
Official Report, One Hundred Fiftieth Annual General Conference
of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, held in the
Tabernacle
Salt Lake City, Utah
April 5 and 6, 1980



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SESQUICENTENNIAL

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

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THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTIETH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The 150th Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah on Saturday, April 5, 1980, at 10:00 A.M.

The general sessions of the conference were held at 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday, April 5 and 6, 1980. The general welfare session was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, April 5, 1980, at 7:00 A.M. The general priesthood meeting was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, April 5, 1980, at 7:00 P.M.

President N. Eldon Tanner, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday morning, Saturday afternoon, priesthood, and Sunday morning sessions. President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the general welfare meeting and the Sunday afternoon session.

After attending the Saturday morning general session, President Kimball and his party travelled to Fayette, New York to participate in special services to commemorate the Sesquicentennial of the Church. The first portion of the Sunday morning general session was televised from the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City. By means of special satellite transmission facilities, the television cameras then switched to a replica of the Peter Whitmer, Sr. farmhouse in Fayette, New York, from which President Kimball made remarks about the organization of the Church in the original Whitmer farmhouse on April 6, 1830. At President Kimball's request, Elder Gordon B. Hinckley then read a proclamation to the world from the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Later, President Kimball and Elder Hinckley addressed the conference via satellite transmission from a new chapel constructed near the replica of the Whitmer farmhouse. Following his address, President Kimball dedicated the new chapel.

During the Sunday afternoon session, the television cameras again switched from the Salt Lake Tabernacle to the new Fayette Chapel, from which Elder Hugh W. Pinnock spoke and President Kimball delivered the concluding address of the conference. The Mormon Youth Chorus in the Salt Lake Tabernacle and a special choir at the Fayette Chapel alternately sang verses of the hymn "We Ever Pray for Thee" with the cameras switching back and forth to and from the two choirs as they sang. The Mormon Youth Chorus then sang "God Be with You," and the benediction was offered by Elder Eldred G. Smith from the Fayette Chapel.

Also commemorating the Sesquicentennial of the Church was a special presentation by the United States Postal Service authorities. The half-hour ceremony, which followed the Saturday morning welfare session, marked the date of the first issuance of a U.S. postal card bearing a picture of the Salt Lake Temple.

The Primary general presidency was reorganized during the conference. Sister Naomi M. Shumway, president, and Sisters Colleen B. Lemmon and Dortha C. Murdock were released with a vote of thanks, and Sister Dwan J. Young was sustained as the new president of the Primary with Sisters Virginia B. Cannon and Michaelene P. Grassli as her first and second counselors, respectively.

The proceedings of all sessions of the conference were given extensive coverage in the United States and Canada over many radio and television stations coast to coast, originating with KSL in Salt Lake City.

By means of satellite transmission, sessions of the conference were heard over radio in countries of Central and South America, Mexico, Australia, Spain, and, for the first time, seen on television in the Philippines.

The general priesthood meeting was transmitted over closed circuit from the Tabernacle to approximately 1,924 buildings throughout the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, New Zealand, Australia, Philippines, Korea, and for the first time, the Dominican Republic; and by way of closed-circuit television to the Salt Palace and to stake buildings in Salt Lake City and on the BYU campus.

Video tapes of conference sessions were sent to television stations in Canada and to members and friends assembled in chapels throughout Great Britain, Germany, France, Switzerland, Holland, Belgium, and Austria.

Rebroadcasts of all sessions of the conference were sent by KSL Radio in Salt Lake City, and KIRO Radio, Seattle, Washington, to many parts of the United States and Canada, and the world, beginning at midnight following each conference day's proceedings.

This report of the conference also includes the continuity of the Tabernacle Choir and organ broadcast over the Columbia Broadcasting System on Sunday from 9:30 A.M. to 10:00 A.M. immediately preceding the general conference session.

General Authorities present

The following General Authorities of the Church attended one or more of the general sessions:

The First Presidency: Spencer W. Kimball, N. Eldon Tanner, Marion G. Romney.

The Quorum of the Twelve: Ezra Taft Benson, Mark E. Petersen, LeGrand Richards, Howard W. Hunter, Gordon B. Hinckley, Thomas S. Monson, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, Bruce R. McConkie, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, and James E. Faust.

The First Quorum of the Seventy: Presidents. Franklin D. Richards, Neal A. Maxwell, J. Thomas Fyans, Carlos E. Asay, M. Russell Ballard, Dean L. Larsen.¹ *Additional members:* Marion D. Hanks, A. Theodore Tuttle,¹ Bernard P. Brockbank, Paul H. Dunn, Hartman Rector, Jr., Loren C. Dunn, Robert L. Simpson, O. Leslie Stone, Rex D. Pinegar, W. Grant Bangerter, Robert D. Hales, Adney Y. Komatsu, Joseph B. Wirthlin, Gene R. Cook, Charles Didier, William R. Bradford, George P. Lee, John H. Groberg, Jacob de Jager, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Robert E. Wells, G. Homer Durham, James M. Paramore, Richard G. Scott, Hugh W. Pinnock, F. Enzo Busche, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Ronald E. Poelman, Derek A. Cuthbert, Robert L. Backman, Rex C. Reeve, Sr., F. Burton Howard, Teddy E. Brewerton, and Jack H. Goasland, Jr. *Emeritus members:* Sterling W. Sill, Henry D. Taylor, James A. Cullimore, Joseph Anderson, William H. Bennett, John H. Vandenberg, and S. Dilworth Young.

The Presiding Bishopric: Victor L. Brown, H. Burke Peterson, and J. Richard Clarke.

Other authorities present

Other authorities of the Church in attendance included Regional Representatives, presidents of stakes and their counselors, presidents of temples, bishoprics of wards, and presidencies and members of the

Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood quorums.

Many general, stake, and ward auxiliary officers also attended.

¹Elders Royden G. Derrick and Theodore M. Burton were excused due to illness.

FIRST DAY MORNING MEETING

FIRST SESSION

The opening session of the Sesquicentennial conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 5, 1980, at 10:00 A.M. President Spencer W. Kimball presided at this session. President N. Eldon Tanner, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for this session was furnished by the Tabernacle Choir with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducting and Robert Cundick at the organ.

Before the commencement of the meeting, the Tabernacle Choir sang "Come, O Thou King of Kings."

President Tanner then made the following remarks:

President N. Eldon Tanner

President Spencer W. Kimball, who presides at this session, has asked me to conduct this session.

We extend a cordial greeting to all assembled this morning in the Tabernacle on Temple Square at the commencement of this, the 150th Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We also welcome those seated in the overflow congregation in the Salt Palace and the many throughout the world who make up the unseen audience of radio and television.

The Tabernacle Choir has just rendered "Come, O Thou King of Kings."

Seated on the stand are all of the General Authorities of the Church except Elders Royden G. Derrick and Theodore M. Burton who are ill, and Elders Jacob de Jager and Derek A. Cuthbert who are presiding in the Salt Palace.

Present also are Regional Representatives, stake and temple presidencies, patriarchs, bishops, other general and local officers of the Church, and members of the Church from many foreign lands. We extend a special welcome to government, education, and civic leaders who are present.

We announce the honorable release, with a vote of thanks for their excellent services, of the Primary General Presidency, consisting of Sisters Naomi M. Shumway, Colleen B. Lemmon, and Dorthea C. Murdock, and the Primary General Board as now constituted. We now present for your vote, Sister Dwan J. Young as the president of the Primary Association with Sister Virginia B. Cannon as first counselor and Sister Michaelene P. Grassli as second counselor. All in favor, please signify. Any contrary by the same sign.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger with Robert Cundick at the organ will provide the music for this session.

The Choir will now sing "More Things Are Wrought by Prayer." Following the singing, the invocation will be offered by Elder Rex C. Reeve, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy and Executive Administrator of the British Isles-Africa Area.

The Choir sang "More Things Are Wrought by Prayer."

Elder Rex C. Reeve offered the invocation.

Without announcement, the Choir sang "A Marvelous Work."

President Tanner

Our beloved President, President Spencer W. Kimball will now speak to us.

President Spencer W. Kimball

My beloved brothers and sisters, I am grateful, as always, just to be with you and to be near you. These last six months I have felt your love and support and prayers, time and time again, and wish to thank you most sincerely for them.

Righteous history

General conference is always a glorious event. But this conference is even more special because we celebrate the Sesquicentennial of the organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The history of the Church is essentially the history of its individual members. One of the best ways to celebrate righteous history is to make *more* of it, make *more* righteous history! In this connection, you will recall that a year ago you were called upon to stretch yourselves in further service. Included in the counsel given then was the suggestion that each active member or family bring an individual or a family into the Church by the time the April 1980 conference arrived. That conference is now here. Did we do it? Or are some of us still being "neighbors as usual," not yet fully sharing the gospel with our friends and neighbors?

As we speak of sharing the gospel, let me say that the First Presi-

dency has just been advised by the Church Missionary Committee that as of last week we had 30,004 full-time missionaries. That is the largest number of missionaries ever in the history of the Church. What a glorious work they are performing and what blessings they bring into the lives of our Father's other children throughout the world who hearken to their message of joy and peace and salvation.

Brethren and sisters, there are more young men who can and should serve in the mission field. Presently they represent 79 percent of our total missionary force. We have not yet reached our potential. The young sisters serving represent 13 percent of the total. Eight percent of the total missionary force is represented by older couples. What a blessing their maturity and experience are wherever they serve. With the divine commission we have to share the gospel with the entire world, we do indeed need many more missionaries. Remember that "the field is white already to harvest" (D&C 4:4).

Consolidated meeting schedule

You will recall, also, our saying last year in general conference and in seminars for the Regional Representatives that some further program ad-

justments were coming. We said at that time: "We see ourselves as positioning our people so that the Latter-day Saints can give greater attention to family life, can focus more on certain simple and basic things, can render more Christian service, and can have greater effectiveness in all these things—through the process of simplification, scheduling, proper priorities, and by honoring the priesthood line" (Regional Representatives' seminar, 5 Oct. 1979; see also *ENSIGN*, Nov. 1979, p. 100).

Those adjustments, as you have recently learned, now have been made. We are confident that as a result we will indeed see an upsurge in quality family life, in Christian service, and in attendance at Church meetings.

Living the gospel in the home

We hope, for instance, that either before or after your series of Sunday meetings, depending upon your particular consolidated meeting schedule, you will do what the Savior asked the Nephite disciples to do: After he taught them, he asked them to go to their homes and to ponder and to pray over what was said (see 3 Ne. 17:3). Let us keep that pattern in mind.

We also said last year that we have paused on some plateaus long enough, and then we gave an emphasis to councils—family councils, ward and stake councils, and on through to area and Churchwide councils.

If you continue to observe carefully, you will see how all these developments are pointing us in one direction. As a people, we are being positioned to do more perfectly that which the Lord has given us to do.

May we suggest that, in our desire to enrich family life in the Church and to provide more time for Christian service, we make sure we

do not overlook the tens of thousands of single Latter-day Saints who do not live in a traditional Latter-day Saint family setting. Please do not neglect these wonderful brothers and sisters.

A year ago it was also observed that "our success . . . will largely be determined by how faithfully we focus on living the gospel in the home" (Spencer W. Kimball, *ENSIGN*, May 1979, p. 83). That is surely true and, in like manner, we will be spiritually successful to the degree that we are good neighbors and good friends to those in the household of faith and to our non-member friends.

Genealogy and temple work

With the announcement just made of the construction of seven new temples, there begins the most intensive period of temple building in the history of the Church.

The building of these temples must be accompanied by a strong emphasis on genealogical research on the part of all members of the Church.

We feel an urgency for this great work to be accomplished and encourage members to accept this responsibility. Members do so by writing their personal and family histories, participating in the name extraction program when called to do so, completing their four-generation research, and then continuing their family research in order to redeem their kindred dead.

To assist and give encouragement to this important work, the Genealogical Department, under the direction of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve, has organized another World Conference on Records to be held in Salt Lake City in August of this sesquicentennial year. Experts in family history from thirty countries will present four days

of seminars to an audience of participants from around the world. We encourage all who can to attend.

Progress in the Church

Brothers and sisters, we rejoice in the fifteen decades of progress of the Church. We want to keep faith with that small but noble band of souls who assembled in the Peter Whitmer home 150 years ago for the purpose of formally organizing the Church. We *can* keep faith, in part, by helping the Church to grow in numbers and also in spirituality. We can count our growing membership. We can count the increasing numbers of stakes. These numbers thrill us, as they indicate the progress we are making and remind us, likewise, that we must achieve in even more major ways in the years ahead.

We can also tell that we are making progress by the attention we get from the adversary. Do not falter nor be distressed when others misrepresent us, sometimes deliberately and sometimes in ignorance. This has been the lot of the Lord's people from the beginning, and it will be no different in our time.

Keep the faith

Brothers and sisters, pray for the critics of the Church; love your enemies. Keep the faith and stay on the straight and narrow path. Use wisdom and judgment in what you say and do, so that we do not give cause to others to hold the Church or its people in disrepute. Do not be surprised or dismayed if trials and challenges come upon us. This work, which Satan seeks in vain to tear

down, is that which God has placed on earth to lift mankind up!

I have lived for more than half the 150 years the restored Church has been upon the earth in this last dispensation. I have witnessed its marvelous growth until it now is established in the four corners of the earth. As the Prophet Joseph said:

"Our missionaries are going forth to different nations, and in Germany, Palestine, New Holland, Australia, the East Indies, and other places, the Standard of Truth has been erected; no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done" (*History of the Church*, 4:540).

Let us, then, press on confidently in the work of the Lord as we look forward to the glorious years of promise ahead. Through our faithfulness, all that God has promised will be fulfilled. This is the work of the Lord. The gospel is true. Jesus is the Christ and our Redeemer. May the Lord bless us all as we begin this great sesquicentennial conference of his church, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

We shall now hear from Elder Thomas S. Monson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Thomas S. Monson

We welcome to their new responsibilities and opportunities President Dwan J. Young and her counselors, Virginia B. Cannon and Michaelene P. Grassli. Certainly President Naomi Shumway and her counselors, Colleen B. Lemmon and Dorthea Lou C. Murdock, have established an enviable record of service on which to build.

Tribute to Primary leaders

Today I desire also to pay tribute to another Primary leader—a noble woman and personal friend. I speak of LaVern W. Parmley, former president of the Primary Association of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and former member of the National Advisory Council, Boy Scouts of America. Sister Parmley, as she was affectionately addressed by those who knew her, completed her mission here on earth on Sunday, 27 January 1980. Her funeral services followed a few days later, where in word and song eulogies were expressed and comfort extended to those in attendance.

LaVern Parmley and Naomi Shumway, together with their counselors, gave freely of their time and talents over a span of many years, teaching little children to walk in the light of the gospel of Christ. They taught each child to sing with personal conviction:

*I am a child of God, . . .
Lead me, guide me, walk beside me,
Help me find the way.
Teach me all that I must do
To live with him someday*

("I Am a Child of God," *Sing with Me*, B-76).

Teaching boys

Part of their great love was teaching boys. Their inspired objective was to prepare them to receive the Aaronic Priesthood and to walk uprightly along the Scouting trail.

Under their direction, all eleven-year-old boys were asked to commit to memory the Articles of Faith of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. You remember them. May I mention just two:

"We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost" (A of F 1:1).

"We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things" (A of F 1:13).

Can you think of a more firm foundation, a more basic philosophy to guide a boy, than the Articles of Faith? What a gift these noble women imparted when they expected each boy to know and indeed live by such a standard. They personally accepted the divine injunction, "Feed my sheep; feed my lambs" (see John 21:15-16).

John the Baptist

Some may inquire: What is the significance of the Aaronic Priesthood for which such preparation takes place? Is it all that important in the life of a boy? The Priesthood of Aaron "is an appendage to the . . . Melchizedek Priesthood, and has power in administering outward ordinances" (D&C 107:14). John the

Baptist was a descendant of Aaron and held the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood. Perhaps we could review the life and mission of John, so that the importance of the Aaronic Priesthood might be more fully appreciated.

Long years ago and distant miles away, in the conquered country of Palestine, a marvelous miracle occurred. The setting was bleak, the time one of tumult. In these, the days of Herod, king of Judea, there lived a priest named Zacharias and his wife, Elisabeth. "They were . . . righteous before God (Luke 1:6). However, long years of yearning had returned no reward—Zacharias and Elisabeth remained childless.

Then came that day of days ever to be remembered. There appeared to Zacharias the angel Gabriel, who proclaimed: "Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

"He shall be great in the sight of the Lord" (Luke 1:13-15).

Elisabeth did conceive. In due time a son was born, and according to the angel's instruction he was named John.

As with the Master, Jesus Christ, so with the servant, John—precious little is recorded of their years of youth. A single sentence contains all that we know of John's history for a space of thirty years—the entire period which elapsed between his birth and his walk into the wilderness to commence his public ministry: "The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel" (Luke 1:80).

His dress was that of the old prophets—a garment woven of camel's hair. His food was such as the desert afforded—locusts and wild honey. His message was brief. He

preached faith, repentance, baptism by immersion, and the bestowal of the Holy Ghost by an authority greater than that possessed by himself.

"I am not the Christ" (John 1:20), he told his band of faithful disciples. "But I am sent before him." "I indeed baptize you with water . . . but one mightier than I cometh . . . he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire (see Matt. 3:11).

Baptism of Christ

Then there transpired the climactic scene of John's mission—the baptism of Christ. Jesus came down from Galilee expressly "to be baptized" by John. Humbled of heart and contrite in spirit, John pleaded, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" The Master's reply: "It becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." (See Matt. 3:13-15.)

"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

"And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased (Matt. 3:16-17).

John's testimony that Jesus was the redeemer of the world was declared boldly. Without fear, and with courage, John taught: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

Of John, the Savior later testified, "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist" (Matt. 11:11).

John's public ministry moved toward its close. He had, at the beginning of it, condemned the hypocrisy and worldliness of the Pharisees and Sadducees; and he now had occasion to denounce the lust of a king.

The result is well known. A king's weakness and a woman's fury combined to bring about the death of John.

Restoration of Aaronic Priesthood

The tomb in which his body was placed could not contain that body. Nor could the act of murder still that voice. To the world we declare that at Harmony, Pennsylvania, on 15 May 1829, an angel, "who announced himself as John, the same that is called John the Baptist in the New Testament" (D&C 13, section heading), came as a resurrected personage to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. "The angelic visitant averred that he was acting under the direction of Peter, James, and John, the ancient Apostles, who held the keys of the higher Priesthood, which was called the Priesthood of Melchizedek" (D&C 13, section heading). The Aaronic Priesthood was restored to the earth.

"Ministering of angels"

Thanks to that memorable event, I was given the privilege to bear the Aaronic Priesthood, as have millions of young men in these latter days. Its true significance was taught me by my former stake president, the late Paul C. Child.

When I was approaching my eighteenth birthday and preparing to enter military service in World War II, I was recommended to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood. Mine was the task of telephoning President Child for an appointment and interview. He was one who loved and understood the holy scriptures. It was his intent that all others should similarly love and understand them. Knowing from others of his rather detailed and searching interviews, our telephone conversation went something like this:

"Hello, President Child. This is Brother Monson. I have been asked by the bishop to seek an interview with you."

"Fine, Brother Monson. When can you visit me?"

Knowing that his sacrament meeting time was six o'clock, and desiring minimum exposure of my scriptural knowledge to his review, I suggested, "How would five o'clock be?"

His response: "Oh, Brother Monson, that would not provide us sufficient time to peruse the scriptures. Could you please come at two o'clock, and bring with you your personally marked and referenced set of scriptures."

Sunday finally arrived, and I visited President Child's home on Indiana Avenue. I was greeted warmly, and then the interview began. He said: "Brother Monson, you hold the Aaronic Priesthood. Have you ever had angels minister to you?"

My reply was: "No, President Child."

"Do you know," said he, "that you are entitled to such?"

Again came my response: "No."

Then he instructed, "Brother Monson, repeat from memory the thirteenth section of the Doctrine and Covenants."

I began, "Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels . . ." (D&C 13:1).

"Stop," President Child directed. Then in a calm, kindly tone he counseled: "Brother Monson, never forget that as a holder of the Aaronic Priesthood you are entitled to the ministering of angels." It was almost as though an angel were in the room that day. I have never forgotten the interview. I yet feel the spirit of that solemn occasion. I revere the priesthood of Almighty God. I have wit-

nessed its power. I have seen its strength. I have marveled at the miracles it has wrought.

Authority of Aaronic Priesthood

Almost thirty years ago I knew a boy, even a priest, who held the authority of the Aaronic Priesthood. As the bishop, I was his quorum president. This boy, Robert, stuttered and stammered, void of control. Self-conscious, shy, fearful of himself and all others, he had an impediment of speech which was devastating to him. Never did he fulfill an assignment; never would he look another in the eye; always would he gaze downward. Then one day, through a set of unusual circumstances, he accepted an assignment to perform the priestly responsibility to baptize another.

I sat next to him in the baptistry of this sacred tabernacle. He was dressed in immaculate white, prepared for the ordinance he was to perform. I asked Robert how he felt. He gazed at the floor and stuttered almost incoherently that he felt terrible.

We both prayed fervently that he would be made equal to his task. Then the clerk read the words: "Nancy Ann McArthur will now be baptized by Robert Williams, a priest." Robert left my side, stepped into the font, took little Nancy by the hand, and helped her into that water which cleanses human lives and provides a spiritual rebirth. He then gazed as though toward heaven and, with his right arm to the square, repeated the words "Nancy Ann McArthur, having been commissioned of Jesus Christ, I baptize you

in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (see D&C 20:73). Not once did he stammer. Not once did he stutter. Not once did he falter. A modern miracle had been witnessed.

In the dressing room, as I congratulated Robert, I expected to hear this same uninterrupted flow of speech. I was wrong. He gazed downward and stammered his reply of gratitude.

To each of you this day, I testify that when Robert acted in the authority of the Aaronic Priesthood, he spoke with power, with conviction, and with heavenly help.

Such is the legacy of one called John, even John the Baptist. We hear his voice today. It teaches humility; it prompts courage; it inspires faith.

May we be motivated by his message. May we be inspired by his mission. May we be lifted by his life to a full appreciation of the Aaronic Priesthood and its divine power. I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Following Elder Monson's remarks, the Choir sang "Praise Ye the Lord" without announcement.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Thomas S. Monson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us. He was followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "Praise Ye the Lord."

Elder David B. Haight, also a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our next speaker.

Elder David B. Haight

I pray for divine direction and an interest in your faith and prayers as I

express the convictions of my soul this morning.

We are all so pleased to have President Kimball here looking so well and blessing us with his inspired counsel and direction. The world loves and honors our prophet, but the Saints love him even more.

This is a glorious time of the year, the newness of springtime—an opportunity for each of us to re-appraise our spiritual understanding and commitment, to rejoice in the glory of the resurrection of our Lord, and to feel of his anxious love for all mankind.

Lazarus resurrected

Probably nowhere did Jesus find more needed rest and happier hours than in Bethany in the quiet house of that family whom, according to John, he loved (see John 11:5). This small village with this very special family was just outside Jerusalem on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives. The family evidently consisted of Martha, Mary, and their brother, Lazarus. This quiet village, though only two miles from Jerusalem, was completely hidden from the bustle of the crowds and must have fed the soul of Jesus with love and peace. He must have felt welcome to share this family's hospitality. They not only furnished comfort but listened in deep conviction to his words.

While Jesus was about his ministry he received a solemn message that he whom he loved was sick (see John 11:3). Lazarus was Jesus' intimate personal friend outside the circle of Apostles.

The scripture account tells us Jesus did not leave at once in response to the request because he was occupied with his important work, but he sent word that he would come.

Four days later when Jesus arrived at Bethany he stayed outside the little village, the record tells us,

inasmuch as a large number of people, including distinguished Jews, had assembled to comfort and mourn with Mary and Martha. The sisters undoubtedly were disappointed in the Savior's delay.

"Lord," said Martha, "if thou hadst been here my brother had not died" (John 11:21).

The Savior's brief reply undoubtedly brought comfort to Martha and rings out in hope to all the world: "Thy brother shall rise again" (John 11:23).

Martha, we assume not thinking it possible for her brother to be awakened from the sleep of death, answered, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (John 11:24).

Then "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

"And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believeth thou this?" (John 11:25-26).

Martha's deep faith supplied the answer, "Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world" (John 11:27).

Martha, after having borne this strong witness, found Mary, who, hurrying to Jesus in agony as had Martha, said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died" (John 11:32).

These were his friends. These must have been moments of tender compassion for Jesus and, undoubtedly, of deep emotion and wonderment for all who witnessed. Jesus said, "Where have ye laid him?" They said, "Lord, come and see" (John 11:34).

His enemies, some of whom were there, were asking whether he who had opened the eyes of the blind could not have saved his friend from death. Jesus surely knew their

thoughts and would have heard their comments as he viewed the crowd with its hired mourners.

The burial tomb, typical of the time, probably was a recess cut in the rock with a stone over the entrance. Jesus asked that the stone be removed. He stood at the entrance and called, "Lazarus, come forth."

"And he that was dead came forth" (John 11:43-44).

There were many witnesses to this miracle who believed, but there were others who would carry an alarming story to the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem.

Jesus is betrayed

As Jesus' fame grew, so grew the opposition from the chief priests, apprehensive that he would undermine the established order. And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve Apostles aside and said unto them: "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man shall be betrayed unto the chief priest and unto the scribes; and they shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify him. On the third day he shall rise again" (see Mark 10:32-34).

In an upper room, Jesus and his Apostles were together for the last time. He taught them, saying, "Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me" (Matt. 26:21). As they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it and broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: "Take, eat. This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me" (see Matt. 26:26; Luke 22:19). After this manner also he took the cup, saying, "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins," thus establishing the pattern for the sacrament as a sacred ordinance in his church (Matt. 26:28).

In Gethsemane Jesus knelt in prayer and poured out his soul. "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. 26:39).

"And being in agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as . . . great drops of blood falling . . . to the ground" (Luke 22:44).

The Crucifixion

Following his betrayal, and when the morning was come, the chief priests and his enemies took counsel against Jesus to put him to death, and they bound him and led him to Pontius Pilate, the governor, "and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified" (see Matt. 27:1-2, 26).

He was taken to Calvary. At the third hour, they crucified Jesus, and with him they crucified two thieves (see Mark 15:25, 27). "And there was . . . darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.

" . . . and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst" (Luke 23:44-45).

Christ is resurrected

After three days, very early in the morning on the first day of the week, the women came to the sepulcher with spices to anoint the body of Jesus. Instead, they were greeted by a young man in a long white garment who announced: "He is not here. He is risen" (see Luke 24:6). Jesus showed himself first to Mary Magdalene and afterward to the Apostles.

For forty days after his resurrection, Jesus remained with his disciples to instruct them more in the gospel. He told them, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

And then "he led them out as far as . . . Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them," and "while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven" (Luke 24:50-51).

And "while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

"Which . . . said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go" (Acts 1:10-11).

Testimony of Christ's resurrection

We testify to all the world, as did the Apostles of old, that this same Jesus taken up into heaven as men watched, will return—will return in power and great glory, attended by the hosts of heaven. At that day "the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together" (Isa. 40:5). But prior to that day, as foretold by the prophets, there must be a restoration of all things in the last days, the fulness of the gospel with all its saving powers to be returned to earth (see Acts 3:20-21).

We proclaim with knowledge and power as witnesses of heavenly events that the final great restoration has taken place, that angelic ministers have been sent from heaven, that God's voice has been heard declaring its truth, that the gift of the Holy Ghost and the priesthood powers with blessings and promises have again been given to man.

Organization of the Church

Tomorrow, the day selected to remember the resurrection of our Lord, is an occasion of additional joy and humble thanksgiving. Not only the organization of Christ's church

was reinstituted on that day 150 years ago, but the Lord has protected, sheltered, and prospered it through these challenging years. God has held it in the palm of his hand.

The Prophet Joseph Smith's account of the first organization meeting is inspiring to read and contemplate—the Whitmer home, the opening prayer, approval to organize the Church as commanded, Joseph and Oliver Cowdery ordained elders, the sacrament; and then all members present were blessed with the gift of the Holy Ghost. There was prophecy and rejoicing. The events of that April 6, 150 years ago, had been directed by God. Members used their full agency in consenting to the organization, and the Holy Ghost bore witness to their souls that what was done was acceptable to the Lord.

Then followed the trying and dramatic events of Kirtland, Zion's Camp march, Haun's Mill, Liberty Jail, the expulsion from Nauvoo, the tragedy at Carthage, Winter Quarters, handcart brigades, and Johnston's army—the testing of a people, the trials of faith, but always the undergirding faith and belief in our Savior and his promise to Joseph, "If thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes" (D&C 121:8).

Now today in this peaceful valley, in this historic tabernacle, we witness the fruits of God's love and promise to his people. We still sing with emotion, "All is well, all is well."

Tolstoy's view of Mormonism

The motivating force behind the sustaining and vigorous growth of the Church is that it is true. It is God's plan. The gospel provides the only way to a mortal life of happiness and a joy forever.

Count Leo Tolstoy, Russian author and statesman, in conversation

with Andrew D. White, United States foreign minister to Russia, in 1892 said, "I wish you would tell me about your American religion."

"We have no state church in America," replied Dr. White.

"I know that, but what about your American religion?"

Dr. White explained to Tolstoy that in America each person is free to belong to the particular church in which he is interested.

Tolstoy impatiently replied: "I know all of this, but I want to know about the *American* religion. . . . The church to which I refer originated in America and is commonly known as the Mormon Church. What can you tell me of the teachings of the Mormons?"

Dr. White said, "I know very little concerning them."

Then Count Leo Tolstoy rebuked the ambassador. "Dr. White, I am greatly surprised and disappointed that a man of your great learning and position should be so ignorant on this important subject. Their principles teach the people not only of heaven and its attendant glories, but how to live so that their social and economic relations with each other are placed on a sound basis. If the people follow the teachings of this church, nothing can stop their progress—it will be limitless."

Tolstoy continued, "There have been great movements started in the past but they have died or been modified before they reached maturity. If

Mormonism is able to endure, unmodified, until it reaches the third and fourth generation, it is destined to become the greatest power the world has ever known" (see *Improvement Era*, Feb. 1939, p. 94).

Greatest power in the world

It is not only destined to *become* but *is* the greatest power in the world. I thank God for his revelations to his prophets, past and present, and for not leaving us alone. I declare to you, my friends everywhere, my witness that God does live, that he made us in his own image, that he sent his divine Son, our Savior, to show us the way. I know that my Redeemer lives and pray that his blessings and peace may come to all men everywhere, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

The Choir and congregation will now join in singing "Redeemer of Israel." Following the singing, Elder James E. Faust, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will speak to us.

The Choir and congregation sang the hymn "Redeemer of Israel."

Elder James E. Faust

At the Samoa area conference in 1976, President Spencer W. Kimball said: "Often when we have press conferences, the press asks us this question: 'What is the greatest problem that your . . . Church has today?' We answer that it is rapid growth. It

is very difficult to keep up with the growth of the Church in many lands" (in Conference Report, Samoa Area Conference 1976, p. 9).

It has been 150 years since The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized. Why does this

Church continue to flourish and grow so dramatically? In 1979 there were almost two hundred thousand convert baptisms in addition to the natural growth of the Church. What distinguishes The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from all others? We believe that we can answer this question more correctly than anyone else.

Several characteristics are peculiar to our faith. Among them is its organization with prophets and Apostles, who Paul said are the foundation of the Church (see Eph. 2:20); the First Quorum of the Seventy, also the great order of lay priesthood leadership, the missionary system, the welfare program, the temples, the genealogical effort, and many other distinguishing features.

Gift of the Holy Ghost

There is, however, another reason for our growth, which transcends all others. Of an interview in 1839 between the Prophet Joseph Smith and Martin Van Buren, then president of the United States, the following was reported:

"In our interview with the President, he interrogated us wherein we differed in our religion from the other religions of the day. Brother Joseph said we differed in mode of baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. We considered that all other considerations were contained in the gift of the Holy Ghost" (*History of the Church*, 4:42).

One of the reasons the Prophet's response was so inspired is that the right to enjoy the marvelous gifts of the Holy Ghost is conferred upon every member of this Church soon after baptism. This is in fulfillment of the promise of the Savior: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he

may abide with you for ever" (John 14:16).

This powerful gift entitles the leaders and all worthy members of the Church to enjoy the gifts and companionship of the Holy Ghost, a member of the Godhead whose function is to inspire, reveal, and teach "all things" (see John 14:26). The result of this endowment is that for 150 years the leadership and membership of this church have enjoyed, and now enjoy, continuous revelation and inspiration directing them in what is right and good.

Divine direction

Inspiration and revelation are so common, so widespread, so universal among the leaders and faithful members of this church that there is a strong spiritual base underlying what is done. This can be found in the gatherings, both large and small.

Why does this church grow and flourish? It does so because of divine direction to the leaders and members. This began in our day when God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph Smith early in the spring of 1820. However, we claim that God's inspiration is not limited to the members of this church. The First Presidency has stated:

"The great religious leaders of the world such as Mohammed, Confucius, and the Reformers, as well as philosophers including Socrates, Plato, and others, received a portion of God's light. Moral truths were given to them by God to enlighten whole nations and to bring a higher level of understanding to individuals. . . .

"We believe that God has given and will give to all peoples sufficient knowledge to help them on their way to eternal salvation" (*Statement of the First Presidency regarding God's Love for All Mankind*, 15 Feb. 1978).

Personal revelation

We declare in all solemnity, however, that we know salvation in the world to come is dependent upon accepting the gospel of Jesus Christ as taught in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. One factor in salvation is personal revelation. Joseph Smith said: "No man can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelations. The Holy Ghost is a revelator" (*History of the Church*, 6:58).

Latter-day Saints, having received the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, are entitled to personal inspiration in the small events of life as well as when they are confronted with the giant Goliaths of life.

David and Goliath

David, the youngest son of Jesse, a mere, stouthearted shepherd boy, volunteered to fight the giant Goliath. David and all of the army of Israel were insulted by the humiliating taunts of this formidable giant, but David knew that inspiration had brought him to save Israel. King Saul was so impressed with the faith and determination of this young boy that he appointed David to fight Goliath.

Goliath made sport of David's youth and lack of armament. David responded that he came in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, and that the whole assembly would learn that the Lord saveth not by the sword and the spear, "for the battle is the Lord's" (1 Sam. 17:47). Then David threw a rock from his sling with such force and accuracy that the stone sank deep into the forehead of Goliath. Goliath fell to the earth a dying man, and the Philistines fled in fear.

God speaks today

What has happened to David's living God? It is the greatest insult to

reason to suggest that God, who spoke so freely to the prophets of the Old Testament including Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, and the other prophets, now stands mute, uncommunicative, and silent.

We may well ask, Does God love us less than those led by the ancient prophets? Do we need his guidance and instruction less? Reason suggests that this cannot be. Does he not care? Has he lost his voice? Has he gone on a permanent vacation? Does he sleep? The unreasonableness of each of these proposals is self-evident.

As the Savior taught in the synagogue at Capernaum, he proclaimed his divinity in no uncertain terms. Following this, John states:

"From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

"Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?

"Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

"And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" (John 6:66-69).

We acknowledge and testify that the same witness of Christ's divinity as received by Peter is also our sacred knowledge.

Promptings of the Spirit

Personal revelation comes as a testimony of truth and as guidance in spiritual and temporal matters. Members of the Church know that the promptings of the Spirit may be received upon all facets of life, including daily, ongoing decisions (see D&C 42:61). How could anyone think of making an important decision such as "Who is to be my companion?", "What is my work to be?", "Where will I live?", and "How will I live?" without seeking the inspiration of Almighty God.

Many faithful Latter-day Saints have been warned by the Spirit to prevent injury or death. Among these was President Wilford Woodruff, who said:

"When I got back to Winter Quarters from the pioneer journey [1847], President Young said to me, 'Brother Woodruff, I want you to take your wife and children and go to Boston and stay there until you can gather every Saint of God in New England and Canada and send them up to Zion.'

"I did as he told me. It took me two years to gather up everybody, and I brought up the rear with a company (there were about one hundred of them). We arrived at Pittsburgh one day at sundown. We did not want to stay there, so I went to the first steamboat that was going to leave. I saw the captain and engaged passage for us on that steamer. I had only just done so when the spirit said to me, and that, too, very strongly, 'Don't go aboard that steamer, nor your company.' Of course, I went and spoke to the captain, and told him I had made up my mind to wait.

"Well, that ship started, and had only got five miles down the river when it took fire, and three hundred persons were burned to death or drowned. If I had not obeyed that spirit, and had gone on that steamer with the rest of the company, you can see what the result would have been" (*Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, sel. G. Homer Durham, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1946, pp. 294-95).

Guidelines for receiving inspiration

There are some guidelines and rules necessary for one to be the recipient of revelation and inspiration; they include (1) to try honestly and sincerely to keep God's commandments, (2) to be spiritually attuned as a receiver of a divine message, (3) to

ask in humble, fervent prayer, and (4) to seek with unwavering faith.

I testify that inspiration can be the spring of every person's hope, guidance, and strength. It is one of the magnificent treasures of life. It involves coming to the infinite knowledge of God.

How do revelation and inspiration operate? Each person has a built-in "receiving set" which, when fine-tuned, can be a receiver of divine communications. Said Job, "There is a spirit in man; and . . . the Almighty giveth them understanding" (Job 32:8). It is possible, like Nephi, to be led completely by the Spirit, "not knowing beforehand" that which should be done (see 1 Ne. 4:6).

How is inspiration received? Enos stated, "And while I was thus struggling in the spirit, behold, the voice of the Lord came into my mind" (Enos 1:10). One does not necessarily hear an audible voice. The spirit of revelation comes by divine confirmation. "I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart," says the Lord in the Doctrine and Covenants (D&C 8:2).

Still, small voice

How was the voice of the Lord heard by Elijah the Tishbite? It was not the "strong wind [which] rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks," nor "after the wind an earthquake," nor "after the earthquake a fire." It was "a still small voice" (see 1 Kgs. 19:11-12).

It is the inner voice of the Spirit, which has the capacity to whisper through and pierce all things (see D&C 85:6). Helaman says, "It was not a voice of thunder, neither was it a voice of a great tumultuous noise, but behold, it was a still voice of perfect mildness, as if it had been

a whisper, and it did pierce even to the very soul" (Hel. 5:30).

Thus the Lord, by revelation, brings inspiration into one's mind as though a voice were speaking. Elder Harold B. Lee gave this testimony:

"I have a believing heart because of a simple testimony that came when I was a child, I think maybe I was around ten—maybe eleven—years of age. I was with my father out on a farm away from our home, trying to spend the day busying myself until father was ready to go home. Over the fence from our place were some tumbledown sheds which had attracted a curious boy, adventurous as I was. I started to climb through the fence and I heard a voice as clearly as you are hearing mine—'Don't go over there!' calling me by name. I turned to look at father to see if he were talking to me, but he was way up at the other end of the field. There was no person in sight. I realized then, as a child, that there were persons beyond my sight and I had heard a voice. And when I had heard and read these stories of the Prophet Joseph Smith, I, too, know what it means to hear a voice because I've heard from an unseen speaker" (*Divine Revelation*, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year, Provo, 15 Oct. 1952, p. 6).

Revelation for Church comes through the prophet

Although every faithful member of the Church is entitled to receive personal revelation, there is only one man upon the earth who receives revelation for the whole Church.

Beginning with Joseph Smith, the Prophet of the Restoration, there have been living oracles of God designated to communicate minute by minute, day by day, and hour by hour, as needed, to the leaders of the Church.

President Wilford Woodruff, fourth president of the Church, said: "The Church of God could not live twenty-four hours without revelation (*Discourses of Wilford Woodruff* p. 61).

Roy W. Doxey reminds us:

"Every day men and women come, by revelation, to understand the basic truth that God has restored his gospel and church.

"Every day leaders of the Church are led by revelation to conduct the affairs of the Church, general and local, throughout the world.

"Every day Latter-day Saint missionaries are impressed by the spirit of revelation to bear witness, to know what to say, to know what to do, and to teach by the spirit of revelation.

"Every day the mind and will of the Lord as revealed in the standard works of the Church are illuminated in the minds of Latter-day Saints by the spirit of revelation.

"Every day faith is increased in the hearts of the faithful by evidences of revelation in their lives—in decisions regarding marriage, vocations, home concerns, business ventures, lesson preparations, danger signals—in fact, in all facets of life.

"Every Latter-day Saint may know by the spirit of revelation that President Joseph Fielding Smith spoke the truth when he said:

"The Lord not only blesses the men who stand at the head and hold the keys of the kingdom, but *he also blesses every faithful individual with the spirit of inspiration.*" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:281-282.)" (*Walk with the Lord*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1973, pp. 173-74).

On 1 June 1978 one of the greatest revelations ever received in the history of the world came to mankind. It was revealed that all worthy brethren in the Church, regardless of color or race, could receive the priesthood.

President Kimball receives revelation

Who is the prophet of the world today? I testify that the prophet upon the face of the earth today is President Spencer W. Kimball.

We desire our friends to know that every devoted person of any faith, anywhere in the world, who is obedient and righteous and who sincerely prays may receive answers and inspiration from God.

We are certain that salvation in God's presence requires acceptance of the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We bear solemn witness that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is God's church upon the earth.

Why has this Church grown so dramatically over these 150 years? Why does it continue to grow at an ever-increasing pace? It does so in large measure because of divine revelation and inspiration.

I pray that we may so live as to enjoy the companionship of the Holy

Ghost, for the Holy Ghost, under the direction of Almighty God, has led this people and its leaders for 150 years since its restoration from its humble beginnings to the great spiritual force it is today. This is my prayer and testimony which I leave in the sacred and holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

Following Elder Faust's address, the Choir sang "Song of Praise" and "Turn Back O Man" without announcement.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder James E. Faust, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "Song of Praise" and "Turn Back O Man."

President N. Eldon Tanner

During my many years of service as a Church official I have been asked by brides- or grooms-to-be if I would perform their marriage ceremony. This I have always been pleased to do when possible, and so I have united in the holy bonds of matrimony many couples—some civil marriages for this life only before I become a General Authority of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and some marriages in the temple of God for time and for all eternity. I shall comment later on the difference.

I suppose one of the happiest times in a person's life is when contemplating marriage—particularly if the person feels that the choice of mate is the one and only. It is safe to

assume that at the time of marriage most couples are sure they are making the right choices; but all too often the honeymoon ends, and trouble begins, and the marriage terminates in divorce.

Purpose of earth's creation

The frequency of divorce has led some to a life-style where they feel inclined to escape from the seemingly meaningless rituals, without benefit of clergy or other legal sanctions. I often wonder how well-informed they are about the purpose of the creation of the earth on which they dwell, and how fully they have researched the scriptures to learn why

God created man and woman and instituted the sacred ordinance of marriage.

Let us consider first the purpose of the creation of the earth. The scriptures make it clear that it was for no other purpose than to provide a place for the sons and daughters of God to dwell in mortality and prove themselves worthy, through keeping the commandments, to return to the presence of God from whence they came.

Following the creation of the earth, "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . .

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it" (Gen. 1:26-28).

When God created woman and brought her to the man, he said:

"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:24).

Marriage ordained of God

Yes, marriage is ordained of God, and following that first reference to husband and wife, we find recurring scriptures as evidence that men and women became husbands and wives in marriage ceremonies followed by wedding feasts. We are not here just to "eat, drink, and be merry" (2 Ne. 28:7). We have been given an earth to subdue, and instructions to multiply and replenish it. It is interesting to note that God said "multiply" and not just "replenish" the earth (see Gen. 1:28).

Eternal marriage

It is important for us to under-

stand, as we can learn from the scriptures, that God is eternal, that his creations are eternal, and that his truths are eternal. Therefore, when he gave Eve to Adam in marriage, that union would be eternal. Marriage as ordained of God and performed in his holy temples is eternal—not just until death. In Ecclesiastes we read:

"I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever" (Eccl. 3:14).

When Christ asked Peter to tell him who he was, Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus gave Peter the assurance that he knew this by revelation from God the Father, and that it would be upon this rock of revelation that he would build his church. Then he said, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (see Matt. 16:15-19).

When the Pharisees came to Jesus, tempting him, to ask about divorce, his answer included the following: "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,

"And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

"Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matt. 19:4-6).

These scriptures indicate that celestial marriage, ordained by God and performed by his authority in his holy temples, is eternal, and couples so united are sealed for time and all eternity, and their children are born in the covenant of the everlasting gospel. They will be an eternal family according to their faithfulness.

Preparation for celestial marriage

How does one prepare for such a marriage? All young people should consider very carefully and prayerfully the kind of mate they would like to have for eternity and for the father or mother of their children. Parents have a responsibility to teach their children the importance of keeping themselves clean and pure, with high moral standards, so they will be worthy of the kind of men and women with whom they want to associate and marry. Someone has said that a man breeding livestock is very careful about what he allows in the pasture with his prize animals, but he lets his son or daughter go with anyone without checking on their credentials.

Another example is given of a man whose daughter came to him one evening and said, "Dad, may I use the car tonight?"

He replied, "It isn't here."

"What do you mean, 'It isn't here.' Where is it?"

"I don't know. I let a man borrow it."

"Well, who is he?"

"I don't know."

"I don't understand. When will he bring it back?"

The father then explained, saying, "You seem to be quite concerned about my car, and yet you don't seem to appreciate my wanting to know about your dates—with whom and where you are going and when you will come back. I have far more interest in you and your welfare than in my automobile, and I hope you can understand *now* why I ask you those questions."

Children should understand and be made to feel the love and concern their parents have for them. If the proper relationship exists they will willingly confide their plans and be happy to have their friends and parents meet.

Selecting a marriage partner

When young people come to me for advice about courtship and marriage I usually suggest that they ask themselves the following questions:

What kind of mother or father do I want my children to have?

What kind of parent am I prepared to be?

Do I want to associate with someone because of his or her popularity only, or do I look deeper for spiritual and moral qualities?

Am I analyzing our similarities and differences in background, culture, and intellect?

Am I prepared to adjust to these differences?

Do I realize that such adjustments need to be made *before* marriage?

These considerations will certainly help in making a proper choice for a companion with whom one is prepared to spend eternity. Then after the marriage there are many responsibilities that cannot be taken lightly; but with each contracting party assuming his or her full share of the responsibility, there is nothing in this life that will bring greater satisfaction and happiness.

Four specifics for establishing a happy home

As I have performed marriage ceremonies for young couples, I have talked with them about their future and the things that will go into building an increase of love for one another and into the establishment of a happy home. There are four specific things, among others, which I always include.

First, I remind them to keep the covenants which they make as they are married.

Second, addressing myself to the young man, I tell him to make her happy. If he will do all he can to

make her happy, she cannot help but want to reciprocate and do everything she can for his comfort and welfare.

Third, I stress the importance of clearing up any misunderstandings they may have. I remind them that it does not matter *who* is right, but *what* is right. They should never retire at night with any differences between them. As they kneel together in prayer and ask the Lord to bless them and help them overcome their difficulties, the sweet spirit of forgiveness will come into their hearts, and they will forgive one another as they ask the Lord to forgive them.

Fourth, and very important, I remind them to continue to love one another.

I tell them too that marriage is not a fifty-fifty proposition. Each must go the extra mile so there is no contention about the halfway mark. They must keep private matters confidential, and I advise them to solve their own problems without interference from family or friends.

Sometimes young people do not have the patience to wait for material comforts and luxuries which they may not be able to afford. Wanting too much too soon can be a hardship on both husband and wife, and financial burdens brought on by careless management are often a source of contention. It is far more important to build an atmosphere of love and harmony and spirituality in the home than to concentrate on material possessions which can be accumulated in time as financial ability permits.

Importance of children

Into this happy home and pleasant atmosphere will eventually come the children for which the marriage was consummated, and who will add immeasurably to the joy and fulfillment which God the Father intended when he instructed Adam and Eve to multiply and replenish the earth.

When parents understand the purpose of their existence, that they are literally the spiritual offspring of their Father in Heaven and that they have a responsibility to provide mortal bodies for others, then they rejoice in the miracle of birth as they realize they are copartners with God in the creation of each child who comes into that home.

In keeping with the revelations on this subject, one of our early leaders, the late Melvin J. Ballard, said this:

"There is a passage in our Scriptures which the Latter-day Saints accept as divine: 'This is the glory of God—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man' [see Moses 1:39]. Likewise we could say that this is the glory of men and women—to bring to pass the *mortality* of the sons and daughters of God, to give earth-life to the waiting children of our Father. . . . The greatest mission of woman is to give life, earth-life, through honorable marriage, to the waiting spirits, our Father's spirit children who anxiously desire to come to dwell here in this mortal state. All the honor and glory that can come to men or women by the development of their talents, the homage and the praise they may receive from an applauding world, worshipping at their shrine of genius, is but a dim thing whose luster shall fade in comparison to the high honor, the eternal glory, the ever-enduring happiness that shall come to the woman who fulfils the first great duty and mission that devolves upon her to become the mother of the sons and daughters of God" (*Sermons and Missionary Services*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1949, pp. 203-4, italics added).

Birth control

We reaffirm today what U.S. president Theodore Roosevelt said in 1917:

"What this nation vitally needs is not the negative preaching of birth control to a submerged tenth, and the tenth immediately adjoining, but the positive preaching of birth encouragement to the eight-tenths who make up the capable self-respecting American stock which we wish to see perpetuate itself" (*Metropolitan*, Oct. 1917).

There are various arguments for curtailing the birth of children or the size of families, but they are contrary to the laws of God. Our early citizens who were patriotic and God-fearing, and in many instances lacked for material possessions, believed in large families; and from that stock came some of our greatest statesmen and finest lawyers, scientists, and educators. They were self-made men reared in humble homes where spirituality abounded.

Love expressed through actions

The happy home is one where the family lives together, works together, plays together, and prays together; where the parents show love and courtesy and demonstrate it to each other. Love is expressed often through actions and by the spoken word. We should not be like the Scotsman who, at the death of his wife, was receiving expressions of sympathy from his friends. One neighbor commented on what a fine person she was. Jock replied, "Aye, she was a good woman, and I came near telling her so once or twice."

In a recent publication of a small pamphlet called *Family Matters*, the opening sentence was, "Will your family survive the '80s intact?" It mentions economic conditions and inflation, then says:

"Inflation isn't the biggest concern for many. . . . Moral decay will be the key threat to family life in the '80s. That's what a majority of your neighbors told *Better Homes and*

Gardens in a survey with a huge response. They blame inattentive parents and lack of a spiritual foundation.

"Today's trends give a parent much to be concerned about." The article goes on to list shocking statistics on divorce, teenage pregnancies, use of drugs and alcohol. Then the question is asked, "What can be done to help children live happy, fulfilling lives?" Dr. Paul Glick, the Census Bureau's chief demographer, gives this answer:

"Caring, attentive parents give children their best start in life. There's no real alternative for their optimum growth" (*American Family Society*, vol. 4, no. 1).

Dr. Sydney Harris, in a recent syndicated newspaper column, reached the same conclusion. He said people asked him why he didn't write about the energy crisis, and he responded that he didn't have enough solid facts to make a judgment about that subject. He went on to say that he also felt it was not important enough, because mankind can solve its technical problems, but what concerned him was the greater problem, we have which is moral, not technical. He concluded by saying that if we fail as a species it will have nothing to do with energy or any other technological obstacle, but with the way we regard ourselves and others as threats and enemies rather than as members of the same family. He said that until we know who we are and what we are supposed to do, all our other knowledge cannot save us.

Gospel plan of life and salvation

Jesus Christ came to earth to give us that very message—who we are and what we are supposed to do. He gave us the gospel plan of life and salvation and said there was no other name under heaven whereby we could be saved (see Acts 4:12).

We have that same gospel restored in these latter days, with the living prophet today, even Spencer W. Kimball, to speak for God, as has been God's method of communication with man through the ages. The answers to all life's problems are to be found in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Continuous revelation keeps us advised on current problems.

To strengthen the weakening family structure, the Church has instituted the family home evening program, where at least one night each week the entire family meets together to solve problems, enjoy recreation, and learn to better know and love one another. Here is opportunity for the parents to lead out as examples of love, kindness, courtesy, and support as father and mother together take their places as patriarch and matriarch of the family. In such a home are taught the moral principles and other virtues which will help those family members to be the future leaders of their communities and countries.

From such homes come children who will eventually establish their own homes founded on righteousness and morality. They will enter into their marriage covenants in purity of body and mind, so they too can be examples of virtue to their own posterity.

Making home heaven on earth

I conclude by reading from a letter I received from a convert to the Church who, after the required waiting period, took his family to the holy temple of God for a sealing ordinance. He wrote:

"We love this church and we love the Lord and our Heavenly Father. We were on the verge of a total family failure when some of our LDS friends here began to work with us.

"Even now as I sit here and think back to Saturday, I have to be amazed at the way the Church has changed our lives, from almost total family loss to an eternal family! . . .

"Nothing can compare to seeing my wife and child dressed in white, with a radiant glow around them, and feeling the very Spirit of God whisper in my ear, 'John, they're yours for all time and all eternity.' "

I know that through the gospel of Jesus Christ, and through keeping the commandments of God and the covenants we make with him, we can each make of our home a heaven on earth while we prepare ourselves and our children to return to our Heavenly Father. I bear testimony to the truthfulness of the things I have said this day, and I do it in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

We are grateful to the managers and operators of the many television and radio stations for offering their facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this conference to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

We shall conclude this session of the conference with the Tabernacle Choir singing "Lead Me into Life Eternal." Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder Robert E. Wells, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy and Executive Administrator of the Argentina-Uruguay-Paraguay Area.

This conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The Choir sang "Lead Me into Life Eternal."

The benediction was pronounced by Elder Robert E. Wells.

FIRST DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

SECOND SESSION

The second session of the 150th Annual Conference began at 2:00 P.M. on Saturday, April 5, 1980.

It was conducted by President N. Eldon Tanner.

Music for this session was provided by a Relief Society choir comprised of sisters from the Centerville, Syracuse, Layton, and Kaysville regions, under the direction of Sister Beverly J. Pond with Robert Cundick at the organ.

At the beginning of the meeting, President N. Eldon Tanner, who conducted the session, made the following remarks:

President N. Eldon Tanner

President Spencer W. Kimball, who is en route to New York for the dedication of the Fayette Chapel, which will take place tomorrow morning, has asked me to conduct this session. This chapel, incidentally, is located near the site of the rebuilt Peter Whitmer, Sr., farmhouse where the Church was organized 150 years ago tomorrow.

We welcome all assembled in the historic Tabernacle on Temple Square in this, the second session, of the 150th Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We also welcome the many members and friends of the Church tuned to these proceedings by radio and television. We note that there is an overflow congregation in the Salt Palace where Elders Joseph B. Wirthlin and Vaughn J. Featherstone preside.

We are pleased to acknowledge special guests present this afternoon—government and educational

leaders, as well as Regional Representatives, stake and temple presidencies, patriarchs, bishops, and officers and members of the general boards and committees.

The proceedings of this conference will be carried extensively in the United States and Canada over many television and radio stations, originating with KSL in Salt Lake City.

Through satellite transmission, sessions of this conference will be heard over radio in countries of Central and South America, Mexico, Australia, Spain, and Taiwan; and, for the first time, seen on television in the Philippines.

We express our appreciation to the owners and operators of the radio and television stations for their cooperation in making such an extensive coverage of this conference possible.

The general priesthood meeting to be held this evening will be transmitted over closed circuit from the Salt Lake Tabernacle to men of the priesthood assembled in approximately 1,924 buildings throughout the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, New Zealand, Australia, the Philippines, Korea, and, for the first time, the Dominican Republic; and by way of closed-circuit television to the Salt Palace, and to stake buildings in Salt Lake City and on the Brigham Young University campus.

The music this afternoon will be provided by the Relief Society choir from the Centerville, Syracuse, Layton, and Kaysville regions, under the direction of Sister Beverly J. Pond with Robert Cundick at the organ.

The choir will begin this service by singing "An Angel from on High." The invocation will be offered by Elder Franklin D. Richards, a

member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The hymn "An Angel from on High" was rendered by the choir.

Elder Franklin D. Richards offered the invocation.

President Tanner

The choir will now sing "He Is Not Here."

The Choir sang "He Is Not Here."

President Tanner

Elder Wilford G. Edling will now read the auditor's report.

Afterward, Elder Francis M. Gibbons will present the statistical report of the Church for the year 1979.

Auditor's Report 1979

Elder Wilford G. Edling

We have reviewed the annual financial report of the Church as of December 31, 1979, and the operations for the year then ended. Financial statements and operations reviewed by the committee include the general funds of the Church and other controlled organizations, the accounts of which are maintained by the Financial Department of the Church. We have also examined the budgeting, accounting, and auditing procedures employed, and the manner in which funds are received and expenditures are controlled. We determined that expenditures of general Church funds were authorized by the First Presidency and by budgetary procedures. The budget is authorized by the Council on Disposition of the Tithes, comprised of the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, and the Presiding Bishopric. The Committee on Expenditures, in weekly meetings, administers the expenditure of funds under the budget.

Modern accounting technology and equipment are employed by the Financial Department and other departments in keeping abreast of rapid

Church expansion and changing methods of electronic data processing. The Finance Committee and the Law Department are conjointly giving continuous attention to matters relating to taxation of churches by the federal government, by states, and foreign governments.

The Auditing Department, which is independent of all other departments, functions in the three-fold capacity of performing financial audits, operational audits, and audits of the computer systems employed by the Church. These services are conducted on a continuous basis and include all Church departments, other Church-controlled organizations (the accounts of which are maintained in the Financial Department of the Church), and worldwide operations including missions, financial centers, and departmental activities conducted in foreign lands. The extent and scope of the Auditing Department in safeguarding the resources of the Church are increasing commensurate with the growth and widening activities of the Church. The audit of local funds of wards and stakes is assigned to stake auditors. Incorporated businesses owned or controlled by the

Church, for which accounts are not maintained in the Financial Department, are audited by professional auditing firms or by governmental regulatory agencies.

Based on our review of the annual financial report and other accounting data, and our study of the accounting and auditing methods by which financial operations are controlled, together with continuing discussions with personnel of the Financial, Auditing, and Law departments, we are of the opinion that the

general funds of the Church received and expended during the year 1979 have been properly accounted for in accordance with established procedures as outlined herein.

Respectfully submitted,
**CHURCH FINANCE
 COMMITTEE**
 Wilford G. Edling
 Harold H. Bennett
 Weston E. Hamilton
 David M. Kennedy
 Warren E. Pugh

Statistical Report 1979

Elder Francis M. Gibbons

For the information of the members of the Church, the First Presidency has issued the following statistical report concerning the growth and status of the Church as of December 31, 1979:

Church Units

Number of stakes of Zion 1,092
 Number of full-time missions 175
 Number of wards 7,235
 Number of branches in stakes.. 2,130
 Number of branches
 in missions 2,121
 Number of countries with organized
 wards or branches 81
 (These statistics reflect an
 increase of 1,632 wards and branches
 during 1979.)

Church Membership

Total membership reported by stakes,
 missions, and Church offices at
 the close of 1979 4,439,000

Church Growth during 1979

Children blessed 107,000
 Children of record baptized... 67,000

Converts baptized 193,000

(This convert baptism figure is an
 estimate based on 1979 reports
 received at Church headquarters prior
 to the conference.)

Social Statistics

Birthrate per thousand 30.0
 Number of persons married per
 thousand 13.7
 Death rate per thousand 4.2

Priesthood

Deacons 152,000
 Teachers 122,000
 Priests 232,000
 Elders 394,000
 Seventies 33,000
 High priests 161,000
 (This represents an increase of
 107,000 priesthood members during
 1979.)

Full-time missionaries 29,454

(This has been increased to over
 thirty thousand since the end of last
 year.)

Church School System

Total enrollment during the 1978-79
 school year:

Seminaries and institutes, including special programs	304,000
Church schools, colleges, and continuing education.....	72,000

Welfare Services

Persons assisted with cash or commodities	139,300
Persons assisted by LDS Social Services	43,000
Persons placed in gainful employment	23,400
Man-days of labor donated to welfare services	479,500
Commodities distributed from storehouses (in pounds)	23,253,000

Genealogical Society

Names cleared in 1979 for temple endowments	4,574,000
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The Genealogical Department is acquiring records in 39 countries and has a total of 1,024,000 one-hundred-foot rolls of microfilm, equivalent to 4,927,000 volumes of 300 pages each.

Temples

Number of endowments performed during 1979:	
For the living	51,600
For the dead	3,873,300
Temples in operation	17
Temples planned or under construction	5

(This does not include temples announced last Wednesday.)

There were 116,700 more endowments done in 1979 than in 1978.

Prominent Members Who Passed Away During the Year

Clair Stoddard Poelman, wife of Elder Ronald E. Poelman of the First Quorum of the Seventy; Finn B. Paulsen, president of the Sao Paulo Temple; Jay R. Payne, president of the Albuquerque New Mexico East Stake; Albert Stanley Green, president of the Nottingham England Stake; Madeline B. Wirthlin, widow of Bishop Joseph L. Wirthlin, former Presiding Bishop; Lavern W. Parmley, former general president of the Primary Association; O. Abram Murdock, Jr., former U.S. Senator from Utah; and Sherman P. Lloyd, former U.S. Representative from Utah.

President N. Eldon Tanner

I shall now present the General Authorities, general officers, and general auxiliary officers of the Church for the sustaining vote of the conference, following which Elder LeGrand Richards, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our first speaker.

Sustaining of General Authorities and Officers

It is proposed that we sustain President Spencer W. Kimball as prophet, seer, and revelator, and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

Nathan Eldon Tanner as First Counselor in the First Presidency and Marion G. Romney as Second Counselor in the First Presidency. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any by the same sign.

It is proposed that we sustain as

the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Elder Ezra Taft Benson. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

As the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: Ezra Taft Benson, Mark E. Petersen, LeGrand Richards, Howard W. Hunter, Gordon B. Hinckley, Thomas S. Monson, Boyd K. Packard, Marvin J. Ashton, Bruce R. McConkie, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, and James E. Faust. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

The counselors in the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

Spencer W. Kimball as trustee-in-trust for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

As the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and as members of the First Quorum of the Seventy: Franklin D. Richards, J. Thomas Fyans, Neal A. Maxwell, Carlos E. Asay, M. Russell Ballard, Dean L. Larsen, Royden G. Derrick. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

As additional members of the First Quorum of the Seventy: Marion D. Hanks, A. Theodore Tuttle, Theodore M. Burton, Bernard P. Brockbank, Paul H. Dunn, Hartman Rector, Jr., Loren C. Dunn, Robert L. Simpson, O. Leslie Stone, Rex D. Pinegar, Wm. Grant Bangerter, Robert D. Hales, Adney Y. Komatsu, Joseph B. Wirthlin, Gene R. Cook, Charles Didier, William R. Bradford, George P. Lee, John H. Groberg, Jacob de Jager, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Robert E. Wells, G. Homer Durham, James M. Paramore, Richard G. Scott, Hugh W. Pinnock, F. Enzo Busche, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Ronald E. Poelman, Derek A. Cuth-

bert, Robert L. Backman, Rex C. Reeve, Sr., F. Burton Howard, Teddy E. Brewerton, Jack H. Goasland, Jr. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if any, by the same sign.

As the Presiding Bishopric: Victor L. Brown, presiding bishop; H. Burke Peterson, first counselor; and J. Richard Clarke, second counselor. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

As Patriarch Emeritus: Eldred G. Smith. As emeritus members of the First Quorum of the Seventy: S. Dilworth Young, Sterling W. Sill, Henry D. Taylor, James A. Cullimore, Joseph Anderson, William H. Bennett, John H. Vandenberg. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

As Regional Representatives: All Regional Representatives as they are at present constituted.

The Sunday School: Elder Hugh W. Pinnock, president; Elder Ronald E. Poelman, first counselor; and Elder Jack H. Goasland, Jr., second counselor; with all members of the board as at present constituted.

The Young Men: Elder Robert L. Backman, president; Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone, first counselor; and Elder Rex D. Pinegar, second counselor; with all members of the board as at present constituted.

The Relief Society: Barbara B. Smith, president; Marian R. Boyer, first counselor; and Shirley W. Thomas, second counselor; with all members of the board as at present constituted.

The Young Women: Elaine A. Cannon, president; Arlene B. Darger, first counselor; and Norma B. Smith, second counselor; with all members of the board as at present constituted.

The Primary Association: Dwan J. Young, president; Virginia B. Cannon, first counselor; and Michaelene P. Grassli, second counselor.

All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

The Church Board of Education: Spencer W. Kimball, N. Eldon Tanner, Marion G. Romney, Ezra Taft Benson, Gordon B. Hinckley, Thomas S. Monson, Boyd K. Pack-er, Marvin J. Ashton, Neal A. Max-well, Marion D. Hanks, Victor L. Brown, and Barbara B. Smith. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

The Church Finance Committee: Wilford G. Edling, Harold H. Ben-nett, Weston E. Hamilton, David M. Kennedy, and Warren E. Pugh.

The Tabernacle Choir: Oakley

S. Evans, president; Jerold D. Ot-ley, conductor; Donald H. Ripplin-ger, associate conductor; and Robert Cundick, Roy M. Darley, and John Longhurst, Tabernacle organists.

All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

The voting seems to have been unanimous.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder LeGrand Richards, a mem-ber of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our first speaker.

He will be followed by Elder Howard W. Hunter.

Elder LeGrand Richards

Search the scriptures

We have been taught by our President and our leaders that we should study and read the scriptures. We were told that in our meeting Friday with the Regional Representatives of the Twelve. Brother Hinckley told us at our last conference to read the Book of Mormon, and he has had over a thousand letters back from Saints, advising that they have read it.

The Savior of the world advised us to read the scriptures. He said: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39). Is there anything worth seeking more than eternal life?

Nahum's prophecy of our day

As I read the scriptures—and I have read the Book of Mormon dur-ing the past six months and most of the Bible—I always find something therein that I did not remember was there when I read it before. And I would like to use as a sort of a text

for what I say here today a verse that I took from the book of Nahum, chapter 2, in the Bible, which reads as follows: "The chariots shall be with flaming torches in the day of his preparation. . . .

"The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways: they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings" (Nahum 2:3-4).

Could anybody have described an automobile better than that before there was such a thing as an automo-bile? Certainly they travel like the lightning, and they look like tor-ches—especially in the evening when the lights are on—and they jostle against each other. If you want a demonstration of that, just go to one of the body repair shops and see how many of them come in all bruised!

The thing that I liked about that particular passage of scripture is that it describes the day of the Lord's preparation. We live in that day. Five hundred years ago this prophecy could not have come true, but today there is no other answer for that

prophecy than an automobile. The importance of the prophecy is that it describes the day of his preparation.

Messenger to prepare for Christ's coming

I like to think of the many passages of scripture that designate the time of his preparation. I quote you from the book of Malachi, where the Lord, speaking through Malachi, said that he would send his messenger to prepare the way for his coming. And he would come swiftly to his temple, and who could abide the day of his coming, because he would be as refiner's fire and fullers' soap (see Mal. 3:1-2). Now, obviously that had no reference to his first coming. He did not come swiftly to his temple at that time. He did not come cleansing and purifying as refiner's fire and fullers' soap. We are told that when he comes in the latter days, the wicked will cry out to the rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us from his presence" (see Rev. 6:16).

When the Lord sends a messenger to prepare the way for his coming, that messenger can be none other than a prophet. When the Savior came in the meridian of time, John the Baptist was sent to prepare the way for his coming, and Jesus testified of him that there was no greater prophet in Israel (see Luke 7:28). And the prophet Amos tells us: "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

Therefore, when the time of preparation comes, as I have read to you here today, the Lord could not prepare for his coming without a prophet. And the prophet of this dispensation was none other than the Prophet Joseph Smith. And what he has brought forth is a fulfillment of so many of the prophecies of holy scripture that cannot be found anywhere else in all this world.

"Restitution of all things"

I like the statement of Peter of old, following the day of Pentecost, when he talked to those who had put to death the Christ. He said the heavens were to receive the Christ until "the times of restitution of all things . . . spoken by the mouths of all the holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:20-21). Search this world over and you cannot find a church that claims a restitution of all things spoken by the mouths of all the holy prophets except The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We believe Peter was a prophet; and if the world does, then they cannot look for the Savior's second coming until there is such a restitution of all things.

There is not time to discuss that restitution today, but just think of the coming of the Father and the Son to teach the real personality of the Godhead; the coming of Moroni with the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated; the coming of John the Baptist (as Brother Monson testified this morning) with the Aaronic priesthood, the power to baptize by immersion for the remission of sins; the coming of Peter, James, and John who held the keys of the holy apostleship, with power to organize the church and kingdom of God in the earth for the last time, in fulfillment of the promise made by Daniel in his interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

Nebuchadnezzar's dream

The king had forgotten his dream, and he called all the soothsayers and the wise men and astrologers, and none of them could tell him his dream. He heard of the man Daniel and sent for him, and Daniel said: "There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days" (Dan.

2:28). Then Daniel told him about the rise and fall of the kingdoms of this world until the latter days, when the God of heaven would set up a kingdom that should never be destroyed or given to another people. But like a little stone cut out of the mountains without hands, it would roll forth until it should become as a great mountain and fill the whole earth (see Dan. 2:44-45).

The establishment of that kingdom was made possible in these latter days—and he said in the latter days—through the coming of Peter, James, and John with the holy apostleship and the power to organize the kingdom of God in the earth again.

Kingdom of God

One of our missionaries in the South, while I was the mission president there, preached about that dream and the establishment of the Lord's latter-day kingdom. I stood at the door at the close of the meeting, and a man came up and introduced himself as a minister. He said, "You don't mean to tell me you think that kingdom is the Mormon church, do you?"

And I said, "Yes, sir. Why not?"

He said, "It couldn't be."

I said, "Why couldn't it?"

He said, "You can't have a kingdom without a king, and you don't have a king, so you don't have a kingdom."

"Oh," I said, "my friend, you didn't read far enough. You just read the seventh chapter of Daniel and you will see where Daniel saw 'one like the Son of man' coming in the clouds of heaven unto the Ancient of Days. And unto him was given the kingdom, that all other kingdoms, powers, and dominions under the whole heavens should serve and obey him (see Dan. 7:13-14).

Then I said: "My friend, tell me, how can a kingdom be given to him when he comes in the clouds of heaven if a kingdom is not prepared for him?" I said: "Maybe you would like to know what is going to become of that kingdom. If you will read a little further, Daniel said something like this: The kingdom and the power and the dominion under the whole heavens shall be given unto the Saints of the Most High God, that they might possess the kingdom for ever (see Dan. 7:18, 27). And as if that were not quite long enough Daniel adds, 'Even for ever and ever.'"

Now, who are the Saints of the Most High God? All you wonderful people who are listening in today, and you who are bearing the burden along with these thirty thousand missionaries scattered all over this world to help prepare this kingdom for the coming of the great King.

Restoration of everlasting gospel

I like to refer to the experience of John the Revelator when he was banished upon the Isle of Patmos. A voice from heaven said: "Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter" (Rev. 4:1). This was thirty years after the death of the Savior. And the angel showed John the power that would be given to the evil one, the devil, to make war with the Saints (and the Saints were the followers of Jesus) and to overcome them and to reign over all kindreds, tongues, and nations (see Rev. 13:7). That is one of the positive declarations in the holy scriptures of a complete apostasy from the church that Jesus established. But the angel did not leave it there. He then showed John another angel flying in the midst of heaven, "having the everlasting gospel [and that is the only gospel that can save men] to preach unto them that dwell on the

earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Rev. 14:6).

If the everlasting gospel had been upon the earth, there would have been no need for John to see a restoration brought back by an angel. This is the restitution of all things that Peter had in mind when he said that the heavens were to receive the Christ "until the restitution of all things . . . spoken by the mouths of all the holy prophets since the world began." And then the angel showed him an angel bringing the everlasting gospel to be preached to every nation, "saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come" (Rev. 14:7).

We live in the day of his judgments. In the period of my lifetime there have been more judgments and destructions and wars and contentions in this world than in all the history of the world combined before that time. This is the time of the judgments that the angel saw, when that everlasting gospel should be restored. And then he adds: "Worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (Rev. 14:7).

Day of preparation

When Joseph Smith had his marvelous vision and saw the Father and the Son, there was not a church in this world that worshipped the God that made the heavens and the earth and the sea and the fountains of water. They worshipped an essence

everywhere present, a god without body, parts, or passions. And if he has no body, that means he has no eyes—he cannot see; he has no ears—he cannot hear; he has no voice—he cannot speak. What is there left to worship when you take all of those qualities away? And then think of the two glorious personages who appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith in a pillar of light brighter than anything in this world.

Now there are many more wonderful things that the holy prophets were permitted to see with respect to this preparation for his coming in the day when the chariots should jostle against each other, when their lights should be like torches, and when they should travel like the lightning, but that is as far as my time permits. I love this work. I know it is true. There is no one else—no other people in the world—that have fulfilled the words of the prophets as has the restoration of the gospel in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times.

I pray God to bless you all, and bear you my witness of the divinity of this work, in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ, amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder LeGrand Richards, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder Howard W. Hunter, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Howard W. Hunter

Law of resistance

A few years ago we were standing in a large crowd of people gathered early in the morning along

the waterfront of Apia Harbor in Samoa. It was the occasion of the National Holidays, when hundreds of people came to watch the *Fautasi*, or long-boat, races that sweep in from

the ocean to the calmer waters of the harbor to cross the finish line.

The crowd was restless, and most eyes were turned toward the sea, watching for the first glimpse of the fautasis. Suddenly there was a roar from the crowd as the boats came into sight in the distance. Each of them had a crew of fifty powerful oarsmen dipping and pulling the oars with a rhythm that forced the crafts through the waves and foaming water—a beautiful sight.

The boats and men were soon in full view as they raced toward the finish. Even though these powerful men pulled with their might, the weight of a boat with fifty men moved against a powerful adverse force—the resistance of the water.

The cheering of the crowd reached a crescendo when the first long-boat crossed the finish line. We walked over to the place where the boats docked after the race had concluded. One of the oarsmen explained to us that the prow of the fautasi is so constructed that it cuts through and divides the water to help overcome the resistance that retards the speed of the boat. He further explained that the pulling of the oars against the resistance of the water creates the force that causes the boat to move forward. Resistance creates both the opposition and the forward movement.

Friction, or resistance, is an interesting phenomenon. Without this force, a person or vehicle could not move about, or if already in motion, could not be stopped except by collision. Simple things like nails, screws, and bolts would not stay in place; a cork would not stay in a bottle; a light globe would drop from its socket; a lid would not stay on a jar.

The law of friction or resistance that we think of as only applying to science seems to find application in our personal lives. This is probably

what Lehi was referring to when he spoke to his son Jacob. He reminded Jacob of the afflictions and sorrows that had come to him because of the rudeness of his brethren, and told him how these afflictions would ultimately result in good. These are the words of Jacob to his son: "Thou knowest the greatness of God; and he shall consecrate thine afflictions for thy gain" (2 Ne. 2:2).

Opposition in all things

In other words, the afflictions that had come to him in the form of opposition or resistance would be for his good. Then Lehi added these words that have become classic: "For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things. If not so, . . . righteousness could not be brought to pass, neither wickedness, neither holiness nor misery, neither good nor bad" (2 Ne. 2:11).

We came to mortal life to encounter resistance. It was part of the plan for our eternal progress. Without temptation, sickness, pain, and sorrow, there could be no goodness, virtue, appreciation for well-being, or joy. The law of opposition makes freedom of choice possible; therefore, our Heavenly Father has commanded his children, "Choose ye this day, to serve the Lord God who made you" (Moses 6:33). He has counseled us to yield to his spirit and resist temptation. Free agency, of course, permits us to oppose his directions; thus, we see many who resist the truth and yield to temptation.

Tribulation endured by progenitors

Today the Church stands at the summit of a century and a half of progress. The terrain over which we have traveled is a grim reminder that struggle, persecution, and sorrow have been the lot of our forebears. Kirtland, Jackson County, Clay

County, Haun's Mill, and Nauvoo seem synonymous with suffering—a part of the tribulation the Lord promised that his people would have to endure (see D&C 58:3).

As we look back in retrospect, we see that it was because of the opposition encountered in our early history that our progress today has been made possible. Out of that caldron of persecution and heartache, the Lord answered the soul-cry of the Prophet Joseph Smith in these words: "Thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment;

"And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high" (D&C 121:7-8).

"If thou art called to pass through tribulation, . . . know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good" (D&C 122:5, 7).

By the tribulation well endured by numerous of our progenitors, a desert blossomed as a rose (see Isa. 35:1), a tried and persecuted people provided a heritage of faith, and Zion put on her beautiful garments for all to see (see D&C 82:14).

One hundred fifty years of Church history provide us with a lesson that when resistance and opposition are greatest, our faith, commitment, and growth have the greatest opportunity for advancement; when opposition is least, the tendency is to be complacent and lose faith. President Brigham Young said: "Let any people enjoy peace and quietness, unmolested, undisturbed, — never be persecuted for their religion, and they are very likely to neglect their duty, to become cold and indifferent, and lose their faith" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 7:42). This lesson, which applies to the Church collectively, also applies to individuals.

Documented in scripture are episodes from the lives of many former-day Saints who, by personal sacrifice, opposition, and adversity,

achieved their exaltation. From their biographies of struggle, I offer their testaments of faithful endurance.

Job

The classic example of faithful endurance was the Old Testament prophet Job. He lost all his possessions, he suffered great personal affliction and physical pain, some of his children met tragic death, and even his friends deserted him. Yet he proclaimed his faith: "[God] knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. . . . His way have I kept, and not declined" (Job 23:10-11).

Abraham and Jacob

We turn the pages to another exemplar of faith, father Abraham. He fought in time of war, went through a period of extensive famine, saw his own father turn away from the priesthood, and suffered persecution for his faith—almost to the point of his own death. After years of waiting for a son, he was ordered to sacrifice him to the Lord. He also experienced the sorrow of the loss of his beloved wife, Sarah.

To the early Saints of this dispensation, the Lord said, "I, the Lord, have suffered the affliction to come upon them. . . . They must needs be chastened and tried, even as Abraham" (D&C 101:2, 4).

Abraham's grandson, Jacob, was also no stranger to adversity. As a young man he was estranged from his twin brother and didn't return home to see his father, mother, or brother for many years. He lived a life of mourning for a favorite son, whom he thought dead, but who had been sold into slavery. He buried his beloved Rachel after she gave birth to his last-born son, Benjamin. He knew the personal sorrow of sons who were not valiant, but still he

blessed their days and posterity so that their descendants are honored to be called the House of Jacob, the House of Israel.

Paul

The New Testament records the life of one Paul of Tarsus. From the day of his dramatic conversion, he experienced great trial and personal affliction. He was imprisoned for his faith, beaten, stoned, and in his own words, buffeted by Satan. Yet he wrote: "Most gladly . . . will I . . . glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Cor. 12:9). Comparing his own adversity to that of Paul, the Prophet Joseph once wrote, "I feel, like Paul, to glory in tribulation; for to this day has the God of my fathers delivered me" (D&C 127:2).

Nephi

Last, I refer to the life of Nephi from the Book of Mormon as an example of faithful endurance. With his parents, he left prosperous circumstances in Jerusalem and then for eight years, in great affliction, journeyed in the wilderness. The family then crossed uncharted seas to a new land. During this period, Nephi was assailed, ridiculed, and persecuted by members of his household. Following the death of his father, Nephi and other family members had to separate themselves from his older brothers because they sought his life. Out of his despair, he declared, "My God hath been my support; he hath led me through mine afflictions in the wilderness; and he hath preserved me upon the waters of the great deep" (2 Ne. 4:20).

Biographies of faith

These are biographies of faith—men whom God has honored because they relied on him in times of their

extremity. They learned the truth that God chose them "in the furnace of affliction" (Isa. 48:10).

Today other biographies of faith are being written—Saints who, like Job, suffer physical pain, emotional sorrow, and even disloyalty from friends—yet remain faithful; Saints who, like Jacob, see sons and daughters not so valiant as they should be, but who bless them for their potential; Saints who, like Paul, endure great ridicule and endure to the end; Saints who, like Nephi, must separate themselves from family because of their commitment to the gospel. There are those who know pain and sorrow because of loss of loved ones; who know spiritual sorrow because children go astray; who experience loss of health, financial reverses, and emotional distress, and yet, like Job, resolve, "When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10).

President Kimball

We recently celebrated the birthday of President Spencer W. Kimball. Most of us are familiar with the fact that great adversity has been his companion for a great portion of his eighty-five years. He spoke from experience when he wrote these words: "Being human, we would expel from our lives physical pain and mental anguish and assure ourselves of continual ease and comfort, but if we were to close the doors upon sorrow and distress, we might be excluding our greatest friends and benefactors. Suffering can make saints of people as they learn patience, long-suffering, and self-mastery" (*Faith Precedes the Miracle*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1972, p. 98).

God will have a tried people

We stand on the summit of 150 years of Church history; yet there are

other summits to climb before the work of God is crowned with victory. There will be tribulations collectively and hardships personally—that resistance so essential to the eternal plan.

What makes us imagine that we may be immune from the same experiences that refined the lives of former-day Saints? We must remember that the same forces of resistance which prevent our progress afford us also opportunities to overcome. God will have a tried people!

I witness today this truth from a verse of one of our favorite hymns:

*When through fiery trials thy
pathway shall lie,
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy
supply.
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only
design*

*Thy dress to consume and thy gold to
refine.*
(Hymns, no. 66).

May God bless us to endure well the purpose for which we were sent, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Howard W. Hunter, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just addressed us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "How Firm a Foundation." After the singing, Elder F. Enzo Busche, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will address us.

The choir and congregation sang the hymn "How Firm a Foundation."

Elder F. Enzo Busche

As I stand here before you at this moment, I cannot help but think back to the day when I, as an investigator of the Church, was confronted with the missionaries' challenge to prepare for my baptism. This step seemed to be too big for me to take, but because I already had a testimony burning within me of the truthfulness of this work, I knew that withstanding baptism would take away my right to speak to my Father in Heaven again in prayer.

So I accepted the challenge for baptism, with a fearful heart, but I told the missionaries that I would do it only on two conditions: First, that I would never be called to any Church position, and second, that I would never have to give a talk. Without the loving influence and the power and security of the Holy Ghost, which I received by the laying on of hands after baptism to help

me, I could not have done anything in my various Church assignments by myself.

Knowledge of God important

We, as members, have the privilege to bear witness of the restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ through a divinely authorized man, Joseph Smith, in these latter days. As I bore this witness to a man just recently while I was serving as mission president in Germany, I saw that he felt very uneasy about my statement, and he, like so many others, responded with a question: "Don't we all believe in the same God?" This question hurt me. It always hurts me when I see how many people are so indifferent and show such a lack of awareness in this most vital question in man's life: Can I find thee, my Father in Heaven?

Yes, one could say that regardless of when, where, and in what circumstances we are raised, we all long for our Heavenly Father and desire after him, because we knew him before we came to this earth. But do we, on this earth, all believe in the same God? No—absolutely not! Men have created, in their use of free agency, all kinds of different interpretations of our Father in Heaven and the purpose of our lives.

In our mortal existence there is no place for an uncertain, indifferent awareness of our responsibility and obligation to decide whom we should follow. Either we must attain a knowledge of our Creator and God, who loves us, who wants to bring peace, dignity, light, and happiness into our lives, or by and by we will forget our divine origin and remain in the foggy mists of the deceiver—the adversary, who cannot stand the fact that we, as living souls, did not accept his plan in our premortal lives.

He is fighting, with all of his knowledge, to lead men astray as they exercise their free agency, that he might make them his slaves. We are witnesses that the fear, hatred, despair, loneliness, and ugliness that people experience in their lives are the fruits of the influence of the adversary. It is obvious that his long-range, ungodly strategy to destroy our ability to truly love and have faith is aimed at these latter days before the second coming of the Savior, when a decision is required of every man.

If we do not decide to search out and accept the truth in the only way authorized by God, with all our might, mind, and strength, even when it means changing our lives completely, we will have built our house on sand. The half-truths of men, often mingled with scripture, are sometimes strong enough to fulfill the expectations of the people for

a season or for a generation, but they can neither bring them along the path of exaltation and eternal life nor bring satisfying answers to the demanding problems of mankind in these days.

Follow Christ

Receiving and accepting Jesus Christ and his plan of salvation in its fulness and its truth means leaving the world and its earthly desires behind and building Zion around ourselves. When Christ walked the earth to prepare the way for his disciples, standing in purity and bearing testimony of the truth, he was a light in the darkness, and the darkness knew him not (see John 1:5). The darkness organized itself to destroy him. Christ knew that this would happen, not only to him but also to all his true disciples. He said, in speaking to his followers, in Matthew 10:22, “And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake.”

When we really follow Christ in his true restored church, it will be manifested in our lives. The fruit will follow. The Holy Ghost will lead us to make uncomfortable decisions, to develop true love and faith by learning to sacrifice and to discipline ourselves. Our abilities will grow and will bring satisfaction and joy and happiness. Through the instrument of an ongoing communication with our Heavenly Father—a constant prayer in our hearts for direction in the many little decisions in our lives—we feel the softness of the yoke of Christ, as he said in Matthew 11:28, 30:

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. . . .

“For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

We will be led to live our lives his way and not the world’s way.

Satan deceives

The men of the world feel secure with the question "Don't we all believe in the same God?" The answer to the question is "No." The deceiver has initiated all kinds of philosophies and religions to lead people astray, to make them feel happy and safe in their man-made rationalizing and wickedness. He wants them to forget that someday we all have to stand in the judgment of Christ and report our deeds and words. The Savior said in Matthew 12:36, "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."

We are living in the glorious days of fulfillment eagerly awaited by the prophets of old—Enoch, Isaiah, Daniel, Paul, and many others. In our day the works of the deceiver of all the ages are being revealed by Christ through a living prophet. The disciples of Christ—the Saints of the latter days under the leadership of a living prophet, even Spencer W. Kimball—are taking the offensive to show the world the fruits of righteous living in the gospel of Jesus Christ. We testify with the angels that these are the days of warning for the people of the nations of the world, and that the time is near when it will be too late. We testify with the words of Amulek, a Book of Mormon prophet, recorded in Alma 34:32-33 and 35:

"For behold, this life is the time for men . . . to perform their labors.

"And now, as I have said unto you before, as ye have had so many witnesses, therefore, I beseech of you that ye do not procrastinate the day of your repentance until the end; . . .

"For behold, if ye have procrastinated the day of your repentance even until death, behold, ye have become subjected to the spirit

of the devil, and he doth seal you his; therefore, the Spirit of the Lord hath withdrawn from you, and hath no place in you, and the devil hath all power over you; and this is the final state of the wicked."

Principle of righteousness

The saving priesthood powers from above operate only through the principle of the righteousness of men. These powers are working through the innocent and the pure in heart as prophesied since the days of old. Thirty thousand missionaries are sent out to teach with this power, searching for those who are seeking the eternal principles of truth that they have been waiting for during their whole lifetime. Hundreds of thousands of priesthood holders and women witness daily—through their righteous lives, their example, and their testimonies—that they have been sealed by the Holy Ghost with the knowledge that these things are true, that the kingdom of God is in the process of establishment in these days to prepare for the second coming of the Savior.

With great excitement, the disciples of Christ in these last days are learning to accept the word given to the Prophet Joseph Smith in Doctrine & Covenants 58:64:

"For, verily, the sound must go forth from this place into all the world, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth—the gospel must be preached unto every creature, with signs following them that believe."

This work in these latter days is bringing to pass the prophecy of the prophet Enoch, the seventh from Adam, recorded in the Pearl of Great Price, Moses 7:62:

"And righteousness will I send down out of heaven; and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten; his resurrection from the dead; yea, and

also the resurrection of all men; and righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out mine elect from the four quarters of the earth, unto a place which I shall prepare, an Holy City, that my people may gird up their loins, and be looking forth for the time of my coming; for there shall be my tabernacle, and it shall be called Zion, a New Jerusalem."

Accept God as he really is

My dear brothers and sisters, I bear you my testimony that this is the day of the establishment of the kingdom of Christ on this earth—that nobody will be able to escape the

decision to accept God as he really is and not as he has been made to appear according to man-made philosophies. I know that this is the work of the living God, working through a living prophet, Spencer W. Kimball. I say this in humility in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ, amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder F. Enzo Busche, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

Elder Marion D. Hanks, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now address us.

Elder Marion D. Hanks

Enoch

In that same chapter of the book of Moses to which Brother Busche has just referred, there is a conversation recorded that is for me one of the most instructive and tender in all literature. Enoch had "built a city that was called the City of Holiness, even Zion," which "in process of time, was taken up into heaven. . . .

"And . . . the God of heaven looked upon the residue of the people [that is, upon those who had not been taken up], and he wept" (Moses 7:19, 21, 28).

Then Enoch said to the Lord: "How is it that the heavens weep, and shed forth their tears as the rain upon the mountains?"

" . . . How is it that thou canst weep, seeing thou art holy, and from all eternity to all eternity?" (Moses 7:28-29).

Enoch then reminded God of the limitlessness and ongoing nature of his creations, and of his holy perfections and glory and accomplishments, and said: "Naught but peace, justice, and truth is the habi-

tation of thy throne; and mercy shall go before thy face and have no end; *how is it thou canst weep?*

"The Lord said unto Enoch: Behold these thy brethren; they are the workmanship of mine own hands, and I gave unto them their knowledge, in the day I created them; and in the Garden of Eden, gave I unto man his agency;

"And unto thy brethren have I said, and also given commandment, that they should *love one another*, and that they should *choose me*, their Father; but behold, they are without affection, and they hate their own blood.

" . . . and the whole heavens shall weep over them, even all the workmanship of mine hands; wherefore should not the heavens weep, seeing these shall suffer?" (Moses 7:31-33, 37; italics added).

God, from whom all blessings come, asked of his children only that they should love each other and choose him, their Father.

But as in our day, many neither sought the Lord nor had love for each other, and when God foresaw

the suffering that would inevitably follow this self-willed, rebellious course of sin, *he wept*. That, he told Enoch, was what he had to cry about.

Long ago I heard an important story which has been helpful to me. I have not seen it in writing and therefore cannot give credit as I would like. The story has obviously been deliberately fashioned to teach in a provocative way principles in which I believe.

At the gate

Over a period of time three men, as each of us ultimately will, passed from mortal life to ongoing immortality. Each, as he made the transition, at once found himself in the presence of a gracious person who made him feel comfortable and calmed his apprehensions.

Each man in turn found himself responding to questions which somehow formed in the mind and heart, vital above all other considerations. "What do you think of Christ? What is your relationship with him? Do you know him?"

The first man answered reluctantly, with some chagrin. He had not been, he said, one who had participated in organized religious activity. There seemed to be too much formalism, too much hypocrisy, too little real religion. Neither had he on his own sought a personal relationship with the Lord. He had been a good husband and father, an active citizen, a man of integrity, but it now came to him very clearly that he had missed the central purpose of his life, that he had been distracted from what he should have been seeking. With gratitude, he was received into a circumstance where he could begin to learn what he needed to know.

The second man had a briefer interview. Quickly perceiving the import of the questions, he quickly answered. He had, he said, been a

soldier for Christ, a crusader for him in business, a spokesman for him in industry. He seemed crestfallen to be ushered after a time into a circumstance where he too could begin to learn what he needed to know.

The third traveler came into the presence of his host with an overwhelming sense of warmth and wonder. Understanding the questions, looking tearfully into the loving eyes of him who stood at the gate, he fell to his knees at his feet and worshiped him.

The Holy One

In the scripture it is written:

"O . . . my beloved brethren, . . . the way for man is narrow, but it lieth in a straight course before him, and the keeper of the gate is the Holy One of Israel; and he employeth no servant there; and there is none other way save it be by the gate; for he cannot be deceived, for the Lord God is his name" (2 Ne. 9:41).

Salvation and exaltation, I believe, are not matters of heavenly bookkeeping, but of the qualifying of the soul that comes with knowing the Lord.

Willing to receive

It is also written that one who does not abide laws pertaining to the various conditions of eternal opportunity cannot enjoy the blessings of those kingdoms. There are those who will not enjoy the blessings of *any* kingdom of glory, but must function, says the record, in a kingdom *not of glory* (see D&C 88:22-24). And of them it is written:

"And they who remain shall also be quickened; nevertheless, they shall return again to their own place, to enjoy that which they are willing to receive, because they were not willing to enjoy that which they might have received.

"For what doth it profit a man if a gift is bestowed upon him, and he receive not the gift? Behold, he rejoices not in that which is given unto him, neither rejoices in him who is the giver of the gift" (D&C 88:32-33).

Each of us will enjoy all of God's blessings that we are willing to receive.

But how do we manifest that willingness? A prophet answers: "How knoweth a man the master whom he has not served, and who is a stranger unto him, and is far from the thoughts and intents of his heart?" (Mosiah 5:13).

We know and choose him and enjoy his blessings through serving him, through qualifying for his friendship, and by keeping him always in our hearts and minds. In our afflictions and gropings and forebodings we turn to him for comfort and support. He is always accessible to those who seek him.

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28).

"Lo, I am with you alway," he said, "even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20).

"I will not leave you comfortless" (John 14:18).

He understands our infirmities and pressures and problems. Better than any other, he understands how it is to feel all alone.

"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46).

Love each other

But loving him, reaching out to him, we have also to live his commandment to love each other. He taught us and showed us the paths we must follow. When he returned to Nazareth and entered the synagogue on the Sabbath day, he opened the book of Isaiah and read what had been written 700 years earlier about His ministry:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised" (Luke 4:18).

In the magnificent story of the return of the King, he taught us unforgettably our responsibility to the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and those in prison. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40).

Millennia before, through Isaiah, there was delineated the course of helpfulness he expected his children to follow:

"To loose the bands of wickedness, . . . undo the heavy burdens, . . . let the oppressed go free, . . . deal thy bread to the hungry, . . . bring the poor that are cast out to thy house, . . . when thou seest the naked, . . . cover him, . . . satisfy the afflicted soul" (Isa. 58:6, 7, 10).

We know, you and I, that we need the Lord. And he has made it plain that he also needs us as instruments of his love to his other children.

His instruments

A little girl living in a place for homeless children earned displeasure from annoyed attendants by depositing a note in a tree limb which could be reached from outside the institution. The apprehended little rule-breaker was quickly fetched to the superintendent, who opened the note which read, "To whoever finds this, I love you."

God's children need to be loved, and to have someone to love.

But it is written, "let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (1 Jn. 3:18).

"Not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart" (Eph. 6:6).

In the sermon Amulek preached, to which Brother Busche has referred, encouraging prayer and faith, there was added this invitation:

"And now behold, my beloved brethren, I say unto you, do not suppose that this is all; for after ye have done all these things, if ye turn away the needy, and the naked, and visit not the sick and afflicted, and impart of your substance, if ye have, to those who stand in need—I say unto you, if ye do not any of these things, behold, your prayer is vain, and availeth you nothing, and ye are as hypocrites who do deny the faith" (Alma 34:28).

The poet expressed it another way:

Love is not all: it is not meat nor drink

Nor slumber nor a roof against the rain;

Nor yet a floating spar to men that sink.

(Edna St. Vincent Millay, *Collected Poems*, ed. Norma Millay, New York: Harper and Row, 1956, p. 659).

We speak of the love of Christ that is greater than faith, greater than hope; that expresses itself in sacrifice, in service, in giving.

Now, some of those who need our love are near at hand, others are far away. A few of the latter are arriving in our communities to remind us that vast numbers of displaced people are now and will be increasingly in need of help across the earth. We have heard a little of the tragedy of the boat people. Yet the problem of the hungry, the homeless, the hopeless, the poor and cast out, is beyond anything most of us can comprehend.

Near at hand

There are others nearer at hand who struggle with problems with which we must also be concerned. Major organized institutional welfare and social service efforts are in process, thank the Lord, but these are to augment our individual concern for the strangers who are among us, resident or passing through, for the wayward, the elderly, and the ill.

The widowed and divorced suffer devastating displacement, also, often alone and often in need of encouragement and help. Brokenhearted parents who have really tried, but whose progeny have chosen another path, are heartsick and often find little comfort in sermons or in the success of others. The numbers of single-parent families burgeon, each one representing special needs not understood by those who have not experienced them.

We have the testimony of scripture that the Lord God weeps when we do not choose him or truly love each other. The saddest circumstance any of us can envision, indeed the only evil that ultimately can really harm us, is in not choosing him and thus to be separated from him. But the companion tragedy—one that also brings suffering that makes him weep—is to fail in our affection for each other, affection expressed in unselfish efforts to give the Christian service President Kimball referred to thrice this morning, Christian service to the hungry, the naked, the oppressed, those who are cast out, the widow, the orphan, the afflicted, the brokenhearted, the bruised, the abandoned, the elderly, the sick, and the imprisoned.

Choose him—and love

We have two great challenges, you and I, and the challenge never ends as long as breath lasts: to

choose him and to love each other. Then we may be sure we will know him in this world and at last in that kingdom which is not of this world, where "God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:3-4).

God bless us that we may meet the test, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Marion D. Hanks, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our concluding speaker.

President Ezra Taft Benson

A marvelous work and a wonder

Seven centuries before the birth of Christ, Isaiah foresaw and foretold the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ in these latter days. He declared it would be a "marvelous work and a wonder" to all mankind (Isa. 29:14). When Jesus appeared to the Nephites in America, He confirmed the prophecy of Isaiah in these words: "For my sake shall the Father work a work, which shall be a great and a marvelous work" among the people of the land of America in the last days (3 Ne. 21:9).

April 6, 1830, in the state of New York, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had its beginning in this dispensation, a beginning that went largely unnoticed by the world. A small number of men and women, including the Prophet Joseph Smith, gathered in the home of Peter Whitmer, Sr., to witness and participate in the official organization of the Church. Today there are over 4½ million members in eighty-one countries. We now look in retrospect on 150 years of the history of the Church and are led to exclaim with Isaiah, "Truly the work is marvelous and wonderful!"

That the Church of Jesus Christ would have an inconspicuous beginning and then enjoy phenomenal growth was likewise predicted. Jesus used the comparison of the small mustard seed to describe the early beginning of His church. But eventually, He declared, that insignificant seed would become a great tree and many would find refuge in its branches (see Matt. 13:31-32).

The prophet Daniel described the beginning and remarkable growth of the Church as a small stone which would become a great mountain and fill the entire earth! (see Dan. 2:34-35, 44).

As men have attempted to assess the Church at a given period of time, in many instances they have not been able to see its forward movement and potential. The growth of the Church, like the growth of grass or trees, has been almost imperceptible to the eye, but little by little, line by line, precept by precept, the Church has matured.

Church survives persecution

Simultaneous with the early development of the Church was a spirit of opposition and persecution.

Wherever the tiny "mustard seed" was planted, attempts were made to frustrate its growth. But notwithstanding all the efforts to destroy the work—even the murder of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother—the Church prospered and grew. There were those who thought the Church would fail with the deaths of the martyrs Joseph and Hyrum, but they did not perceive, as Daniel foretold, that this latter-day kingdom should "never be destroyed" (Dan. 2:44).

Just before the Prophet's death, Brigham Young said, "The kingdom is organized; and, although as yet no bigger than a grain of mustard seed, the little plant is in a flourishing condition" (*History of the Church*, 6:354).

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is, as Daniel prophesied, a spiritual kingdom "cut out of the mountain without hands" (Dan. 2:45), meaning that it was begun through the intervention of God. It is not just another human institution. What other organizations or churches ascribe their founding to the declaration that messengers have come to human beings from the God of heaven with authority and power to restore ordinances and keys lost by apostasy?

The Church has survived exile from four states, the harassment and persecution of its members, an extermination order from a governor, the execution of its prophet, disenfranchisement by the government, and continuous persecution of its leaders and people. That is what this church endured and survived in the first sixty years of its history—and it was through such adversity, persecution, and impoverishment that the Church gained strength and matured. By the time Joseph F. Smith, the son of the Prophet Joseph's brother Hyrum, became President, he could say, "We have passed through

the stages of infancy . . . , and are indeed approaching . . . manhood and womanhood" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1909, p. 2).

Opposition to the Church did not subside with the twentieth century, but gradually people came to see us for what we stood for, rather than what our enemies said about us. Our Mormon boys fought in two world wars and were recognized for their standards and principles. During the Great Depression of the thirties, the Church came to be known for independence, self-reliance, and taking care of its own. And over the century, Latter-day Saints distinguished themselves in the fields of science, education, medicine, business, and other endeavors.

The Church flourishes

The missionary force brought a harvest of converts from all over the world. Seeds planted abroad as missions became stakes. Truly Zion had put on her beautiful garments; her borders had become enlarged (see D&C 82:14). When Joseph Fielding Smith, son of President Joseph F. Smith, became President of the Church, he declared: "We are coming of age as a church and as a people. We have attained the stature and strength that are enabling us to fulfill the commission given us by the Lord through the Prophet Joseph Smith that we should carry the glad tidings of the restoration to every nation and to all people" (in Conference Report, Manchester England Area Conference 1971, p. 5).

Two years later, President Smith's successor, President Harold B. Lee, said: "Today we are witnessing the demonstration of the Lord's hand even in the midst of his saints, the members of the Church. Never in this dispensation, and perhaps never before in any single period, has there been such a feeling of

urgency among the members of this church as today. Her boundaries are being enlarged, her stakes are being strengthened. . . .

"No longer might this church be thought of as the 'Utah church,' or as an 'American church,' but the membership of the Church is now distributed over the earth" (ENSIGN, July 1973, pp. 4, 5).

One year ago, President Kimball stood at this pulpit and said: "Since we last met in general conference. . . , we have witnessed much growth and expansion of the Lord's kingdom. . . .

"We have established new missions covering almost all of the free world, and we are turning our attention more diligently now to one day sharing the gospel with our Father's children behind the so-called iron and bamboo curtains. We have need to prepare for that day. The urgency of that preparation weighs heavily upon us. That day may come with more swiftness than we realize.

"Every year now we are adding approximately a hundred new stakes. . . .

"I rejoice with you, my brothers and sisters, in these statistical evidences of the progress and growth throughout Zion" (ENSIGN, May 1979, p. 4).

Yes, as we indulge in retrospect after 150 years of existence, we rejoice and declare the progress has been marvelous and wonderful. We thank the Lord for His merciful blessings. We do not hesitate to ascribe the success and progress of the Church to His omnipotent direction.

But now—what of the future?

No neutral stand

We assuredly expect additional progress, growth, and increased spirituality. We will see our missionaries cover the earth with the message of the Restoration. We will see temples

in every land where the gospel has penetrated, symbolizing the truth that families, living and deceased, may be joined together in love and eternal family associations. But we must also be reminded that there will be ever-present efforts to obstruct the work.

In 1845, the Quorum of the Twelve issued an epistle to the heads of state in the world. I quote from one paragraph:

"As this work progresses in its onward course, and becomes more and more an object of political and religious interest and excitement, no king, ruler, or subject, no community or individual, will stand *neutral*. All will at length be influenced by one spirit or the other; and will take sides either for or against the kingdom of God" (James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols., Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-75, 1:257).

That day is now here. Opposition has been and will be the lot of the Saints of the kingdom in any age. The finger of scorn has been pointed at us in the past, and we may expect it in the future. We also expect to see men in high places defend the Church; there will also be "pharaohs" who know neither Joseph nor his brethren. The seed planted and watered in 1830 has now matured to a fully grown tree for all to see. Some will seek the refuge of its shade in the heat of the day, but none will be neutral in their appraisal of its fruit.

The Church will continue its opposition to error, falsehood, and immorality. The mission of the Church is to herald the message of salvation and make unmistakably clear the pathway to exaltation. Our mission is to prepare a people for the coming of the Lord. As the world drifts further away from God and standards of virtue and honor, we may expect oppo-

sition to the work of the Church. We may expect to see the time, as the Book of Mormon forecasts, when "multitudes . . . among all the nations of the Gentiles [will gather] to fight against the Lamb of God" (1 Ne. 14:13). The power of God and the righteousness of the Saints will be the means by which the Church will be spared (see 1 Ne. 14:14-15).

Great need for faithfulness

Never before in our 150-year history has there been greater need for faithfulness among our members. Now is the time for all who claim membership in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to stand firm and demonstrate their allegiance to the kingdom of God. It cannot be done as a critic or as an idle spectator on the sidelines. This is the time to answer the rally cry of our fathers:

*Who's on the Lord's side? Who?
Now is the time to show;
We ask it fearlessly:
Who's on the Lord's side? Who?*
(Hymns, no. 175).

Appeal to inactive priesthood bearers

I call on all inactive priesthood holders—you who, for reasons best known to yourselves, are disassociated from your quorums and church. You have formed new affiliations, and now some of you have become disinterested in the Church and no longer conform to its standards. Unhappily, many of your families tread in your paths and follow your examples. Brethren, when we fail to be true to our priesthood promises, the price we and our loved ones are forced to pay might well be entitled "the high cost for low living." What a blessing you would be to your wives and children if you would harmonize your lives with your covenants. O, brethren of the

priesthood, how we need your support, affiliation, and strength! Do not desert the cause of God at a time when the conflict is most imminent. Make President John Taylor's slogan your commitment: "The kingdom of God or nothing!" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 6:26).

We appeal to you to put aside habits that prevent you from affiliating with your brethren. Put aside your worldliness and renew your covenants. If you have differences with fellow members, go to them, or to your priesthood leaders, and talk them out. Don't allow differences to canker your soul and set you in opposition to the Church. You will find your brethren waiting to put their arms around you and welcome you into fellowship. You are our brethren in the priesthood and we love you.

Keep covenants

Brothers and sisters, be faithful to the Church. Be strong in your callings. Keep your covenants, and God will bless you and preserve you in the trying days ahead.

On the anniversary of the one hundredth birthday of the Church, President Heber J. Grant gave this counsel to the Saints: "Refrain from evil; do that which is good. Visit the sick, comfort those who are in sorrow, clothe the naked, feed the hungry, care for the widow and the fatherless. Observe the laws of health which the Lord has revealed, and keep yourselves unspotted from the sins of the world. Pay your tithes and offerings, and the Lord will open the windows of heaven and pour out blessings until there shall not be room to contain them. Be obedient to the laws of God and the civil laws of the country in which you reside, and uphold and honor those who are chosen to administer them" (*Messages of the First Presidency*, 5:286). We renew that counsel to you today.

Nothing can stop God's work

This is the spiritual kingdom of God moving forward in its divine course to fill the earth, a truly marvelous work and a wonder! As we contemplate our past and future, may we remember the prophecy of Joseph Smith, words that I testify are true: "No unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done" (*History of the Church*, 4:540).

My brothers and sisters, this work is true. Humbly I bear this witness to all the world.

May God bless us all to be faithful and valiant, giving our first allegiance to God and His kingdom. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has been our concluding speaker.

We remind the brethren of the general priesthood meeting which will

convene here in the Tabernacle this evening at 7 P.M.

KSL Radio and KIRO Radio at Seattle will rebroadcast sessions over extensive distances beginning at midnight following each conference day's proceedings.

Video cassettes of conference sessions will be sent to Church leaders in Europe to enable members to watch conference in chapels.

The nationwide CBS Radio Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those desiring to attend this broadcast must be in their seats no later than 9:15 A.M.

The singing for this session has been furnished by the Relief Society choir. We are grateful for the contributions you sisters have made and for the beautiful spirit your music has added to this meeting.

The choir will now sing in closing "Though Deepening Trials." Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder F. Burton Howard, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Though Deepening Trials."

Elder F. Burton Howard pronounced the benediction.

GENERAL PRIESTHOOD MEETING

THIRD SESSION

The general priesthood meeting convened in the Tabernacle at 7:00 P.M. on Saturday, April 5, 1980. President N. Eldon Tanner, First Councilor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The music was provided by an Aaronic Priesthood choir from the Jordan, Jordan South, Sandy, Midvale, Crescent, Draper, Taylorsville, and Taylorsville West regions with Norman R. Wendel conducting and Roy M. Darley at the organ.

President Tanner opened this session with the following remarks:

President N. Eldon Tanner

President Spencer W. Kimball, who is en route to Fayette, New York, has asked me to conduct this session.

Brethren, we are assembled in the general priesthood session of the 150th Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

These services are being relayed by closed-circuit transmission and will reach members of the priesthood gathered in the Salt Palace and in approximately 1,924 locations in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Puerto Rico, Australia, the Philippines, Korea, and, for the first time, the Dominican Republic.

We extend our greetings and blessings to all the priesthood members assembled here in the Tabernacle or elsewhere. We commend all members of the priesthood who have made arrangements to participate in this important meeting.

We note that Elders O. Leslie Stone and Rex D. Pinegar preside in the Salt Palace, and Elder Adney Y. Komatsu and Bishop J. Richard Clarke preside at the BYU Marriott Center.

For the information of the brethren in outlying areas, we announce that at the general session this morning sisters Dwan J. Young, Virginia B. Cannon, and Michaelene P. Grassli were sustained as the new

general presidency of the Primary Association.

The singing during this session will be furnished by an Aaronic Priesthood choir from the Jordan, Jordan South, Sandy, Midvale, Crescent, Draper, Taylorsville, and Taylorsville West regions under the direction of Norman Wendel with Roy Darley at the organ. I would like to say what a fine-looking group of Aaronic Priesthood we have here tonight!

We shall begin this service by the choir singing "Oh, How Lovely Was the Morning." Following the singing, Elder Loren C. Dunn, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and Executive Administrator of the Australia, New Zealand Area, will offer the invocation.

The choir sang the hymn "Oh, How Lovely Was the Morning."

Elder Loren C. Dunn offered the invocation.

President Tanner

The choir will now favor us with "I Face the World" and "I Am a Mormon Boy," after which we shall be pleased to hear from Elder Marvin J. Ashton, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The choir rendered the numbers "I Face the World" and "I Am a Mormon Boy."

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

When our prophet, Spencer W. Kimball, and I walked through the admittance door of the Utah State Prison a few days ago, the sound of sliding, electronically controlled cell doors could be heard clanging in the

background. The grating sounds of the steel bars against the concrete floor and walls let me know where I was again. The total situation was familiar to me. I had been in prison many times before (as a visitor).

President Kimball visits prison

It was President Kimball's first visit. Once past the heavily guarded door, we were escorted to Warden Lawrence Morris's office, located near the front of the medium security area. Even after we were safely seated in his office, I was still filled with real anxieties. I hoped conditions would be completely under control with no disturbances possible. There must not be any interference or interruption during the visit of the prophet. I was responsible for this trip, and as we sat there together, this total situation weighed heavily upon me. Past experience had taught me that the behavior of some inmates is unpredictable. Fortunately the able warden had prepared well, and conditions in and around his office were ideally calm and quiet. To my great relief it appeared that the "grapevine" means of communication inside the prison had not learned of the President's coming.

What had attracted President Kimball to the prison? Why was he there? What was his special interest? What was on his mind? Was there a certain inmate he wanted to see? Why should he expose himself to this dangerous environment, when he had mountains of responsibilities needing his attention in his own office?

With this latest prison visit over and having had a few days to reflect on and ponder the situation, I now know that President Spencer W. Kimball went there for many reasons and people. Being at his side and seeing him share himself with these special people will always be one of the choicest experiences of my life. I learned much. I was with a prophet in an unstable environment. My senior companion, if you please, taught me well. As we traveled together to the prison, visited there, and returned in the car, the warmth and wisdom of this mighty man renewed in me a

thrilling appreciation for his greatness.

Leadership traits

Let me share with you, especially you members of the Aaronic Priesthood, some of the leadership traits I witnessed during this tour with President Kimball. As we review and think together, I hope that we can apply these same traits in our lives. We can accomplish more and become stronger individually by following his example.

After a short visit in his office, the warden invited two inmates to come in and meet President Kimball. As they hesitatingly came in, President Kimball stood up, shook their hands, and gave them a warm welcome. Here was a prophet with two prisoners. I watched with keen interest. What would President Kimball say following the greeting? "What are your special jobs out here? Where is your home? Tell me about your family. Are you working on the construction of the new chapel?" These were some of his questions—all of which were free of criticism and embarrassment. Perhaps others would have been inclined to say under these circumstances, "How long is your prison sentence? What was your crime? How long have you been here? Your family can't be very proud of you. You ought to be ashamed wasting your life in jail. Why don't you shape up?"

President Kimball set the example for me and for all of us as he conducted this personal interview, if you please, with skill and sincerity. In a very few minutes, with few, but appropriate, words, he let the two prisoners know he was with them because he cares.

When this short visit with the two prisoners was over, we were to make our way to the prison chapel.

When we were outside again, it was about 10:30 A.M., with the temperature near 40 degrees Fahrenheit. "Would you like to ride or walk the two-block distance?" President Kimball was asked. He responded with, "I would like to walk." Since President Kimball was without a top coat, his personal secretary, D. Arthur Haycock, started to take his off to share with the President. President Kimball said, "No, thank you. You keep it on. If I walk, I won't need it." Just a routine appreciation gesture? Perhaps, some would say. But to me it was evidence of President Kimball's courteous way of life.

As President Kimball walked the distance to the new chapel site with the wardens, prisoners, and a few others of us, I was close enough at hand to hear his constant questions and concerns. He listened intently as answers were given and situations of interest pointed out. I was impressed again with his concern for people, their confinement and treatment.

Once within the walls of the chapel under construction, he took time to shake hands with workers, some of whom were prisoners, and with other visitors who were now aware of his presence. He seemed to take time for everyone. People never seemed to be a bother. I saw a number of workers jump down from scaffolds to shake his hand. In some cases I saw his arm go out to them before they could clean mortar and dirt from their fingers. They and leaders from other churches heard him say, "This interdenominational worship facility will help prisoners find their way back." He also added, "The Church and our people are happy to be participants in any and all community projects that are worthy." Once again I was impressed with his wholesome relationship with all people.

Respect and dignity

The highlight of the chapel inspection tour and the prison visit in general, it seemed to me, came when two inmates were invited to stand at the side of the prophet in the minimum security reception area for picture taking. As the President welcomed them forward and later put his arms around them, he said, "It is an honor for me to have my picture taken with you." The two prisoners were obviously touched by his comment. Others of us again saw the greatness and stature of the one we love so much. Respect and human dignity were witnessed. Again he taught well that all people are entitled to be treated as human beings, wherever they are found and regardless of where they have been. President Kimball, it was obvious, is a foe of sin but a friend of the sinner. The scripture found in D&C 50:26 came forcefully to my mind: "He that is ordained of God and sent forth, the same is appointed to be the greatest, notwithstanding he is the least and the servant of all."

As we were finishing our visit, one inmate rushed up to me and said, "I didn't get a chance to shake President Kimball's hand. Would you please tell him I love him?" Another prisoner responded with, "I'm not a Mormon, but he's got to be a special guy." Some day I hope that prisoner finds out what a special guy President Kimball really is.

As we walked back to the car to return to Salt Lake City, this choice experience with the prophet brought to mind the story of Parley P. Pratt when he and the Prophet Joseph Smith were together in a prison in Richmond, Missouri. The situation was much different, but the same witness of true dignity and majesty was enjoyed. (See Parley P. Pratt,

Jr., ed., *The Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1938, pp. 193-200, 210-215, 230-240.) I, too, saw true majesty when a prison visitor performed and spoke under God's authority and shared himself fearlessly.

All men basically good

Before we drove away from the prison compound, President Kimball viewed the maximum security area. When he looked at the extra fences, towers, guards, and isolated location, he commented on how unfortunate it is when men can't be given freedom, responsibilities, and the joys of work. "All men are basically good. Some just lose their way and need to be led back into proper paths and habits," he said.

President Kimball asked the warden how the Church's family home evening program was doing at the prison. (President Kimball had been instrumental in its implementation years ago.) When told it was most successful, he was very pleased. The warden informed him that each week dozens of families continue to go to the prison on Monday evenings to provide family experiences for those qualified to be involved. These good people serve as families for inmates who don't have them. Their relationship, which very often goes on after prisoners are released, provides an excellent anchor in rehabilitation. The strength of the family is available on a regular basis. President Kimball has long been a believer that every person is entitled to family relationships, and when told that some inmates have their first real family experiences through this program, he was delighted.

During the tour of the new chapel and the walk between the buildings, there were always a number of young and old nearby to assist and respond to President Kimball's ques-

tions. After hearing President Kimball refer to me a number of times as "Marv" as we walked together, one of the younger set was impressed to say, "Isn't it kind of neat to have President Kimball call you 'Marv'?" I responded with, "Yes, it is, and it is especially neat to know that President Spencer W. Kimball is a prophet of God." I had again seen him in action.

In the car returning to Salt Lake City, President Kimball thanked us time and again for taking him to the prison. He felt good about the response of those with whom he had associated. "I hope you will make it possible for me to go back again," he suggested. "Those people need our love and constant encouragement."

Ten major points

What can we as priesthood members and leaders learn from President Kimball's trip to the prison? Much, I hope. Could I just quickly mention ten major points I observed? I think they can help us all be and do better if we will but follow his example.

1. He demonstrated how to interview "inactives," if you please, with friendly and sincere comments. His questions were free of embarrassment, ridicule, and criticism. How do you approach those who haven't been seen for a while and you want to reactivate?

2. He made others feel comfortable in his presence. He never talked down to anyone. He was always "one with" and not "one apart." Do we know how to make our associates feel comfortable during our visits, or are they allowed to feel we are just trying to improve our percentages?

3. He listened intently to the comments of his associates. Those about him knew they had his atten-

tion and his interest. I thought of the scripture found in Luke 2:46-47: "After three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

"And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers." In this case perhaps we are within our rights to paraphrase this quotation a little and say, "After a few minutes they found him in the prison, sitting in the midst of the prisoners, both hearing them and asking them questions.

"And all that heard him were astonished at his capacity to ask and listen."

4. He was courteous. He knows well the fifth point of the Boy Scout Law and has undoubtedly been practicing it for more than seventy-five years.

5. He treated every person he met like a friend. He seemed to classify all he met into one category—basically good. Do you have the skill and capacity to be friendly to others when, in your limited vision, they may not seem to deserve it?

6. He expressed appreciation to everyone. No favor or assistance was ever taken for granted. "And in nothing doth man offend God, or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all things" (D&C 59:21). Some who escape our love and quorum associations are starving for a word of encouragement and appreciation.

7. He exhibited a dignity and poise that was most impressive. Governor Scott M. Matheson of the State of Utah was on hand during President Kimball's tour. As I walked, talked, and visited with both men, I was greatly impressed with the fact that the governor received the same treatment from President Kimball as did the inmates. Do you have the capacity to love the nonattender as

much as you do the 100-percent attender?

8. He despises sin, but he loves the sinner. When I saw his arms go around the shoulders of the prisoners, I was touched. Are we beneath or above this type of behavior?

9. He is available to all God's children. He made prisoners feel they were doing him a favor to let him have his picture taken with them. As I watched him in his personal associations, never once did I see him avoid a situation or an individual. When they wanted to shake his hand or have a picture, there was never "I'm tired" or "not now."

10. He took long and meaningful strides in the direction of all who were inclined to hesitate. He seems determined to bring those on the edges back. Do we have the same kind of continuing approach with those who are temporarily sidelined?

Heartwarming example

I am glad the time and conditions were right for President Kimball to visit his friends in prison and that I could be with him. One prisoner who stood by his side for the picture is serving time for theft and burglary; the other is there for manslaughter. One was a member, one a nonmember. His greetings to them, "It is an honor for me to have my picture taken with you," continues to ring in my ears. "I was in prison, and ye came unto me" (Matt. 25:36). Once again we have the heartwarming example of seeing how widely our President can spread his arms in love. He makes room for all of us. He will not give up on anyone.

It is my hope and prayer that we will have the courage in our lives, homes, and quorums to lift, lead, and love in the way I saw demon-

strated by a prophet in prison. This I humbly ask in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Marvin J. Ashton, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just addressed us.

Elder Paul H. Dunn

“Time-out”

Like many of you, I really enjoy sports. Sports often teach great lessons. The other night while I was watching an NCAA championship basketball game, I heard one of the players call out that familiar word, “time!” The team ran to the sidelines to receive some instructions from the man who could give them some help—the coach. And he did.

Isn't it interesting that, generally speaking, a team calls time-out when they're in trouble, when they need to regroup? I recall many times in my career when we'd call “time,” and the catcher or the pitching coach or the manager would come to the mound and give me some needed instructions or encouragement. Sometimes the language was a little different, but the counsel was most always appreciated, sometimes even humorous.

I recall in one of my first professional games many years ago, in the very first inning the first three hitters hit safely, all of them on the first pitch. Out of the dugout came the pitching coach. The catcher joined him, and the three of us assembled on the mound.

The pitching coach turned to my catcher and said, “What in the world has Paul got on the ball anyway?”

The catcher said, “I don't know. I haven't seen it yet.”

Well, what's that got to do with you and me? Life, you know, is a

We shall now hear from Elder Paul H. Dunn, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He will be followed by Elder A. Theodore Tuttle, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy and president of the Provo Temple.

little like “the big game.” There are times when you and I need to call time-out. Have you ever had the experience of loading the bases while continuing to throw high and wide? Have you experienced “fourth down and one” on the goal line with ten seconds left? Have you watched your twenty-point lead dwindle to two? Or in life's game do you have a challenge controlling your temper or language? Is that personal weakness you've noticed still not under control? Are school subjects your nemesis? Are your finances ready to pull you under? Is your family solidarity sitting on shifting sand? And most important of all, are you trying to do it alone? Or have you been smart enough to call time-out to ask the coach for help?

Prayer

You know, it doesn't always have to be a formal prayer, my young brethren. You can do it as you drive in the car, on a date, in the privacy of your room, or on the playing field.

I'm reminded of something I read just the other day. Let me share it with you. It seems that a small boy was trying to lift a heavy stone, but couldn't budge it. His father, watching very interestedly, said, “Are you sure you're using all of your strength?”

“Yes, I am!” the boy cried.

"No, you're not," said the father. "You haven't asked me to help you."

Well, let me just tell you that however tight the game seems at the moment, I know the coach and I know that He can help. There is a personal and loving God who knows all of the plays. He understands the game of life. He understands you and me. And he understands what you and I need now to help in our lives. Talking to him is an easy thing, really. All you have to do is call time-out. Say to yourself, "I've had it. I need help." And be prepared to listen. Say to him, "I can't take any more of this running without seeing clearly where the bases are or the direction I'm headed."

Great leaders pray

Are you aware that all through history great leaders have called time-out? Washington at Valley Forge, Lincoln seeking answers in the war, Joseph Smith in the grove. This was true of the prophets of old: Abraham sought God; Moses called upon the Lord. Nephi, a great young champion, says in his own account: "I, Nephi, being exceeding young [like many of you], nevertheless being large in stature, and also having great desires to know of the mysteries of God, wherefore, I did cry unto the Lord; and behold he did visit me, and did soften my heart that I did believe all the words which had been spoken by my father; wherefore, I did not rebel against him like unto my brothers" (1 Ne. 2:16).

Accounts such as these in scripture have always given me great courage to do likewise. That's why I think the prophets, even the leaders today, have counseled us to know the scriptures that we might be motivated to seek help.

Military experiences

Fortunately, like many of you, I came from a home where that kind of influence was available. Near my eighteenth birthday I was drafted into World War II. I found myself in an entirely new environment. I had always been taught in my home to take time out at night to pray, but I found this a little delicate, where in a typical barrack, there would be over fifty men on a floor. I used to try to get a bunk near the end of the room, where there would be a little privacy, and I would wait until the lights would go out before I would crawl out of bed to say my prayers.

I remember at Fort MacArthur everything went well for the first few nights and then finally one night, shortly after the lights went out, I crawled out of bed and knelt down to pray. About that time two half-stewed characters came in, flipped on the lights, and aroused all of us. A couple of fellows across the aisle from me saw me on my knees. Typical of that kind of environment, they started to poke fun. One of them, pointing to me, shouted so all could hear, "Hey, holy Paul, pray for me!" I felt a little chagrined and somewhat embarrassed and I thought to myself, "Now, what do you do?"

My mother had taught me a great principle. She used to say: "In delicate situations, use a sense of humor. It always helps." So while still on my knees, I squared my shoulders, looked at both of the soldiers, and said: "Would you give me your full names because I don't think the Lord knows you." Later, I'm pleased to say, they did come to know the Lord because they too took time-out.

I noticed later, when we got into combat, that in my battalion—the 305th Infantry—the word soon got around: "Get in Dunn's squad. He

always comes back." Many is the time that I shared a foxhole with anxious soldiers where we took time-out to talk to our Eternal Coach, even our Heavenly Father.

I remember the time so well as we were preparing for my very first invasion, sitting out in the Pacific on a troop ship with three thousand men aboard. This large group of soldiers represented the first seven waves in the invasion force. Prior to disembarking, one of the Protestant chaplains held a final church service. He had us all look around and get acquainted with each other and then he said: "Now, gentlemen, I don't want to worry you, but do you realize by tomorrow morning at eight o'clock, many of you will be standing before your Maker? Are you ready?"

Well, how would you feel, young men, if that challenge were hurled at you? At that time I was almost nineteen. Shortly after the service I found a secluded spot on the ship and called time-out and talked to my Heavenly Father. I didn't sleep that night nor did most of the men. The next morning as the seven waves of infantry went ashore, many not making it, I dug my first foxhole and took another time-out. I remember the event well. I called upon my Heavenly Father and said, "I really need to know if thou art there." Heavenly Father spoke to my mind, and I haven't been the same since.

Power of prayer

Will you learn, my young brethren, to take time-out? It even works in sports, because of the amazing influence it wields. I remember my first professional season, playing in a strange town; I had joined the club at midseason. The catcher, who was also the manager, was old enough to be my father. He was an old professional ballplayer from the Washing-

ton Senators and had had much experience. The team was a rough lot. I remember so well one night while visiting in a distant town, about two o'clock a knock came at my hotel door. I got up and answered it, and there standing in the framework was my manager.

He said, "Paul, may I come in?"

And I said, "Please do. What's the matter?"

He said, "Close the door, and whatever you do don't tell the others I came."

I said, "Well, I won't."

He responded: "I've been watching you for these past two months. You know the Lord, don't you?"

I said, "I think he's my friend."

He said, "Would you help me find him?"

We sat down in the room, and for over two hours talked about God, the Eternal Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. Tears began to form in his eyes.

I said, "Danny, have you ever prayed?"

He said, "No."

I said, "Would it offend you to pray with me?"

"Well," he said, "not if you will pray."

I said, "I would be honored."

So together we knelt down beside my bed, and talked to Heavenly Father. We took time-out. And as we arose from our knees, he pushed back the tears, threw his arms around me, almost choked me to death, and said, "Thank you, thank you. Could we do this some more?"

I said, "As often as you would like."

We did on several other occasions. But you know what else was interesting? Before the season ended, several other knocks came at my door. One night it was the first base-

man, then the shortstop, and the left fielder. And each in his own wonderful way said, "Don't tell the others."

I learned on that occasion that people are really seeking and want what you and I have. God bless you,

my wonderful brethren, to have the wisdom and strength to call time-out and visit with your Heavenly Father. He really lives, as does his Son, to which I testify in the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder A. Theodore Tuttle

Brethren, something has happened to me. For twenty-two years I have been a General Authority. I have traveled the world over in my ministry. Over the course of these years, I have had marvelous experiences and have met many wonderful people. I have participated in sacred meetings. The choice association with my brethren has taught and inspired me. Now something has happened—I have been called to serve in a temple.

Greatest responsibility to seek after dead

I want to bear witness—and my witness is true—that the work for the redemption of the living and the dead is divine. It is a keystone of our religion. The work performed in temples stays the judgments of God from smiting the earth with a curse. It is not unusual, therefore, that the Prophet Joseph would say, "The greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us [as individuals] is to seek after our dead" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1938, p. 356).

The Prophet Joseph taught that you and I are to become saviors on Mount Zion. We are to gather, build temples, seek after our dead, and perform all the vital ordinances. This work welds eternal links that bind us to each other and to our fathers. We are exalted as family units.

The Prophet Joseph said, "It is necessary . . . that a . . . welding together of dispensations . . . should take place . . . from the days of Adam even to the present time" (D&C 128:18).

Then go, brethren. Be sealed to your wife and your sons and daughters. Be sealed to your fathers as far back as you can. Temples are built to perform these sacred ordinances. It is sad that in some of our larger centers temple work is presently lagging. Leaders, strengthen temple work! The Prophet Joseph warned, "Those Saints who neglect it in behalf of their deceased relatives, do it at the peril of their own salvation" (*Teachings*, p. 193).

Yet in his anxiety the Prophet once observed, "But there has been a great difficulty in getting anything into the heads of this generation. It has been like splitting hemlock knots with a corndodger for a wedge, and a pumpkin for a beetle. Even the Saints are slow to understand" (*Teachings*, p. 331).

Importance of genealogy

Our performance manifests that we are giving neither sufficient time nor attention to temple work. Genealogical research needs more vigor. Submittal of the four-generation sheets must be hastened. This program was announced thirteen years ago. Since that time nearly half the present members of the Church have

either been born or baptized. We ask you leaders, Where are the four-generation sheets from all these new members? As a matter of fact, where are yours? Will you see that this work is done, brethren? This is an inspired program.

Once you complete your four generations, you are not finished. Continue to search out all of your ancestral lines. The four-generation project becomes a platform for launching further research. In fact, this is one place where you move forward by reaching backward! "It is our duty," counseled Elder John A. Widtsoe, "to secure as complete genealogies as possible, to discover our fathers and mothers back to the last generation, to connect, if it may be possible, with Adam, our first father upon the earth—a duty which we cannot escape" ("Genealogical Activities in Europe," *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*, July 1931, p. 104).

There are great promises to those who do this. All who diligently search realize that help comes—often from the other side of the veil. You see, they are organized and working there at least as well as we are here!

Elder Melvin J. Ballard testified that "the spirit and influence of your dead will guide those who are interested in finding those records. If there is *anywhere* on the earth *anything* concerning them, you will find it" (Bryant S. Hinckley, *Sermons and Missionary Services of Melvin Joseph Ballard* Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1949, p. 230; italics added). And Elder Widtsoe said, "I have the feeling . . . that those who give themselves with all their might and main to this work receive help from the other side, and not merely in gathering genealogies. Whoever seeks to help those on the other side receives help in return in all the affairs of life" ("Genealogical Activities," p. 104).

I testify that this is true.

This testimony is echoed by thousands of humble Latter-day Saints whose labors bear witness of this truth! Elisha's words have been vindicated: "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with [the enemy]" (2 Kings 6:16).

Family and priesthood leaders involvement

We have introduced the name-extraction program in many areas in order that the work might progress better. Brethren, assist this work wherever possible.

Young men and young women must not be left out of the joys of this special work. Deacons, do you have a Book of Remembrance? What about you teachers and priests? Have you started your own life story? Are you collecting pictures, certificates, and spiritual experiences to add interest? Assisting your parents in the search for your relatives often develops real pride in your heritage.

You may have heard of the young man who got involved in this work. He was sent to the department store to buy some genealogical supplies. He asked the first clerk he saw, "Do you have any family group sheets?" Perplexed, the young lady replied, "Well we have twin-size sheets, double, and queen size, but I'm not sure whether we have family group sheets!"

To all who may want to help in preserving family history, we issue an invitation now to come to the World Conference on Records this coming August. This conference is designed to assist all of us to do redemptive work for the dead in a better way.

You leaders in the stakes, wards, and quorums, assume the additional duty to see that every man in your priesthood quorum fulfills his responsibility with respect to his

dead. I quote from President Marion G. Romney concerning the significance of holy covenants: "We are individually responsible and will be held accountable for the way in which we *ourselves* keep the covenants we enter into, and we shall also be accountable for the breaking of covenants by others for whom we are responsible insofar as such breaking is the result of our failure to teach them" (ENSIGN, Nov. 1975, p. 73; italics added). Ponder that thought!

A supernal work

Brethren, the great priesthood leaders of past dispensations look to us to move this work. All the righteous men and women who ever lived look to us! We are their *only* hope for salvation. We hold the key to their prison doors. We must set them free! How can we any longer ignore their right to salvation? President Brigham Young said, "When I think upon this subject, I want the tongues of seven thunders to wake up the people" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe, Salt

Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1941, p. 404).

It was this supernal work—redemption of the living and the dead—of which the Prophet Joseph spoke when he said, "Brethren, shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward and not backward. Courage, brethren; and on, on to the victory! . . . Let the dead speak forth anthems of eternal praise to the King Immanuel, . . . for the prisoners shall go free" (D&C 128:22).

O God, please grant that the spirit of Elijah may fall upon the vast body of priesthood in thy Church, to cause thy great work to move forward. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Paul H. Dunn, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has addressed us, followed by Elder A. Theodore Tuttle, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy and president of the Provo Temple.

Elder Carlos E. Asay, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will be our next speaker.

Elder Carlos E. Asay

Salt

I hold in my hand a test tube filled with salt. Salt, as you know, contains two elements—sodium and chlorine—and is known chemically as sodium chloride.

This white substance occupies an important place in our lives. It is essential to health; body cells must have salt in order to live and work. It has antiseptic, or germ-killing, properties. It is a preservative. It is an ingredient in many foods and products. And it is estimated that there are more than fourteen thousand uses for salt.

According to the historians, "Salt at one time had religious significance, and was a symbol of purity. . . . Among many peoples, salt is still used as a sign of honor, friendship, and hospitality. The Arabs say 'there is salt between us,' meaning 'we have eaten together, and are friends' " (*The World Book Encyclopedia*, 1978, 17:69).

The Organizer and Creator of this world understood perfectly the nature and importance of salt. More than thirty-five references to this substance are found in the scriptures. In

the Old Testament mention is made of a "covenant of salt" (see Lev. 2:13; Num. 18:19; 2 Chron. 13:5). In the New Testament the Savior referred to his disciples as the "salt of the earth," and charged them to retain their savor (Matt. 5:13). He repeated this charge to his chosen disciples on the American continent:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, I give unto you to be the salt of the earth; but if the salt shall lose its savor, wherewith shall the earth be salted? The salt shall be thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men" (3 Ne. 12:13).

How many times have we read, or heard others read, this scripture? Yet, do we understand fully the "salt of the earth" message? Are we conversant with the analogy? Are we responding properly to its implications?

Permit me to speak of the "savior" and "savior" roles which we have been called to fulfill as members of the priesthood and as the salt of the modern world.

Savor of men

In 1833 Joseph Smith received a revelation which included these instructions: "When men are called into mine everlasting gospel, and covenant with an everlasting covenant, they are accounted as the salt of the earth and the savor of men;

"They are called to be the savor of men" (D&C 101:39-40; italics added).

The word *savor* (*s-a-v-o-r*) denotes taste, pleasing flavor, interesting quality, and high repute.

The salt in container A, which I am holding in my right hand, has savor. That is, it is clean, pure, uncontaminated, and useful. In this state or condition, salt will preserve, flavor, heal, and perform other useful functions.

The salt in container B, however, is salt that has lost its savor. It

has lost its savor because it has been mixed with things of bad taste. In fact, it has taken on some of the color and appearance of other substances.

When the Lord used the expression "savor of men," he was speaking of those who represent him. He was referring to those who have repented, who have been washed clean in the waters of baptism, and who have covenanted to take upon them his name and his cause. Moreover, he was speaking of those who would share by covenant his priesthood power. He was speaking of you and me.

A world-renowned chemist told me that salt will not lose its savor with age. Savor is lost through mixture and contamination. Similarly, priesthood power does not dissipate with age; it, too, is lost through mixture and contamination.

When a young man or older man mixes his thoughts with pornographic literature, he suffers a loss of savor.

When a priesthood bearer mixes his speech with lies or profanity, he suffers a loss of savor.

When one of us follows the crowd and becomes involved in immoral acts and the use of drugs, tobacco, alcohol, and other injurious substances, he loses savor.

Flavor and quality flee a man when he contaminates his mind with unclean thoughts, desecrates his mouth by speaking less than the truth, and misapplies his strength in performing evil acts. King Benjamin cautioned, "Watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe the commandments of God" (Mosiah 4:30).

I would offer these simple guidelines, especially to the young men, as the means to preserve one's savor: If it is not *clean*, do not think it; if it is not *true*, do not speak it; if it is not *good*, do not do it (see

Marcus Aurelius, "The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius," in *The Harvard Classics*, Charles W. Eliot, ed., New York: P. F. Collier and Son, 1909, p. 211).

Cleanliness, truth, and goodness have always been and will ever be the watchwords of men with savor. It is said that sixty-five percent or more of our communications are non verbal. If this is so, who we are and what we are is most important. A living prophet has declared: "No greater service can be given to the missionary calling of the Church than to exemplify positive Christian virtues in our lives" (Spencer W. Kimball, *ENSIGN*, Nov. 1978, p. 6).

We must fight daily to retain our savor, our purity. We must press forward, clinging to our standards of holiness, remembering all the while that we are called to be the savor of men.

Saviors of men

The Prophet Joseph Smith received these instructions from the Lord:

"For they were set to be a light unto the world, and *to be the saviors of men*;

"And inasmuch as they are not the saviors of men, they are as salt that has lost its savor" (D&C 103:9-10; italics added).

One is impressed with the depth of meaning associated with the words "saviors of men," when they are studied in companionship with a complete definition of the priesthood: "The priesthood is the power and authority of God delegated to man on earth to act in all things pertaining to the salvation of men. It is the means whereby the Lord acts through men to save souls" (Spencer W. Kimball, *ENSIGN*, June 1975, p. 3).

Priesthood is God's power. It is to be used in saving souls. It is not shared with young men or older men simply to sit on or to hold in name

only. It is shared with the expectation that the receiver will exercise it in behalf of himself and others. The priesthood is to be honored, and callings within the priesthood are to be magnified.

One of the grandest concepts in the gospel of Jesus Christ is the concept that men can and should be more than passive observers in the cause of saving souls. One Church leader taught: "In our preexistent state . . . we made a certain agreement with the Almighty. . . . We agreed . . . to be not only saviors for ourselves but measurably, saviors for the whole human family. We went into a partnership with the Lord. The working out of the plan became then not merely the Father's work, and the Savior's work, but also our work" (John A. Widtsoe, *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*, Oct. 1934, p. 189).

I know of a young priest who was asked by his bishop to fellowship an inactive quorum member. The bishop indicated that others had failed in their attempts to recover the boy. The final words of the bishop's commission were: "Please save ____." After many tries and failures, the miracle was wrought—the inactive returned to full activity in the quorum. It was thrilling for me to hear the hero in this experience bear testimony of the joy which he received as a result of his soul-saving efforts.

Less than a month ago, two missionaries visited a widowed lady who had expressed interest in the Church. She was ill and had been advised by her physician that a kidney was to be removed. The elders comforted the woman, heeded the whisperings of the Spirit, and pronounced a blessing. Another miracle happened. The operation was cancelled, and the missionaries began teaching their friend the gospel. A baptismal date has already been set.

This particular woman will never forget the blessing and teachings of the elders. They will be held in cherished memory and regarded as "saviors of men."

One of our priesthood brothers tells of how he was guided by the Spirit in locating thousands of names on one of his father's ancestral lines. When the necessary research was completed, he and his wife and others completed the appropriate temple ordinances. In summarizing his experience, he said:

"It taught me that if a person will put forth the effort to search, the way will be opened up and he will obtain the spirit of Elijah. . . .

"I firmly believe that in the pre-existence we made a commitment . . . to be a savior to these people, doing all the necessary research and having the temple work done for them" (Jacob Suess, "Twice Rescued," in *Links of Forever*, comp. by Connie Rector and Diane Deputy, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1977, p. 120).

There should be salt between us and all men. We should extend honor, friendship, and hospitality to all of our brothers and sisters. To the inactive we extend the hand of fellowship; to the nonmembers we extend the divine invitation "come and see"; with the fathers of yesteryear we establish links which weld fathers to children and children to fathers. In all of this, we advance the purposes of the Master and assist in the reconciliation of men to the God who gave them life. And, in the process, we not only preserve our savor but we save ourselves.

I count it significant that the headquarters of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is located

in Salt Lake City. From this center of the Church flows the message of salvation to all the world. To this city of salt, men and women gather from all corners of the earth to receive instruction and edification. Such instruction, if accepted and practiced, will enable men to retain their savor and assist them in becoming saviors of men.

I pray that all of us will appreciate more perfectly the words of the Savior: "Ye are the salt of the earth." I pray that we will carry this designation faithfully and honorably.

Please remember that men—like salt—lose their savor through contamination; remember also that men who fail to use their priesthood power in behalf of others are like salt without savor.

I testify that an abiding and exalting relationship with the Master is established as we live to be men with savor and saviors of men. This I declare, adding my witness that He lives and directs his church today, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Carlos E. Asay, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Do What Is Right." After the singing, we shall be pleased to hear from Elder M. Russell Ballard, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The hymn "Do What Is Right" was sung by the choir and congregation.

Elder M. Russell Ballard

This is a great honor for me to address you, my brethren, and I seek the Spirit of the Lord that what I say might help each of us want to become better members of the Church and serve more diligently in the priesthood.

Personal experience

I had an extremely frightening experience several years ago while flying from Reno, Nevada, to San Rafael, California, with a friend in his twin-engine Aztec airplane.

When we left Reno, the weather was a little cloudy, and my friend was somewhat worried about it. Because of his concern, we landed at the Lake Tahoe airport to get a second report on the weather. It did not indicate that the weather was too bad, so we continued our flight to San Rafael.

Our destination was an airport in the northern part of San Francisco Bay. As we approached the Bay area, the clouds became increasingly low and dense. We tried to stay under the clouds so we could see the water and thus keep our bearings visually. But suddenly we flew into very dense clouds and could see nothing.

When you fly into such clouds, you become totally disoriented. You do not know whether you are flying straight, sideways, or upside down. You lose your sense of forward motion, and it takes a few minutes for the pilot to orient himself from visual flying to instrument flying. At 180 miles an hour, you move a long distance in that few minutes and can get into serious trouble very quickly. Unfortunately, my friend had not flown entirely on instruments for two years.

My friend struggled intensely and was near the point of panic as he tried to recall all that he had learned about instrument flying. I knew very little about instrument flying, so I

could not help him. All I could do was put my hand on his shoulder and tell him to take a deep breath and get hold of himself. The only instrument that I could read was the altimeter. I said, "We are now at 500 feet. Don't make any quick moves; just think it out, and you can pull us through."

It seemed an eternity before he finally made radio contact with Hamilton Air Force Base. He said to them, "I am in trouble; please help me." The air traffic controllers had us on their radar screen and immediately began to help my friend regain control of the plane. They told us where we were and started to give us instructions to help guide us to safety.

When my friend heard the voice from Hamilton Tower, he regained a sense of confidence that enabled him to gain control. But he knew that the plane was completely out of control and that our chances of pulling out of this danger were marginal. We could easily go the wrong way. The foothills, buildings, towers, and bridges were not far away. At one time we dropped to only 200 feet, and must have been flying upside down at one time because the maps and other items in the visor above my head fell into my lap.

At the peak of this crisis, an instant replay of my entire life flashed through my mind. I thought of my wife, my seven children, my parents, my business partners, the 37 priests whom I was the adviser to, and many other things. I prayed fervently all through this crisis and made a commitment more deep and more sincere than ever before in my life. I began, "Heavenly Father, guide us out of this thick, dense cloud, and help my friend remember all he knows about instrument flying." And then I said, "In the name of Jesus Christ and by the power of

the holy priesthood, bless my friend that he might regain control." My prayer continued. I committed to Heavenly Father that if he would help us, I would place my life in his hands. I promised him that I would be what he wanted me to be.

Finally, we saw the lights on the runway. The white line in the center of the runway was a most welcome sight.

Every priesthood bearer sitting in this priesthood meeting tonight has a great work to do. Each one of us has the power to demonstrate to our Heavenly Father that we really love him and desire to serve him with all of our hearts.

Making a meaningful commitment

Let me show how each of us can make a sincere and meaningful commitment to Heavenly Father right now. Please find a small piece of paper and a pencil. Borrow from your neighbor if you need to. Now, brethren, write on your piece of paper the name of one inactive or non-member man or boy who lives in your ward. Will you make a commitment tonight that you will do all in your power, with the help of the Lord, to lead that person out of darkness into the full light of the gospel? You can be to him as the voice from Hamilton Tower was to my friend and me, and you can guide him safely into full fellowship in the Church of Jesus Christ.

Just a few months after I made my *full* commitment to the Lord that I would give my life to his service if he so desired, I was presiding over the Canada Toronto Mission. During that mission, President Kimball called me to spend the rest of my life in the service of the Lord as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Worth of souls is great

No work is more important than helping bring the gospel into the

lives of our brothers and sisters. You and I have no better way to demonstrate our love for the Lord than to personally lead someone into the safety of full activity in the Church.

I want to help you keep the commitment that you have just made, brethren. I invite you to write to me when you feel the time has come that you need some additional help. Send me the name and address of the man or the boy whom you seek to rescue, and I will write a letter of encouragement to him. I am sure that my brethren of the General Authorities will help me if I receive more letters than I can answer, because they are fully committed to helping you and me meet our righteous commitments.

The Lord has said in the Doctrine and Covenants, "Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God;

"For, behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him.

"And he hath risen again from the dead, that he might bring all unto him, on conditions of repentance.

"And how great is his joy in the soul that repenteth!

"And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!" (D&C 18:10-13, 15).

Keep commitments

The light of the Lord is real, my brethren. He will lead every soul out of the clouds of darkness and away from the fog of doubt and uncertainty with a perfect eternal signal that will guarantee safety, peace, and confidence. He said to all the world, "Come, . . . follow me" (Mark 10:21), and "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

Life's flight pattern can be changed. The instruments we use in saving souls are love and sharing our testimonies of the divine mission of our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Thousands of our lost brethren, both men and boys, can be led to a safe landing if we will keep the commitments that we have made tonight. The power of the priesthood that is within each one of us is a greater power than any radar, radio, or any other communication system. Nothing is more important to the Lord than saving souls.

God bless us to keep this commitment, my brethren, to bring into

full fellowship one precious son of God, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

We have just heard from Elder M. Russell Ballard, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder W. Grant Bangerter, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder John H. Groberg, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder W. Grant Bangerter

Central to the calling to administer the gospel to all people, living and dead, is the power of the Holy Ghost. My experience tells me that many who labor in the callings of the priesthood lack insight into this great agency and are unable to be as effective as they ought to be.

I pray that I may be blessed to give some helpful instructions about this most potent and sacred influence.

Obviously, if I do not have the Holy Spirit, I may as well not speak tonight.

Teaching by the Spirit

Most of our work is done in the form of teaching. This takes place in classes such as priesthood quorums, Sunday School, and seminary; many times in interviews; by missionaries as they present the gospel in their discussions; by home teachers to the families of the Church; and, of course, in sermons such as this one.

So I'm speaking to stake presidents, bishops, and quorum leaders, to missionaries, auxiliary leaders, home teachers, and class instructors.

How can we teach by the Spirit? Brethren, try to detect the influence of the Holy Spirit in the following experiences.

Calls to serve

While I was serving as stake president, my counselors and I invited a certain brother for an interview where we presented to him his calling to be the president of the stake Young Men organization. This man had not been fully active. He liked to spend his weekends, including Sundays, camping and fishing, and it was reported that he and his wife did not always obey the Word of Wisdom. There was some question as to whether we should consider him for such a position, but because of the prayerful discussions we had held in the presidency and the high council we concluded that he should be called. As we advised this brother of his appointment, he responded that he was not interested and that he did not feel worthy or qualified. We then told him how we had come to choose him over all the

members of the stake. We explained that we needed a strong and capable leader of youth in our stake and that both the presidency and the high council had offered earnest prayers, asking the Lord to indicate the person who should fill the position. We said: "The answer was clear. You are the man the Lord has chosen. It is for you to decide, of course, but you do have an obligation to go home and discuss the question with your wife. The only request we make of you is that thereafter you kneel down with her and ask the Lord what he wants you to do."

Three days later I received an unhappy telephone call from this same man. He reluctantly informed me that he would accept the position with all its implications. He gave powerful service in his calling, and when that assignment was finished, he became a member of the high council, and he has been happy about the gospel ever since.

We had a similar experience when we called another man to be the president of our stake mission. Through some discouraging experiences in Church service, he thought himself halfway on the road to apostasy and not at all sure of his testimony. He resisted his appointment vigorously, saying that it would deprive him of time to do some of the most enjoyable things in life. We explained to him how once again we had sought the direction from the Lord about who should preside over the mission. We told him that he was not being forced to accept the call, but that he should ask his Heavenly Father whether or not it was right for him to serve. The Lord gave him a powerful assurance that he was called to the work. The following year he, with his missionaries, baptized nearly ten percent of all the nonmembers in our stake. Later on, he was called to be a bishop.

Missionary obligation

On certain occasions I have approached young men of missionary age and informed them that they have been called to serve a mission. Sometimes they explain that they have no desire to go on a mission. I then tell them that it is immaterial to me whether they serve a mission or not. Of course, it isn't all immaterial; but I say I am only informing them of the calling the Lord has already given them. And I'll explain how I know that. I was present the day President Kimball made the announcement that all young men should go on a mission. The Holy Spirit told me that the principle was true.

Later on, I was talking with a humble, but inspired, patriarch who is here tonight. He informed me that he was not trained nor educated to give patriarchal blessings and that he could only say the things the Lord told him to say. I thought that sounded about right. He then added: "You would be interested to know how many young men who come for their blessings are told that they will go on missions." With that statement, I again felt revelation and saw light, and I knew that President Kimball had not called them on a mission. He had merely made the announcement. But the mission had been ordained by the Lord himself, and every young man who belongs to the Church has an obligation to labor to build up the kingdom.

There has been no difficulty, therefore, for me in telling young men that I know they have been called on a mission. And when they respond that they are not interested, I merely say: "Don't tell me; tell the Lord. You go and pray and ask him what he wants you to do." Almost always they return from that experience saying: "Well, I suppose I had

better go on a mission." For some of them it is then time to say: "Now we both understand that you are not quite prepared, so let us begin to take the steps by which you will be qualified to go."

Ask the Lord

Here's another situation. I have watched missionaries over many years, as they teach the gospel, find that some of their best investigators tell them that they have decided not to join the Church. Most missionaries at this point are discouraged and disappointed. The missionary who understands the Holy Ghost, however, takes that moment as his great opportunity.

He even welcomes it, because he knows what to do. And he might say: "Very well, if that is your wish. However, please allow us a moment just to tell you how much the gospel means to us. Do you remember how Joseph Smith knelt one evening in his room and prayed to the Lord to know of his standing before God? As a result, an angel appeared and said: 'Joseph, I have come to you from the presence of God to tell you that the Lord has a work for you to do, by which your name will be known for good and evil among all men' [see JS-H 1:33]. What did Joseph Smith say? Did he say: 'Oh, no thanks, Mr. Angel. I don't want to go on a mission. I only wished to know if the Lord loves me!' Of course, he couldn't have said that. We want to tell you that we know this work is true just as surely as if we had knelt there by the side of Joseph Smith, because God has revealed it to us. He will reveal it to you, too. We don't think you should decide not to join his church until you have knelt down and asked the Lord what he wants you to do."

And the investigators, as they pray, respond saying: "Of course, the Lord wants us to join the

Church." The next step, naturally, is to prepare for their baptism.

Spiritual preparation necessary

What has taken place in all of these situations? It is simply that the Holy Ghost has come into the presence of those who are teaching and those who are listening and has given them a witness of the mind and will of God. They have felt something they never understood or knew before. Did you notice? You felt it, too, as I told you these experiences, and I felt it. This is explained in the Doctrine and Covenants: "Wherefore, he that preacheth and he that receiveth, understand one another, and both are edified and rejoice together" (D&C 50:22).

We are further told: "The Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith; and if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach" (D&C 42:14). Prayer is the principal means by which this Spirit is obtained and felt.

We must prepare ourselves to work with the Spirit of the Lord.

Certain principles must accompany our teaching through the influence of the Spirit: First, we are to be holy men. This does not mean like the Marlboro man or the macho man—*holy* men. Then we need confidence in the Holy Ghost; believe in it and expect its presence to be with us. And when it comes, we need to recognize its presence and be able to help others to feel the influence that it brings.

One of our great missionaries said: "I bear them my testimony. Then I bear them their testimony. And then I have them bear their testimony back to me."

That's the process. Alma did the same thing when he had explained to the people of the city of Gideon about the coming of Christ and the redemption that would be provided for those who would accept Him and

be baptized, he said: "And now my beloved brethren, do you believe these things? Behold, I say unto you, yea, I know that ye believe them; and the way that I know ye believe them is by the manifestation of the

Spirit which is in me" (Alma 7:17). To this I bear testimony, after many wonderful experiences of the influence of the Holy Ghost, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder John H. Groberg

My dear brethren, I ask that our faith be united so the Lord's Spirit may touch our hearts.

Personal and family histories

I would like to begin by asking a question. (Don't raise your hand; just think about it.) How many of you, regardless of age, have your personal and family histories up to date?

As bearers of the priesthood, we have an obligation to follow the counsel of the prophet. President Kimball has made it abundantly clear that it is very important to write our personal and family histories. It is so important that this August the Church is sponsoring, in Salt Lake City, a great World Conference on Records to help all of us, and the whole world, better understand the vital importance of these histories and to learn much about how to write them.

Why is the writing of personal and family histories so important? There are many reasons. I will focus on just a few.

By writing personal and family histories and doing the research required thereby, we inevitably have our hearts turned to our fathers as well as to our children. The Lord says this must happen, "lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Mal. 4:6). Let us not be part of a curse.

Also, by writing personal and family histories, we are helped im-

measurably in gaining a true, eternal perspective of life. Writing our histories with the proper blend of fact and feeling (and so often, feelings in spiritual things are the real facts) gives us a deep spiritual insight into the meaning and purpose of our lives.

I wonder if, as in so many things, we don't deny ourselves this deeper spiritual insight by simply neglecting to write our histories.

Becoming sensitive to spiritual things

Some people say, "I don't have anything to record. Nothing spiritual happens to me." I say, "Start recording, and spiritual things will happen. They are there all the time, but we become more sensitive to them as we write."

Writing our histories will certainly help us keep our eyes on the most important of all goals—even the goal of eternal life.

As we contemplate what those before us have gone through that we might be here, as we sense their faith and courage and feel their love for us and our love for them, we realize what is really important. We begin to comprehend the eternity of the family. We gain great insight into the things of God, and we are not the same. We talk and act differently—for we have a deepened understanding of eternity. We realize that so-called problems are only what

we see when we take our eye off our eternal goal.

The priesthood we hold is the power to bless others. The priesthood is eternal; thus, the blessings of the priesthood are eternal. Every use of the priesthood has eternal significance—including the writing of personal and family histories.

We have all been thrilled and humbled by the announcement of the new temples. I wonder how many personal histories written in the last few days have recorded great moving expressions of gratitude to God for earnestly prayed-for and sincerely sacrificed-for temples? I wonder how many personal histories will yet record such great feelings of gratitude as the future unfolds?

Writing motivates righteousness

Writing histories should be a great motivation to do what is right. You young men, how many of your histories record, "I will serve a mission; I will live worthy to go to the temple; I know President Kimball is a prophet; I will follow his direction"?

I ask that every bearer of the priesthood resolve to do what is necessary to write in his personal history.

"Today I went to the temple and received my endowments"; or, "Today I went to the temple, where our family was sealed together"; or, "Today I went to the temple and did the work for my great grandfather (or other ancestors)"; or, "Today I went to the temple with my brother or friend or neighbor and witnessed their sealing."

If you resolve to do it, you will do it. Do not let anything stand in your way.

Example showing spiritual strength for posterity

There is something eternal in the very nature of writing, as is so

graphically illustrated by the scriptures themselves. In a very real sense, our properly written histories are a very important part of our family scripture and become a great source of spiritual strength to us and to our posterity.

For example, let me give you a brief incident from a family history in Hawaii. It involves sacrifice and temple blessings and true eternal perspective.

In the early 1900s, a young father and his family joined the Church in Hawaii. He was enthused about his new-found religion, and after two years of membership both he and his eldest son held the priesthood. They prospered and enjoyed the fellowship of the little branch. They anxiously looked forward to being sealed as a family for eternity in the temple soon to be completed in Laie.

Then, as so often happens, a test crossed their path. One of their daughters became ill with an unknown disease and was taken away to a strange hospital. People in Hawaii were understandably wary of unknown diseases, as such diseases had wrought so much havoc there.

The concerned family went to church the next Sunday, looking forward to the strength and understanding they would receive from their fellow members. It was a small branch. This young father and his son very often took the responsibility for blessing and passing the sacrament. This was one such Sunday. They reverently broke the bread while the congregation sang the sacrament hymn. When the hymn was finished, the young father began to kneel to offer the sacrament prayer. Suddenly the branch president, realizing who was at the sacred table, sprang to his feet. He pointed his finger and cried, "Stop. You can't touch the sacrament. Your daughter has an unknown disease. Leave immediately while someone else fixes

new sacrament bread. We can't have you here. Go."

How would you react? What would you do?

The stunned father slowly stood up. He searchingly looked at the branch president, then at the congregation. Then, sensing the depth of anxiety and embarrassment from all, he motioned to his family and they quietly filed out of the chapel.

Not a word was said as, with faces to the ground, they moved along the dusty trail to their small home. The young son noticed the firmness in his father's clenched fists and the tenseness of his set jaw. When they entered their home they all sat in a circle, and the father said, "We will be silent until I am ready to speak." All sorts of thoughts went through the mind of this young boy. He envisioned his father coming up with many novel ways of getting revenge. Would they kill the branch president's pigs, or burn his house, or join another church? He could hardly wait to see what would happen.

Five minutes, ten minutes, fifteen minutes—not a sound. He glanced at his father. His eyes were closed, his mouth was set, his fingers clenched, but no sound. Twenty minutes, twenty-five minutes—still nothing. Then he noticed a slight relaxing of his father's hands, a small tremor on his father's lips, then a barely perceptible sob. He looked at his father—tears were trickling down his cheeks from closed eyes. Soon he noticed his mother was crying also, then one child, then another, and soon the whole family.

Finally, the father opened his eyes, cleared his throat, and announced, "I am now ready to speak. Listen carefully." He slowly turned to his wife and said, meaningfully, "I love you." Then turning to each child, he told them individually, "I love you. I love all of you and I

want us to be together, forever, as a family. And the only way that can be is for all of us to be good members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and be sealed by his holy priesthood in the temple. This is not the branch president's church. It is the Church of Jesus Christ. We will not let any man or any amount of hurt or embarrassment or pride keep us from being together forever. Next Sunday we will go back to church. We will stay by ourselves until our daughter's sickness is known, but we will go back."

This great man had proper eternal perspective.

The daughter's health problem was resolved; the family did go to the temple when it was completed. The children did remain faithful and were likewise sealed to their own families in the temple as time went on. Today over 100 souls in this family are active members of the Church and call their father, grandfather, and great-grandfather blessed because he kept his eyes on eternity, because he used his priesthood to bless his family, and because he recorded his feelings. How the heart of this father turned to his children, and how his children's hearts turned to him.

Influence of our histories

All of you have similar incidents in your families. Search them out. Record them. Live by them, and pass them on to your posterity.

I have a strong feeling that when this life is over, our personal and family histories and the influence they wield will be of much greater importance than we now think.

Brethren, this is the work of the Lord. I testify that he lives and that he has great influence in our lives. May we have this understanding of eternity and see and feel and record

his influence in our lives, I do humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder W. Grant Bangerter, a member of the First Quorum of the

Seventy, has addressed us, followed by Elder John H. Groberg, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

We shall now be pleased to listen to President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency.

President Marion G. Romney

My beloved brethren, I have enjoyed this meeting very much. I have two talks here, and I have been thinking about which one I had better give. Both of them are too long, and we have already been well fed in this priesthood meeting.

Grateful for priesthood responsibilities

It's a great thing to hold the priesthood of God, to represent him in the world. I am very grateful for his mercies unto me—the great opportunities that he has given me in my life to serve him. From the time I was a child, I have had a priesthood responsibility that I have tried to fulfill, and I want to express my appreciation to the Lord in the hearing of all of you brethren here tonight; I want him to know that I am grateful for the opportunities I have had in my life, for my ancestors on both my paternal and maternal side.

I have had association with the General Authorities now for about forty years, serving with them, and I have enjoyed my labors very much. I can bear witness to the righteousness of the men with whom I have labored. It's a great thing to labor with men like President Kimball and President Tanner. They are men without guile. They are men who do Herculean tasks, who labor far beyond their normal strength and who are held up and prospered by the power of the Lord that rests upon

them. I am grateful for my opportunity of laboring with them, and I am grateful for the power that I have felt here tonight in these talks that have been given so well and with so much spirit.

Pray for spirit of discernment

I want to leave you my testimony and express my desire to remain faithful all the days of my life. I pray to the Lord for discernment that I can enjoy the promptings of the Spirit. There are many scriptures that are very dear to me, but one that has been perhaps as useful to me as any other scripture I can remember is the statement of the Lord that "the Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world; and the Spirit enlighteneth every man through the world, that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit.

"And every one that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit cometh unto God, even the Father.

"And the Father teacheth him of the covenant [of the gospel]" (D&C 84:46-48).

Try, to live, brethren, so that you can have the Spirit with you in all your activities. Pray for the spirit of discernment that you may hear the promptings of the Spirit and understand them and then pray for courage to do them, to follow the guidance of the Spirit. This is a great era of the world's history in which to live. We are living in the dispensation of the fulness of times.

Live lives that preach the gospel

We are moving into the time spoken of by the Savior that will try men's souls. We are God's anointed priesthood. There is no doubt about that, and he expects us to be true and faithful and show the way to the world to escape the destruction that will certainly come upon the wicked. And our responsibility is to live lives that will preach the gospel, as well as to quote the scriptures as we are taught. We must live so that men seeing us will know that we are living by the principles of eternal life.

I love you and want to serve you all I can as long as I live. I want to be worthy to stand with my brethren of the General Authorities and my brethren, laymen in the Church. I don't think all the good people in the Church are General Authorities. I think your struggles, your service, and your daily lives are a witness which the Lord will accept and bless you for. I bear you this witness and pray that the Lord will bless every man and boy who holds the priesthood, that we will magnify our callings and receive the rewards of faithful servants. And I ask this blessing upon all of you in the name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has been our concluding speaker.

Sessions of the conference tomorrow will be broadcast to a large audience in many parts of the United States and Canada over the many television and radio stations cooperating to provide extensive coverage of this conference. Many radio stations will broadcast conference tomorrow morning (Sunday) in major cities of Mexico and Central America, and by satellite transmission in Australia, Spain, and countries of South America.

The nationwide CBS radio Tabernacle Choir broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 Sunday morning. Those desiring to attend must be in their seats before 9:15 A.M.

As you leave this priesthood meeting tonight, we remind you to obey traffic rules, to use caution, and to be courteous in driving.

The beautiful music for this priesthood session has been furnished by the Aaronic Priesthood choir. We are grateful to you young men for your inspiring music and express sincere thanks for the service you have given here tonight.

The choir will close this meeting with "Praise to the Man," following which Elder Teddy E. Brewerton, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy and Executive Administrator of the Brazil Area, will offer the benediction.

The choir sang "Praise to the Man."

Elder Teddy E. Brewerton offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY MORNING MEETING

FOURTH SESSION

The fourth session of the general conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 6, 1980. President N. Eldon Tanner conducted this session.

Music for the session was provided by the Tabernacle Choir with Jerold Ottley conducting and John Longhurst at the organ, and the Fayette New York Branch choir with Robert B. Winebrenner conducting and Alma Jean Porschet at the organ.

Prior to the beginning of the session, the Tabernacle Choir sang the hymn "High on the Mountain Top" without announcement.

President Tanner then made the following remarks:

President N. Eldon Tanner

President Spencer W. Kimball, who is in Fayette, New York, has asked me to conduct this session.

We extend a cordial welcome to all present this morning in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on Temple Square in this, the fourth session, of the 150th Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We also welcome those who are seated in the overflow congregation in the Salt Palace and those tuned to the conference by radio and television. Elders Bernard P. Brockbank and Robert L. Backman preside in the Salt Palace.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders, and officers and members of the Church from many lands who have assembled to

worship and to counsel together in this conference.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Jerold Ottley with John Longhurst at the organ, is providing the music for this session. The Choir opened these services by singing "High on the Mountain Top" and will now sing "Jesus, Savior," following which Elder Robert D. Hales, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy and Executive Administrator of the Europe West Area will offer the invocation.

The Tabernacle Choir sang the anthem "Jesus, Savior."

Elder Robert D. Hales offered the invocation.

President Tanner

Today we celebrate the Sesquicentennial of the Church. It was organized 150 years ago today on April 6, 1830 in a rustic farmhouse owned by Peter Whitmer, Sr. and located in Fayette, New York. President Spencer W. Kimball, President of the Church, is in Fayette this morning with a party including Elder Gordon B. Hinckley of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Elder Hugh W. Pinnock of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and Elder Eldred G. Smith, Patriarch Emeritus.

Through the miracle of satellite transmission, we will now join President Kimball at the Peter Whitmer farm in Western New York, where he will address us.

President Spencer W. Kimball

My dear brothers and sisters, it is a deeply moving and wonderful experience to stand here today where the Prophet Joseph Smith stood 150 years ago. We came here last night by jet airplane from Salt Lake City. We made the trip in a matter of a half-dozen hours, flying eastward over the broad expanse of this beautiful land where long ago our forebears painfully traveled westward in search of a place where they could be free of persecution and could worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience.

We are here, this lovely Easter morning, in the reconstructed farmhouse of Peter Whitmer, Sr. It has been faithfully restored for this occasion to bring to us anew the recollection of the all-important and significant event which occurred here a century and a half ago. In the years to come, it will be visited by good people from over the earth who will wish to stand where I stand today.

Organization of the Church

In this very location on April 6, 1830, there assembled a small group to formally organize The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They were believers in the testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith that in a grove of trees not many miles from here, on a spring day in the year 1820, he beheld in vision God the Eternal Father and his Son, the resurrected Lord, Jesus Christ. There followed in the intervening years visitations of other resurrected heavenly beings. From the soil of Cumorah's Hill, a few miles to the west of here, Joseph obtained from the angel Moroni the records of a people who anciently inhabited this land; and,

through the gift and power of God, he translated that record, now known as the Book of Mormon. A substantial part of that work of translation was accomplished in this Whitmer home.

On that historic Tuesday of April 6, 1830, one and a half centuries ago, six men from those assembled in this house organized the Church as a religious society. Three of the descendants of those men are here with us today—Sister Lorena Horner Normandeau, a great-granddaughter of Joseph Smith; Eldred G. Smith, a second great-grandson of Hyrum Smith; and Melvin Thomas Smith, a great-grandson of Samuel Harrison Smith.

Sure and glorious future

Standing here today we review in our minds the mighty faith and works of those who, from this humble beginning, gave so much to help move the Church to its present wondrous stature; and more importantly, we behold through the eye of faith a vision of its sure and glorious future.

Now, my brothers and sisters, with the future before us, and sensing deeply the responsibilities and divine mission of the restored Church on this sacred occasion, the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles declare to the world a proclamation. We have felt it appropriate to issue this statement from here, where the Church began. Accordingly, I shall ask Elder Gordon B. Hinckley of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, to speak in my behalf and in behalf of my brethren, to read this proclamation to you and to the world.

Proclamation

From the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 6, 1980

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized 150 years ago today. On this sesquicentennial anniversary we issue to the world a proclamation concerning its progress, its doctrine, its mission, and its message.

On April 6, 1830, a small group assembled in the farmhouse of Peter Whitmer in Fayette Township in the state of New York. Six men participated in the formal organization procedures, with Joseph Smith as their leader. From that modest beginning in a rural area, this work has grown consistently and broadly, as men and women in many lands have embraced the doctrine and entered the waters of baptism. There are now almost four and a half million living members, and the Church is stronger and growing more rapidly than at any time in its history. Congregations of Latter-day Saints are found throughout North, Central, and South America; in the nations of Europe; in Asia; in Africa; in Australia and the islands of the South Pacific; and in other areas of the world. The gospel restored through the instrumentality of Joseph Smith is presently taught in forty-six languages and in eighty-one nations. From that small meeting held in a farmhouse a century and a half ago, the Church has grown until today it includes nearly twelve thousand organized congregations.

We testify that this restored gospel was introduced into the world by the marvelous appearance of God the Eternal Father and his Son, the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ. That most glorious manifestation marked the beginning of the fulfillment of the promise of Peter, who prophesied of "the times of restitution of all things,

which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began," this in preparation for the coming of the Lord to reign personally upon the earth (Acts 3:21).

We solemnly affirm that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is in fact a restoration of the Church established by the Son of God, when in mortality he organized his work upon the earth; that it carries his sacred name, even the name of Jesus Christ; that it is built upon a foundation of Apostles and prophets, he being the chief cornerstone; that its priesthood, in both the Aaronic and Melchizedek orders, was restored under the hands of those who held it anciently: John the Baptist, in the case of the Aaronic; and Peter, James, and John in the case of the Melchizedek.

We declare that the Book of Mormon was brought forth by the gift and power of God and that it stands beside the Bible as another witness of Jesus the Christ, the Savior and Redeemer of mankind. Together they testify of his divine sonship.

We give our witness that the doctrines and practices of the Church encompass salvation and exaltation not only for those who are living, but also for the dead, and that in sacred temples built for this purpose a great vicarious work is going forward in behalf of those who have died, so that all men and women of all generations may become the beneficiaries of the saving ordinances of the gospel of the Master. This great, selfless labor is one of the distinguishing features of this restored Church of Jesus Christ.

We affirm the sanctity of the family as a divine creation and declare that God our Eternal Father will hold parents accountable to rear their children in light and truth, teaching

them "to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord" (D&C 68:28). We teach that the most sacred of all relationships, those family associations of husbands and wives and parents and children, may be continued eternally when marriage is solemnized under the authority of the holy priesthood exercised in temples dedicated for these divinely authorized purposes.

We bear witness that all men and women are sons and daughters of God, each accountable to him; that our lives here on earth are part of an eternal plan; that death is not the end, but rather a transition from this to another sphere of purposeful activity made possible through the Atonement of the Redeemer of the world; and that we shall there have the opportunity of working and growing toward perfection.

We testify that the spirit of prophecy and revelation is among us. "We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God" (Articles of Faith 1:9). The heavens are not sealed; God continues to speak to his children through a prophet empowered to declare his word, now as he did anciently.

The mission of the Church today, as it has been from the beginning, is to teach the gospel of Christ to all the world in obedience to the commandment given by the Savior prior to his ascension and repeated in modern revelation: "Go ye into all the world, preach the gospel to every creature, acting in the authority which I have given you, baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (D&C 68:8).

Through the Prophet Joseph Smith the Lord revealed these words of solemn warning: "Hearken ye people from afar; and ye that are

upon the islands of the sea, listen together.

"For verily the voice of the Lord is unto all men, and there is none to escape; and there is no eye that shall not see, neither ear that shall not hear, neither heart that shall not be penetrated.

"And the rebellious shall be pierced with much sorrow; for their iniquities shall be spoken upon the housetops, and their secret acts shall be revealed.

"And the voice of warning shall be unto all people, by the mouths of my disciples, whom I have chosen in these last days" (D&C 1:1-4).

It is our obligation, therefore, to teach faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, to plead with the people of the earth for individual repentance, to administer the sacred ordinances of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost—all of this under the authority of the priesthood of God.

It is our responsibility to espouse and follow an inspired program of instruction and activity, and to build and maintain appropriate facilities for the accomplishment of this, that all who will hear and accept may grow in understanding of doctrine and develop in principles of Christian service to their fellowmen.

As we stand today on the summit of 150 years of progress, we contemplate humbly and gratefully the sacrifices of those who have gone before us, many of whom gave their lives in testimony of this truth. We are thankful for their faith, for their example, for their mighty labors and willing consecrations for this cause which they considered more precious than life itself. They have passed to us a remarkable heritage. We are resolved to build on that heritage for the blessing and benefit of those who follow, who will constitute ever enlarging numbers of faithful men and

women throughout the earth.

This is God's work. It is his kingdom we are building. Anciently the prophet Daniel spoke of it as a stone cut out of the mountain without hands, which was to roll forth to fill the whole earth (see Dan. 2:31-45). We invite the honest in heart everywhere to listen to the teachings of our missionaries who are sent forth as messengers of eternal truth, to study and learn, and to ask God, our Eternal Father, in the name of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, if these things are true.

"And if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

"And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things" (Moro. 10:4-5).

We call upon all men and women to forsake evil and turn to God; to work together to build that brotherhood which must be recognized when we truly come to know that God is our Father and we are his children; and to worship him and his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of mankind. In the authority of the Holy Priesthood in us vested, we bless the seekers of truth wherever they may be and invoke the favor of the Almighty upon all men and nations whose God is the Lord, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Following Elder Hinckley's reading of the proclamation, the Fayette Branch choir sang the hymn "The Morning Breaks; the Shadows Flee" without announcement.

President Spencer W. Kimball

My beloved brothers and sisters, I am grateful for this opportunity. It was a thrilling experience to speak to you a few minutes ago from the Peter Whitmer farm home where the Church was organized. It is now an inspiring experience to be in this lovely chapel in Fayette, Seneca County, New York, because it represents something of the marvelous progress made by the Church during the 150 years of its history.

"He is risen"

My brothers and sisters, today we not only celebrate the Sesquicentennial of the organization of the Church, but also the greatest event in human history since the birth of Christ on this day 1,980 years ago. Today is Easter Sunday.

Immediately following the semi-annual conference last October, Sister Kimball and I accompanied

President and Sister N. Eldon Tanner and others to the Holy Land for the dedication of the Orson Hyde Memorial Gardens on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. During the few days we were there, we retraced the footsteps of Jesus.

We saw Bethlehem and Nazareth, the Sea of Galilee, and the River Jordan. We visited the Mount of Transfiguration and Jacob's Well, the Garden of Gethsemane and Golgotha. We sat and meditated in the empty tomb. And then we walked out of the tomb into the sunlit garden where early in the morning the angels spoke to the two Marys and said, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen" (Luke 24:5-6).

That is my witness to all within the sound of my voice. He is risen! He lived. He died. He was resurrected—the Son of God, who opened the door of immortality to all men

and the blessings of eternal life to those who live his commandments. Of his reality and divinity, I add my solemn testimony this beautiful Easter Sabbath

Progress of the Church

In the proclamation just read by Elder Gordon B. Hinckley, we have reviewed briefly the events of the coming forth of the Church as a restoration of the original church established by the Savior himself when he was upon the earth. We have borne witness to the world of the miraculous and wonderful events which preceded that restoration, and also we have spoken of the remarkable progress of the work in the years that have followed. For 85 of those 150 years, I have been a living witness of this progress.

Solemn testimony

Knowing full well that before long, in the natural course of events, I must stand before the Lord and give an accounting of my words, I now add my personal and solemn testimony that God, the Eternal Father, and the risen Lord, Jesus Christ, appeared to the boy Joseph Smith. I testify that the Book of Mormon is a translation of an ancient record of nations who once lived in this western hemisphere, where they prospered and became mighty when they kept the commandments of God, but who were largely destroyed through terrible civil wars when they forgot God. This book bears testimony of the living reality of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Savior and Redeemer of mankind.

I testify that the holy priesthood, both Aaronic and Melchizedek, with authority to act in the name of God, was restored to the earth by John the Baptist, and Peter, James, and John;

that other keys and authority were subsequently restored; and that the power and authority of those various divine bestowals are among us today. Of these things I bear solemn witness to all within the sound of my voice. I promise in the name of the Lord that all who give heed to our message, and accept and live the gospel, will grow in faith and understanding. They will have an added measure of peace in their lives and in their homes and by the power of the Holy Ghost will speak similar words of testimony and truth. I do this and leave my blessing upon you in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

I now invite you to join me in a prayer of dedication:

Dedicatory Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. On this anniversary day, we are met where The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized under revelation from thee 150 years ago. Our hearts are filled with gratitude for thy marvelous blessings, so generously bestowed. As we review the past, we are subdued in contemplating the works of those who have gone before us, and particularly the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum who, with their life's blood, sealed their testimonies of the sacred things which occurred in this area.

We are grateful for all who have labored with faith in the nations of the earth to bring the Church to its present stature. Standing today at this milestone of history, we look with assurance to the future. We know that with thy direction thy work will roll on for the blessing of thy children of all generations and throughout the earth; and that where there are now hundreds there will be thousands; and that, whereas thy work is established today in many nations, it must and will roll forth over the

whole earth until men everywhere shall bow the knee and give homage to thee and thy Son.

We plead with thee, our Father, that thou wilt touch the hearts of the rulers of nations that they will open their doors to thy servants until truth shall cover the earth as the waters cover the mighty deep.

Today, dear Father, in the authority of the holy priesthood, which thou hast given us, we dedicate these structures which stand on the farm of Peter Whitmer, Sr.: the restored log farmhouse, with its furnishings, as a reminder of the humble beginnings from which thy mighty work has grown; the later Whitmer home, as a place of residence for thy servants who will labor here as missionaries among the many strangers who will be attracted to this place of history; and this beautiful chapel and visitors' center, in which we meet today, that it may be a place of sacred worship, a place of instruction, a sanctuary from the world, and a place of hospitality to the scores of thousands who will come here as visitors. May thy Holy Spirit abide here. May thy protecting power be made manifest in the preservation of these important scenes of history. May knowledge of thee increase and testimony of thy divine Son strengthen in the hearts of the many who will come with inter-

est and depart with added faith and knowledge.

Father in Heaven, on this day of dedication we pray for thy servants and thy people everywhere throughout the earth. Bless those who walk in righteousness, and let thy Holy Spirit be with them. Strengthen within the heart of each a renewed sense of dedication to thee and thy everlasting truth.

We love thee, our Father. We love thy holy Son. We give our witness to the world concerning him and thee, and ask that thou wilt accept of our thanks, our labors, and our love, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Following President Kimball's talk and dedicatory prayer, the Fayette Branch choir sang "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet" without announcement.

Elder Hugh W. Pinnock

President Spencer W. Kimball has just addressed us and offered the dedicatory prayer. The Fayette Branch choir has sung "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet." Our next speaker will be Elder Gordon B. Hinckley of the Quorum of the Twelve.

Elder Gordon B. Hinckley

My beloved brethren and sisters, my heart is filled with gratitude for the opportunity to be here. This beautiful new Fayette chapel was made possible by the generosity of some of those present today. We thank you for your great kindness. I am particularly honored to be here with President Kimball on this historic occasion.

Joseph Smith testified of Christ

It is a pleasing coincidence that the birthday of the Church falls on Easter Sunday. Today the entire Christian world pauses to remember the most remarkable and significant event in history, the resurrection from the dead of the Son of God, the

Savior of mankind.

To a world plagued with doubt over the actuality of that resurrection, Joseph Smith testified unequivocally of the risen, living Christ. That testimony was spoken in many ways and under many circumstances.

First, he spoke out of the experience of his incomparable vision of the Father and the Son, whom he both saw and heard. They were individual personages of form and substance, of body and voice. They spoke with him as one man speaketh with another (see Ex. 33:11).

Secondly, as the instrumentality through which came the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith has borne witness of the Savior to all who have read and will read that volume. Its constantly recurring message is a testimony of the promised Messiah who came to the earth and gave his life for the sins of all mankind, and who rose triumphant from the grave as "the first fruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15:20).

Thirdly, Joseph Smith bore witness of the living Lord through the Church organized here on these grounds. This church carries the name of Jesus Christ, and its members are expected by precept and example to bear witness of him in whose name they meet and serve.

Fourthly, Joseph Smith testified of the risen Lord, when by the power of his prophetic office he spoke these remarkable words:

"And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

"For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—

"That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God" (D&C 76:22-24).

Finally, he sealed that testimony with his life's blood, dying a martyr to the truths of which he had spoken concerning the Redeemer of the world, in whose name he had carried on his ministry.

And so, brothers and sisters, on this day of Easter, when we remember Him who overcame death, we speak with gratitude of the Prophet who was a preeminent witness of the living Christ.

Rise of the Church

As we are assembled at the place of the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ, I picture in imagination that April 6 of 1830. The few who believed in Joseph's mission gathered on that day, which was designated by divine revelation as "being one thousand eight hundred and thirty years since the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the flesh" (D&C 20:1).

One wonders whether any of that group, other than Joseph Smith who saw with prophetic vision, had any idea of the greatness of the thing they were beginning. From this rural area, from the simple log farmhouse on these grounds, there was to grow by constant accretion an organization worldwide in its scope and numbering millions in its membership.

Those of us who are here today, reliving the events of history, are filled with emotion as our words and faces are caught by the wondrous technique of television, flung to a satellite high in the heavens, then fed back to an earth station and placed on a screen before those in the great Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, all of this with only the lapse in time between you and us of less than three-quarters of a second. As we think of this miracle, our minds are drawn by contrast to chapters in that epic and painful movement of the Church from these

farmlands of rural New York to the valley of the Great Salt Lake, and thence to the nations of the earth.

Following the organization of the Church, persecution soon raised its ugly head. A decision was made to move to Kirtland, Ohio.

Here they built their beautiful temple, and in its prayer of dedication the young prophet invoked the powers of heaven that the Church "may come forth out of the wilderness of darkness, and shine forth fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners" (D&C 109:73).

But the fulfillment of that prayer would not come quickly. The peace of Kirtland was shattered by insults, financial distress, the tarring and feathering of their leader.

In Missouri they built another center. This was to have been Zion. That dream was blasted with rifle fire, the burning of homes, the wolf cries of the night-riding mobs, the illegal expulsion order, followed by the painful march across the bottomlands of the Mississippi and the crossing of the river to a temporary asylum in Illinois.

Their prophet did not make that journey with the fleeing exiles. During the bitter winter of 1838-39 he was imprisoned in the cold, miserable basement cell of a Missouri jail, the victim of a false arrest.

Bereft, destitute, lonely, he cried out in those circumstances: "O God, where art thou?" (D&C 121:1).

Prophecy fulfilled

In the revealed response to that prayer came these remarkable words of prophecy:

"The ends of the earth shall inquire after thy name, and fools shall have thee in derision, and hell shall rage against thee;

"While the pure in heart, and the wise, and the noble, and the vir-

tuous, shall seek counsel, and authority, and blessings constantly from under thy hand" (D&C 122:1-2).

My brethren and sisters, we who are here today and you who are assembled in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City—all of us who are a part of this great kingdom established among the nations of the earth are the fulfillment of that prophecy, as is the institution of the Church of which we are members.

Joseph Smith never saw the day of which we are a part, except through the vision of a seer. He died that sultry June 27, 1844, at Carthage, Illinois.

John Taylor, who was then with him, summed up his work in these words: "Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it. . . . He lived great, and he died great in the eyes of God and his people" (D&C 135:3).

Standing at the crest of a century and a half since the organization of the Church, we are inclined to exclaim, "What hath God wrought through the instrumentality of his servant Joseph!"

Testimony

I give you my testimony of him. He was the ordained servant of God, this Joseph raised up to become the mighty prophet of this dispensation—"a seer, a translator, a prophet, an apostle of Jesus Christ" (D&C 21:1). To that witness I add another word of testimony, that President Spencer W. Kimball, with us today, is Joseph Smith's rightful successor, the prophet of our time, the President of the church which was organized here 150 years ago today. Its history has been heroic. It stands today a tower of strength, an anchor of certainty in an unsettled

world. Its future is secure as the church and kingdom of God, of which I bear solemn witness in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Following Elder Hinckley's remarks, the Tabernacle Choir sang the hymn "Praise to the Man" without announcement.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Gordon B. Hinckley, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, has just

addressed us from the new chapel in Fayette, New York, near the site of a replica of the log cabin where the Church was organized 150 years ago today.

Following Elder Hinckley, the Tabernacle Choir sang "Praise to the Man."

The Choir and congregation will now render "Now Let Us Rejoice," following which we shall be pleased to hear from Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The choir and congregation sang "Now Let Us Rejoice."

Elder Boyd K. Packer

Humble members

That day, 150 years ago, came and went quietly.

Those who met in that humble farmhouse to organize The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were not—indeed they were not—the prominent men of their day.

Only a few, and they of most humble prospect, were party to it. It was as Paul had told the Corinthians:

"Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

"But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty" (1 Cor. 1:26-27).

This sacred event, witnessed by those few, had been preceded by marvelous spiritual manifestations.

In preparation for it the Father and the Son had appeared to one of them. He had been called as the prophet.

Angelic messengers had instructed them.

The principle of revelation, thought by most to have concluded in centuries past, was demonstrated to be ongoing.

The Book of Mormon had been published, and its pages carried a testimony of the prophet Moroni that angels have not "ceased to appear unto the children of men." Nor will they, "so long as time shall last, or the earth shall stand, or there shall be one man upon the face thereof to be saved" (Moro. 7:36).

These humble men from among the common folks of that day were to become Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, as surely as Peter, the fisherman, and the other common men had been made Apostles in ancient times.

And so the angels came, a continuation of them, to teach these men, to confer the priesthood upon them, to deliver keys of authority to them; for these were things that men could not assume, nor take to themselves.

Above all, the Lord Himself appeared and reappeared, "That the fulness of my gospel might be proclaimed by the weak and the simple unto the ends of the world" (D&C 1:23).

Days of beginning not far past

Those days of beginning were not so far away as we sometimes think. There sits behind me on the stand Elder LeGrand Richards of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

He remembers personally some of those who helped to open this work.

He attended the dedication of the Salt Lake Temple and remembers President Wilford Woodruff very clearly. He heard him speak on several occasions.

Yesterday Elder Faust mentioned the incident where Wilford Woodruff, leading a group of immigrants, was inspired not to take an ill-fated boat. Brother Richards heard Brother Woodruff give that sermon, name a number in the audience, and say to them, "If I had not followed that prompting, you would not be here today."

President Woodruff was only two years younger than the Prophet Joseph Smith, and he had been an Apostle for five years when the Prophet was martyred.

Hands we have touched have touched the hands that shaped the beginnings of this dispensation.

Rank and file carry gospel spirit

Some things have not changed very much over the years. Some things have not changed at all. This work has been brought through 150 years by ordinary men and women and children across the world.

The rank and file of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, present and past, who now number in

the millions, have each carried their part.

Lives are shaped through the influence of obscure, faithful members who carry the spirit of the gospel.

When once I tried to thank a great teacher and patriarch, William E. Berrett, he quickly passed the credit back to one who had taught him. An old convert from Norway was called to teach a group of mischievous Aaronic Priesthood boys. They were greatly amused by his broken English, but somehow the Spirit polished his words and soon the boys responded.

I have heard Brother Berrett testify on more than one occasion, "We could warm our hands by the fire of his faith."

Examples

President Heber J. Grant once heard Bishop Millen Atwood preach a sermon in the Thirteenth Ward, "I was studying grammar at the time," he said, "and he made some grammatical errors in his talk.

"I wrote down his first sentence, smiled to myself, and said: 'I am going to get . . . enough material to last me for the entire winter in my night school grammar class.' We had to take . . . four sentences a week, that were not grammatically correct, together with our corrections.

"... But I did not write anything more after that first sentence—not a word; and when Millen Atwood stopped preaching, tears were rolling down my cheeks, tears of gratitude and thanksgiving that welled up into my eyes because of the marvelous testimony which that man bore of the divine mission of Joseph Smith, the Prophet of God. . . .

He continued: "Although it is now more than sixty-five years since I listened to that sermon, it is just as vivid today, and the sensations and

feelings that I had are just as fixed with me, as they were the day I heard it. . . .

"... the one thing above all others that has impressed me has been the spirit, the inspiration of the living God that an individual had, when proclaiming the Gospel, and not the language. . . . I have endeavored, from that day to this . . . to judge men and women by the spirit they have; for I have learned absolutely, that it is the spirit that giveth life and understanding, and not the letter—the letter killeth" (*Improvement Era*, Apr. 1939, p. 201).

Joseph Millett

Whenever we seek for true testimony we come, finally, to ordinary men and women and children.

Let me quote from the diary of Joseph Millett, a little-known missionary of an earlier time. Called on a mission to Canada, he went alone and on foot. In Canada, during the wintertime, he said:

"I felt my weakness. A poor, ill-clothed, ignorant boy in my teens, thousands of miles from home among strangers.

"The promise in my blessing and the encouraging words of President Young to me, with the faith I had in the gospel, kept me up.

"Many times I would turn into the woods . . . in some desolate place with a heart full, wet eyes, to call on my master for strength or aid.

"I believed the Gospel of Christ. I had never preached it. I knew not where to find it in the scriptures."

That didn't matter so much, for, "I had to give my Bible to the boatman at Digby for passage across the sound."

Years later, Joseph Millett, with his large family, was suffering through very, very difficult times. He wrote in his journal:

"One of my children came in and said that Brother Newton Hall's folks was out of bread, had none that day.

"I divided our flour in a sack to send up to Brother Hall. Just then Brother Hall came.

"Says I, 'Brother Hall, are you out of flour?'

"'Brother Millett, we have none.'

"'Well, Brother Hall, there is some in that sack. I have divided and was going to send it to you. Your children told mine that you was out.'

"Brother Hall began to cry. He said he had tried others, but could not get any. He went to the cedars and prayed to the Lord, and the Lord told him to go to Joseph Millett.

"'Well Brother Hall, you needn't bring this back. If the Lord sent you for it you don't owe me for it.'"

That night Joseph Millett recorded a remarkable sentence in his journal:

"You can't tell me how good it made me feel to know that the Lord knew there was such a person as Joseph Millett" (Diary of Joseph Millett, holograph, Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City).

The Lord knew Joseph Millett. And He knows all those men and women like him, and they are many. Theirs are the lives that are most worth recording.

This rank and file of the Church—150 years of them—have brought the truth to this generation. It is planted where it is most likely to bear an abundant harvest—in the hearts of the ordinary people.

Glimpse of heaven

When President Kimball first came here as a member of the Twelve, he was asked to sit for a portrait. (Those of us who know him

well know how those hours of sitting still must have bothered him.) To keep him from daydreaming, the painter one day asked an abrupt question:

"Brother Kimball, have you ever been to heaven?"

His answer seemed to be a shock, as he said without hesitation, "Why, yes . . . certainly. I had a glimpse of heaven just before coming to your studio."

He then told of an experience in the temple where he had performed a marriage:

"As the subdued congratulations were extended, a happy father . . . offered his hand and said, 'Brother Kimball, my wife and I are common people and have never been successful, but we *are* immensely proud of our family. . . . This is the last of our eight children to come into this holy house for temple marriage. They, with their companions, are here to participate in the marriage of this, the youngest.' . . .

"I looked at his calloused hands, his rough exterior, and thought to myself, 'Here is a real son of God fulfilling his destiny' " (EN-SIGN, Dec. 1971, p. 36; also in Conference Report, Oct. 1971, p. 152-53).

Pioneers

President J. Reuben Clark told of pioneer members of the Church in these words:

"Day after day, they of the last wagon pressed forward, worn and tired, footsore, sometimes almost disheartened, borne up by their faith that God loved them, that the restored gospel was true, and that the Lord led and directed the Brethren out in front.

He then told of the morning:

" . . . when from out that last wagon floated the [cry] of the newborn babe, and mother love made a

shrine, and Father bowed in reverence before it. But the train must move on. So out into the dust and dirt the last wagon moved again. . . .

"Who will dare to say that angels did not cluster round and guard her and ease her rude bed, for she had given another choice spirit its mortal body" (*Improvement Era*, Nov. 1947, p. 705).

Who would dare to say that angels do not now attend the rank and file of the Church who—

answer the calls to the mission fields,

teach the classes,

pay their tithes and offerings,

seek for the records of their forebears,

work in the temples,

raise their children in faith,

and have brought this work through 150 years?

Day of miracles

There comes a witness, also, from some who have stumbled and fallen but have struggled back and have found the sweet, forgiving, cleansing influence of repentance. They now stand approved of the Lord, clean before Him; His Spirit has returned to them and they are guided by it. Without reviewing the hard lessons of the past they guide others to that Spirit.

Who would dare to say that the day of miracles has ceased? Those things have not changed in 150 years, not changed at all.

For the power and inspiration of the Almighty rests upon this people today as surely as it did in those days of beginning:

"It is by faith that miracles are wrought; and it is by faith that angels appear and minister unto men; wherefore, if these things have ceased wo be unto the children of men, for it is because of unbelief" (Moro. 7:37).

The prophet Moroni taught that angelic messengers would accomplish their work "by declaring the word of Christ unto the chosen vessels of the Lord, that they may bear testimony of him.

"And by so doing, the Lord God prepareth the way that the residue of men may have faith in Christ, that the Holy Ghost may have place in their hearts" (Moro. 7:31-32).

There has come, these last several years, a succession of announcements that show our day to be a day of intense revelation, equaled, perhaps, only in those days of beginning, 150 years ago.

Apostles of Jesus Christ

But then, as now, the world did not believe. They say that ordinary men are not inspired; that there are no prophets, no apostles; that angels do not minister unto men—not to ordinary men.

That doubt and disbelief have not changed. But now, as then, their disbelief cannot change the truth.

We lay no claim to being Apostles of the world—but of the Lord Jesus Christ. The test is not whether men will believe, but whether the Lord has called us—and of that there is no doubt!

We do not talk of those sacred interviews that qualify the servants of the Lord to bear a special witness of Him, for we have been commanded not to do so.

But we are free, indeed, we are obliged, to bear that special witness.

But that witness, the testimony of this work, is not reserved to those few of us who lead the Church. In proper order that witness comes to men and women and children all over the world.

Revelation

Across the world the ordinary members, who might be described as

obscure, bear witness that they were guided to this Church by revelation and that they are guided in their service in it.

Revelation that belongs to the prophet and president of the Church, to speak on matters for the entire Church, rests as well upon all who hold office, each within the limits of his calling.

It rests upon parents who preside over families, and if we will live for it, it will rest upon each of us.

Like all of my Brethren, I too come from among the ordinary people of the Church. I am the seventy-eighth man to be accepted by ordination into the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in this dispensation.

Compared to the others who have been called, I am nowhere near their equal, save it be, perhaps, in the certainty of the witness we share.

I feel compelled, on this 150th anniversary of the Church, to certify to you that I know that the day of miracles has not ceased.

I know that angels minister unto men.

I am a witness to the truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the Only Begotten of the Father; that He has a body of flesh and bone; that He knows those who are His servants here and that He is known of them.

I know that He directs this Church now, as He established it then, through a prophet of God. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

At the conclusion of Elder Packer's address, the Tabernacle Choir sang "And Then Shall Your Light Break Forth" without announcement.

President N. Eldon Tanner

President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will be our concluding speaker.

President Marion G. Romney

My beloved brothers and sisters and friends, today we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the organization of the Church. The Church of which we speak is not a man-made organization; it is exactly what its name implies.

"Thus [said the Lord himself] shall my church be called in the last days, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

"Verily I say unto you all [he continued]: Arise and shine forth, that thy light may be a standard for the nations;

"And that the gathering together upon the land of Zion, and upon her stakes, may be for a defense, and for a refuge from the storm, and from wrath when it shall be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth" (D&C 115:4-6).

Genuineness of Book of Mormon

In the headnote to the twentieth section of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Prophet Joseph wrote: "We obtained of him [Jesus Christ] the following, by the spirit of prophecy and revelation; which not only gave us much information, but also pointed out to us the precise day upon which, according to his will and commandment, we should proceed to organize his Church once more here upon the earth"; and then he added, "The Lord again attests the genuineness of the Book of Mormon."

Since the Lord, as he specified the date on which his Church was to be organized, attested again to "the genuineness of the Book of Mormon" at the same time, in the same revelation, I have concluded that as we observe the sesquicentennial anniversary of the organization of his Church, it will be proper for us to review a few Book of Mormon

teachings. There are many reasons why we should do so. To begin with, the Lord has put us under obligation to teach the Book of Mormon. He said that he sent Moroni to reveal it (see D&C 27:5), and that through his mercy he had given the Prophet Joseph "power . . . to translate [it]" (D&C 20:8; see also D&C 1:29), and that it contains "the truth and the word of God" (D&C 19:26) and "the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles and to the Jews also" (D&C 20:9).

Most correct book

The Prophet Joseph Smith "told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book" (*History of the Church*, 4:461; *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938, p. 39).

Nephi tells us that its contents "shall go from generation to generation as long as the earth shall stand; . . . and the nations who shall possess them [the teachings of the Book of Mormon] shall be judged of them according to the words which are written" (2 Ne. 25:22).

For me there could be no more impelling reason for reading the Book of Mormon than this statement that we who have the Book of Mormon shall be judged by what is written in it.

Moroni says that the very reason the book has been given to us is that we may know the "decrees of God" (Eth. 2:11) set forth therein and by obedience to them escape the calamities which are to follow disobedience.

Remember Book of Mormon teachings

To the early Saints the Lord spoke rather sharply about remembering the Book of Mormon's teachings.

"Your minds in times past," he said to them, "have been darkened because of unbelief, and because you have treated lightly the things you have received—

"Which vanity and unbelief have brought the whole church under condemnation.

"And this condemnation resteth upon the children of Zion, even all.

"And they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon" (D&C 84:54-57).

Prior to this he had told them that "the Book of Mormon and the holy scriptures are given of me for your instruction" (D&C 33:16). On another occasion he had said, "The elders, priests and teachers of this church shall teach the principles of my gospel, which are in . . . the Book of Mormon" (D&C 42:12).

It is, of course, obvious that unless we read, study, and learn the principles which are in the Book of Mormon, we cannot comply with this direction to teach them.

Avoid evil

There is another reason why we should read the Book of Mormon: By doing so we will fill and refresh our minds with a constant flow of that "water" which Jesus said would be in us "a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14). We must obtain a continuing supply of this water if we are to resist evil and retain the blessings of being born again.

The great overall struggle in the world today is, as it has always been, for the souls of men. Every

soul is personally engaged in the struggle, and he makes his fight with what is in his mind. In the final analysis the battleground is, for each individual, within himself. Inevitably he gravitates toward the subjects of his thoughts. Ages ago the wise man thus succinctly stated this great truth: "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7).

If we would escape the lusts of the flesh and build for ourselves and our children great and noble characters, we must keep in our minds and in their minds true and righteous principles for our thoughts and their thoughts to dwell upon.

We must not permit our minds to become surfeited with the interests, things, and practices of the world about us. To do so is tantamount to adopting and going along with them, for the experience of the race sustains the conclusion of him who said that—

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,

*As to be hated needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,*

We first endure, then pity, and then embrace.

(Pope, *Essay on Man*, epistle ii, lines 217, *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, London: Oxford University Press, 1966, p. 383).

If we would avoid adopting the evils of the world, we must pursue a course which will daily feed our minds with and call them back to the things of the Spirit. I know of no better way to do this than by daily reading the Book of Mormon.

Keep truths in mind

In all dispensations, the Lord has counseled his people to keep in their minds and thoughts the truths he has revealed to them. To the early

Saints of this dispensation he said: "Let the solemnities of eternity rest upon your minds" (D&C 43:34). This counsel followed his statement to the elders:

"Ye are not sent forth to be taught, but to teach the children of men the things which I have put into your hands by the power of my Spirit;

"And ye are to be taught from on high" (D&C 43:15-16).

Instructing ancient Israel not to go after "the gods of the people which [were] round about" them (Deut. 6:14), he said:

"Hear, O Israel. . .

"... these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

"And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

"And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

"And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates" (Deut. 6:4, 6-9).

"Search the scriptures" (John 5:39), said Jesus to his carping critics, who, being surfeited with the things of this world, rejected him. In the scriptures they could, if they would, learn the truth about him and the things of eternal life which he taught them.

Meditate on word of God

The Psalmist thus recounts the rewards which follow knowing and meditating upon the word of God:

"O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.

"Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies. . .

"I have more understanding

than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.

"I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.

"I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word.

"I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me.

"How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

"Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every [evil] way.

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps. 119:97-105).

Teachings will assist youth

I am persuaded, my brothers and sisters, that it is irrational to hope to escape the lusts of the world without substituting for them as the subjects of our thoughts the things of the Spirit, and I know that the things of the Spirit are taught with mighty power in the Book of Mormon. I believe with all my heart, for example, that if our young people could come out of our homes thoroughly acquainted with the life of Nephi, imbued with the spirit of his courage and love of truth, they would choose the right when the choice is placed before them.

How marvelous it would be if, when they must make a decision, there would flash into their minds, from long and intimate association with them, the words of Nephi:

"I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them" (1 Ne. 3:7).

And when the going gets rough and temptation to abandon the course

of righteousness presses upon them, they might think of his plea to his wayward brothers:

"Let us be faithful," he said, "in keeping the commandments of the Lord; for behold he is mightier than all the earth, then why not mightier than Laban and his fifty, yea, or even than his tens of thousands?" (1 Ne. 4:1; see also 3:15).

If our young folks become familiar with the teachings of the Book of Mormon, they will not only be inspired by the examples of Nephi, the 2,000 sons of Helaman (see Al. 53), and other great Book of Mormon characters to choose the right, they will also be so schooled in the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ that they will be able to know and understand what is right.

From almost every page of the book, there will come to them a moving testimony that Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Son of the living God, our Redeemer and Savior. This witness alone will be a sustaining anchor in every storm. In the Book of Mormon they will find the plainest explanation of Christ's divine mission and his atonement to be found anywhere in sacred scriptures.

They will be familiar with the great, fundamental, basic virtues; the Book of Mormon is full of instructions concerning them. They will have learned that "to be carnally-minded is death, and [that] to be spiritually-minded is life eternal" (2 Ne. 9:39). They will know that the Lord God delights in chastity and virtue which are "most dear and precious above all things" (Moro. 9:9; see also Jacob 2:28). They will know that a violation of these sacred principles is, in the sight of the Lord, "an abomination . . . above all sins save it be the shedding of innocent blood or denying the Holy Ghost" (Al. 39:5).

They will have learned the folly of putting their trust in the learning

of men or in the riches of this world (see 2 Ne. 9:28-30). As a matter of fact, there is no fundamental virtue about which they will not be taught, for in the Book of Mormon, as has already been said, is to be found "the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ" (D&C 20:9; see also D&C 19:26).

Practice of daily reading to gain Spirit

And so, I counsel you, my beloved brothers and sisters and friends everywhere, to make reading the Book of Mormon a few minutes each day a lifelong practice. All of us need the uninterrupted association with the Spirit of the Lord. We need to take the Holy Spirit for our constant guide that we be not deceived. I am persuaded by my own experience and that of my loved ones, as well as by the statements of the Prophet Joseph Smith, that one can get and keep closer to the Lord by reading the Book of Mormon than by reading any other book. Don't be content with what someone else tells you about what is in it. Drink deeply from the divine fountain itself.

I feel certain that if, in our homes, parents will read from the Book of Mormon prayerfully and regularly, both by themselves and with their children, the spirit of that great book will come to permeate our homes and all who dwell therein. The spirit of reverence will increase; mutual respect and consideration for each other will grow. The spirit of contention will depart. Parents will counsel their children in greater love and wisdom. Children will be more responsive and submissive to the counsel of their parents. Righteousness will increase. Faith, hope, and charity—the pure love of Christ—will abound in our homes and lives, bringing in their wake peace, joy, and happiness.

That we will seek these blessings through reading the Book of Mormon, I humbly pray and leave my blessings with you, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Following President Romney's remarks, the Tabernacle Choir sang "Hosannah Anthem" without announcement.

President N. Eldon Tanner

President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has just spoken to us, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "Hosannah Anthem."

We appreciate the courtesies shown by the owners and operators of the many radio and television stations who offered their facilities as a public service to make the proceedings of this conference available to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

These services are being carried over radio to seventy stations in countries of South America and sixty-one stations in Australia. They are being broadcast in the United States and

Canada over numerous commercial television systems by RCA SATCOM satellite.

Video tapes of sessions of this conference will be sent to television stations in Canada and to members and friends assembled in chapels throughout Great Britain, Germany, France, Switzerland, Holland, Belgium, and Austria.

For the first time, conference will be broadcast over television in the Philippines.

We shall conclude this fourth session of the conference with the Tabernacle Choir singing "Hail to the Brightness of Zion's Glad Morning," after which the benediction will be pronounced by Elder Jack H. Goaslind, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

This conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The Choir sang the hymn "Hail to the Brightness of Zion's Glad Morning."

The benediction was given by Elder Jack H. Goaslind.

SECOND DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

FIFTH SESSION

The fifth and concluding session of the Sesquicentennial conference commenced at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, April 6, 1980. President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

Music for the session was furnished by the Mormon Youth Chorus directed by Robert C. Bowden with Roy M. Darley at the organ and the Fayette New York Branch choir with Robert B. Winebrenner directing and Alma Jean Porschet, organist.

President Romney opened the meeting with the following comments:

President Marion G. Romney

President Spencer W. Kimball, who is at the Fayette New York chapel, has asked me to conduct this session.

We extend a sincere welcome to all assembled this afternoon in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah in the fifth and concluding session of the 150th Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We also welcome those seated in the Salt Palace, where Elders J. Thomas Fyans and Neal A. Maxwell preside, and in the Fayette New York chapel.

Sessions of this conference are being carried over hundreds of radio and television stations to a large audience in the United States and many other parts of the world.

We send our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere participating in these proceedings by radio and television.

Conference is being broadcast by

seven radio stations in Spain and ten radio stations in Taiwan and by video cassettes to members assembled in chapels in Great Britain, France, Germany, Austria, Holland, Switzerland, and Belgium.

The Mormon Youth Chorus with Robert C. Bowden directing and Roy Darley at the organ will begin this service by singing "I Know That My Redeemer Lives." The invocation will be offered by Elder Robert L. Simpson, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy and president of the Los Angeles Temple.

The Mormon Youth Chorus sang the hymn "I Know That My Redeemer Lives."

The invocation was offered by Elder Robert L. Simpson.

President Romney

The Mormon Youth Chorus will now sing "A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief." Following the singing, we shall hear from Elder Mark E. Petersen, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The hymn "A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief" was rendered by the Mormon Youth Chorus.

President Romney

Elder Mark E. Petersen, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us.

He will be followed by Elder Bruce R. McConkie, also a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Mark E. Petersen

This anniversary of the Church is of great importance to the Latter-day Saints.

Measuring Church growth

One reason is that it allows us to see ourselves in perspective. It helps us to measure our growth. It shows us the direction we have come over the last 150 years and now points like a compass to the future.

With the ancient scriptures in our hands and the teachings of modern prophets constantly before us, we chart the course which the Lord expects us to follow.

By restoration from heaven we have received the everlasting gospel brought back to earth by angelic ministration as foretold by the prophets who saw our time. With it we were given the Book of Mormon, which is an amazing volume of ancient American prophetic writing. More than a million copies are published each year as we take it worldwide.

Our missionary system has increased from about a dozen men in 1830 to an army of nearly thirty thousand today. Our membership doubles every fifteen years. Our four million will soon be eight million. Our stakes and missions now exceed thirteen hundred in number in about eighty different nations. We have twelve thousand local congregations in forty-six languages.

We operate hundreds of seminaries and institutes for the daily study of the gospel. We also have some elementary schools and colleges. Our great Brigham Young University is recognized in many lands for its superior accomplishments. Knowing that the glory of both God and man is intelligence, we advocate good education.

We have a welfare program which is the envy of nations. We

make an earnest effort to care for our own with no expense to taxpayers. For this purpose we have hundreds of projects which not only provide the necessities of life for the needy among us, but employment also, including jobs for the handicapped.

Our temple work moves forward magnificently. We are building additional temples in various parts of the world as we take the ordinances of salvation to more and more people. The service rendered in those holy structures exceeds anything ever known in the past.

We take humble pride in the rapid growth, the marvelous accomplishments, and the stability of our people. "By their fruits ye shall know them," the Savior taught (Matt. 7:20). Our fruits bear testimony of our devotion to Almighty God, of our firm commitment to carry on his modern ministry, and of the validity of the message which we bear.

Our message

And what is our message?

First and foremost, it is that God *does* live, that he is our Eternal Father and our Creator. All human beings are his offspring. Knowing this, we accept the commandment of the Savior to perfect ourselves so that we may be like him.

Next we affirm that Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the Christ—he who was born in Bethlehem on the first Christmas; he who answered the questions of the doctors in the temple when but twelve years old; he who was baptized of John; he who walked the plains of Palestine preaching his gospel, healing many who were sick, and raising some of the dead; he who was persecuted by the religious cults of the day, was condemned to the cross, but who conquered death and

the grave in a glorious resurrection on the third day afterward.

He *is* the Savior of mankind! He *is* the Redeemer of all flesh! He *did* arise from the grave. He *is* risen, as the angel said, in physical, corporeal reality. And he lives today! Our modern prophets have seen him face to face and have talked with him. We know that he lives and by his resurrection he will also give to each of us a victory over death, for we too shall be resurrected—physically and literally. We too shall live again. That is our testimony on this Easter day.

We testify also that Christ has spoken again in our day, that he has raised up new prophets and through them has reestablished his Church on earth as it was originally when he called Peter, James, and John, Thomas, Judas, and others into the ministry.

The divine gospel was lost over the centuries, human philosophies displaced revealed doctrine, and the holy priesthood was taken away. But now it is all restored! We testify that it *is* restored! Revelation again comes from heaven. Prophets once more walk among us, and the truth is offered freely to all who will listen. God's modern dispensation now shines as a brilliant ensign to the nations, just as the prophets foretold.

War between good and evil

But as it shines, opposition grows. As truth is spread abroad, deceit and dishonesty arise to oppose it. As virtue is taught by the servants of God, unchastity increases among the ungodly. Indeed, as the Prophet Lehi said, "There is an opposition in all things" (2 Ne. 2:11); and as truth manifests itself, the adversary seeks to strike it down.

In a very real sense it is a war—a hot war—a war between right and wrong, between the powers of heaven and the forces of Lucifer.

The scriptures warn that the devil will make war with the Saints of God, but he never can and he never will overcome them. He will attack them with all the wicked devices his pornographic mind can devise, but he never will stop God's work.

This is not a war for territory or wealth; it is a contest for the eternal souls of men and women, boys and girls, the literal offspring of God, our Heavenly Father.

Our forces are strong. We have had many glorious victories and will yet have more. Our task is to save all who will listen.

God's work and glory are the same: "To bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). We work together in partnership with him.

Recognize Satan's tactics

But how many of us realize how serious this conflict is? Do we measure its effect upon our own family circles? Do we understand what the devil is trying to do to us? Do we recognize his evil emissaries for what they are when they openly assail us or when they seek deceitfully to seduce us quietly?

Seduction is his greatest weapon. Do we realize that? I repeat: seduction is the greatest weapon of the devil. It is alluring; it falsely appears to be advantageous and desirable. He would have us think that bitter is sweet, that black is white, that sin is acceptable, that virtue is obsolete, archaic, and prudish.

Because he revels in filth, he would tell us that to be clean is some naive concept of our grandmother's age which does not apply in this enlightened day. He says that evil is good and that standards have been relaxed. "Go your way," he says; "fear no consequences; do your own thing; have fun; express your basest

desires if you wish, and let yourselves go!" That is his philosophy.

Do we recognize it when it is flung at us by our angry foes or when it comes with a soft voice and a disarming smile? Do we truly recognize evil when we see it? Do we really know right from wrong? If we do not, then let us hasten to learn from our Church leaders. They will tell us quickly and plainly.

If we do know what is right, have we the courage to stand up for it, to defend virtue, to declare the validity of our faith, to oppose false teachings, and to fight the unpopular battle? Have we the moral stamina to confront any and all opportunities and thus preserve truth, uphold cleanliness, and defend the cause of God?

The time has come when we must take a far more firm and positive stand than ever before. We must identify illicit sex, pornography, filthy speech, and the use of liquor, tobacco, marijuana, and worse drugs as enemies of God and enemies to ourselves.

We must see in all of them the fiery darts of the devil.

Who is on the Lord's side?

We must bolster our spiritual fortifications, raise the shield which God has given us, and wield the sword of righteousness and faith as all God's servants should.

We must ask ourselves anew the potent question: Who's on the Lord's side? Who?

And we must understand that:

*Now is the time to show;
We ask it fearlessly;
Who's on the Lord's side? Who?
We wage no common war,
Cope with no common foe;
The enemy's awake;
Who's on the Lord's side? Who? . . .
Our ensign to the world*

*Is floating proudly now;
No coward bears our flag;
Who's on the Lord's side? Who?
(Hymns, no. 175).*

Have you a precious child? Would you save his soul? Would you fight to protect him from immorality, pornography, liquor, tobacco, and drugs? Do you shield him from evil companions?

How vigorously do you fight? Do you go all out for your child, or don't you love him that much? Would you try as hard to save him from sin as you would to save him from drowning or from fire? If not, why not?

Is not sin our worst enemy? It can destroy both body and spirit. Are we not fighting for eternal life as well as for a peaceful mortal existence?

Parental responsibilities

Some young people are in trouble these days. Hundreds of thousands are not, of course, and are faithful and clean. But those who are casualties need help, and their greatest help should and must come from their own home circles.

Then shall we not as families bend every effort to save our young ones? Shall we not fortify our homes to defend them? Shall not every parent rise to this emergency? Every father must awaken to the responsibility which is his. Every mother must put her priorities where they belong.

Is it too much to ask that parents deliberately and objectively teach their children the gospel truths which alone can save them from the carnage of Satan? Is it too much to ask all parents to live those truths themselves?

Is it too much to set a proper example by our own righteous living?

Is it too much to teach our children that it is better to die in defense of virtue than to lose it?

Is it too much to live the Word of Wisdom ourselves and teach it to our little ones? Is it too much to teach them that violation of the Word of Wisdom can lead them into much worse sin?

Is it too much to be honest ourselves and to teach our children to be honest?

Is it too much to have daily family prayers?

Is it too much to go with our children to our Church meetings and observe a sacred Sabbath?

Is it too much to hold family gatherings in our homes either before or after our chapel services on Sunday and thus further insulate our little ones against the sins of the day?

Is it too much to hold a home evening each Monday and there teach our family the value of a clean life, doing so by recreation as well as by precept?

Is it too much to believe sufficiently in the Lord so that we will accept his word and really obey him?

Is it too much to remember that God has said that if we are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus we shall lose the crown over the kingdom (see D&C 76:78-79)?

Is it too much to keep in mind—and may we never forget—that if we receive the commandments with a doubtful heart and keep them with slothfulness, we shall be condemned (see D&C 58:26-29)?

“Put on whole armour of God”

There is no reward for half-hearted obedience. We must become vigorous and enthusiastic about living

our religion, for God commands that we serve him with *all* our heart, with *all* our might, with *all* our strength, and with the very best of our intelligence.

With him there can be no half-way measures. We must be fully for him or we may be classed with those who are *against* him.

Then what shall we do? Put on the whole armour of God—that is what we are to do:

“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

“... Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day. . . .

“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

“Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph. 6:11, 13, 14, 16-17).

As Paul further said, let us not be “men-pleasers,” but be true servants of God, doing his will from the heart (see Eph. 6:6).

For this I humbly pray in the sacred name of the Lord, Jesus Christ, amen.

President Marion G. Romney

Elder Mark E. Petersen, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just addressed us.

We shall now hear from Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie

A glorious view

We stand today on a mountain peak, on a majestic, glorious peak in the midst of the mountains of Israel. To gain this height, we have climbed over peaks of peace and trudged through the valleys of despair.

Below us lie the deserts of sin and the forests of evil; below us stretch the swamps of carnality and the plains of passion; below us rage the roaring rivers of war and hate and crime, through all of which we have struggled to reach this summit.

Above us, stretching crest on crest, are yet greater and grander peaks. Each one is rimmed with rivers and forests and cliffs and crags. There are deep canyons and steep precipices.

Along the way we shall yet climb, hidden in the underbrush, is the lair of the lion and the hole of the asp. Venomous serpents are coiled on ledges beside the path and jackals lurk in dark caves by the wayside.

Our onward course will not be easy. The way ahead will be blocked by a landslide of lasciviousness; an avalanche of evil will bury the trail.

As we trudge forward, sharp rocks will cut our feet; rivers of lava will melt the soles of our sandals; and we shall be hungry and thirsty and faint. The way ahead will be hard and the path rugged.

But far in the distance—its heights hidden in the clouds, the divine Shechinah resting upon its summit—far in the distance stands Mount Zion, the grandest peak of all.

Through the morning mists we see Mount Zion, whereon is built "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem," where there is assembled "an innumerable company of angels," on whose height is con-

gregated "the general assembly and church of the firstborn" (Heb. 12:22-23).

From where we stand, on the peak of 150 years of progress, the view is glorious indeed.

Past history

Looking back with pride, we see the spring of 1820 when the Gods of heaven, the supreme rulers of the universe, rent the heavens, appeared to Joseph Smith, and ushered in the dispensation of the fulness of times (see D&C 112:30).

We see Moroni flying through the midst of heaven, sounding the trump of God, and revealing the book which whispers from the dust with a familiar spirit (see Rev. 14:6).

We see other angelic ministrants come, bringing keys and powers and authorities until all of the keys of the kingdom of God are committed unto man on the earth.

We see the little stone cut from the mountain without hands beginning to roll forth toward that coming day when it shall smite the Babylonian image, break in pieces the kingdoms of men, and fill the whole earth (see Dan. 2:34-35).

We see the elders of the kingdom going forth to many nations, crying repentance, gathering Israel, and assembling the faithful in the tops of the mountains where stands the house of the Lord (see 2 Ne. 12:2).

We see converts and stakes and temples. Gifts and signs and miracles abound. The sick are healed and the dead are raised by the power of God, and the work of the Lord goes forward.

But amid it all there is sorrow and toil and testing. The Saints are tried to the full to see if they will

abide in the Lord's covenant even unto death (see D&C 98:14).

Our gaze falls upon Carthage, where murderous devils in human guise shed the best blood of the nineteenth century.

We see Nauvoo in flames and the holy temple of God desecrated by depraved and cursing fiends.

We see snow and cold and death and graves, as a weary people follow a new leader to their promised land.

We see a people cursed and smitten and driven as they lay their all on the altar, and we hear them sing with their might, "All is well, all is well" (*Hymns*, no. 13).

We see prophet follow prophet as the faithful seek to prepare a people for the Second Coming of him whose witnesses they are.

Joy in the present and the future

But our joy and rejoicing is not in what lies below, not in our past—great and glorious as that is—but in our present and in our future.

Nor are the days of our greatest sorrows and our deepest sufferings all behind us. They too lie ahead. We shall yet face greater perils, we shall yet be tested with more severe trials, and we shall yet weep more tears of sorrow than we have ever known before.

We honor our forebears and reverence our prophets. We rejoice in the goodness of God to them and thank him and them for the heritage that is ours.

As we ponder these things and count our blessings, we seem to hear a voice acclaim, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (Ex. 3:5).

But we know that our work is in the living present and our glorious destiny lies ahead.

Forward to Zion

From the top of the peak where the soles of our feet now tread, we can look forward, crest upon crest, to the Zion of God which one day will be ours if we walk in the course charted by those who have gone before. We cannot see the whole course; many things are hidden from our view. Mountain trails wind through valleys and over crests, around ledges, and through forests. We do not know the length of the journey nor the perils that await us.

But what we can see causes us to rejoice and to tremble. We tremble because of the sorrows and wars and plagues that shall cover the earth. We weep for those in the true Church who are weak and wayward and worldly and who fall by the wayside as the caravan of the kingdom rolls forward.

We rejoice because of the glory and honor that awaits those who come forth out of all this tribulation with clean hands and pure hearts (see Ps. 24:4).

Looking ahead, we see the gospel preached in all nations and to every people with success attending.

We see the Lord break down the barriers so that the world of Islam and the world of Communism can hear the message of the restoration; and we glory in the fact that Ishmael—as well as Isaac—and Esau—as well as Jacob—shall have an inheritance in the eternal kingdom.

We see congregations of the covenant people worshipping the Lord in Moscow and Peking and Saigon. We see Saints of the Most High raising their voices in Egypt and India and Africa.

We see stakes of Zion in all parts of the earth; and Israel, the chosen people, gathering into these cities of holiness, as it were, to await the coming of their King.

We see temples in great numbers dotting the earth, so that those of every nation and kindred and tongue and people can receive the fulness of the ordinances of the house of the Lord and can qualify to live and reign as kings and priests on earth a thousand years.

We see the seed of Cain—long denied that priestly power which makes men rulers over many kingdoms—rise up and bless Abraham as their father.

We see the Saints of God, who are scattered upon all the face of the earth, rise in power and glory and stand as lights and guides to the people of their own nations.

We see our children and our children's children stand firm in defense of truth and virtue, crowned with the power of God, carrying off the kingdom triumphantly.

We see the faithful Saints perfecting their lives and preparing for the coming of him whose children they are, preparing for the glorious mansion he has promised them in the kingdom of his Father.

Greater evil

But the vision of the future is not all sweetness and light and peace. All that is yet to be shall go forward in the midst of greater evils and perils and desolations than have been known on earth at any time.

As the Saints prepare to meet their God, so those who are carnal and sensual and devilish prepare to face their doom.

As the meek among men make their calling and election sure, so those who worship the God of this world sink ever lower and lower into the depths of depravity and despair.

Amid tears of sorrow—our hearts heavy with forebodings—we see evil and crime and carnality covering the earth. Liars and thieves and

adulterers and homosexuals and murderers scarcely seek to hide their abominations from our view. Iniquity abounds. There is no peace on earth.

We see evil forces everywhere uniting to destroy the family, to ridicule morality and decency, to glorify all that is lewd and base. We see wars and plagues and pestilence. Nations rise and fall. Blood and carnage and death are everywhere. Gadianton robbers fill the judgment seats in many nations. An evil power seeks to overthrow the freedom of all nations and countries. Satan reigns in the hearts of men; it is the great day of his power.

Lord's work continues

But amid it all, the work of the Lord rolls on. The gospel is preached and the witness is born. The elect of God forsake the traditions of their fathers and the ways of the world. The kingdom grows and prospers, for the Lord is with his people.

Amid it all, there are revelations and visions and prophecies. There are gifts and signs and miracles. There is a rich outpouring of the Holy Spirit of God.

Amid it all believing souls are born again, their souls are sanctified by the power of the Spirit, and they prepare themselves to dwell with God and Christ and holy beings in the eternal kingdom.

Is it any wonder that we both rejoice and tremble at what lies ahead?

Truly the world is and will be in commotion, but the Zion of God will be unmoved. The wicked and ungodly shall be swept from the Church, and the little stone will continue to grow until it fills the whole earth.

The way ahead is dark and dreary and dreadful. There will yet be martyrs; the doors in Carthage

shall again enclose the innocent. We have not been promised that the trials and evils of the world will entirely pass us by.

Keep the commandments

If we, as a people, keep the commandments of God; if we take the side of the Church on all issues, both religious and political; if we take the Holy Spirit for our guide; if we give heed to the words of the apostles and prophets who minister among us—then, from an eternal standpoint, all things will work together for our good.

Our souls at rest

Our view of the future shall be undimmed, and, whether in life or in death, we shall see our blessed Lord return to reign on earth. We shall see the New Jerusalem coming down from God in heaven to join with the Holy City we have built. We shall mingle with those of Enoch's city while together we worship and serve the Lord forever.

And so, as we view the endless course ahead, the glory and wonder on each succeeding peak seems to swallow up the shadows and sorrows in the valleys below.

With our souls attuned to the infinite, we seem to hear a heavenly choir whose celestial strains resound through the mountains of Israel. The music purifies our souls and the words become a psalm of worship—the Psalm of the Restoration. From peak to peak the echoing strains acclaim:

Glory and honor unto the Lord our God. Let heaven and earth acclaim his name, for he hath wrought wondrous works in all the earth.

Sing unto him, for he sendeth his holy angel and restoreth his pure word. He calleth truth from the earth

and raineth righteousness from heaven.

Blessed be his great and holy name. He restoreth the kingdom to Israel; he gathereth his elect out of all nations; he inviteth the Gentiles to join with his people.

All glory to the Lord our King, for he cometh to reign gloriously among his Saints. He cometh with fire, and the wicked are as stubble. He cometh with loving kindness, and his redeemed inherit the earth. Glory and honor unto the Lord our God.

Sing unto him for his wondrous works.

Blessed be his great and holy name. All glory to the Lord our King.

And as these psalmic words echo and reecho in our hearts, we hear other things that it is not lawful for us to utter; and there comes into our hearts that sure witness that he who called his ancient covenant people, he who guides and preserves us at this hour, even he will be with us and ours everlastingly.

Our souls are at rest.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Marion G. Romney

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just addressed us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Come, Come, Ye Saints." After the singing, Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will speak to us.

The congregation joined the choir in singing the hymn "Come, Come, Ye Saints."

President Romney

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve

Apostles. He will be followed by Elder Dean L. Larsen, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder L. Tom Perry

Early Saints leave Missouri

My attention has been directed toward the great history of this Church during this, its sesquicentennial year. There is a period of Mormon history which has always been a great source of inspiration to me. Emerging out of what I would believe the darkest period of trial and hardship, there broke forth a light of beauty and accomplishment seldom witnessed in the events of mankind.

The efforts of the Church to settle in Missouri were met with severe opposition by the residents of that state. Lands were purchased, homes constructed, fields planted, and personal property acquired, only to have most of it stolen from them. In the dead of winter they were forced to leave the state under threat of their lives. All of the members of the First Presidency of the Church were imprisoned at Liberty awaiting trial. The only leadership they could give the suffering Saints was some encouragement through the mail, when it was allowed to be sent.

The Prophet Joseph Smith was forced to remain the long winter months from November to April awaiting trial at the Liberty Jail. When evidence could not be found against the prisoners, they were allowed to escape. They made their way to the Saints, who had been treated kindly by the residents of Quincy, Illinois. How the Prophet's heart must have plunged to the bottom of his soul as he came upon the suffering Saints encamped on both sides of the Mississippi River, some

living in tents or dugouts and some shelterless under the open sky, without homes, comforts, or sufficient food. Disease had taken a heavy toll, and sickness reached out into every family.

Nauvoo

Even though the Prophet was haggard, pale, and penniless after his long confinement, it did not take him long to make his leadership felt. He found a swamp where the Mississippi makes a horseshoe bend. It was practically deserted; there were only a half-dozen houses. It was a place in which nobody seemed to have a great interest. The owners of this mosquito-infested swamp were happy to sell the land to the penniless Saints for promissory notes, payable over a term of years.

"Characteristic of the Prophet, he renamed the place to meet his desires. Not what it was, but what, with the faith and work of man, the region might become—'Nauvoo, the City Beautiful' " (William E. Berrett, *The Restored Church*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1965, p. 149).

The faith of the Prophet rallied the people, and a special zeal seldom witnessed in all of man's history swept over this people. "That deep and abiding strength was to change a swamp into a great city; miserable shelters into splendid houses; penniless people to the most prosperous citizens of Illinois. That missionary zeal was to carry the gospel into

many lands and double the membership of the Church. And all of this in the short time of five years!

"What a program. And what an accomplishment! A people stripped of all earthly possessions, money, homes, factories, lands, rebuilt in five short years, a city-state which was the envy of long-settled communities" (Berrett, *The Restored Church*, p. 150). A miracle had occurred!

Colonel Thomas L. Kane, in a speech before the Historical Society of Philadelphia, gave this graphic picture of Nauvoo:

"A few years ago, ascending the upper Mississippi in the autumn, when its waters were low, I was compelled to travel by land past the region of the rapids. My road lay through the Half Breed tract, a fine section of Iowa, which the unsettled state of its land titles had appropriated as a sanctuary for coiners, horse thieves and other outlaws. I had left my steamer at Keokuk at the foot of the lower falls, to hire a carriage and to contend for some fragments of a dirty meal with the swarming flies, the only scavengers of the locality.

"From this place to where the deep water of the river returns my eye wearied to see everywhere sordid vagabonds and idle settlers, and a country marred without being improved by their careless hands. I was descending the last hillside upon my journey, when a landscape in delightful contrast broke upon my view. Half encircled by a bend of the river, a beautiful city lay glittering in the fresh morning sun. Its bright new dwellings [were] set in cool green gardens ranging up around a stately dome-shaped hill, which was crowned by a noble marble edifice, whose high tapering spire was radiant with white and gold. The city appeared to cover several miles, and beyond it, in the background, there rolled off a fair country chequered by

the careful lines of fruitful husbandry. The unmistakable marks of industry, enterprise and educated wealth everywhere, made the scene one of singular and most striking beauty" (*Memoirs of John R. Young, Utah Pioneer, 1847*, Salt Lake City: The Deseret News, 1920, p. 31).

Accomplishments of early Saints

Each time I visit Nauvoo today, my heart swells with pride at the accomplishments of the early Saints. I marvel at its beauty, as a portion of this miracle city has been restored under the careful direction of Dr. LeRoy Kimball.

I reflect on what made this city so different from others I have studied in history. It is then that I remember these were special people; they were dedicated to live the principles of the Lord, our Savior. They followed His admonition when He said,

"Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

"... For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:31-33).

Deep and abiding faith

Emerging out of the struggles to build Nauvoo are two fundamental principles which, when I think about them, are as necessary for our success today in 1980 as they were in 1840. First, there was a deep and abiding faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ. I marvel how tents and dugouts changed to beautiful brick and frame homes. The difference was the voice of a prophet rallying the Saints to put their trust in the Lord.

I hear the cries today of breakdowns in our system. There is a shortage here and a problem there, and every time I analyze the difficulty, I find it to be man-made. The Lord's supply system continues to work as it always has. The resources are still available in abundance. We worry about energy today, and some wonder if a miscalculation has been made in the heavens and the supply will not last until the Millennium. There is only one energy shortage existing today, and that is what exists between our own two ears.

How was this great faith developed in the hearts of our pioneer forefathers? They understood a basic tenet of the gospel. The Lord has required some principles to be accepted by faith by His children here on earth. Those principles which require acceptance by faith, however, are supported by that for which we have sure knowledge. There has grown through the generations a revealed truth that has been tested, analyzed, studied, and practiced. The early Saints understood that a knowledge of the law of the Lord, as contained in the scriptures, was the best foundation on which they could build their faith. They understood that the more the gap was closed between the principles which must be accepted by faith and those which could be obtained by knowledge, the stronger would be their faith.

In all of the history of mankind there has never been a time when we have had a greater opportunity to increase our knowledge of the law of the Lord. Each new season brings new lesson manuals, training aids, written words of inspiration, topical guides, cross-referencing systems, recorded tapes, etc., to increase our effectiveness in our study of the scriptures. The Church has even moved to a consolidation of the Sunday meeting schedules to allow additional hours at home on the Lord's

day to study together as families. Surely there can be no excuse for us not to become the best informed generation of all time in our knowledge of the scriptures. Never before have we had opportunity such as we have today to become real gospel scholars.

Industry

The second principle taught to us by our pioneer forefathers was that of industry. They understood that something can never be generated from nothing. It was the united efforts of all that produced the greatest results. I wonder where Nauvoo would have been after five years if they had been worrying about paid vacations, coffee breaks, working too hard for what they received, unemployment benefits, etc. They only understood the principle that combined labor produces wealth. To survive, you must produce more than you consume. The wealth of this Church will always be measured by the ability of its members to work together, not by assets listed on a balance sheet.

The skill of one will be added to the skill of another as we work side by side. I often marvel at the number of special educations I have received through Church service. Calls to the welfare farm have taught me the art of gardening; work assignments on chapels have developed manual skills of carpentry, plumbing, painting, and cleaning. Church calls have given me an understanding of organization and administration. Missionary service taught the fine points of how to sell. Church service has given me a much more liberal, well-rounded education than a college degree could possibly bestow. The benefits to me have been multiplied a thousandfold over that which I would have received if I'd been paid for that service.

Then there is so much fun in Church service. I remember one hot

summer evening when we were engaged in a ward building-fund project. We had contracted to supply the food service at a state fair. I was assigned to the dishwashing detail along with Bay Hutchings, another member of our ward. We were working across the counter from the customers who were enjoying our delicious food. There was a call from the cashier's cage: "Dr. Hutchings, the hospital is calling you." Suddenly all the forks were suspended in midair. The customers turned one to another and exclaimed, "A doctor washing dishes?" We had to immediately explain that this was a Church building-fund project. No one was being paid for his services. The waiters, cooks, dishwashers, and busboys were doctors, lawyers, merchants, chiefs—all having one great time working together for our project. We must never forget that the wealth, the strength, the security of the Church is our ability to labor together. Let us be a righteous example of this fundamental principle in our homes, our places of employment, our neighborhoods, our communities, our states, and our nations.

Formula for success

The history of the Lord's dealings with His children, as revealed through His prophets, has clearly outlined a formula for success for our mortal experience. First, it is to have

a foundation in our mortal experience, a deep and abiding faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Our value system must conform to His, must be consistent with His teachings.

Second is the process of laboring together to use the power of a child of God to build a better world. In this jubilee year let the trumpet sound again from the tops of the mountains. Let us rejoice and appreciate the accomplishments of the past. But more importantly, let this be a year of determined effort to teach correct principles with all of the energy we can muster. Let us learn to work together to make our homes places of love and beauty, our communities clean and wholesome, our nation fit for the blessings of the Lord, and the world a place where peace and understanding can dwell in the hearts of all mankind.

I want to add my testimony to this historic conference. God lives. Jesus is the Christ. The greatest joy we can find on this earth is conforming our lives to His principles. This I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Marion G. Romney

Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Dean L. Larsen, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Dean L. Larsen

My comments today will bear upon President Kimball's challenge to us to rise above the plateaus we have been on. They will relate also to the added flexibility and freedom we are being encouraged to assume in the new pattern of Sunday worship and weekday activity. I'll speak to the

principle which undergirds these new developments. Latter-day Saints understand that mortal life was purposefully designed to place us in circumstances where we can be individually tested and where, by the exercise of the agency God has given us, we can determine what our future

possibilities will be. The ancient prophet Lehi understood this when he said to his son Jacob, "Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great mediation of all men, or to choose captivity and death" (2 Ne. 2:27).

He further explained that men "have become free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon, save it be by the punishment of the law . . . according to the commandments which God hath given" (2 Ne. 2:26).

Freedom to exercise moral agency

On one occasion the Lord explained that it was his desire that "every man may act in doctrine and principle pertaining to futurity, according to the moral agency . . . given unto him, that every man may be accountable" (D&C 101:78).

When we understand what is right and what is wrong, we are in a position to exercise our freedom in making choices. In so doing, we must stand accountable for our decisions, and we cannot escape the inevitable consequences of these choices. Such freedom to exercise moral agency is essential in an environment where people have the highest prospects for progress and development.

By our very endowment as children of an Eternal Father, we have had implanted within our souls the urgency to be free. It is natural for us to want to be accountable for our own fates, because there is a whispering within us confirming that this accountability is absolutely essential to the attainment of our eternal destiny.

The existence of laws, regulations, and procedures has never

been sufficient to compel men to obedience. Productive obedience comes through the exercise of free will. Elder Albert E. Bowen of the Quorum of the Twelve once said:

"It is a truism that no law is any better than the people who administer it. Howsoever well framed a law may be or however worthy its purpose, it can degenerate into utter futility unless wisely administered by those sympathetic with its purposes" (*The Church Welfare Plan*, Sunday School manual, 1946, p. 115).

Self-accountability

We are told in the scriptures that prior to the creation of this earth, fully one-third of all the hosts who contemplated the challenges of mortal life allowed themselves to be deluded into thinking that there were acceptable alternatives to the essential risks that accompany the exercise of agency and free will (see Abr. 3:27-28; Rev. 12:4). The price they paid is beyond comprehension. Today we are being encouraged to accept greater responsibility for the allocation of our time, for our spiritual development through personal and family study of the gospel, and for giving loving Christian service. We must be willing to respond to this new challenge. Our willingness to accept this added accountability will exert an influence that will reach far beyond our Sunday worship service and religious life.

Unless we retain a vibrant desire to be free, and unless we understand and practice the principles that give life to essential freedoms, we have little reason to hope they will endure. If we allow ourselves to accept dependency and regulation and to cease valuing independence and self-accountability, then we are vulnerable to the forces that destroy freedom. If righteousness is judged primarily by

the degree to which one responds to programmed activity, then a condition develops within which opportunities for progress decline. The resulting tragedy affects the mortal potential of man and has a profound effect on his eternal possibilities as well.

Programmed behavior cannot produce the level of spiritual development required to qualify one for eternal life. A necessary range of freedom and self-determination is essential to one's spiritual development. With an understanding of correct principles and an intrinsic desire to apply them, one must be motivated within himself to do many good things of his own free will; for, as the revelation says, the power is in him wherein he is an agent unto himself (see D&C 58:27-28).

Balance of freedom and restraint

In preserving our freedom for self-determination, we cannot ignore the need for carefully ordered structure and procedure within government or any other organization. A careful balance must be maintained between that which is ordered for the welfare of the group and that which is reserved for the conscience and the incentive of the individual.

This necessary balance of freedom and restraint is essential to right relationships within families and communities, and it cannot be ignored in our assignments within the Church.

I have pondered the injunctions that have come to us in recent months from leaders of the Church to simplify and reduce the number of programmed activities prescribed for the members. There seems to be a sensitivity to the need for maintaining this essential balance. We have heard increased emphasis given to the need for individual initiative and accountability within families. In

his concluding remarks at the April 1979 general conference, President Kimball said:

Individual spiritual growth

"The basic decisions needed for us to move forward, as a people, must be made by the individual members of the Church. The major strides which must be made by the Church will follow upon the major strides to be made by us as individuals. . . .

"... Our individual spiritual growth is the key to major numerical growth in the kingdom" (ENSIGN, May 1979, p. 82).

I rejoice in the spirit and intent of this instruction from a living prophet. I see in it the purposeful effort to preserve our individual accountability in the context of our Church membership and religious life.

When members of the Church exercise self-determination in their application of gospel principles, they need not relax in their compliance with these principles. In fact, optimum progress can only occur when conditions are ideal for it, and these conditions must include the necessary degree of freedom and self-accountability. Anything less will guarantee stunted spiritual growth.

We must understand that as freedom for unrestricted development is enhanced, the possibilities for failure are also increased. The risk factor is great. The ideal cannot be achieved otherwise. Celestial attainment can be reached in no other environment.

We have inspired leaders today who are reconfirming the fact that there is no ultimate safety in programmed security where others assume accountability for our direction and performance.

Those who insist that a Church program exist for every contingency

and need are as much in error as their counterparts who demand that government intervene in every aspect of our lives. In both instances the ideal balance is destroyed with a resultant detriment to human progress.

These are essential truths which our leaders are reinforcing for us today. These are challenging truths. They demand much of us. They press us to make our lives better by our own initiative and by our own efforts. They make no unconditional promises.

At the same time, our obedience to them preserves for us the elements of life which make individual progress possible. They make life purposeful and full of promise. They lead to eternal progress. Humanity cannot fulfill its destiny when these truths are disregarded and abused. I cherish them with all my soul and am unreservedly committed to their promulgation among all the peoples of the earth. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Marion G. Romney

We have just listened to Elder Dean L. Larsen, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Our next speaker will be Elder Hugh W. Pinnock of the First Quorum of the Seventy and General President of the Sunday Schools of the Church, who is with President Spencer W. Kimball in the new chapel at Fayette, New York, which President Kimball dedicated this morning.

Following Elder Pinnock's address, we will be pleased to hear from our beloved prophet, President Spencer W. Kimball, who will deliver the closing address of the conference from the new Fayette chapel.

The first verse of "We Ever Pray for Thee" will then be rendered by the Fayette New York Branch choir, directed by Robert B. Winebrenner

and accompanied by Alma Jean Porschet. The second verse will be rendered by the Mormon Youth Chorus. The Mormon Youth Chorus will then sing the closing hymn "God Be with You." Following the singing, the benediction will be pronounced by Elder Eldred G. Smith, Patriarch Emeritus, who is also with President Kimball in Fayette.

Before hearing from Elder Pinnock, we should like to express, on behalf of all who have listened to the singing during sessions of this general conference, appreciation and our sincere gratitude to the members of the Tabernacle Choir for again giving so generously of their time to bring us the beautiful and inspiring music heard at this conference.

We are appreciative of the inspiring music performed by the Relief Society choir at the Saturday afternoon session, the Aaronic Priesthood choir at the priesthood session last night, the Mormon Youth Chorus at the session this afternoon, and the Fayette New York Branch choir for their singing at the sessions today. We are thankful to their conductors and organists.

We thank all who have contributed in various ways to the success and inspiration of this conference, especially the General Authorities who have given such appropriate and inspiring messages and such beautiful prayers.

We appreciate the attention given by local and national press representatives and by representatives of radio and television in reporting the sessions of this conference.

We thank our city officials for the cooperation given this conference; the city traffic officers for courteously and efficiently handling the increased traffic; the Fire Department and the Relief Society and Church Health Unit nurses, who have been on hand to render service throughout the conference.

We are grateful to the Tabernacle ushers for seating the great audiences of these conference sessions in such a courteous manner.

We again express appreciation to the owners and managers of the many radio and television stations who have given public service time to carry sessions of this conference in the United States, Mexico, and Canada;

and by satellite to Australia, Central and South America, Spain, and Taiwan.

We thank the interpreters who have provided translation for the sessions of the conference.

We shall now hear from Elder Pinnock in Fayette, who will be followed by President Kimball.

Elder Hugh W. Pinnock

What a marvelous day this has been, and what an incredible age in which we live! For over a year I have thought of this great day—the dedication of these three buildings, the many people who have made these projects possible, and the remarkable effect of the restoration of the gospel upon the world.

Church growth explained

As we study this reinstitution and the theological basis of the Church, we will find ourselves thinking about the questions that so many others have asked. What is the explanation for the growth and the amazing influence of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints? What does make Mormons different? Perplexed scholars, social critics, religionists, and cultural observers have given many answers. Their responses have ranged from describing the Church as a social abnormality that appeals to accomplishment-oriented people to such a simplistic idea as a conservative church always generates interest during troubled times.

However, the more deeply one wonders what makes us different from our nonmember friends and neighbors, the more certain is the answer: the Redeemer and other heavenly messengers personally restored the everlasting gospel to the earth. That is why we are here.

A poet so aptly said, "An honest tale speeds best being plainly told" (William Shakespeare, *Richard III*, act 4, sc. 4, line 358). That is my posture this day. The plain fact is that we believe the very same concepts that were revealed to the prophets ever since the world began. We utilize the same principles taught by the Master two thousand years ago.

As we study the Church today, we conclude that it is the same institution that was on the earth so many centuries ago. No other explanation is sensible. This is why scholars who attempt to relate the gospel of Jesus Christ to popular movements of the day, to a chance happening, or to other responses simply do not make sense, nor do they satisfy the longings of even the most naive seeker after truth.

Aspects of restored Church

An example: the Master, while speaking to his disciples in the Old World, said, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd" (John 10:16). We have known for 150 years that the other sheep were those sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father living here in the Americas. These are they whom the

Savior visited after his resurrection. Their lives and trials are recorded in the Book of Mormon. No other logical explanation can be given for that verse in John. The restored gospel also offers explanations for so many other verses that have left biblical scholars mystified and struggling.

Yes, the Church is essentially an alien body implanted in fairly hostile territory. As the Savior advised, we are to be *in* the world but not part of it. We are to be loyal soldiers in this rebel world. Yes, we are different, and we must remain that way.

Why else would a group of people have the courage to respond almost unanimously to a man whom we know to be our prophet, seer, and leader, one who receives revelations continuously as needed? Similarities are found in the times of ancient Israel and again in the days of Jesus Christ. Where else is found a church that is structured with apostles and prophets, patriarchs, seventies, bishops, and teachers?

Here is a church that responds to the Savior's admonition, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, . . . for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14). The great programs we have for our little ones assure them from their first consciousness that we love them and desire to teach them the truth.

Consider these additional aspects of the restored Church: a great women's program involving in meaningful ways over 400,000 of our sisters who are leading and teaching in various organizations; the Aaronic Priesthood and the Melchizedek Priesthood, which involve the men and boys in a multiplicity of powerful and helpful ways; worship services on the first day of the week; holy temples where eternal marriage and other ordinances are performed, including baptism for the dead; a worldwide missionary system wherein 30,000 men and women serve;

baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; an unpaid clergy ("freely ye have received, freely give" [Matt. 10:8]); teachings that stress the redeeming and positive in life; and an extensive welfare program to assist the poor and needy in dignity and love. The list goes on and on.

The events of this day further testify that the happenings of fifteen decades ago, which occurred here in western New York state, began a moral revolution that, as Daniel prophesied, would roll forth to eventually encompass the globe. (See Dan. 2).

Safety in the Church

There are other implications, however, that need to be stated. Where can one find spiritual, emotional, and economic safety in order to survive today's terrible cultural storms? The world is messy and bent on self-centeredness. Economic chaos and political instability are also part of today's environment, leaving uneasiness, insecurity, and turmoil in all of our lives. Fortunately, the Restoration gives us the panacea that mends, directs, corrects, and heals; but if we don't conform to this great God-given system, we will be like those unwise maidens who did not trim their wicks and fill their lamps with oil. We as a people are action-oriented and work-inclined. Conformance to this eternal system of energy expenditures does provide the only complete set of answers, which the world so desperately needs. May we be wise.

Four suggestions to show gratitude

A grateful and sensitive member of the Church could logically ask, "What may I do personally to express gratitude for all that I am and have because of my membership in

and affiliation with the kingdom of God?" Here are some suggestions:

First, utilize in personally helpful ways the advice and counsel of our prophet. One of our unique characteristics, as a people, is the fact that we have a divinely appointed leader, a heavenly designee, whose authoritative responsibility has persisted for 150 years, beginning at this very spot with the first elder of the Church, Joseph Smith. A prophet's words are designed to provide joy for us and for those we love, to include direction that will intensify our eternal effectiveness.

Second, become more expressive to our friends, family members, and neighbors concerning this great restoration. In a revelation given on this very day one and one-half centuries ago, Jesus expressed the necessity of being effective missionaries when he said, "That as many as would believe and be baptized in his holy name, and endure in faith to the end, should be saved" (D&C 20:25).

Third, serve, as called, in the kingdom. In this same April 1830 revelation, the Lord said: "All those who . . . are willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ, having a determination to *serve him to the end*, and truly manifest by *their works* that they have received of the Spirit of Christ . . . shall be received by baptism into his church" (D&C

20:37; italics added).

Fourth, walk "in holiness before the Lord" (D&C 20:69; see also 21:4). The Lord went on to say, a sesquicentennial ago, that "by doing these things the gates of hell shall not prevail against you; yea, and the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before you, and cause the heavens to shake for *your good, and his name's glory*" (D&C 21:6; italics added). The most significant sermons we will ever preach will be through the acts we perform.

These are four simple steps, but from them can come happiness and *peace that surpass understanding*. To reiterate:

First, follow the loving counsel of our prophet and other Church leaders.

Second, teach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Doesn't integrity demand that we tell others about this great restoration?

Third, serve the Master. Manifest our testimonies through our words and works.

Fourth, walk in holiness and live the commandments.

May each of us, as part of this great jubilee year and sesquicentennial celebration, conform our lives in building, loving, forgiving, and healing ways to express gratitude for all we have, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

This has been a glorious conference, my brothers and sisters! I have felt close to those of you in the Tabernacle, even though we are separated by a whole continent.

Greatness measured by deeds, service

This great sesquicentennial conference has brought us all close to the beginnings of this dispensation.

We have been refreshed because of those reminders. But even as we speak of beginnings, events in the world remind us that we are moving ever closer to the ending of this dispensation. So, for me, this conference has been filled with memories and also with anticipation—feelings which have combined to make me more grateful than ever for the privilege of being a part of this great latter-day work.

Viewed in perspective, 150 years isn't really a very long time, even in human history. It is but a brief moment in eternity. You and I know that, actually, individuals and institutions are measured by deeds, not days; by service, not centuries. Just as an individual's life can often make up in quality what it lacks in length of years, so The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has compressed into 150 years many significant accomplishments. We don't have to be old to be great.

We have now had twelve Presidents of the Church. I wish to express my deep and heartfelt appreciation for each and all of the eleven Presidents who have preceded me and for all that they and their associates and the general membership of the Church were able to achieve, often in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

Steadfastness of members

One cannot study the history of the Church without being impressed with how steadfast the majority of the Saints have always been in the midst of difficulty. I sense that same steadfastness in the Church today. Our members know their Lord. They know his leaders. They know their Master's voice and follow it. They do not follow strange voices nor the spurious enticements of strangers.

We have been entrusted with a special message for all the world. We must ever be conscious of that trust and ever be on the alert. There is a tide to be taken now in the affairs of the Church in all the earth which will lift us up and carry us forward as never before. Let us then not weary in well doing.

Hold fast to iron rod

Now, my brothers and sisters, as we move into the last half of the Church's second century, let us keep our faith beautifully simple. May we,

as Paul said, be "wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil" (Rom. 16:19). Learn to recognize evil, and shun it always. May we keep Church programs and organizations simple. If we do, we will build to a thrilling and rewarding momentum in the days and months and years ahead. The Savior urged his followers to be "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Matt. 10:16). Let us follow that counsel today. Let us so live that if people speak critically of us they must do so falsely and without justification.

Let us hold fast to the iron rod. The Savior urged us to put our hand to the plow without looking back. In that spirit we are being asked to have humility and a deep and abiding faith in the Lord and to move forward—trusting in him, refusing to be diverted from our course, either by the ways of the world or the praise of the world. I see that quality of readiness and devotion in our people today. There is so much yet to be done! Let us, then, move forward; let us continue the journey with lengthened stride. The Lord will lead us along, and he will be in our midst and not forsake us.

I know with all my soul that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that he died on the cross and was resurrected from the dead. He is the risen Lord, the Great Presiding High Priest, and he stands at the head of the Church. Of this I testify this beautiful Easter Sunday, on this great anniversary of the restoration and organization of the Church on this very spot 150 years ago. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Fayette Branch choir and the Mormon Youth Chorus sang the hymn "We Ever Pray for Thee." The Mormon Youth Chorus then rendered "God Be with You."

Elder Eldred G. Smith pronounced the benediction.

GENERAL WELFARE SESSION SATURDAY MORNING

A general welfare services session was held in connection with general conference on Saturday morning, April 5, 1980, beginning at 7 o'clock. Invited to attend this session were General Authorities, Regional Representatives, stake presidencies, high councilors involved in welfare work, bishoprics, stake and ward Relief Society presidencies, and others responsible for operating welfare production products.

President Spencer W. Kimball presided at this session. President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

President Romney opened the meeting with the following remarks:

President Marion G. Romney

President Spencer W. Kimball, who presides at this conference, has asked me to conduct this session.

We are happy to welcome you to this general welfare services meeting attended by general and local priesthood leaders and sisters of the Relief Society. The matters to be presented at this meeting are of vital importance to the effectiveness of the welfare program. We, therefore, request that you instruct those under your direction in the things you will be taught here.

Under the direction of Donald Ripplinger with Roy Darley at the organ, we shall begin this meeting by singing hymn number 215, "Today, While the Sun Shines." The invocation will be offered by Elder Gene R. Cook, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy and Executive Administrator of the Andes Area.

The congregation sang the hymn "Today, While the Sun Shines."

The invocation was offered by Elder Gene R. Cook.

President Marion G. Romney

My beloved brothers and sisters, I very much appreciate the opportunity to meet with you this morning. Since the welfare program was inaugurated in the mid-1940s I believe I have attended every such general conference welfare meeting we have held.

Serving our fellowman

The Church welfare program has from its beginning been, in my mind, associated with the second great commandment. You will remember, of course, that when one of the Pharisees asked Jesus "Which is the great

commandment in the law?" that he responded, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

"This is the first and great commandment.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

"On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 22:36-40).

As a ward bishop I was involved in the welfare program when it was first announced, and I have been involved in it ever since.

This long participation has taught me that the crowning aspect of a Christlike life is found in serving one's fellowmen.

Welfare program based on eternal principles

In the Church, serving and helping one's neighbor is not done only through spontaneous kindly deeds to our immediate families and next-door neighbors; it is also accomplished through the Church welfare program, which is based upon modern revelation through prophets of this dispensation. Its principles are eternal. They have been revealed and implemented, to some extent, where and whenever the Lord has established his church upon the earth. We read in the Book of Mormon, for example, that "Alma commanded that the people of the church should impart of their substance, every one according to that which he had; if he have more abundantly he should impart more abundantly; and of him that had but little, but little should be required; and to him that had not should be given.

"And thus they should impart of their substance of their own free will and good desires towards God, and to those priests that stood in need, yea, and to every needy, naked soul.

"And this he said unto them, having been commanded of God; and they did walk uprightly before God, imparting to one another both temporally and spiritually according to their needs and their wants" (Mosiah 18:27-29).

(This was, as you will remember, in America among the Nephites about 147 B.C.)

In October 1936, the Presidency of the Church issued this statement, which continues today as the guiding precept of welfare services:

"Our primary purpose was to set up, in so far as it might be possible, a system under which the curse

of idleness would be done away with, the evils of a dole abolished, and independence, industry, thrift and self respect be once more established amongst our people. The aim of the Church is to help the people to help themselves. Work is to be reenthroned as the ruling principle of the lives of our Church membership" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1936, p. 3; see also *Welfare Services Handbook*, p. 1).

As a people and as a Church, we accept as fundamental truth the proposition that the responsibility for one's own economic maintenance rests (1) upon himself; (2) upon his family; and (3) upon the Church, if he is a faithful member thereof.

Self-sustaining

Welfare work divides itself into three main divisions. First is the basic doctrine of being self-sustaining to the full extent of one's ability. By applying the principles of personal and family preparedness, sometimes referred to as temporal welfare, we are to provide our own needs. So doing puts us in position to share our surplus with others. In his April 1937 conference talk, President J. Reuben Clark outlined the course of independence which should be followed by every member of the Church. He there said:

"What may we as a people and as individuals do for ourselves to prepare to meet this oncoming disaster, which God in his wisdom may not turn aside from us? . . .

"Let us avoid debt as we would avoid a plague; where we are now in debt let us get out of debt; if not today, then tomorrow.

"Let us straitly and strictly live within our incomes, and save a little.

"Let every head of every household see to it that he has on hand enough food and clothing, and, where possible, fuel also, for at least a year ahead" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1937, p. 26).

Family assistance

When circumstances combine to require help, it is Church doctrine that one rely upon his family for assistance. Obviously, no one should become a charge upon the public when his relatives are able to care for him. Every consideration of kindness, of justice, of fairness, of the common good, and of humanity requires this.

President Stephen L. Richards taught a principle which every family in the Church would do well to bear in mind:

"I think," said he, that "my food would choke me if [I] knew that while I could procure bread my aged father or mother or near kin were on public relief. I believe a decent family pride is a salutary thing with any people and in any nation . . . , a family pride in wholesome, self-reliant, and enterprising living—a family pride that promotes the utmost solicitude for each member of the family. It wouldn't hurt my feelings to hear a family boast that through all vicissitudes they had come to each other's help and had never received public assistance. I have known brothers and sisters to put each other through school by hard, self-sacrificing toil. I cannot imagine any of these permitting their father and mother to come to public relief" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1944, pp. 138-39).

Church assistance

Finally, aid is available from the Church. It has been so in all dispensations. Paul himself was a welfare worker, in a very modern sense of the term. We find him writing in Romans 15:

"But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.

"For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a

certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.

"It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things" (Rom. 15:25-27).

The obligation of the Church to help its poor is here placed by Paul on a par with communicating spiritual riches to those who are in darkness. By both means we store up treasures in heaven.

"Charge them," he says, "that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

"That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

"Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim. 6:17-19).

In our day, the Lord has given us this charge:

"If thou lovest me thou shalt serve me and keep all my commandments.

"And behold, thou wilt remember the poor, and consecrate of thy properties for their support that which thou hast to impart unto them, with a covenant and a deed which cannot be broken.

"And inasmuch as ye impart of your substance unto the poor, ye will do it unto me; and they shall be laid before the bishop of my church and his counselors, two of the elders, or high priests, such as he shall appoint or has appointed and set apart for that purpose" (D&C 42:29-31).

Essentially a question of spirituality

The foregoing principles are true when properly applied by members

and leaders alike. They bring about the desired end of establishing the Church and building up Zion. It is true, however, that when not properly applied, difficulties follow. Within two-and-a-half years after the original Church welfare plan was put in place by the First Presidency, President J. Reuben Clark made this significant statement in an address in Estes Park, Colorado, 20 June 1939:

"The Church has found that the whole problem is essentially a question of spirituality, rather than of finance or economics [in getting Church welfare work accomplished]. Where the spirituality has been high, the Plan has succeeded; where the spirituality is low, the Plan has lagged. The Church has proved there is no substitute for the great commandments: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy . . . might, mind, and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself' [see D&C 59:5-6]" (*Church Welfare Plan: A Discussion*, General Church Welfare Committee, 1939, pp. 32-33).

While we have made great strides in the program since that day, the principle still applies. Everything we do in welfare services must be measured by its accomplishment in spiritual terms. Givers must give out of a righteous heart and with a willing spirit. Receivers must receive with thankfulness and gladness of heart. The Spirit must confirm a bishop's evaluation regarding assistance. It must lead a home teacher and a visiting teacher to know how to respond to needs of families to

whom they are assigned. With righteous intent, participating in this great work sanctifies the soul and enlarges the mind. As we spiritually mature in fulfilling our welfare responsibilities, whatever they may be, we prepare ourselves to become "partakers of the divine nature" (see 2 Pet. 1:4). May it be our happy lot to be filled with that measure of spirit that we may be sealed with the bond of charity, which, as Moroni said, "is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him."

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; that we may have this hope; that we may be purified even as he is pure" (Moro. 7:47-48).

It is my prayer that each and every one of us will learn and apply these fundamental principles of welfare services and gain thereby the promised reward, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Marion G. Romney

We shall now listen to President Harold G. Hillam, president of the Idaho Falls Idaho South Stake.

He will be followed by Sister Shirley W. Thomas, second counselor in the Relief Society.

President Harold G. Hillam

I have made it a habit of running three miles every day, and I would have to admit that this walk up here leaves me a little more out of breath than the end of three miles. It is a humbling experience to occupy this pulpit, which has been occupied by

such great, great men in welfare services.

Teton Dam experiences

Sometime after the collapse of the Teton Dam and the ensuing

flooding disaster which affected several counties in eastern Idaho, while serving as the area welfare leader, I was asked to speak on behalf of the Church to a group of people who were responsible for civil defense and disaster relief. They included representatives from city, county, state, and federal organizations as well as a number of religious, volunteer, and service groups. The requested topic was how the LDS Church is prepared to respond to emergency crises.

I realized that they had already observed the response of the Church to the flood. They saw firsthand how the bishops' storehouse system was almost immediately prepared to ship in truckloads of supplies and then stood by to fill the requests of the local priesthood leaders. They saw the Deseret Industries help bring order out of chaos. Large mountains of clothing were donated from many parts of the country and placed in large, unsorted piles. There were party dresses with work shoes, small sizes with large, men's with women's, and clean with soiled. In a very short time the Deseret Industries had these much-needed articles of clothing cleaned, pressed, sized, and placed on racks from which those in need could choose for their particular needs.

They saw how the LDS Social Services was available to help the people in their social and emotional needs as emotional tolerances were pressed to the limit. Many jobs were lost due to the flood, and many new ones were created. LDS employment program was busy as employees and employers were matched together. They saw, as did people from all over the world, the many thousands of volunteers who came, at their own expense, to help in the cleanup effort.

There was a need in the early

days of the flood cleanup for heavy equipment. A request was made for tractors and front-end loaders from stakes both near and far. We thought in terms of 5 or 6 outfits. Soon after the request was made, the area welfare leader from Soda Springs, approximately 165 miles away, called and said, "President, I understand that you need some tractors and front-end loaders. We are ready and prepared to bring 150." I told him that 20 would be marvelous.

There was a need for electricians to restore power to the homes that lost it because of the flood. We estimated that 150 would be a great response. The call went out. We didn't get just 150. More than 450 licensed electricians and helpers responded to that call. This same type of devotion and dedication was shown many, many times over as a variety of needs was fulfilled.

LDS Social Services

It was evident to this group to whom I would speak, as well as to others, what had happened in this major crisis, but were they aware of those who are helped every day on an individual basis—for example, the young girl who found love, understanding, and kind assistance from LDS Social Services when she was confronted with a major crisis in her life? Because of wise counsel, she did not compound an already serious problem with a graver tragedy when she found that there is an alternative to the accepted worldly philosophy of abortion.

They did not know of the many other services of LDS Social Services, the childless marriages with loving homes who are blessed with the opportunity to adopt a little infant, the Lamanite program, professional counseling, foster homes, and others.

Deseret Industries

I was sure that most of them did not totally understand the Deseret Industries; and most certainly did not understand that it is a living example of the principle of consecration, wherein each of us has the opportunity to give freely of our surpluses, and then those great people who are not willing to be spectators in the arena of life are given the opportunity to maintain their dignity by enjoying the blessing of work. Perhaps they were not even aware that Deseret Industries is open for all to make purchases which are so helpful in meeting the pressures of an inflated economy. Shopping at Deseret Industries is like shopping at an exclusive store. There are many items that are one of a kind, and with shipments arriving daily we have an opportunity to make new choices every day.

On one occasion when I had arrived early at Deseret Industries prior to our monthly meeting of the local operating committee, I made a tour of the well-organized displays and racks of commodities. My eyes were drawn to the area of overcoats. One particularly appealed to me. It was a fine, all-wool, English-tailored coat. I thought, "If it fits, I'll buy it." I looked at the price: four dollars and seventy-five cents! At that price, I knew it fit. I bought it and I paid cash for it. I took it home and, when I modeled it for my wife, I put my hands in the pockets, and there were a number of rare, one-cent postage stamps. I guess the stamps themselves were worth probably about as much as I had paid for the coat. And I suspect that I was probably the only person who made a purchase at Deseret Industries who not only made an excellent buy but also received stamps!

Blessing those in need

This group of people to whom I would speak certainly had no way of knowing about the father who found himself with his loving bishop exclaiming, "Bishop, tragedy has struck our family. I have lost my job. I need welfare." That knowledgeable bishop replied, "Brother, you don't need welfare. What you need is a job, and you have come to the right place." That wise bishop had just taught the great principle of work. The bishop's comment was not an idle remark, because he had available to him, as a part of the great storehouse system, a ward employment specialist, who has access not only to the employers within the ward and stake but also, through the employment center, to those throughout the entire area. If a job could not be found in the open market, that same employment specialist would become a resource to the bishop to help find meaningful work opportunities for the needy brother within the Lord's plan, thus allowing that father the joy of maintaining his dignity by working for the commodities received. This same employment system serves the needs of all members as they seek employment and seek to upgrade their opportunities.

This group of interested people that I would speak to wanted to know what we as the Church can do in a major disaster, but that is not all. There are heartaches, hurts, problems—yes, even disasters—which occur in every life at some time. And, in the individual's life, those personal disasters are just as real and just as deserving of our help as the disaster of those involved in the flood in eastern Idaho, or the earthquake in Guatemala, or the flooding in California.

I wanted this group to know that

in the Church not only are we prepared to deal with major disasters which involve many, but the Lord's plan provides for the loving care of each of his children on an individual, one-on-one basis.

Those of us who are here today have at our disposal the principles of the welfare plan, which assist us in helping to bless those who are in need.

I give you my solemn witness that we are engaged in the Lord's work. May each one of us strive to carry out our stewardships, so the work may be done in His own way. The work and labor which we perform in welfare services will lead us

steadily forward to that time when we will be blessed to live the great law of consecration in a Zion society.

May each of us be found doing our duty, I pray in the name of him whose plan it is, even Jesus Christ, amen.

President Marion G. Romney

President Harold G. Hillam, president of the Idaho Falls Idaho South Stake, has just spoken to us.

Sister Shirley W. Thomas, second counselor in the general presidency of the Relief Society, will now address us.

Sister Shirley W. Thomas

Devotion of early sisters

In the early spring of 1842 the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo united the charitable efforts of women in a desire to support the priesthood in the cause of Zion. The Prophet Joseph Smith told the sisters "their offering [was] accepted of the Lord," and the sisters gave unstintingly ("Story of the Organization of the Relief Society," *Relief Society Magazine*, Mar. 1919, p. 129). Following his injunction to search out the poor and needy and minister to their wants, they called a committee that went from house to house. The members who had means were asked to give, and the needy were referred to the society for aid.

Their reports typically read: one family "poor, sick & distressed and no bedding," two families by the river "sick & nothing to eat," one widow "destitute of money" (Relief Society of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *History of Relief Society 1842-1966*, Salt Lake City: General Board of Relief Society, p. 24). Donations included

sugar, bedding and clothes, onions, flour—whatever they had to give. One sister, having no goods, offered her time, "any portion or all," she said. Another would "knit, sew or wait on the sick" (*History of Relief Society 1842-1966*, p. 23). When President Joseph Smith organized the Relief Society, he predicted "better days [for] the poor and needy," and through the efforts of these devoted sisters many Saints were cared for and comforted (See *History of the Church*, 4:607).

Perhaps this one line, taken from the records, could best describe these efforts: "We have not said be ye warmed and clothed without trying to do it" (*History of Relief Society 1842-1966*, p. 25). To a divine concept they added their commitment—and to gospel principles, practice.

Today's problems

Today's problems of families reflect the increasing complexity of our time. The welfare services of the Church include multiple systems and

long-range plans, but the *constant* through all its development is the application of gospel principles in loving concern for another's need.

A Relief Society president knows that, in spite of a report which shows members receiving temporary assistance constitute 4 percent of a ward, to the sister in distress it is 100 percent. Her needs are whole and real. Consider the case of a woman we shall call Sister Allen. Troubled and lonely, she had just returned from a hospital stay and major surgery. Two months before, her husband had abandoned his responsibilities to their family of five. The bishop had visited, and now the Relief Society president came. It was a family-needs visit, and as they talked Sister Allen spoke wistfully of having some cream of asparagus soup and blueberry muffins. These items were not on the bishop's order form and could have been dismissed as not available. But the president really wanted to serve Sister Allen and wondered if this rather special request might suggest a need for more than food. What was Sister Allen's real need? Was it for commodities or for consideration, for someone to demonstrate that she was worthwhile by giving her special attention now, when her problems seemed to overwhelm her?

Sensitivity to needs

Sensing the larger need, the Relief Society president ordered the items available through the storehouse, then assigned compassionate service responsibilities to her visiting teachers and others to provide meals that included the muffins and the soup and also to show their concern in other visible and tangible ways. Sister Allen responded. She got better, aided by the food but more so by their friendship.

Each problem is in some way unique and may require a special

sensitivity to the care needed. President Romney said at last October conference that no hard-and-fast rules will ever be given in answer to the questions, Who should assist? How much assistance should be given? How long and how often should I assist? (see *ENSIGN*, Nov. 1979, p. 96).

Caring for others, like the "quality of mercy," is "twice blest: Bless[ing] him that gives and him that [receives]" (William Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice*, act 4, sc. 1, lines 184, 186-87). In giving we grow in patience, humility, faith—all the elements of that pure love called charity. Every sister, whether she is single or married, living alone or in a family, needs the opportunity to develop these Christlike attributes.

Relief Society works with priesthood leaders to care for the sick and needy and at the same time teaches, through its curriculum, the welfare principles and concepts which help every sister meet her own needs and give to others the kind of care that has always distinguished truly compassionate service.

Foundation of six welfare principles

The six welfare principles stressed by President Kimball—love, work, service, stewardship, self-reliance and consecration—are the foundation stones upon which all welfare services are built. Relief Society, incorporating them into its lessons, teaches the Christlike qualities of pure love, or charity; teaches that work sustains, that service gives work its meaning, that stewardship brings accountability, and that self-reliance allows a freedom to focus on another's needs, and that consecration is to give all one has.

The stake Relief Society education counselor can foster an understanding of these principles by first identifying them in Relief Society

lessons; for example, the relationship of work and self-reliance to problem solving, or the importance of love and service in building self-esteem. Then, recognizing the importance of these principles not only in helping sisters to serve but in preparing them to meet or prevent crises in their own lives, she can make certain that they are emphasized in Relief Society teaching.

An education counselor should remember the words of the Lord when he said, "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts" (Heb. 8:10). She should recognize her stewardship to see that these gospel principles are taught in the Relief Societies of her stake—taught so effectively that sisters "having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience" (Luke 8:15).

Recently, we met a young woman who had learned to make these principles operative in her life. Bringing Sister Smith a beautiful rose, she came to express her love and her gratitude for the blessings of the gospel. She is handicapped, and so is the more grateful for blessings because she knows so well pain and difficulty. When telling of how she is able to keep a house and care for a husband, she said it does take her longer, but a friend goes to the store to get what she needs, and she has learned to do almost everything else for herself. Cutting carrot strips for a ward dinner is a challenge, but she does it and in accepting such opportunities enjoys the fulfillment of service.

Support priesthood

The desire to support the priesthood in this great latter-day work, first seen in the Nauvoo sisters, has

led Relief Society women over many years to establish health facilities, store grain, serve adoptive parents, and meet other critical needs. This same desire motivates the Relief Society today. Teaching is one means of helping the sisters and their families realize the great promise declared by President Kimball:

"As givers gain control of their desires and properly see other needs in light of their own wants, then the powers of the gospel are released in their lives. They learn that by living the great law of consecration they insure not only temporal salvation but also spiritual sanctification" (EN-SIGN, Nov. 1977, p. 77).

That we may each fulfill our stewardship and earn this great reward I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Marion G. Romney

We have just listened to Sister Shirley W. Thomas, second counselor in the general presidency of the Relief Society.

Brother Ripplinger will now lead us in singing hymn number 98, "Let Us All Press On." After the singing, Bishop Victor L. Brown, Presiding Bishop of the Church, will address us.

The congregation sang "Let Us All Press on."

President Romney

Bishop Victor L. Brown, Presiding Bishop of the Church, will now speak to us and he will be followed by Elder Ronald E. Poelman, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Bishop Victor L. Brown

My dear brothers and sisters, it is always an inspiring experience to meet with you in the welfare session of general conference. When we consider the significance of this conference as being convened on the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the organization of the Church, it seems appropriate to address the subject "Welfare Services: Past, Present, and Future."

Eternal principles

The eternal principles upon which welfare services exist today were given by the Lord at the time of Adam. They have not changed over the centuries, nor will they change in the future. The Lord instructed Adam to subdue the earth with this charge: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" (Gen. 3:19). Thus, in the beginning he taught the principles of work and self-reliance. In modern scripture the Lord declared: "Thou shalt not be idle; for he that is idle shall not eat the bread nor wear the garments of the laborer" (D&C 42:42).

To the head of the family he gave this latter-day charge: "And again, verily I say unto you, that every man who is obliged to provide for his own family, let him provide, and he shall in nowise lose his crown" (D&C 75:28).

After providing for our own, the Lord explained that our next duty is to the poor and distressed among us. In section 44 of the Doctrine and Covenants we read:

"Behold, I say unto you, that ye must visit the poor and the needy and administer to their relief" (D&C 44:6).

Charity

Administering to the relief of our neighbor is born of pure love or charity. In his memorable letter to

the Corinthians, Paul explained, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal" (1 Cor. 13:1).

Moroni further explained: "Charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him" (Moro. 7:47).

By following the pure impulses of charity, members contribute resources to the Church from which the bishop may draw to help those in need. The Lord's charge to Bishop Whitney was to "travel round about and among all the churches, searching after the poor to administer to their wants by humbling the rich and the proud" (D&C 84:112).

Basic expectations

From these scriptures we learn that the Lord expects several basic things of his people:

1. He expects each individual to work and to provide for himself.
2. He expects each family to work together, to be independent and self-reliant.
3. He expects the husband and father to provide for his own.
4. He expects us as individuals and families to share our abundance with the poor and distressed.
5. He expects the bishop to search out the poor and the sick and to see that they are cared for.
6. And above all, he expects his people to have charity in their hearts for their fellowmen.

Since welfare services are the gospel in action, we know that these divine principles are unchanging. They are eternal.

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught these great principles 150 years ago.

Growth and development

While the early members practiced the principles of welfare in rudimentary application, it was in the 1930s that the welfare services program, as we know it, was formalized. It applied to the stakes of Zion, which at that time were mostly in the western part of the United States and Canada. Production projects, canneries, and storehouses were established among the people. Now, although there is still much to be done, the welfare services activities in the United States and Canada are approaching maturity.

By the end of 1982, nearly every bishop in these areas of the Church will have access to a physical storehouse. There are presently in operation 802 production projects, 51 central and regional bishops' storehouses, 20 Deseret Industries, 24 employment centers, and 35 LDS Social Services agencies. These exist as resources from which bishops can help the Saints become self-reliant as well as assist those who are unable to provide for themselves.

Now, as to the overseas areas of the Church: Over the past ten years, the international growth of stakes has been phenomenal, increasing from 41 to 269. With this growth, the welfare services program is being introduced on an orderly basis. While every new member can and should live all gospel covenants relative to welfare, we do not expect branches and new wards to implement the full program until they have the capability to do so. It has taken more than forty years for welfare services to reach their present status in the United States and Canada. We look forward to the day when the whole Church is sufficiently mature to have the entire program fully operative. It will require wise teaching of basic principles, along with careful planning, for measured and timely growth to occur. The basic principles discussed earlier

must be taught and lived before the program can appropriately move forward.

There are those who would like to establish the full program immediately. Some time ago, Church leaders in one country asked: "When are you going to bring the full program to us? Our people need it desperately." What they did not understand is that we do not just bring a program to the stakes. It is a part of the complete gospel plan and will develop a step at a time. One does not begin at the top rung of the ladder.

Welfare programs around the world

There are many exciting and heart-warming developments in various parts of the world. Long-range welfare services master plans have been received from England, New Zealand, Australia, Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay. Those stakes in areas where master plans have been approved are moving forward with implementation under the direction of area councils which are well organized and functioning successfully.

In Great Britain, the local brethren have just purchased a dairy project to complement two row-crop projects. They are also in the process of acquiring facilities for a storehouse.

In Australia they have acquired five production projects and are producing oranges and many other fruits as well as every type of local vegetable. They are planning to acquire land this year for storehouses in several major cities.

In Uruguay they are placing special emphasis on personal and family preparedness. Because of high unemployment in that country, they were authorized to establish an employment center last year. A wonderful welfare services missionary

couple and local volunteers are diligently working to help members find or upgrade their employment.

Carefully, but surely, progress is being made toward Church preparedness. However, we still have great concern that as a people we are far short of truly being prepared. The heart of welfare services' success is not Church preparedness but member preparedness. The increased call by bishops on the resources of the storehouse system is an indication that many of our people do not have their reserves and consequently are unable to take care of their own basic needs. I am afraid some members are laboring under the illusion that in difficult times the Church will take care of them. This is not so. The Church is prepared to take care of a limited number of members for a relatively short period of time.

Provide for our own needs

There should be no misunderstanding on this point. The fundamental principle of welfare services is that *you and I provide for our own needs*. If serious economic disruption were to occur, the Church would do all in its power to alleviate suffering by supplementing member efforts. But it would not be able to do for the Saints what we have been taught to do for ourselves for over forty years—that is, to have a year's supply of food, clothing, and, where possible, fuel; to have savings in reserve; and to possess basic production skills. This counsel has been given at least twice a year for all these years. Some have followed the counsel of the Brethren and are prepared, as were the five wise virgins. Some, like the foolish virgins, do not have enough oil in their lamps. (See Matt. 25:1-13.)

A recent Church survey of a representative number of members in the United States indicates that in

emergency circumstances—such as job loss, illness, or natural disaster—the average family had the following supplies: food, twenty-six weeks; clothes, fifty-two weeks; water, two weeks; and fuel, four days. This is not even close to a year's supply. The survey also indicates that financial reserves are low. Only 17 percent could live for more than one year on their financial reserves if income were cut off; 45 percent reported they could only live for three months. The Lord says, "If ye are prepared ye shall not fear" (D&C 38:30). I suppose each of us knows into which category he falls. What a wonderful thing it would be if all were prepared.

Challenge for the future

Our challenge for the future is to be prepared and to perfect ourselves through keeping the commandments more fully. We may give of our time and talents in service to family, neighbors, church, and community. Through tithing and a generous fast offering, we may share of our means to build up the Church and care for the poor and the needy. The Lord has given us this instruction in section 88 of the Doctrine and Covenants:

"See that ye love one another; cease to be covetous; learn to impart one to another as the gospel requires.

"Cease to be idle; cease to be unclean; cease to find fault one with another; cease to sleep longer than is needful; retire to thy bed early, that ye may not be weary; arise early, that your bodies and your minds may be invigorated.

"*And above all things, clothe yourselves with the bond of charity, as with a mantle, which is the bond of perfectness and peace.*

"Pray always, that ye may not faint, until I come. Behold, and lo, I will come quickly, and receive you

unto myself" (D&C 88:123-26; italics added).

May we be blessed to provide the leadership throughout the Church that will cause the membership to be prepared to be received by the Lord when he comes, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Ronald E. Poelman

The ancient Nephite prophet King Benjamin counseled those who had accepted the Savior and received a remission of their sins with these words: "For the sake of retaining a remission of your sins from day to day, . . . I would that ye should impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath, . . . administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally. . . .

"And see that all these things are done in wisdom and order" (Mosesiah 4:26-27).

Our living prophet of God, Spencer W. Kimball, has said to us who also have hope in Christ: "Welfare Services is not a program, but the essence of the gospel. *It is the gospel in action.*

"It is the crowning principle of a Christian life" (ENSIGN, 1977, p. 77).

How then may we, in wisdom and order, most effectively use welfare services to administer to the spiritual and temporal needs of the poor?

The answer is found in priesthood councils.

One year ago the area council became the primary council in the field to correlate, coordinate, plan, and resolve problems. Now, a year later, we may consider how the area council is actually functioning, and,

President Marion G. Romney

We have just listened to Bishop Victor L. Brown, Presiding Bishop of the Church.

Elder Ronald E. Poelman, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now speak to us. He will be followed by President Spencer W. Kimball, President of the Church.

more specifically, its role in (1) welfare services master planning, (2) teaching gospel principles germane to welfare services, and (3) coordinating the welfare services efforts of temporal and ecclesiastical officers.

How the councils work

Personal experience suggests that the principal, immediate benefit from a renewed emphasis on Church councils is the opportunity to coordinate the efforts of temporal and ecclesiastical officers. Through councils, Church leaders can better work together to teach the doctrines, principles, and practices of welfare services and to plan for a great upsurge in accomplishments. The enduring personal friendships which develop during this effort evoke our noblest sentiments.

The Regional Representatives and General Authority Executive Administrator for an area, addressing their welfare services responsibilities, may rely heavily on the Welfare Services area director.

In our first area council meeting, an executive planning committee was appointed, including selected Welfare Services region agents and certain specialists chosen from the area. Also, a timetable was adopted.

Coordinated by this committee, the region agents identified needs and

resources and received guidance from region councils and from individual priesthood leaders.

The specialists then organized the information in a format provided by the General Welfare Services Committee and produced a proposed area-wide phase 1 (or strategic) master plan for consideration, modification, and, finally, approval by the area council.

Following such approval, the proposed plan will be presented to each region council in the area, and then, by a Regional Representative, to each stake welfare services committee and bishop's council for review and approval. Finally, this phase 1 (or strategic) plan will be submitted to the General Welfare Services Committee.

Once the approval of that committee has been obtained, we will begin phase 2, or the operational master plan.

Planning and goals

As planning develops, a need is recognized to perform more effectively that which the Lord has already taught us; for example, to provide meaningful work for more of those receiving assistance and to improve the productivity of our present resources.

Both improving the present system and planning for additional accomplishment require that principles which pertain to welfare services be taught more effectively.

Therefore, our area council adopted a formal teaching plan which includes specific doctrines, principles, and practices to be taught; identifies by whom, to whom, and when the teaching shall occur; and involves everyone in the priesthood line and Relief Society presidents.

Concurrently, a family guide for emergency preparedness is being

compiled. Suggestions on how to implement it and a schedule for delivering it through the priesthood line into every home are also being prepared. This project, not yet finally approved by our area council, is intended to be a first step toward more complete family preparedness, the foundation of welfare services.

Also, the first annual service evaluation of welfare services by ecclesiastical leaders was recently conducted to determine what is succeeding and what can be improved.

A master plan is our principal tool in purposeful preparation. Its organized data, including a detailed capital budget, enables the council to make informed decisions, to accurately measure progress, and to wisely allocate resources according to correct priorities.

Spiritual preparation

The plan defines goals and procedures which have been adopted by common consent, prepares us for a higher purpose, and enables us to serve more individuals in an expanding circle. Thus, the plan becomes the vision of the heart, and we have increased awareness of inspiring concepts which, though not new, come to us with invigorating freshness.

As we carefully and prayerfully develop a plan to prepare for the times of stress that are ahead, the magnitude of the challenge may seem overwhelming. Providing even temporary assistance to 15 percent or perhaps even 30 percent of the Church members may seem beyond our capability. However, in addition, we must plan to provide meaningful work for those who become unemployed and to assist with the physical, emotional, and social problems that inevitably accompany periods of economic stress.

However, "the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them" (1 Ne. 3:7). Coordinating our effort as temporal and ecclesiastical officers in area councils, we can accept the commandment and find the way.

The wisdom of Solomon advises that "where there is no vision, the people perish" (Prov. 29:18).

The Lord through his prophets has warned us of stressful times to come and has provided us with the organization, principles, and direction to prepare. When we seek the Spirit of the Lord in welfare services work we will be blessed with vision and the people will not perish. If we are prepared, we need not fear (see D&C 38:30).

Spiritual preparation is not complete, however, until we have done all that we can to prepare temporally. Then what is lacking will be supplied by the Lord.

Councils foster unity

Unity in temporal matters, as in spiritual matters, is essential to our success. At each step, consensus of the council members must be obtained, through prayer and discussion, to achieve that unity which is prerequisite to the Lord's help. To be effective, decisions must be reached by divine consensus, not by compromise. Participants are not competing advocates, representing special interests, but rather contributing members of a unified body.

The priesthood council is a form of management unique to the divine Church. It assembles to receive the Lord's law by the prayer of faith, to agree upon his word, and to learn how to govern the Church and have all things right before the Lord (see D&C 41:2-3). The council's strength

and effectiveness derive from coordinating individual skills and abilities united with a shared purpose.

"For all have not every gift given unto them; for there are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God.

"To some is given one, and to some is given another, that *all* may be profited thereby" (D&C 46:11-12; italics added).

All things are spiritual

It is of fundamental importance to remember that there are temporal aspects to each spiritual calling and spiritual aspects to every temporal calling. In the words of Brigham Young: "If a man is called . . . to manufacture the clothing that is necessary for the Saints, and he goes at that business with his eye single to the building up of the kingdom of God on the earth he is entitled to the Spirit of the Holy Gospel, and he will receive and enjoy it just as much as if he were preaching the Gospel. . . . [He will have] the spirit to know how to raise sheep, to procure the wool, to put machinery in operation to make the clothing for the advancement, benefit and building up of the people of God on the earth. And the Spirit of the Lord is here in these labors—farming, merchandizing and in all mechanical business just as much as it is in preaching the Gospel, if men will live for it" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 11:293-94).

The challenge and opportunity of welfare services master planning become evident when, as the plan emerges, we realize that by mortal standards the task is impossible, the need too great, the resources insufficient. It is then we know that we must step up to a higher level spiritually.

The Lord tells us in section 70 of the Doctrine and Covenants that

an abundance of the manifestation of the Spirit among us depends upon our willingness to share temporal blessings (see D&C 70:12-14).

Therefore, we must sacrifice our narrow traditions, local interests, and selfish pride to achieve the love and unity indispensable in a Zion society. The principles of love, service, work, self-reliance, consecration, and stewardship must relate to a specific plan, in a particular area, to serve individual needs with well-managed resources. Personal and family preparedness and local self-sufficiency must be related to identified communities, families, production projects, and storehouses.

The abstract becomes concrete when we identify welfare services principles with people, places, and things we know. Temporal application of spiritual laws transforms theology into religion.

Through priesthood councils we may, in wisdom and order, most effectively use welfare services to ad-

minister to the spiritual and temporal needs of the poor, thus experiencing the gospel in action and learning to live the Christian life, to which I testify in the sacred name of our Savior, Jesus Christ, amen.

President Marion G. Romney

We have just listened to Elder Ronald E. Poelman, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

It will now be our pleasure to listen to President Spencer W. Kimball, President of the Church, who will be our concluding speaker.

The first general session of the 150th Annual Conference of the Church will convene in the Tabernacle at ten o'clock this morning.

Following President Kimball's talk, we will sing in closing hymn number 206, "The World Has Need of Willing Men," following which the benediction will be offered by Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

President Spencer W. Kimball

My beloved brothers and sisters, I have enjoyed this meeting very much, and I endorse all that has been presented by the various speakers.

Appreciation

I express deep appreciation to each of you for what you are doing in this wonderful welfare work. We are grateful for the progress that has been made. Notwithstanding there is much service yet to be given, I feel the Lord is pleased with the service that has been rendered by the Saints.

I sense a deep commitment on the part of our leaders to apply in the wards and stakes the principles of welfare service we have heard preached from this pulpit for many

years. Surely there never has been a time when we needed to be more anxiously engaged in such an important cause.

I am pleased with the reports we receive regarding family gardens. I hope all of you plan to put in your garden whenever spring comes in your area, and that where possible you are canning and preserving food. I note, too, the increased emphasis on procuring welfare projects, as well as improving the ones we already have.

Live the gospel

Nearly every family in the Church is feeling the effects of worldwide inflation in one way or

another. May I remind all of us that if we will live the gospel and follow the counsel of the leaders of the Church, we will be blessed to avoid many of the problems that plague the world. The Lord knows the challenges we face. If we keep his commandments, we will be entitled to the wisdom and blessings of heaven in solving them.

Brothers and sisters, I know the gospel is true. It contains the answers to all of life's questions and to all of

life's problems. May the Lord bless us all in this great welfare program, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The congregation sang the hymn "The World Has Need of Willing Men."

Elder Hartman Rector, Jr. offered the benediction.

SALT LAKE TABERNACLE CHOIR AND ORGAN BROADCAST

The following broadcast, announced by J. Spencer Kinard, and originating with KSL Radio and Television, Salt Lake City, Utah, was presented from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 6, 1980, through the courtesy of the Columbia Broadcasting System's network throughout the United States, parts of Canada, and through other facilities to several points overseas:

Announcer: Once more we welcome you within these walls with Music and the Spoken Word from the crossroads of the West.

CBS and its affiliated stations bring you at this hour the Mormon Tabernacle Choir from Temple Square in Salt Lake City, with Jerold Ottley conducting the Choir, John Longhurst, Tabernacle organist, and the Spoken Word by Spencer Kinard.

(Choir without announcement: "So Keep We All This Holy Feast" from "Christ Lay in Death's Dark Prison"—Bach)

Announcer: "With grateful hearts we all are met To eat the bread of gladness, So keep we all this holy feast." The Tabernacle Choir opened today's Easter broadcast with portions

of Bach's cantata "Christ Lay in Death's Dark Prison."

Next, the words of Delbert L. Stapley set to the music of Robert Cundick are heard as the Choir sings "Our God Is a God of Love, Love is his greatest gift to us."

(Choir: "Our God Is a God of Love"—Cundick)

Announcer: Had we been present when Christ faced Pilate, we could have predicted with certainty the outcome. On the one hand stood Jesus. He was a Hebrew, a second-class citizen. He commanded no armies; he had cultivated no friendships with prominent individuals; his only material possession at the time was a homespun cloak.

Facing this carpenter from Galilee was Pilate, Pilate the Governor, the commander of armies, the possessor of wealth; Pilate the lawgiver, in whose hand rested the power to inflict death as the final argument to any debate.

Indeed, death would soon silence this young prophet named Jesus. And in the years to follow martyrdom, the same fate would also become the reward for many others who believed in his name.

It seems, in fact, that death has always been used to silence the truth by those who are ignorant or afraid. Before Christ, the sublime Socrates was silenced by the Athenian court for instructing the youth of Greece to think for themselves. After came Bruno, the mathematician, burned at the stake for his views concerning the solar system; Thomas Moore, beheaded for refusing to break his word; Abraham Lincoln, shot because he believed in the rights of all men; and Gandhi, brought down in violence for preaching the doctrine of nonviolence.

Nor have such reactions been restricted in time or place or purpose. Truth seekers of all generations and in all lands—including this one—have been stilled because of their principles. In 1844, in this country near Carthage, Illinois, an American religious leader named Joseph Smith was shot to death because of his convictions. It was he who 150 years ago today organized a religious community which would seek refuge among the Rocky Mountains, where it would lay the foundations for this historic Mormon Tabernacle on Temple Square.

Yes, truth is forever on the cross. Its champions have languished in prisons, been silenced by the assassin's bullet, been led to the scaffold and to the stake.

But for all of this, death has not conquered these martyrs—nor have their cause, their courage, their sacrifice passed into nothingness.

For, somewhere on the outskirts of Jerusalem there is a tomb: a tomb different from all the other graves and sepulchres the world over, a tomb bearing mute testimony to the final invincibility of truth, a tomb which is empty yet testifies that the lives of all will be eternal.

(Choir without announcement: "The Almighty God Gave His Only Begotten Son"—Cundick)

Announcer: "The Almighty God Gave His Only Begotten Son, He suffered temptations, but he gave no heed to them. Then he was crucified!" The Choir has sung this composition from Robert Cundick's "The Redeemer."

From the works of Johannes Brahms, Tabernacle Organist John Longhurst plays "Beloved Jesus."

(Organ: "Beloved Jesus"—Brahms)

Announcer: The Choir concludes today's broadcast with music from the "Requiem" by Brahms, "The Redeemed of the Lord."

(Choir: "The Redeemed of the Lord"—Brahms)

Announcer: Again we leave you from within the shadows of the everlasting hills. May peace be with you this day . . . and always.

Announcer (on radio): This concludes the two-thousand six-hundred forty-second performance, continuing the fifty-first year of this traditional broadcast from the Mormon Tabernacle on Temple Square, brought to you by CBS and its affiliated stations, originating with Station KSL in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Jerold Ottley conducted the Choir, John Longhurst was at the organ, the Spoken Word by Spencer Kinard.

In another seven days at this same hour, Music and the Spoken Word will be heard again from the crossroads of the West.

This is the CBS radio network.

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE MUSIC

The Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir provided the choral numbers for the Saturday morning and Sunday morning sessions of the conference, with Jerold D. Ottley and Donald H. Ripplinger conducting.

A Relief Society choir comprised of sisters from the Centerville, Syracuse, Layton, and Kaysville regions furnished the music for the Saturday afternoon session under the direction of Beverly J. Pond.

At the general priesthood meeting, an Aaronic Priesthood choir from regions in the Salt Lake Valley provided the music, directed by Norman

R. Wendel.

The Mormon Youth Chorus sang at the Sunday afternoon session, directed by Robert C. Bowden.

The Fayette, New York Branch choir assisted with music during the Sunday morning and Sunday afternoon sessions. Their director was Robert B. Winebrenner, accompanied by Alma Jean Porschet.

Prelude, postlude, and interlude music and accompaniments on the Tabernacle organ throughout the conference sessions were played by Robert Cundick, Roy Darley, or John Longhurst, Tabernacle organists.

Francis M. Gibbons

Clerk of the Conference

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THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY
SAINTS

Official Report of the
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Semiannual General

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THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTIETH SEMIANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The 150th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah on Saturday, October 4, 1980, at 10:00 A.M.

The general sessions of the conference were held at 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday, October 4 and 5, 1980. The general welfare session was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, October 4, 1980, at 7:00 A.M. The general priesthood meeting was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, October 4, 1980, beginning at 7:00 P.M.

President Spencer W. Kimball presided at all sessions of the conference and conducted the welfare, Saturday afternoon, and Sunday morning sessions. President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday morning, priesthood, and Sunday afternoon sessions of the conference.

At the Saturday afternoon session, Elders Bernard P. Brockbank and O. Leslie Stone were sustained as emeritus members of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Television and radio stations carried portions or all of some of the conference sessions to large audiences throughout the world. The general priesthood session was carried by closed-circuit transmission to approximately 2,044 locations in many different countries.

General Authorities present

The following General Authorities of the Church attended one or more of the general sessions:

The First Presidency: Spencer W. Kimball, N. Eldon Tanner, Marion G. Romney.

The Quorum of the Twelve: Ezra Taft Benson, Mark E. Petersen, LeGrand Richards, Howard W. Hunter, Gordon B. Hinckley, Thomas S. Monson, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, Bruce R. McConkie, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, and James E. Faust.

The First Quorum of the Seventy:
Presidents: Franklin D. Richards, Neal A. Maxwell, J. Thomas Fyans, Carlos E. Asay, M. Russell Ballard, Dean L. Larsen, and Royden G. Derrick. *Additional Members:* Marion D. Hanks, A. Theodore Tuttle, Theodore M. Burton, Paul H. Dunn, Hartman Rector, Jr., Loren C. Dunn, Robert L. Simpson, Rex D. Pinegar, W. Grant Bangerter, Robert D. Hales, Adney Y. Komatsu, Joseph B. Wirthlin, Gene R. Cook, Charles A. Didier, William R. Bradford, George P. Lee, John H. Groberg, Jacob de Jager, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Robert E. Wells, G. Homer Durham, James M. Paramore, Richard G. Scott, Hugh W. Pinnock, F. Enzo Busche, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Ronald E. Poelman, Derek A. Cuthbert, Robert L. Backman, Rex C. Reeve, Sr.,¹ Teddy E. Brewerton, and Jack H. Goasland, Jr.

The Presiding Bishopric: Victor L. Brown, H. Burke Peterson, and J. Richard Clarke.

Emeritus General Authorities: Eldred G. Smith, Sterling W. Sill, Henry D. Taylor, James A. Cullimore, Joseph Anderson, John H. Vandenberg,² Bernard P. Brockbank, and O. Leslie Stone.

^{1,2} Elders F. Burton Howard and S. Dilworth Young were away on assignment.

Other authorities present

Other authorities of the Church in attendance included Regional Representatives, presidents of stakes and their counselors, presidents of

temples, bishoprics of wards, and presidencies and members of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood quorums.

Many general, stake, and ward auxiliary officers also attended.

FIRST DAY MORNING MEETING

FIRST SESSION

The first general session of the conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah on Saturday, October 4, 1980, at 10:00 A.M. President Spencer W. Kimball presided at this session. President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music of the opening session was provided by the Tabernacle Choir with Jerold Otley conducting and John Longhurst at the organ.

Before the commencement of the meeting, the Tabernacle Choir sang "Arise, O Glorious Zion" without announcement.

President Romney then made the following remarks:

President Marion G. Romney

President Spencer W. Kimball, who presides at this conference, has asked that I conduct this first general session.

We welcome all assembled in the Tabernacle on Temple Square at the beginning of this, the first general session of the 150th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We also welcome all others who are participating by television, radio, and direct wire.

Seated on the stand are all of the General Authorities of the Church except Elders F. Burton Howard and S.

Dilworth Young who are away on assignment, and Elders M. Russell Ballard and Robert D. Hales who are presiding in the Salt Palace. Present also are other general leaders and many local Church leaders from around the world.

We extend a special welcome to government, education, and civic leaders who are present.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Jerold Otley with John Longhurst at the organ, rendered the opening hymn "Arise, O Glorious Zion." This session will continue by the Choir singing "The Lord's Prayer." Following the singing, the invocation will be offered by Elder Theodore M. Burton, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Choir sang "The Lord's Prayer."

Elder Theodore M. Burton offered the invocation.

The Choir sang "For the Beauty of the Earth" without announcement.

President Marion G. Romney

The Tabernacle Choir has just rendered "For the Beauty of the Earth."

We shall now be pleased to hear from our beloved friend and leader, President Spencer W. Kimball, President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

President Spencer W. Kimball

My dear brothers and sisters, I am happy to greet you at this opening session of our 150th semiannual world conference of the Church.

Eternal families

From the beginning, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has emphasized family life. We have always understood that the foundations of the family, as an eternal unit, were laid even before this earth was created! Society without basic family life is without foundation and will disintegrate into nothingness.

Therefore, whenever anything so basic as the eternal family is imperiled, we have a solemn obligation to speak out, lest there be critical damage to the family institution by those who seem to be deliberately destructive of it.

The commandments and standards of morality set by the Lord himself are under attack on every hand. There are false teachers everywhere using speech and pornographic literature, magazines, radio, TV, street talk—spreading heresies which break down moral standards.

Because of the seriousness of this matter, I have prepared an article for the November 1980 *Ensign* and *New Era* magazines in which I speak out frankly and at length on the subject of morality. This is a grave responsibility, and not an easy one. I encourage all Latter-day Saints to read this special message.

Perilous times

We are living in perilous times as more and more individuals dishonor the marriage vow and as juvenile delinquency mounts. Divorces in the United States are up over 65 percent since 1970. The number of unmarried couples living together has gone up over 157 percent during the past

decade. Many more children are growing up without having both parents in the home. In 1979, almost one of every five families with children was being maintained by one parent.

Abortion has reached plague proportions. There have been, for instance, "more deaths from abortion in England in the decade since the English Abortion Act than there were deaths in the First World War." Of this, Malcolm Muggeridge said:

"I was brought up to believe that one of the great troubles of our Western world was that in the First World War we lost the flower of our population. Well, now we have destroyed an equivalent number of lives in the name of humane principles, before they were even born." (*Human Life Review*, Summer 1980, p. 74.)

Furthermore, many of the social restraints which in the past have helped to reinforce and to shore up the family are dissolving and disappearing. The time will come when only those who believe deeply and actively in the family will be able to preserve their families in the midst of the gathering evil around us.

Whether from inadvertence, ignorance, or other causes, the efforts governments often make (ostensibly to help the family) sometimes only hurt the family more. There are those who would define the family in such a nontraditional way that they would define it out of existence. The more governments try in vain to take the place of the family, the less effective governments will be in performing the traditional and basic roles for which governments are formed in the first place.

Seventh commandment

Whether we like it or not, so many of the difficulties which beset

the family today stem from the breaking of the seventh commandment (see Ex. 20:14). Total chastity before marriage and total fidelity after are still the standard from which there can be no deviation without sin, misery, and unhappiness. The breaking of the seventh commandment usually means the breaking of one or more homes.

Delinquent adults still tend to produce delinquent children, and that awful reality will not change simply by our lowering standards as to what constitutes delinquency—either in adults, youth, or children.

We of all people, brothers and sisters, should not be taken in by the specious arguments that the family unit is somehow tied to a particular phase of development a mortal society is going through. We are free to resist those moves which downplay the significance of the family and which play up the significance of selfish individualism. We know the family to be eternal. We know that when things go wrong in the family, things go wrong in every other institution in society.

Those who, whether in ignorance or malice, attack the family are setting in motion an awful and needless cycle of misery and despair, for they will search in vain and pain for substitutes, and the wisdom of the worldly wise shall perish publicly for their folly concerning the family.

The decline in many of our families is occurring at a time when the nations of the world are moving into some of the most difficult times known.

Permissiveness will not pull us through such crises. Materialism will not sustain us, for moth and rust will still lay waste and corrupt all mortal treasures.

Our political institutions—parliaments, congresses, and assemblies—cannot rescue us if our basic institution, the family, is not intact. Peace treaties cannot save us when

there is hostility instead of love in the home. Unemployment programs cannot rescue us when many are no longer taught how to work or do not have the opportunity to work or the inclination, in some cases, to do so. Law enforcement cannot safeguard us if too many people are unwilling to discipline themselves or be disciplined.

Rising generations who have been taught that authority and loving discipline are wrong will not keep the fifth commandment, honoring their fathers and mothers (see Ex. 20:12). How can the rising generations honor their parents if their parents have dishonored themselves—especially by breaking the seventh commandment?

Almost every array of statistics one sees with regard to the family becomes a sad sermon in statistics, reminding us of the need to stem and to turn the tide.

Let us be sure, in our Latter-day Saint homes, that we do our part to stem and to turn the tide.

Importance of journals

Again, I urge you to be diligent in recording your personal and family histories. We are pleased with the success of the recent World Conference on Records, where more than eleven thousand people from over thirty nations around the globe gathered to share and learn concerning personal record keeping. In this, let us be an example to others and reap the benefits of stronger family units as we preserve our heritage.

Parents to teach children

We hope our parents are using the added time that has come from the consolidated schedule in order to be with, teach, love, and nurture their children. We hope you have not forgotten the need for family activity

and recreation, for which time is also provided. Let your love of each member of your family be unconditional. Where there are challenges, you fail only if you fail to keep trying!

We genuinely welcome help, real help, from churches, schools, colleges, and universities, from thoughtful men and women of every race, creed, and culture who care about the family. But, as indicated earlier, if the supporting network of institutions does not function adequately, then we will do our part anyway. There is no lack of clarity in what the Lord has told us. We cannot shirk. He has placed the responsibility directly where it belongs, and he holds us accountable with regard to the duties of parents to teach their children correct principles and of the need to walk uprightly before the Lord—and there is no substitute for teaching our children by the eloquence of example.

Families can be forever

Oh, brothers and sisters, fami-

lies can be forever! Do not let the lures of the moment draw you away from them! *Divinity, eternity, and family*—they go together, hand in hand, and so must we!

I bear you my solemn witness that God lives, that Jesus Christ lives, and that he is our Savior and Redeemer. I leave you my love and my blessings, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Following President Kimball's address, the Tabernacle Choir sang the hymn "Guide Us, O Thou Great Jehovah" without announcement.

President Marion G. Romney

We have just heard from President Spencer W. Kimball, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "Guide Us, O Though Great Jehovah."

It will now be our pleasure to hear from President N. Eldon Tanner, First Counselor in the First Presidency of the Church.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Follow the prophet

I feel it a privilege and a blessing to be able to be with you this morning in this session of conference. To follow President Kimball is something that I have tried to do now for about seven years. And if I can succeed, I am going to make a go of it. I am so happy to be with you this day, to partake of the spirit that is always present in the conferences, to hear the Tabernacle Choir, and to hear the sermons of the leadership of this great church.

Testimony

I was not prepared to talk at all,

but President Kimball asked me if I would like to say a few words. I would like to bear my testimony to my family, friends, businessmen, and the world. I have had the great privilege of being with four Presidents of this church and of seeing how the Lord works through them. One cannot doubt when he sees them that they are prophets of God, leading us in the paths of truth and righteousness and helping us to prepare ourselves and our children for eternal life.

We know we are spirit children of God, and we were present when it was decided to form an earth here where we could come and dwell and

prove ourselves worthy, by keeping the commandments, to go back into the presence of our Heavenly Father. That is why the earth was created.

Jesus Christ was chosen to be the Savior of the world. He gave the plan of life and salvation to the prophets in the old days, as recorded in Genesis and elsewhere. We know who we are, where we came from, why we are here, and how we can get back to his presence.

We are very fortunate in having a testimony of the teachings of the

gospel of Jesus Christ. I hope and pray that all of us will do our best in the duties that are given to us. May our example and influence be felt for good wherever we are. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Marion G. Romney

We have just heard from President N. Eldon Tanner. We shall now hear from Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder L. Tom Perry

"For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare; yea, I prepared all things and have given unto the children of men to be agents unto themselves" (D&C 104:17).

Law of the harvest

I marvel each year as I witness the system which the Lord has provided to supply for the needs of His children here on the earth. Each spring I follow a piece of string tied between two stakes to make a straight line, and with my hoe in hand I proceed to drop two or three seeds into good, fertile soil. Each fall I am overwhelmed with the bounteous harvest. Those few seeds have grown into tall plants, and each seed for the most part has produced a full golden ear containing more than a hundredfold of the original seed which was dropped into the soil a few months earlier. Each season of harvest one must be overwhelmed with humble gratitude for the blessings of the Lord to His children.

The Savior must have appreciated this process, for He used the example of this growth cycle many times as He taught in parables during His earthly ministry. We find lesson after lesson in His teachings using

examples from the Lord's supply system. We find parables concerning the sower (see Matt. 13:3-23), the seed growing by itself (see Mark 4:26-29), the tares (see Matt. 13:24-30), the unfruitful fig tree (see Luke 13:6-9), the fig tree's leaves (see Matt. 24:32-33), treasures hidden in a field (see Matt. 13:44), and many, many others. Is it any wonder we found His disciples teaching after His earthly ministry, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7).

One must be impressed with the great message of the Lord's law of the harvest. His system produces growth, multiplication, and abundant rewards. Surely as we watch the blessings of this growth cycle each year, we would expect His children to catch the vision of their mortal potential. He has entrusted to many of His children during their earthly ministry the opportunity of caring for His special creations—His sons and His daughters. It is surely the greatest of all responsibilities which He has delegated to mankind.

Concern for families

I have spent some time in the last few months listening—listening

to the frustrations of parents, listening to the urgent appeals from youth, listening to the small voice of a child. My ears have been filled with concerns; these concerns were all centered upon what has happened to the basic, secure, fun-loving, traditional family, which has been the foundation of civilization beginning with father Adam and mother Eve. Suddenly we find great forces at work to relegate it to a minority position. Recorded history has made it abundantly clear what happens to mankind when the traditional family unit is cast aside. The Book of Mormon gives us account after account of the results of what occurs to civilizations who turn from the course designed for them by the Lord.

Jacob warns against pride

In the book of Jacob we find the scriptures recording, "And now it came to pass that the people of Nephi, under the reign of the second king, began to grow hard in their hearts, and indulge themselves somewhat in wicked practices" (Jacob 1:15). Jacob warned the people to mend their ways and cautioned them about what would occur if they did not return to the ways of the Lord.

First he cautioned them concerning their pride. Then he turned to a more troublesome problem, saying, "And now I make an end of speaking unto you concerning this pride. And were it not that I must speak unto you concerning a grosser crime, my heart would rejoice exceedingly because of you." (Jacob 2:22.)

"Behold, ye have done greater iniquities than the Lamanites, our brethren. Ye have broken the hearts of your tender wives, and lost the confidence of your children, because of your bad examples before them; and the sobbings of their hearts ascend up to God against you. And

because of the strictness of the word of God, which cometh down against you, many hearts died, pierced with deep wounds." (Jacob 2:35.)

Unless we would turn from the course too many are pursuing today, we too must stand the same judgments of God.

Maintaining a family today

Contemplating the words of the scriptures, I was suddenly startled with the terrifying thought, "What if the clock were to be turned back on my life fifteen years, and I found myself again with a couple of teenagers and a small child living in the 1980 environment?" I found cold beads of perspiration standing out on my forehead as I considered the challenge of maintaining a traditional family during these troublesome years. It was then that I started to think of what I would do differently than I did in that first experience if I could repeat the process fifteen years later.

Four problem areas flashed through my mind which would require renewed determination and effort:

Family finances

1. Family finances. To provide for a family would be much more difficult. Employment is not as secure. Change is occurring at an ever-increasing rate. It is much more of a problem to maintain our standard of living with inflation as it is today. Housing, utilities, food, clothing, and the gas-guzzling automobiles are all taking a larger share of the family income. The pressures on family finances would increase family tensions. How to cope with this new environment looms as a major challenge. But suddenly I was comforted by a voice that was heard to say:

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

"In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." (Prov. 3:5-6.)

I realized the Church had been preparing me for years for a time of stress and strain. Today a long-range family financial plan is clearly needed if children are to have the blessings of missions and education. It would need to be carefully worked out and prepared to meet these requirements. The avoidance of debt is essential; living within my income, fundamental. Much thought and understanding must be given to keep my family finances properly balanced. Expenditures must be challenged: Do I really need a giant house with the giant-size monthly mortgage payments? Is a second car required? Can my family-centered activities replace costly commercial entertainment? Can vacations be made exciting at home?

Having a one-year supply must be moved up on the family priority list. How it is obtained must be considered again. Can more of it be the result of our own labors in making our own clothes, increasing our garden yield, and preserving our own food?

How can I wisely invest my savings so that inflation will not rob me of them? Is my career income secure and able to keep pace with the needs of my family during the ever-changing decade of the eighties?

Yes, assuming the responsibilities of caring temporally for a family requires much more thought, preparation, and planning in the environment we live in today.

Family organization

2. Family organization. I heard a young mother in a testimony meeting a few weeks ago bear witness to a new understanding of what the

Lord had entrusted to her. She said how disappointed she had been with the change in the Sunday meeting program, which had taken her—a Primary worker—from the opportunity of attending Relief Society and Sunday School. She had almost determined to fall into inactivity rather than accept the change. One day while brooding over this situation, the light of inspiration touched her heart and she could see the vision of what was occurring in the Church. It was not the loss of attendance at Relief Society she was to be concerned with, but the new, glorious opportunities to have prime time on the Lord's day to be with her husband and children to fulfill the greatest responsibility the Lord has entrusted to her—the responsibility of teaching and training her own. Now after much prayer, study, and planning with her husband, Sunday has become the most special day in the week.

As I listened to her testimony, I wondered what the results have been in this new, consolidated program which was introduced six months ago. Has it been a time of frustration because schedules and activities have been altered? Has it just added more time to pollute our minds in front of TV sets? Or did we catch the vision of why the extra time was needed to be together in a family setting to allow parents sufficient time to teach, train, and demonstrate the love they feel for each of their children?

If I were cast again in the role of having a young family around me, I would be determined to give them more time. I would try to see that the special times the Church has encouraged me to spend with my family were now strictly followed and properly organized to be more productive.

With the change in the Sunday program, I believe I would alter the format of the special weekly family times we have together. Since most of the children in the world today

will never have the privilege of being taught and trained in a traditional family home, I would be determined to make certain that my children were not denied this privilege. I would want them to have the best possible experience of seeing a family that really works. Eternal families don't "just happen." To enjoy this greatest of all gifts, we must earn it through our accomplishments here in mortality.

First, I would be certain that sufficient time was calendared each week for a family executive committee meeting to plan family strategy. The executive committee, composed of a husband and wife, would meet together to fully communicate, discuss, plan, and prepare for their leadership role in the family organization.

Second, I would make the family home evening times on Monday night a family council meeting where children were taught by parents how to prepare for their roles as family members and prospective parents. Family home evening would begin with a family dinner together, followed by a council meeting, where such topics as the following would be discussed and training would be given: temple preparation, missionary preparation, home management, family finances, career development, education, community involvement, cultural improvement, acquisition and care of real and personal property, family planning calendars, use of leisure time, and work assignments. The evening could then be climaxed with a special dessert and time for parents to have individual meetings with each child.

Third, Saturday would be a special activity day divided into two parts: first, a time for teaching children the blessings of work, how to care for and improve the home, the yard, the garden, the field; second, a time for family activity, to build a family heritage of things you enjoy doing together.

Fourth, Sunday would become the special day in each week. Careful preparation would precede the three-hour worship service time at the chapel. The family would arrive at church rested, relaxed, and spiritually prepared to enjoy the meetings together. The balance of the day would be spent in a climate of spiritual uplift. We would dress to fit the occasion—boys in something somewhat better than levis and T-shirts, girls in comfortable, decent dresses, not in shorts or slacks. It would be a time for our family scripture study, genealogical research, personal journals, family histories, letter writing, missionary contacts, and visits to extended family, to friends, and to shut-ins.

Filling Church positions

3. Filling Church positions. I would prepare, study, train, meditate, and pray for more guidance to better fulfill the Church position to which I had been called. I would want my service to measure up to the standard the Lord expected of me. I would be certain I was so well prepared for each assignment given to me that my inefficiencies would not rob from me precious family time. I would understand more fully the Lord's system of sharing responsibilities with counselors, high councilors, quorum officers, home teachers, and fathers. I would understand more fully the concept that one man can never outperform the results of an effective team.

Community involvement

4. Community involvement. I would have greater involvement in what was going on in the schools my children were attending and the community in which we lived. I would lend my support to the majority of my good neighbors to be certain that where I was living children could have the privilege of growing up in a

clean, safe, wholesome, happy community. I would not allow small, misguided, self-benefiting groups to rob from us the blessings of such a family community experience.

Live worthy of blessings

I pray that our harvest will be blessed with the fulness the Lord has promised to us because we have lived worthy of meriting His blessings. May our families be the traditional type, where the leadership is provided by two worthy parents who welcome children into their home to be loved, taught, and trained in the ways prescribed by the Lord.

I declare unto you my witness that the Lord is strong and mighty and is the King of Glory. He lives to lead and guide and bless us with His love.

May we be blessed with the faith to follow His way, which will lead us to life eternal, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Following Elder Perry's remarks, the Choir sang "Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee" without announcement.

President Marion G. Romney

Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us. He was followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee."

We shall now hear from Elder Robert L. Simpson, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Robert L. Simpson

During these few moments I would like to bear witness to the fact that God's laws are anchored firmly and securely in place by eternal priesthood principle. Gospel truth stands as a pillar of peace, security, and freedom for all who would avail themselves. And I further attest that the ultimate in revealed truth, light, and eternal assurance is inseparably connected with the temple. Those sacred buildings are reverently and accurately referred to as the house of the Lord.

A temple of God in this day and age? How can this be? Most God-fearing folks think only in terms of ancient temples built when prophets lived among the people more than two thousand years ago.

A modern temple

Come with me inside the temple—a modern temple in our day; a temple that has been dedicated to

the Lord, just as ancient temples were; a special building where sacred ordinances are performed by those who have been commissioned with appropriate, divine authority. The temple is indeed a house of quiet worship—everyone speaks softly, usually in whispers. All who participate dress in white. All who come have been found worthy and clean.

The temple is a house of prayer, for Heavenly Father is glorified by every ordinance performed therein. He who enters for the first time receives a pronouncement of special blessings that are not available outside the temple.

The temple is a house of instruction—yes, even divine instruction—about God's eternal plan for his children. In the temple one gains a superior perspective about his personal relationship with his Maker and with the Savior—yes, special knowledge about God and Jesus Christ, which is essential to the obtaining of

life eternal. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

The temple is a house of revelation—yes, continuing revelation. Whether that revelation be to a prophet or a member who seeks after truth, all who come to the temple seeking are continually taught and edified.

The temple is a house of commitment and sacrifice, for it is truly stated that there can be no true worship without sacrifice; indeed, as the Saints sing, sacrifice brings forth the blessings of heaven.

The temple is a house of solemn covenant where one appropriately commits himself to live a more Christlike life. Oh, that four billion people on earth could enter into that kind of covenant!

The temple is a house where young people are married for time and for all eternity. Thus, a common bond is formed, a bond that transcends the earthly pitfalls of misunderstanding, distrust, and, too often, divorce.

House of God; eternal relationships

The temple is a house of eternal relationships, a place where families can come for the purpose of transforming their family circle into an eternal family unit, where all of a sudden "together forever" becomes far more important than the next trivial family difference. You see, eternal families reason together in family council with dad at the head.

The temple is a house of God where all of those declared worthy are extended the privilege of performing the sacred ordinances of the temple on behalf of their forebears, that in very deed the hearts of the children might be turned to their fathers, as foretold in the holy scriptures (see Mal. 4:6). Like all of Heavenly Father's blessings for his

children, the eventual realization is always on condition of faithfulness and conformity to priesthood principles.

Husbands and wives, love each other

The ultimate blessings of the temple are centered in the love and devotion between husband and wife. They must set the example—they are the core. The scriptures say it best of all: "Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord" (1 Cor. 11:11). Everything in this world that is counter to a tender and loyal husband-wife relationship is a tool of the adversary. Everything that promotes and perpetuates family unity—mother, father, and children properly endowed with and motivated by the light and truth of Christ—is in harmony with the Lord's plan for mortal man.

Husbands, love your wives; wives, honor your husbands. Look to the gospel for all solutions to your problems; be a proper example to your children. That is where it all starts. The poet Longfellow expressed it well in these words:

*"As unto the bow the cord is,
So unto the man is woman;
Though she bends him, she obeys him,
Though she draws him, yet she
follows;
Useless each without the other!"*
(*The Song of Hiawatha*, in *The Complete Poetical Works of Longfellow*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1922, p. 135).

These poetic phrases are in harmony with temple teachings.

Eternal marriage

Just hours after a disastrous flood in Idaho a few years ago, one man who had apparently lost every

earthly possession wept bitterly. His despair was not so much over the temporal loss he had suffered, but rather, and far more important, his lovely wife and four children were unaccounted for and presumed drowned. But, within the hour good news came: his family had been miraculously saved and were waiting for him at a nearby emergency facility. The reunion that soon followed was a scene of supreme joy and happiness. His comment in the midst of the jubilation was classic: "I have my family again, and although I stand without one earthly possession left to my name, I feel like a millionaire." Each family member nodded concurrence. For, you see, this family was a very special family; they had recently been sealed together for time and for all eternity in a temple of the living God.

Just yesterday it was my special privilege to be present as a lovely young couple knelt at the altar of the temple. Each was dressed in robes of sparkling white. They were surrounded by a host of family and friends as these special words were spoken as part of the marriage covenant: "For time and for all eternity." You see, such was the precise nature of their *forever* marriage.

Oh, that all people everywhere could be touched by this divine teaching of light and truth that makes such a union possible, not for just a select few, but for any and all of God's children who might properly prepare themselves. But it must be done in *His* way.

Eternal marriage is so sacred that it can only be performed within the walls of the temple, and only by those who have been endowed with proper, divine authority to bind or seal on earth that which will be bound in heaven.

"Whatsoever you seal on earth shall be sealed in heaven; and whatsoever you bind on earth, in my name and by my word, saith the

Lord, it shall be eternally bound in the heavens" (D&C 132:46).

Baptism for the dead

Now, let me introduce you to a group of twenty-five teenagers who have come to the temple at dawn to participate in the sacred ordinance of vicarious baptism. These young people had been found morally clean and worthy by their bishop. You see, bishops today are bound by the same guidelines as bishops of old, who were also taught: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully." (Ps. 24:3-4.) There has always been a standard in the house of the Lord: that standard is purity and cannot be compromised.

These teenagers come in a spirit of reverence with the desire to do something for others who have lived before. One teenage girl made this comment: "Being baptized by immersion for one of my ancestors, who lived in the 1700s, made me very proud. I felt that she was right there with me. I know she was pleased and accepted the work that I did for her."

These teenagers were performing an ordinance that was practiced during Paul's ministry, for he wrote to the Saints of Corinth: "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?" (1 Cor. 15:29.)

This vicarious work for the dead, which was obviously practiced during New Testament times as attested by Paul, was obviously an important ordinance taught by the Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ following his crucifixion. Proof of this is found in Paul's own words as he bears testimony to the Galatians: "But I certify you, brethren, that the

gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Gal. 1:11-12.)

Thousands work long hours in the temples to perform not only baptisms but other vicarious ordinances as well for those who had not the opportunity while in mortality. "If it were not so," the scriptures attest, "the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming" (JS—H 1:39).

The Savior had the power to provide immortality for the entire human race; we have the power to do vicarious work for only one at a time, but it is for the same glorious purpose and made possible by the same authority. Again, I quote the voice of the Lord: "For if you will that I give unto you a place in the celestial world, you must prepare yourselves by doing the things which I have commanded you and required of you" (D&C 78:7).

Realize blessings of the temple

May I declare without apology that every living person should seek earnestly for the blessings of the temple as his ultimate goal. For there you will find peace; there you will come to know what security really is. There, in the house of the Lord, you can learn what you need to know to be truly free. There, tucked away from turmoil and strife, is the chance to be totally unselfish—a rarity in today's world.

I conclude with the loving counsel of the Savior, who said, "Therefore, fear not, little flock; do good; let earth and hell combine against you, for if ye are built upon my rock, they cannot prevail" (D&C 6:34).

There is no foundation more secure than the temple. The work accomplished there transcends all other human effort. May we remove all obstacles to realize temple blessings; for I testify, He waits there for each of us, His children. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Marion G. Romney

Elder Robert L. Simpson of the First Quorum of the Seventy has just addressed us.

The Choir and congregation will now join in singing "Oh, How Lovely Was the Morning," following which Elder Robert E. Wells of the First Quorum of the Seventy will speak to us.

The congregation joined the Tabernacle Choir in singing the hymn "Oh, How Lovely Was the Morning."

President Romney

We welcome those who have just joined us on radio and television. We are gathered in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah in the first general session of the 150th Semiannual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Elder Robert E. Wells, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Robert E. Wells

"This man knows the Shepherd"

I once heard President Hugh B. Brown relate this inspiring story: Sometime ago a great actor in the city of New York gave a wonderful performance in a large theatre, at the close of which there were rounds of applause. He was called back again and again. Finally someone called to him, "Would you do for us the Twenty-third Psalm?"

"Why, yes. I know the Twenty-third Psalm."

He recited it as an actor would, perfectly, with nothing left to be desired as far as a performance was concerned. When he was finished, again there was thunderous applause. Then the actor came to the front of the stage and said: "Ladies and gentlemen, there is an old man sitting here on the front row whom I happen to know. I am going to ask him without any notice if he will come and repeat the Twenty-third Psalm."

The elderly gentleman, of course, was frightened. Trembling, he came to the stage. Fearfully he looked out over the vast audience. Then, as though he were at home only with one, he closed his eyes against the audience, bowed his head, and talked to God, and said:

"The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want.

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

"He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake."

Then changing to address the Savior directly and intimately:

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:

thou anointest my head with oil: my cup runneth over.

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

When the old man finished, there was no applause, but there was not a dry eye in that house. The actor came to the front of the stage. He, too, was wiping his eyes. And he said, "Ladies and gentlemen, I know the words of the Twenty-third Psalm, but this man *knows the Shepherd*." (Adapted from Hugh B. Brown, *The Quest*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1961, pp. 335-36.)

Scriptures and prayer

President Benson has given us a key so that we might become as one who knows the Shepherd. He has told us: "To learn of Christ necessitates the study of the scriptures and the [study of the] testimonies of those who know him. We come to know him through prayer and the inspiration and revelation that God has promised to those who keep his commandments." (*God, Family, Country: Our Three Great Loyalties*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1974, p. 156.)

Sister Mellor

There is a silver-haired Argentine sister who knows the Shepherd. She has given a long life of service to the Lord, his Church, and her fellowmen.

The first time Sister Mellor attended a Mormon church service, she was brought by the missionaries. They felt that she was the most sophisticated, cultured, and best-educated investigator they had ever met. They held a few meetings in her lovely home, and when they invited

her to accompany them to a Sunday Church meeting, she readily agreed. The service was being held in an old building. The members attending were of somewhat humble circumstances compared to the new investigator.

The service did not go well by the standards of the two missionaries hoping to impress their guest. The branch leaders had just been recently called, and they were still learning their duties. There was some confusion at the pulpit. There was an interruption at the sacrament table at the most sacred moment. The sermons seemed to be less interesting than those desired by the eager missionaries. The reverence was threatened from time to time by children moving or crying. There was no organ to provide deep, religious sounds. The missionaries agonizingly thought of the negative impressions their elegant investigator must be receiving. They knew she normally worshiped in a very fashionable cathedral where everything would have been highly professional and the congregation would have been of the highest stratum of local society.

On the way home, one of the missionaries began to reflect his embarrassment. He explained: "Please excuse our present building. Some day we will build a lovely new chapel here." Then he added: "Please excuse our new leaders. We have a lay priesthood, so we take turns conducting, and the new leaders are still learning how to conduct services." He was just about to give another excuse when Sister Herta Mellor turned to him and said somewhat sternly: "Elder, don't you apologize! It must have been like this at the time of Christ!"

With her spiritual eyes and her knowledge of the Shepherd acquired through studying the holy scriptures, she saw through centuries of tradition. She saw past cathedrals and organs. She saw back through the

corridors of time to the Shepherd meeting with his humble fishermen-Apostles, with some sinners, and even with leper outcasts. She saw the early Saints meeting in a small, rented, upstairs room. She saw children, with the Savior smiling at them lovingly. Because she knew the Shepherd, she could say with profound and deep insight, "It must have been like this at the time of Christ."

She exemplifies to me the admonition which many have followed: "Fill your mind with thoughts of Christ, your heart with love of Christ, and your life with service to Christ." Today there stands a lovely chapel, presided over by a well-trained lay bishopric, where Sister Mellor first attended church about thirty years ago.

Joseph Smith knew the Shepherd

There is one man above all other men that I feel truly knew the Shepherd. He was the first living prophet on the earth after many centuries. He wrote an account of the first time he saw the Savior in vision: "I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me. . . . When the light rested upon me, I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*" (JS—H, 1:16-17.)

The young prophet continues describing this unprecedented and heaven-opening event: "My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the [churches] was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the [churches] was

right—and which I should join. I was answered that I must join none of them.” (JS—H, 1:18-19.)

For a period of ten years Joseph, the Prophet, was taught by resurrected beings, by ancient prophets who returned, and by angels from beyond the veil. Then, 150 years ago, he was instructed by the Savior to formally organize His Church: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Subsequently, the Prophet had other mighty visions of the Master, the resurrected Redeemer. Listen to his description of one such manifestation:

“The veil was taken from our minds, and the eyes of our understanding were opened.

“We saw the Lord standing upon the breastwork of the pulpit, before us; and under his feet was a paved work of pure gold, in color like amber.

“His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, . . . saying:

“I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father.” (D&C 110:1-4.) The Prophet who wrote that description knew the Shepherd.

The Prophet Joseph Smith met a martyr’s death. He died for his testi-

mony, sealing his witness with his blood. We pay tribute to him as the first prophet of this dispensation and the most important prophet of all dispensations of time. He “has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived” (D&C 135:3). We honor Joseph Smith this 150th anniversary year of the founding of the Church as a prophet who knew the Shepherd intimately.

Strive to know the Savior

We should each ask, “Am I loving enough, am I studying enough, am I serving enough to *know* the Shepherd? May we all come to know the Savior, through obeying his commandments, that when we meet him face to face, we each can say, “I know thee; thou art my Shepherd.” This I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, our loving Shepherd, amen.

President Marion G. Romney

Elder Robert E. Wells, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us. Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now address us.

Following Elder Maxwell, we shall hear from Elder Mark E. Petersen, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

Fellowshipping and friendship

Brothers and sisters, we must be more ready than we now are to receive the hundreds of thousands of individuals “of every kind” who are gathered into the gospel net from nearly every culture and circumstance (see Matt. 13:47).

A few of these have said to their behavioral Babylons, “We bid thee farewell,” having learned the hard way that without the Decalogue there is decadence.

Other newcomers have ceased trying to live “without God in the world,” a condition “contrary to the nature of happiness” (Alma 41:11).

They have seen how a mortal life so lived is "no more than a night in a second-class hotel" (Saint Teresa of Avila, as quoted by Malcolm Muggeridge, "The Great Liberal Death Wish," *Imprimis*, May 1979, Hillsdale College, Michigan).

Some will even come out of the kingdom of the devil, which the Lord has promised to shake in order to stir some therein to repentance (see 2 Ne. 28:19). These souls, bruised but believing, will have fought their way through guerrilla territory, searching for spiritual liberty even as forces in the world seek "to overthrow the freedom of all lands, nations, and countries" (Ether 8:25).

New arrivals are not asked to renounce their country or that which is good in their culture. All must, however, let go of the things which injure the soul, and there are some such things in every life and in every culture.

Many will come into the Church whose lives have been consistently righteous. They will have rejoicing without the wrenching. When all these individuals have come from so great a distance, surely we can go a second mile in friendship and fellowshiping them! If with quiet heroism they can make their way across the border into belief, surely we can cross a crowded foyer to extend the hand of fellowship. Has it been so long that we have forgotten our first anxious day at a new school or our timidity in a new neighborhood? In the city of Zion, there are constantly new kids on the block!

Since priesthood leaders have determined that the newcomers' visas are in order, let us greet them genuinely—not with frowns and skepticism. It will be our job to lift them up—not to size them up. They will have known much rejection; now let them know much acceptance.

The workers who come to the Lord's vineyard in the last hour will receive the same wages as the "old-

timers," who should, by the way, speak less of the good old days and work to bring about even better days (see Matt. 20:1-16).

The story is told of the first two marines ever—in the American revolutionary war. One boarded a ship mere minutes ahead of the other. When the second man came on board, all enthused about being a marine, the earlier arrival scornfully said, "You should have been here in the old outfit!"

Paul said we should not expect the social register to enter the Church en masse (see 1 Cor. 1:26). Besides, a *Who's Who* is not needed in a church which teaches us all our real identity and which features a democracy of dress in the holy temples.

Arrives will come into the Church as its leaders are cruelly caricatured by some in the world. For perspective, imagine how television's six o'clock news would have portrayed Noah as he worked on his ark day by day. Besides, attention from the Adversary is merely a cruel form of commendation, if we can but stand the "praise."

Newcomers, you may even see a few leave the Church who cannot then leave the Church alone. Let these few departees take their brief bows in the secular spotlight; someday they will bow deeply before the throne of the Almighty, confessing that Jesus is the Christ and that this is his work. Meanwhile, be unsurprised if, as the little stone seen by Daniel rolls relentlessly forth, some seek to chip away at it (see Dan. 2).

Church is for perfecting the Saints

Happily, mingled among the hundreds of thousands of "recruits" will be precious returnees who, like the prodigal son, have come to their senses (see Luke 15:11-32). Filled with tender resolve, they, too, need a warm welcome. Let us emulate the father of the prodigal son, who ran to

greet his son while the son was still a great distance away, rather than waiting passively and then skeptically asking the son if he had merely come home to pick up his things!

Recruits and returnees should be counseled by the wise lyrics of the hymn "Think not, when ye gather to Zion" that all "your troubles and trials are through, . . . that all will be holy and pure, . . . and confidence wholly secure, . . . [that] the Saints . . . have nothing to do . . . but to look to your personal welfare, and always be comforting you" (*Hymns*, no. 21).

The Church is for the perfecting of the Saints, hence new arrivals are entitled to expect instant community but not instant sainthood—either in themselves or in others. It takes time and truth working patiently together to produce the latter in all of us.

Meanwhile, as we work together, we notice each other's weaknesses. Hence all are urged to "succor the weak, [to] lift up the hands which hang down, and [to] strengthen the feeble knees" (D&C 81:5).

Involve new members

Involve newcomers quickly in the Lord's work. They have been called to his vineyard not just to admire but to perspire—not to "ooh" and "aah" but to "hoe and saw." Let us make of them friends—not celebrities; colleagues—not competitors. Let us use their precious enthusiasm to beckon still others to come within.

Let us listen lovingly and encouragingly as all newcomers utter their first halting public prayers and give their first tender talks, feeling unready and unworthy—but so glad to belong. We can tell them, by the way, that the sense of inadequacy never seems to go away.

However, what we now are as a people is clearly not enough, for

"Zion must increase in beauty, and in holiness" (D&C 82:14). As in the time of Alma, the bad conduct of a few members slows the work (see Alma 39:11). Indeed, Zion will not be fully redeemed until after we have been first chastened (see D&C 100:13). Let us, therefore, not be too long-suffering with our own shortcomings. And when we are given thorns in the flesh, let us not demand to see the rose garden (see 2 Cor. 12:7)!

Let us participate in the rigorous calisthenics of daily improvement, and not just in the classroom rhetoric of eternal progression!

Let all gospel instruction in the home or classroom be a genuine experience in learning—not merely doctrinal Ping-Pong. Let us all understand, too, that those very doctrines and duties which may seem the most puzzling or the least attractive may well be those we now most need.

A "mighty change" in heart

Whether old-timers, returnees, or recruits, we must all finally make that "mighty change" in our hearts, and this requires more than a slight change in our schedules (see Mosiah 5:2).

If there are disappointments, let us not turn away but turn to, remembering Peter's immortal interrogative of the Savior, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" (John 6:68). There is, my brothers and sisters, no other "plan of happiness" (see Alma 42:8), only multiple-choice misery.

Let all of us be filled with quiet wonder, but also with quiet determination concerning the marvelous things we have been called to do in such stress-filled times, "for the Lord shall comfort Zion. . . . Joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody." (2 Ne. 8:3.)

Building a holier Zion

As we build a holier Zion, with "the voice of melody" we will sing those lyrics—"All is well, all is well" ("Come, Come, Ye Saints," *Hymns*, no. 13)—but sometimes as a reassuring sob as well as a song, awaiting the promised day when "sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa. 35:10).

With Paul, we can say, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed" (2 Cor. 4:8-9)—perhaps adding, "We are confronted, but not surprised; we are falsely accused, but pray for our accusers; we are reviled, but respond with Christian service." Brothers and sisters, we can be walking witnesses and standing sermons to which objective onlookers can say a quiet amen.

The Savior has told us that just as when the fig tree puts forth its leaves, we may know that summer is nigh, so it will be with his second coming (see Luke 21:28-30). The foreseen summer of circumstances is now upon us. Let us not, therefore, complain of the heat!

The Savior will be in our midst saying, "Fear not, little flock" (see D&C 6:34), urging us to "do good" even as we are badly done by until divine intervention mercifully halts human deterioration, for then "all flesh shall see [him] together" (D&C 101:23), and "all nations shall tremble at [his] presence" (D&C 133:42) as his coming makes "a full

end of all nations" (D&C 87:6) and as there are no laws but his laws (see D&C 38:22).

There will be no more questions then about the historicity of Jesus of Nazareth. For the faithful "of every kind," gladly gathered into his gospel net, there never was any question—only answers!

Meanwhile, may God help us to receive more effectively all newcomers and returnees to Zion—even as God has so mercifully received us into his Church. There will be one more regal reception at the gate, where Jesus is the sole gatekeeper. He awaits us there, not only to certify us, but because his divine love brings him to welcome us. Hence he "employeth no servant there" (2 Ne. 9:41). May we be ready to be so received, as he leads us with his "kindly light," I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Following Elder Maxwell's address, the Choir sang "Lead, Kindly Light" without announcement.

President Marion G. Romney

The Tabernacle Choir has sung "Lead, Kindly Light."

We welcome those who have just joined us on television or radio for this, the first general session of the 150th Semiannual Conference of the Church.

Elder Mark E. Petersen, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us.

Elder Mark E. Petersen

On a warm summer day I visited the land of Adam-ondi-Ahman in the state of Missouri. I had looked forward to this visit with keen anticipation, for I had never been there

before.

The place was beautiful: The fields were green, the hills were rolling, the entire landscape was something to remember.

History of Adam and Eve

But more impressive than the landscape was the significance of the place, for here Adam lived—and Eve—and their family. The stupendous importance of it all weighed heavily upon me.

Here is where the human race began. This we are told by revelation. (See Moses 1:34; D&C 107:53; 84:16.)

Adam and Eve knew God personally. They saw him and talked with him. They were taught the gospel of Jesus Christ even in that early time—which was long before the Lord's earthly ministry, for Jesus had been appointed to be the Savior during our premortal existence.

The plan of salvation, therefore, was instituted among these first human beings, Adam and Eve and their children. Angels taught them. The family believed. They were baptized and began to serve God. (See Moses 5.)

The scriptures say that as Adam tilled the ground and cared for the cattle and the sheep, Eve "did labor with him" (Moses 5:1).

They were highly intelligent people, not at all like either the hominids or the cavemen some claim the first humans to have been. They were well educated, having been taught by the Lord himself. What an education! What an instructor!

Think of it, and remember that "the glory of God is intelligence, or in other words, light and truth" (D&C 93:36). These gifts were imparted to Adam and Eve and their family. No one else could teach them, because they were the first human beings. That task was left to the Lord and his angels.

Adam and Eve had many sons and daughters. Among them were Seth and Abel, faithful to the Lord in all their ways. And then there was Cain!

They taught their children to read and write, "having a language

which was pure and undefiled," given them by God (see Moses 6:6).

"And a book of remembrance was kept" among them, recorded in the language of Adam, and all who called upon God were allowed to write in this pure and undefiled tongue, by the spirit of inspiration (see Moses 6:5-6).

"And thus the Gospel began to be preached, from the beginning, being declared by holy angels sent forth from the presence of God, and by his own voice, and by the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Moses 5:58).

"And from that time forth, the sons and daughters of Adam began to divide two and two in the land, and to till the land, and to tend flocks, and they also begat sons and daughters" (Moses 5:3).

Evil brings retrogression

It was a glorious period—until Satan came among them. That evil person defied the teachings of God and said to the children of Adam, "Believe it not," and from that time some of the family loved Satan more than God (see Moses 5:13). They apostatized from the truth.

These dissenters lost the Spirit of God and as a result became carnal, sensual, and devilish (see Moses 5:13). With these evil attributes always comes retrogression. We should not be surprised, therefore, to hear of cavemen living in the dawn of time.

One of these dissenters was Cain. He made a dreadful covenant with Lucifer and persuaded others to follow him. "Adam and his wife mourned before the Lord, because of Cain and his brethren" (Moses 5:27).

Cain hated righteous Abel and coveted his flocks. He was encouraged by Satan, who told him he could obtain Abel's sheep if he would kill his brother and thus seize possession.

The first murder resulted. Rebuked by the Lord and cursed be-

cause of his tragic sin, Cain left Adam-ondi-Ahman and went to live in a place called Nod.

Church at time of Adam

The Church of Jesus Christ was well established in the time of Adam (see Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938, pp. 157, 169). Men like Seth and Enos grew to become the early patriarchs of the Church, and through them a long line of priesthood leaders was established.

Adam held the keys of the First Presidency and stood directly after the Savior in authority (see *Teachings*, p. 168). He received those keys in the Creation, according to the Prophet Joseph Smith, who added, "Christ is the Great High Priest; Adam next" (*Teachings*, pp. 157-58).

Michael, the archangel

Who was Adam that he was privileged to begin the human race here on earth? Had he been some very special personage in the pre-mortal world?

Indeed, Adam was very special and very important. Before coming into mortality, he was known as Michael. The Prophet Joseph Smith clearly identifies both Adam and Michael as one and the same person, an angel, the chief angel, or archangel, of heaven, the special servant of God and Christ.

When Michael came into mortality he was known as Adam, the first man, but he was still his own self. Although he was given another name, that of Adam, he did not change his identity.

After his mortal death he *re-summed his position as an angel in the heavens, once again serving as the chief angel, or archangel, and took again his former name of Michael.*

In his capacity as archangel, Adam, or Michael, will yet perform a mighty mission in the coming years, *both before and after the Millennium*. This is startling, but the scriptures declare it.

One important assignment that awaits him is to be the angel to sound the trumpet heralding the resurrection of the dead. The scripture reads, "Behold, verily I say unto you, before the earth shall pass away, *Michael, mine archangel*, shall sound his trump, and then shall all the dead awake, for their graves shall be opened, and they shall come forth" (D&C 29:26).

What a marvelous calling for Adam, or Michael. But note that even in this assignment, which is yet future, he still will be an angel—the archangel, but an angel nevertheless.

Section 107 of the Doctrine and Covenants, dated March 28, 1835, identifies him as an angel as of that date—a little more than a hundred years ago—and calls him "Michael, the prince, the archangel" (D&C 107:54).

During the Millennium the devil will be bound, but afterward will be freed for a short time, during which he will rally his evil forces to make one final assault upon God.

Who will lead the defending armies of the Lord? None other than Michael himself, whose position as archangel qualifies him to be the captain of the Lord's host. Is he not the chief of the angels? Then should he not lead them into battle against Lucifer?

As the archangel he continues to serve the interests of the Lord with respect to this earth. His ultimate exaltation, of course, is fully assured, but it must await the completion of his work here.

Seven angels are to sound trumpets to announce a series of events to precede the second coming of the Savior. Michael will be the seventh of those angels.

Says the scripture:

"And Michael, the seventh angel, even the archangel"—and please note here how the Lord still identifies him strictly as an angel, for that is his status—and now I repeat this scripture:

"And Michael, the seventh angel, *even the archangel*, shall gather together his armies, even the hosts of heaven. . . . And then cometh the battle of the great God; and the devil and his armies shall be cast away into their own place." (D&C 88:112, 114; emphasis added.)

Then can anyone honestly mistake the identity of Adam, or Michael? Even after the thousand years of the Millennium are over he will still retain his status as an angel—the archangel—and a resurrected man.

In the year 1842 the Prophet Joseph Smith spoke of Michael, or Adam, who visited him. Joseph identified him as an angel even then—the archangel—and said, "The voice of Michael, the archangel; . . . and of diverse [other] angels, from Michael or Adam down to the present time" (D&C 128:21). He thus listed Michael, or Adam, with the *other* angels.

So, in 1842 Michael, or Adam, was still an angel and will continue to be so through the final winding up scene of this earth.

Adam—not God, nor our Savior

Adam was not our God, nor was he our Savior. But he was the humble servant of both in his status as an angel.

Then what is his relationship to the Savior and to God our Father?

Jesus Christ is the divine Son of God, the first born to our Heavenly Father in the spirit and the *Only Begotten in the flesh*.

Jesus is the Holy One of Israel, not Adam, not anyone else. Although we are all *spirit* children of the Father, Jesus is the *Only Begotten* of

the Father, in mortality, *even from the beginning*, not Adam, not anyone else (see Moses 5:9). This the Lord himself says.

Jesus Christ is "the Only Begotten"

In the day that the gospel was given to Adam, the Holy Ghost fell upon him, and the divine voice of Jesus Christ—the Jehovah of that time—said to him by the power of the Holy Ghost: "I am the *Only Begotten* of the Father from the Beginning" (Moses 5:9).

Then, can anyone claim that distinction for Adam, or for anyone else? Of course not! Jesus Christ is the *Only Begotten* of the Father, even from the very beginning.

Shall we not in full faith accept this doctrine, which is so clearly set forth in scripture?

Christ is the Lord! He alone is our Savior!

The Apostle Paul has an interesting passage in his epistle to the Hebrews. He spoke of the Savior and declared him to be in the express image of his Father's person. Then he asked this question: "Unto which of the *angels* said he [God] at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?" (Heb. 1:5; emphasis added). And of course the answer is immediate and obvious—none of them—none of the *angels*, not even Adam, or Michael, the chief of the angels.

Jesus of Nazareth was the *Only Begotten* of the Father.

In this passage Paul was speaking only of Jesus the Christ. In the very next verse, as he continued to speak of Jesus, Paul called the lowly Nazarene the *first begotten* and declared, "Let all the angels . . . worship him," and this they did—including Adam, who adores the *Only Begotten* of God, the Savior Jesus Christ, and is always subservient to him.

When the Apostle John wrote

one of his most familiar passages he said, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his *only begotten Son*, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16; emphasis added).

And who was thus given of the Father to be crucified? Who wrought out the atonement on Calvary? Jesus of Nazareth! He was the Only Begotten of God. He alone was the Sacrificial Lamb slain from the beginning of the world. Adam was the Savior's progenitor only in the same sense in which he is the ancestor of us all.

God had only one begotten son in the flesh. But Adam had many, including Cain and Abel and Seth. He lived nearly a thousand years. He could have had hundreds of children in that time.

Then how could it be said by anyone that he had "an only begotten" son? How could all of his other children be accounted for? Were they not all begotten in the flesh?

Were Cain and Abel and Seth and their brothers and sisters all orphans? Was any child ever begotten without a father? Adam was their father, and he had many sons. In no way whatever does he qualify as a father who had only one son in the flesh.

Yet God our Eternal Father had only one son in the flesh, who was Jesus Christ.

Then was Adam our God, or did God become Adam? Ridiculous!

"Ancient of Days"

Adam was neither God nor the Only Begotten Son of God. He was a child of God in the spirit as we all are (see Acts 17:29). Jesus was the firstborn in the spirit, and the only one born to God in the flesh.

The Almighty himself repeatedly called Jesus both his firstborn and his Only Begotten.

Then who is Adam? He is Mi-

chael the archangel, appointed by God and Christ to be the mortal progenitor of the race. At this very moment, in the year 1980, he is still in his position as the archangel whose trumpet in the final days will herald the resurrection and who will be the captain of the Lord's hosts in the final defeat of Lucifer.

He is the "Ancient of Days" spoken of by Daniel the prophet and as such will meet the faithful in that same valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman, which is named after him (see Dan. 7:9-22; D&C 116).

At the close of this dispensation he will there deliver up his stewardship to Christ, his Master and his Savior, the Lord Jehovah, who in turn will give his accounting to the Heavenly and Eternal Father of us all (see *Teachings*, pp. 122, 157, 167-68, 237).

If any of you have been confused by false teachers who come among us, if you have been assailed by advocates of erroneous doctrines, counsel with your priesthood leaders. They will not lead you astray, but will direct you into paths of truth and salvation.

I bear you my solemn testimony that this—The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—is indeed the church and kingdom of God. Jesus is the Christ. Spencer W. Kimball is his prophet. We are the legal and divinely chosen custodians of the restored truth. This I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Following Elder Petersen's talk, the choir sang "God of Our Fathers, Whose Almighty Hand" without announcement.

President Marion G. Romney

Elder Mark E. Petersen, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just given the con-

cluding address, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "God of Our Fathers, Whose Almighty Hand."

We are grateful to the managers and operators of the many television and radio stations that offered their facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this conference to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

We shall conclude this session of the conference with the Tabernacle Choir singing "Dedication." Following the singing, the benediction will

be pronounced by Elder Carlos E. Asay, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

This conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The Choir sang the anthem "Dedication."

The benediction was pronounced by Elder Carlos E. Asay.

FIRST DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

SECOND SESSION

The second general session of the 150th Semiannual General Conference began at 2:00 P.M. on Saturday, October 4, 1980.

President Spencer W. Kimball presided at and conducted this session.

Music for this session was provided by the Mormon Youth Chorus directed by Robert C. Bowden with Roy M. Darley at the organ.

At the beginning of the meeting, President Kimball made the following remarks:

President Spencer W. Kimball

We welcome all assembled in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on Temple Square in this, the second general session, of the 150th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We also welcome the many members and friends of the Church tuned to these proceedings by radio, television, and direct wire. There is an overflow congregation in the Salt Palace where Elders Dean L. Larsen and Loren C. Dunn preside.

We are pleased to acknowledge especially our guests who are present this afternoon, along with general and local Church leaders and members from many parts of the world.

We express our appreciation to the owners and operators of many radio and television stations for their cooperation in making these proceedings available to members and friends of the Church in many countries.

The music this afternoon will be provided by the Mormon Youth Chorus under the direction of Robert C. Bowden with Roy M. Darley at the organ.

The chorus will begin this service by singing "O My Father." The invocation will be offered by Elder Bernard P. Brockbank, an emeritus member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Mormon Youth Chorus sang the hymn, "O My Father."

The invocation was given by Elder Bernard P. Brockbank.

President Spencer W. Kimball

The chorus will now sing
"Psalm 148."

The anthem "Psalm 148" was
rendered by the chorus.

President Kimball

President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will now present the General Authorities and general auxiliary officers of the Church for the sustaining vote of the conference, following which Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our first speaker.

Sustaining of General Authorities and Officers

President Marion G. Romney

It is proposed that we sustain President Spencer W. Kimball as prophet, seer, and revelator, and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, by the same sign.

[A call of "no" from several in the congregation.]

Elder McConkie: President Romney, it appears that there are three negative votes. This is to advise those so voting that they may meet with Elder Gordon B. Hinckley of the Council of the Twelve following this session. Thank you.

President Romney: Thank you.

Nathan Eldon Tanner as First Counselor in the First Presidency and Marion G. Romney as Second Counselor in the First Presidency. All in favor, please signify it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

It is proposed that we sustain as the President of the Council of the Twelve, Elder Ezra Taft Benson. All in favor, please manifest it. Those opposed, by the same sign.

As the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: Ezra Taft Benson, Mark E. Petersen, LeGrand Richards, Howard W. Hunter, Gordon B. Hinckley, Thomas S. Monson, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, Bruce R.

McConkie, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, and James E. Faust. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

The counselors in the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any.

As the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and as members of the First Quorum of the Seventy: Franklin D. Richards, J. Thomas Fyans, Neal A. Maxwell, Carlos E. Asay, M. Russell Ballard, Dean L. Larsen, Royden G. Derrick. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

As additional members of the First Quorum of the Seventy: Marion D. Hanks, A. Theodore Tuttle, Theodore M. Burton, Paul H. Dunn, Hartman Rector, Jr., Loren C. Dunn, Robert L. Simpson, Rex D. Pinegar, William Grant Bangert, Robert D. Hales, Adney Y. Komatsu, Joseph B. Wirthlin, Gene R. Cook, Charles Didier, William R. Bradford, George P. Lee, John H. Groberg, Jacob de Jager, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Robert E. Wells, G. Homer Durham, James M. Paramore, Richard G. Scott, Hugh W. Pinnock, F. Enzio Busche, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Ronald E. Poelman, Derek A. Cuthbert,

Robert L. Backman, Rex C. Reeve, Sr., F. Burton Howard, Teddy E. Brewerton, Jack H. Goasland, Jr. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

As the Presiding Bishopric: Victor L. Brown, presiding bishop; H. Burke Peterson, as first counselor; and J. Richard Clarke, as second counselor. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary by the same sign. As emeritus General Authorities: Eldred G. Smith, S. Dilworth Young, Sterling W. Sill, Henry D. Taylor, Bernard P. Brockbank, James A. Cullimore, Joseph Anderson, John H. Vandenberg, O. Leslie Stone. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

As Regional Representatives: All Regional Representatives as they are at present constituted.

The Sunday School: Elder Hugh W. Pinnock, president; Elder Ronald E. Poelman, first counselor; and Elder Jack H. Goasland, Jr., second counselor; with all members of the board as at present constituted.

The Young Men: Elder Robert L. Backman, president; Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone, first counselor; and Elder Rex D. Pinegar, sec-

ond counselor; with all members of the board as at present constituted.

The Relief Society: Barbara B. Smith, president; Marian R. Boyer, first counselor; and Shirley W. Thomas, second counselor; with all members of the board as at present constituted.

The Young Women: Elaine A. Cannon, president; Arlene B. Darger, first counselor, and Norma B. Smith, second counselor, with all members of the board as at present constituted.

The Primary Association: Dwan J. Young, president; Virginia B. Cannon, first counselor; and Michaelene P. Grassli, second counselor; with all members as at present constituted.

All in favor, please manifest it. Those opposed, by the same sign.

It seems, President Kimball, that the voting has been unanimous, with the exceptions already noted, in favor of these officers and the General Authorities.

President Spencer W. Kimball

Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our first speaker.

He will be followed by Elder M. Russell Ballard.

Elder Boyd K. Packer

Following the April general conference a social was held for all of the General Authorities and their wives. The program centered on the opening of a jubilee box prepared by the Relief Society of the Box Elder Stake in Brigham City fifty years ago to celebrate the centennial of the Church.

The box included newspapers, mementos, and a few letters. One of those letters was written by my grandmother, Sarah Adeline Wight

Packer. I quote:

"We moved to a farm in Corinne in the year 1902. There being no branch of the Church there at that time . . . , myself and Hannah Bosley visited all the sisters in Corinne and surrounding territory, to see if there was enough interest among them to organize a Relief Society.

"Through our visits we learned the sisters were willing to come to meeting, and so we proceeded to get a branch organized."

Message to posterity

There was another jubilee box at our social. Each couple posed for a portrait, and we were given a page on which to write a message to go into it. The box will be closed at year's end, to be opened in the year 2030.

We have not handed in our message as yet. But we have very thoughtfully considered it and hope to include something of what I say here today.

I address my remarks to our children and grandchildren. You may wonder why I would speak to them from this pulpit, rather than in a family meeting. There are two reasons.

First, a careful account is kept of these proceedings, and through that record I hope to speak to those who are not yet born. And next, I have the feeling and a hope that what I say may help someone else.

The counsel I give is very difficult to teach and to learn. I fear that when I have given this counsel, some will say, "Well, I knew that already," and regard it as prosaic, unimaginative, even dull. For what I want to say is so ordinary, so commonplace, that it is very difficult to have it universally regarded as important.

Nevertheless, we want our children and grandchildren to know that, beyond the fundamental truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, there has been a restoration of His gospel through the prophets, that the fulness of the gospel is upon the earth. After that (really as an essential part of it), this is the one truth we most want to teach our children.

Ancestors

Three weeks ago I spent a day with Sister Packer in the record office in London. We were looking for Mary Haley. Like missionaries looking for living souls, we tracted

through the pages of old record books. Some of them, I am sure, had not been opened for a hundred years.

I spent most of the day reading the minutes of the overseers of the workhouse—which was really the poorhouse.

One entry told of a woman who had been dismissed from the workhouse and sent to prison. She was refused permission to leave to check on a report that her child was being badly abused at the workhouse school. In great frustration she had "willfully broken a window." And so they sent her to prison.

Another entry reported an inspection of the school. The doctor complained that piles of manure along the edge of the school yard blocked the drainage. Water and sewage had backed up into the yard until the mire was ankle deep. Because of the cold and the poor condition of the children's shoes, many children were ill.

The record of dismissals listed "dead" or "died" time after time, with an explanation: "complaint," "fever," "consumption," "dropsy."

We found Mary Haley! She married Edward Sayers, and they had eleven children. Six of them died before they were seven years of age, one from burns. To our knowledge, only one of the eleven grew to maturity.

That was Eleanor Sayers, my wife's great-grandmother. She was born at Pullham, Norfolk, in the Depwade Union Workhouse and was the first of her family to join the Church. She died of cancer in a dismal London hospital.

The lives of those souls, our forebears, were characterized from beginning to end by both poverty and obscurity.

Before Eleanor Sayers Harman died, she gave all of her funds to her daughter Edith and counseled her to go to America.

Edith had been cast out by her husband when she joined the Church. She and eight-year-old Nellie left England with the flimsy assurance that a missionary *thought* his family in Idaho *might* take them in until they could be located.

Nellie was my wife's mother; Edith, her grandmother. I knew them well. They were women of special nobility.

Our lineage runs also to the stately manor houses of England, well-connected with the courts of kings, where culture and plenty were much in evidence.

But the dignity and worth of those forebears is not more, and may well be less, than that of Eleanor Sayers.

Royalty of righteousness

Sarah and Eleanor, Edith and Nellie—all were women of a special nobility—the royalty of righteousness. We want our children to remember that their lineage runs to the poorhouse in Pullham, Norfolk, and to remember this: It is the misapprehension of most people that if you are good, really good, at what you do, you will eventually be both widely known and well compensated.

It is the understanding of almost everyone that success, to be complete, must include a generous portion of both fame and fortune as essential ingredients.

The world seems to work on that premise. The premise is false. It is not true. The Lord taught otherwise.

True happiness not based on wealth, fame

I want you, our children, to know this truth:

You need not be either rich or hold high position to be completely successful and truly happy.

In fact, if these things come to you, and they may, true success must be achieved in spite of them, not because of them.

It is remarkably difficult to teach this truth. If one who is not well known, and not well compensated, claims that he has learned for himself that neither fame nor fortune are essential to success, we tend to reject his statement as self-serving. What else could he say and not count himself a failure?

If someone who has possession of fame or fortune asserts that neither matters to success or happiness, we suspect that his expression is also self-serving, even patronizing.

Therefore, we will not accept as reliable authorities either those who have fame and fortune, or those who have not. We question that either can be an objective witness.

That leaves only one course open to us: trial and error—to learn for oneself, by experience, about prominence and wealth or their opposites.

We thereafter struggle through life, perhaps missing both fame and fortune, to finally learn one day that one can, indeed, succeed without possessing either. Or we may, one day, have both and learn that neither has made us happy; neither is basic to the recipe for true success and for complete happiness. That is a very slow way to learn.

Was it Poor Richard who said, "Experience keeps a dear school, but fools will learn in no other" (*The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin, Poor Richard's Almanac, and Other Papers*, New York: A. L. Burt Co., ND, p. 230).

We come into mortal life to receive a body and to be tested, to learn to choose.

Decision between good and evil

We want our children and their children to know that the choice of

life is not between fame and obscurity, nor is the choice between wealth and poverty. The choice is between good and evil, and that is a very different matter indeed.

When we finally understand this lesson, thereafter our happiness will not be determined by material things. We may be happy without them or successful in spite of them.

Wealth and prominence do not always come from having earned them. Our worth is not measured by renown or by what we own.

Someone may say that my testimony may not be valid because of the prominence of the General Authorities of the Church. That is something we do not earn. It comes, as the saying goes, "with the territory." And I want you to know that it comes as a burden on our backs, not as wings on our heels.

Our lives are made up of thousands of everyday choices. Over the years these little choices will be bundled together and show clearly what we value.

The crucial test of life, I repeat, does not center in the choice between fame and obscurity, nor between wealth and poverty. The greatest decision of life is between good and evil.

We may foolishly bring unhappiness and trouble, even suffering upon ourselves. These are not always to be regarded as penalties imposed by a displeased Creator. They are part of the lessons of life, part of the test.

Some are tested by poor health, some by a body that is deformed or homely. Others are tested by handsome and healthy bodies; some by the passion of youth; others by the erosions of age.

Some suffer disappointment in marriage, family problems; others live in poverty and obscurity. Some (perhaps this is the hardest test) find ease and luxury.

All are part of the test, and

there is more equality in this testing than sometimes we suspect.

It is possible to be both rich and famous and at the same time succeed spiritually. But the Lord warned of the difficulty of it when He talked of camels and needles (see Matt. 19:24).

Seek first the kingdom of God

This message is central to the scriptures. The Book of Mormon tells us that "men are instructed sufficiently that they know good from evil" (2 Ne. 2:5).

We are taught, also, "Men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose"—

One: "liberty and eternal life, through the great mediation of all men."

Or, two: "to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil." (2 Ne. 2:27.)

From the Old Testament:

"A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches" (Prov. 22:1).

From the New Testament:

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

Again, from the Book of Mormon:

"Before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God.

"And after ye have obtained a hope in Christ ye shall obtain riches, if ye seek them; and ye will seek them for the intent to do good—to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick and the afflicted." (Jacob 2:18-19.)

And from the Doctrine and Covenants:

"Seek not for riches but for wisdom, and behold, the mysteries of

God shall be unfolded unto you, and then shall you be made rich" (D&C 6:7).

"Behold, he that hath eternal life is rich" (D&C 11:7).

Formula for success

What, then, do we want you to do? Simply this:

Be good!

Study the gospel.

Live it!

Stay active in the Church.

Receive the ordinances.

Keep your covenants.

I do not know at this moment whether you are learning. I do know that what I am teaching is true.

One day each of you will know that some things are not divisible. The love of your parents is one of them. Parents do not love one child more than another—nor less. Each receives all of it.

Position and wealth are no more essential to true happiness in mortality than their absence can prevent you from achieving it.

I can envision a day, in the generations ahead, when I would regard you and your children, and theirs, struggling with the challenges of life.

I may see you go the full distance of mortality without becoming either well-known or wealthy. I can see myself falling to my knees to thank a generous God that my prayers have been answered, that you have succeeded, that you are truly happy.

We now move into an uncertain future. But we are not uncertain. Children, bear testimony, build Zion. Then you will find true success, complete happiness.

I know that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, and that in the gospel is true success, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

Elder M. Russell Ballard will be our next speaker. He will be followed by Elder Derek A. Cuthbert, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder M. Russell Ballard

Since last conference, I have come to know that many of our Heavenly Father's children need help with their problems. Hundreds of letters filled with pleas for help have come to the General Authorities. Fathers plead for their sons, mothers for their daughters, boys and girls for their parents. The contents of these letters have been heartrending.

I have learned firsthand that the wounds of those who suffer spiritually can be healed when you and I put forth the extra personal effort required to reach out to them.

Jesus Christ has the power to heal all manner of illness, whether spiritual or physical. A woman was

healed by simply touching the border of his garment, as recorded in the book of Luke:

"And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.

"And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately.

"And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace." (Luke 8:46-48.)

Touching others' lives

Can the Master touch others' lives though you and me? Oh yes, he can, and he will if we will just do our part. A home teacher in Florida let the Savior's touch be felt in this way. I quote excerpts from a letter to me dated July 8, 1980.

"When I joined the Church in 1973, my husband did not join. He didn't want to come to meetings, and he wasn't sure there was a God anyway.

"In 1975 our home teacher became my husband's best friend. For more than three years he missed coming only once. My husband found in our home teacher someone to talk to. He unburdened his years of bitterness and unhappiness. He had never had a real friend before in his entire life.

"In August 1978, our home teacher told us he was moving. We were heartbroken. On his last visit, our home teacher, with my husband's permission, talked about how one can gain a testimony.

"In November, Elder Ballard, you came to our stake and taught the gospel at a special fireside. My husband and I attended and at the conclusion of the meeting, you put your arm around my husband and the Lord spoke through you. You told my husband that our Heavenly Father loved him and wanted him to be baptized and that the Church needed him.

"That night my husband made a decision to be baptized. We called our former home teacher, now living in Louisiana, to see when he could come to baptize my husband. He came and baptized him. One year later he was with us and our family when we were sealed for time and eternity in the Washington Temple.

"Although you may not remember us—for we know you meet many people every year—our lives were touched in an unforgettable way. We are especially grateful to our faithful home teacher."

The Savior's touch

In another instance, a Young Women teacher had a blind girl in her class whose participation was limited because she could not study in the usual way. The teacher would go to the girl's home and read out loud while the girl translated her personal progress book into braille. The work took two years. The teacher also encouraged the other girls in the class to help. Under her direction, they went to the blind girl's home and read to her from the manual until it was translated into braille.

The Master's touch through that teacher reached out and blessed not only this girl but many others who are blind, because the braille translation is available at the general offices of the Young Women organization.

Sometimes the Savior's touch can reach others through little bodies with big hearts. A lovely woman had received the missionary discussions but had not made the final commitment to be baptized. One Sunday she decided to attend sacrament meeting in a ward where she was not acquainted. She wanted a place where she could be alone with her thoughts. She sat beside a little boy. As the sacrament was passed, this little boy noticed that she did not take the sacrament bread. When it came to him, he carefully broke it in two and gave half to her. The woman was very impressed that a child would perform such a meaningful act of kindness. That day she contacted the missionaries and said, "If this is what you teach the children in your church, I want to become a member."

"Help my son to understand"

The Lord taught the Nephites, "Therefore, hold up your light that it may shine unto the world. Behold I am the light which ye shall hold up." (3 Ne. 18:24.) A recent example of the light of the Lord touch-

ing someone who needed it desperately came when I called upon a very close friend shortly after the death of his eternal companion. I asked him, "What can I now do to help?" He answered, "Help my son to understand." You see, this son loved his mother very much. When he saw her suffer month after month, he began to feel that the prayers and the priesthood blessings went unanswered. This caused his faith in our Heavenly Father to waiver, and he lost the light of the Lord in his life.

The words rang in my ears: "Help my son to understand." I asked myself, "How? What can I do?" Finally, I invited him to come to Church headquarters to talk with me. When he arrived and we went to the lunchroom, a most unusual circumstance unfolded while we were eating. During our visit, many General Authorities came by our table and greeted us. Most importantly, he shook hands with eight of the Twelve Apostles that sit here on the stand. Never before or since have I seen that many members of the Twelve in the lunchroom at one time.

As we were leaving the Church offices, another unusual thing happened. We caught a glimpse of President Kimball, and my young friend asked, "Does President Kimball ever talk to someone like me?" Circumstances that would rarely happen again placed us with President Kimball for a few minutes. The short time with him was unforgettably impressive. His instructions were eternal, and his love for this young man was unquestionable. My friend's heart and mine were touched deeply during those few minutes.

President Kimball's final statement to this young man, after giving him a loving embrace, impressed my friend very much. He said, "My boy, when you come home from your mission, you will understand more fully the things we have been talking about." That day a prophet

of God reached out as I suppose only a prophet can. Through him, the Savior touched the life of my friend and turned him toward the light of the Lord.

As we returned to the parking area, I put my arm around him and said, "I know that your mother knows you are here today. Because of her love and devotion to the Lord and her great love for you, I am sure our Heavenly Father has allowed her influence to be felt here today." Tears flowed, attitudes changed, directions became clear, and commitments were made.

What a thrill, my brothers and sisters, to report a few months later to President Kimball that this fine young man was serving faithfully and diligently as a full-time missionary!

Faith and prayers

Finally, may I share how the Lord will touch our personal lives through our own faith and prayers. A beautiful baby girl came to our son's home only to stay with them here on earth for less than five months. The love and care given to her by her parents was deeply touching. The struggle of this infant granddaughter for life was almost more than we could bear. The night before her passing, we went to the Logan hospital giving what support we could to our children.

Later that evening in my son's home, his mother and I knelt with him and prayed for guidance. When we returned to the hospital and I took my tiny little grandchild's hand and looked at her, I felt the Savior's touch. Into my mind came the words, as though spoken by her to me, "Don't worry, grandpa; I'll be all right." Peace came into my heart. The Master's touch fell upon all of us. Soon thereafter she was released to go home again to her heavenly parents.

Oh, yes, brothers and sisters; we can feel the Savior's touch, and we can help others feel that divine touch. We can bless each other by reaching out to the wayward youth, the inactive adult, the widowed, the aged, the sick, and to all of God's children everywhere, member and nonmember of the Church alike.

We somehow need to realize the vital importance of feeling the blessings of the gospel and the peace of the Lord in our lives individually. That is much more significant than how well the mechanics of a program may be working in our wards and stakes. Oh, that every parent, teacher, and Church leader would know that we can bless each other when we administer the Savior's touch to the benefit of our fellowmen.

I realize that many of you are very conscious of the needs of others. I also know that you and I can do much more. Let us make the choice never to let a day pass without striving to touch the life of someone through our service! Then we can cherish and appreciate more the Savior's beautiful admonition: "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40).

I bear testimony that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, that he touched the life of the Prophet Joseph Smith, and that through him the fulness of the gospel has been restored to the earth to bless and guide all mankind. This witness and testimony I bear in the sacred and beloved name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Derek A. Cuthbert

My wife and I have just celebrated a remarkable thirtieth anniversary. Thirty years ago, young missionaries of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints knocked on our door in Nottingham, England.

How did their message appeal to two active members of another church? We, and generations before us, had held membership in the established church of the land. Furthermore, we were very happy with our way of life. Two precious children had graced our home, and a new job in a large industrial company was giving challenge and enjoyment.

What more could we hope for? What could add to our happiness? As the missionaries taught us and prayed with us, we began to realize that there were gaps in our life, that we had unfulfilled needs. For a few minutes may I share with you ten ways in which our lives became even more purposeful and happy as these needs were fulfilled. I am sure you will be

able to identify some of these needs in your life, in your home, in your family.

Communication with God

First, we realized that our communication with God was not often enough or strong enough. True, we had always said our individual prayers, but when, because of the missionaries, we also started to pray together regularly as husband and wife and with our children, we experienced a tremendous feeling of closeness, not only with each other but with the Almighty God.

The missionaries had taught us that he is a personal being, that he is literally our Father, and prayers began to flow from the heart and were no longer repetitious. We came to know him as a loving Father, just and kind, reliable and true. What great need there is in the world today to commune with the Infinite, to talk

and walk with God, to know that he speaks to us today and that we are in reality his children.

Coming to know the Savior

Second, we came to know Jesus Christ, not just as a historical figure, but as the living Son of God. In high school and the years that followed I had made a special study of the New Testament. However, the Savior's life and mortal ministry had no great impact on my life until the missionaries testified, as did Job of old, that our Redeemer lives (see Job 19:25).

I came to know him as my personal Savior, who gave his life for me and for each of us. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). Everyone needs a friend and everyone has a friend beyond compare—Jesus Christ and him crucified and resurrected for us.

Security

Third, as a young married couple, we were seeking security in an insecure world. We had grown from youth through teenage years during World War II. I had been a member of the Home Guard at sixteen, trained to defend my country, and at seventeen had volunteered for the Royal Air Force. Now, more than five years after the war had finished, there was still rubble in the streets and rationing in the shops.

We grasped at the secure message that the missionaries gave us, that God speaks today as he did anciently, through prophets. Yes, he is mindful of us, he *does* love us, he *has* restored his church and the fullness of his gospel as he promised. Oh, how the world needs a prophet to lead us and guide us in these troubled times. I testify that we have such a prophet. He sits behind me as I speak in this tabernacle. He presides over The Church of Jesus

Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Lord's church and kingdom here on earth.

True brotherhood

Fourth, we began attending the Church at the missionaries' invitation—and what a friendly reception! We soon learned what true sociality is, and sincere brotherhood and sisterhood which bind together people of all nations and tongues. "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Eph. 2:19). What a wonderful feeling of belonging, of being needed and appreciated, beyond anything we had previously experienced.

Soon we were singing in choirs; visiting other Church members in their homes, just as they visited us; and giving service to others in some of the many service projects the Church provides. We were able to choose from a wide range of activities—drama, dancing, sport—to supplement the spiritual progress that came rapidly by worshiping and learning with other Latter-day Saints. Everyone needs to experience the warmth of friendship and happy social activity on a continuing basis.

Family life

Fifth, my family and family life became even more meaningful and precious to me as we commenced having wonderful family home evenings together. We learned that all over the world, members of the Church spend at least one evening a week together in a balanced evening of spiritual instruction, fun, and talent sharing. We love our children, and we were glad to learn from the missionaries that although baptism is essential for the remission of sins, infant baptism is not necessary since "all children who die before . . . ac-

countability are saved in the celestial kingdom" (D&C 137:10). We have known a number of parents who have been distressed at the death of a small child because of the un-Christian doctrine of infant baptism.

Again, we also became concerned about our wider family: our grandparents, our great-grandparents, and all of our ancestors. This is also a universal need, as Alex Haley expressed, "a hunger, marrow-deep, to know our heritage" ("What *Roots* Means to Me," *Reader's Digest*, May 1977, p. 73). Everyone has some family, sometimes near, sometimes far, sometimes living in mortality, sometimes passed on and awaiting the Resurrection. The strength that comes from family in all its aspects is a vital need, one that can be fulfilled by the principles and programs learned from the missionaries.

Word of Wisdom

Sixth, everyone appreciates good health, and there is a basic need to have our spirit housed in a well-functioning body if at all possible. Personally, I had suffered internal discomfort for some years, but the health code, or Word of Wisdom, taught by the missionaries helped me to overcome this. I can testify that the exclusion of the habit-forming stimulants of alcohol, tobacco, tea, and coffee has been a great blessing in my life and the lives of my wife and my children. I am glad the Lord gave this revelation through Joseph Smith, the Prophet, almost 150 years ago, bringing increased health and vitality to millions of people.

Personal prayers

Seventh, as provider for our young family, I was not only concerned about physical and spiritual well-being, but indeed with personal

progress generally. I soon found that in the Lord's Church all kinds of resources are provided to fulfill this need. Before long I was involved in educational activities and leadership training and cultural pursuits of various kinds. Progress within my company organization was a natural outgrowth of progression in the Church. This was not surprising, for early in our discussions with the missionaries we had learned of God's plan of eternal progression for his children. Does not everyone deep down have this yearning, this need to progress and improve, to develop and refine?

Need for discovery

Eighth, I think along with these needs there is also a spirit of adventure in most of us in varying degrees, a need to discover, a need to explore. For many this need is met by reading adventure stories or traveling to new places. For myself, I had always been fascinated by the study of Middle Eastern archaeology, particularly of the great Egyptian civilization.

The message of my missionary friends even fulfilled this need, for they told us of an ancient record on gold plates, inscribed by people from the Middle East in the pre-Christian era. Imagine my excitement to learn that these ancient people with their prophets and culture had left the Old World and traveled to the New, to become a mighty people on what is now the American continent. Their records were hidden and preserved and a little over 150 years ago were discovered, not by archaeologists, but by a teenage youth. The faith and worthiness of this young man, Joseph Smith, enabled him not only to find the gold plates, but later to translate the hieroglyphic record by the power of God.

What a thrill it was to see some of the reformed Egyptian characters

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as copied by the hand of Joseph Smith. I knew by the feeling I had that they were true characters. Then, to hold this book of scripture, this Book of Mormon, in my hands and read it eagerly, sincerely, prayerfully, was a powerful spiritual experience. The need I had for the adventure of discovery was fulfilled through the Book of Mormon. This was not merely discovery of ancient peoples, but a complete discovery of the divinity of Jesus Christ. I testify that the Book of Mormon is a witness, a modern-day witness, of the Savior of the world, who visited this continent after his resurrection.

Repentance and baptism

Ninth, as one who had lived less than perfectly, and yet had no serious matters to disturb my conscience, I felt the need to make some changes in my life. I was overjoyed to learn the pure teaching of Jesus Christ concerning faith, repentance, baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, and the laying on of hands to receive the Holy Ghost. What joy to start afresh with a clean sheet, having turned away from unsound doctrines, vain traditions, and perverted ordinances.

Again, this would seem to be a universal need, all men having been born into this earth life innocent and pure, and having been tainted by the things of the world. The marvelous thing is that Jesus gave his life for everyone. His resurrection was for everyone, "for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:22).

Inner peace

Tenth, and finally, since being baptized into this wonderful restored Church of Jesus Christ, I have felt an inner peace, "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding" (Philip. 4:7). I have heard many people say their greatest need and desire is to obtain peace of mind. How does this come? It comes by knowing the truth, for "the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). I testify that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the true Church of Jesus Christ, and teaches true principles and true ordinances.

How grateful I am that my ten most fervent needs have been fulfilled through listening to the missionaries of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Then, by study and prayer and obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel, I have found happiness not only here but for eternities to come.

May all within the sound of my voice, and all God's children everywhere, have the same fulfillment, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

Elder Derek A. Cuthbert has just spoken to us.

The congregation and chorus will now join in singing, "Redeemer of Israel." After the singing, Elder Rex C. Reeve, Sr., a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will speak to us.

The chorus and congregation sang the hymn "Redeemer of Israel."

Elder Rex C. Reeve, Sr.

I bring you greetings today from the wonderful Saints in the British Isles and Africa. They send their love

to each one of you and especially to President Kimball and these great Brethren here on the stand.

It has been inspiring to feel the Spirit of the Lord brooding over these nations, to sense the new levels of dedication and commitment in the hearts of faithful members of the Church, many of whom are newly baptized members.

To you wonderful parents of the two thousand missionaries who are serving in these lands, and to the sons, daughters, and families of devoted missionary couples who are serving there—I bring you greetings. We thank you for all you have done and are doing to sustain them: the sacrifices you make that they can serve, the encouraging letters you write each week, and the faith-filled prayers you offer each night and morning in their behalf. Yes, missionary work is family work.

This is a great time to live, when the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is on the earth. It has a miraculous power to change hearts and give added purpose and new meaning to lives.

Love for nonmember friends

To you wonderful friends who are not yet members of this great Church: I hope you can feel our love for you. We are all children of our Father in Heaven. We are brothers and sisters. The inspired words of a Primary children's song speak of this great truth:

*I am a child of God,
And he has sent me here,
Has given me an earthly home
With parents kind and dear.
(Sing with Me, B-76.)*

We love each one of you. We love you enough that we know you will not be offended as we speak plainly to you, because love does not offend.

We have this message today for each one of you—that the authority of God has been restored and his

church has been reestablished in the earth. I testify to you of this truth! But you do not have to take my word for it; you can know for yourselves. Those who are seeking and will humble themselves and reach up to our Father in Heaven in prayer can know of a surety whether or not it is the truth.

Book of Mormon

To assist in our search for the way, our Heavenly Father has caused a marvelous record to be brought forth in our day. It is a record of his dealings with the people who lived on the Western Hemisphere; and, like the Bible, it is a sacred record. It is called the Book of Mormon. It was translated by the gift and power of God from a record engraved on golden plates. This sacred book, unlike other books, has a promise. It says (and it is found on page 520 in this volume):

“And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost” (Moro. 10:4).

Literally thousands upon thousands have tested this promise and have found it to be true. They have received a witness. It has brought new meaning, added purpose into their lives.

Yes, you can know for yourselves! But you should also know that, once you have had this witness from the Spirit, you are then under obligation, sacred obligation, to testify of it to others.

Missionary service

And now, to those of us who are members of this great church:

These are days of great missionary service. Over thirty thousand young men and women, together with faithful, devoted couples, are carrying this message to many nations and lands. Never before in this dispensation has such a worldwide effort been made to reach every soul in the earth. It is great, and we are mindful of the time and means which you and many others have so willingly given to this purpose.

But as great as our effort has been, it is still far, far from being enough. If we are going to carry this message to every land, every nation, every people, every soul as our great missionary prophet-leader has directed us, there is still one part of this vital missionary force that has not been awakened. It is like a sleeping giant waiting to be aroused. When this sleeping giant is fully awakened, the day of the sickle will have come to an end, and the day of the combine will come in. The harvest will be in millions in place of thousands, as it is today.

The great need today in missionary work is to have all the members, every member—those who bear His name, those who have had a witness—pull aside the curtains of fear and reach out in love to our friends and relatives and neighbors and let them know that we really care about them and warm them with our love, that they may know that we really do care for them as our brothers and sisters, that they too might enjoy these great blessings.

When we were baptized, we entered into a covenant with the Lord, and I quote from Mosiah, that with this covenant we “stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death” (Mosiah 18:9).

Now, silent witnesses are not of much value. The Lord has said: “It becometh every man who hath been warned to warn his neighbor.

“Therefore, they are left without excuse, and their sins are upon their own heads.” (D&C 88:81-82.)

He has also said to us as members of his church: “But with some I am not well pleased, for they will not open their mouths, but they hide the talent which I have given unto them, because of the fear of man. Wo unto such, for mine anger is kindled against them” (D&C 60:2).

“Open your mouths and they shall be filled, . . .

“Yea, open your mouths and spare not, and you shall be laden with sheaves upon your backs, for lo, I am with you.

“Yea, open your mouths and they shall be filled, saying: Repent, repent, and prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make his paths straight; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (D&C 33:8-10.)

Share the gospel

Then, speaking of members of the Church in another revelation, the Lord has said about those members of the Church who would not be in the celestial kingdom but would have to be satisfied to be in the terrestrial kingdom: “These are they who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus; wherefore, they obtain not the crown over the kingdom of our God” (D&C 76:79).

And Mark recorded the Savior’s words in his day: “Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels” (Mark 8:38).

I’d like to tell you that a person is never nearer the Lord than when he is reaching out, Savior-like, to bring another soul to Christ. The words of the poet Whittier say this truth:

*Heaven's gate is shut to him who comes alone;
Save thou a soul, and it shall save thy own.*

(*"The Two Rabbins," The Complete Poetical Works of Whittier*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1894, pp. 91-92.)

I might ask you this question: Do you have a ledger in which to account for your stocks and bonds and holdings? Many successful men do.

On several occasions men came to the Prophet Joseph Smith and asked him to inquire of the Lord what they could do which would be of most worth for them. And each time the answer came: "That . . . which will be of the most worth unto you will be to declare repentance unto this people, that you may bring souls unto me, that you may rest with them in the kingdom of my Father" (D&C 15:6).

Do we keep a missionary ledger where we might record that which will be of "most worth" to us?

Family missionary ledger

You might be interested in this idea; it might help you, too. We have a family missionary ledger. It is just an ordinary ledger on which we have placed a picture of the risen Christ saying to his prophet, President Spencer W. Kimball, "Feed my sheep." We have placed President Kimball's picture there and our picture below it with his words saying, "Lengthen your stride! Do it now!" Then I have written my comment, "If it is to be, it is up to me!"—which means I have to do something about it *now*.

In this ledger we are listing the names of the wonderful people we meet in our regular course of life who haven't yet become members of the Church. Under each name we record the date we met them and what we did with them.

Just as an example to show you how easy it is, let me tell you about these names, William and May Brown. In January 1979, when we first arrived in England, there was an unusual amount of snow. We had no snow shovel; there were none for sale. I tried to sweep the snow, but it was too heavy. Phillip Brown, a young man, and his friend stopped and asked if they could clear our yard. They did a nice job. Sister Reeve called Phillip Brown's mother to ask him if he could come and clean the yard again and to tell her what a good job her son did for us. Mrs. Brown said, "Why don't you come over to our home and have coffee and get acquainted with the neighbors?"

Sister Reeve went, but she had orange juice; and, of course, that gave an opportunity to tell them why—that we were Mormons. Mrs. Brown said, "I met some of your missionaries, and they're surely a fine group of young men. If I were going to change churches, I'd join yours."

On February 19, our forty-second wedding anniversary, we didn't have anyone to share it with, and so we thought, "Why don't we call William and May?" So we called them and said, "Won't you come over and help keep this anniversary with us?" We've had just one pleasant experience after another. They have a Book of Mormon and an LDS hymnbook (Mrs. Brown plays the organ in her church). We send cards as we travel; they are fine people. We are keeping in touch with them. They are good friends.

We haven't set aside any special time for this missionary work but just look for opportunities with everyone we meet, and in this short time we have recorded twenty-nine names in our ledger. Three of these have been baptized, a fourth was to be baptized on October 3, and others are being taught by the missionaries.

When missionaries tract in England they have to knock on three thousand doors to find one person to listen. That means that over 90 percent of their time is spent in finding. Can you imagine what would happen if every family in the Church were to pull aside the curtain of fear and decide to reach out in love and friendship to their neighbors and friends? Not only would the harvest be great, but each family who participated in the process would share in the great blessings of missionary work.

Blessings

The Lord promises great blessings to those who teach this gospel. In section 4 of the Doctrine and Covenants he says: "He that thrusteth in his sickle with his might [now, that means with some muscle], the same layeth up in store that he perisheth not, but bringeth salvation to his soul" (D&C 4:4).

"And any man [any man] that shall go and preach this gospel of the kingdom, and fail not to continue faithful in all things, shall not be weary in mind, neither darkened, neither in body, limb, nor joint; and a hair of his head shall not fall to the ground unnoticed. And they shall not go hungry, neither athirst." (D&C 84:80.)

My, what a marvelous promise!

"And whoso receiveth you, there I will be also, for I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up." (D&C 84:88.)

To you brethren who are stake presidents and bishops: If you really want to sanctify your people—if you want to strengthen your wards and stakes—lead and involve them in missionary work. Every young man should be prepared to fill a mission. They get fifty years' worth of spiritual training on a mission. It's the greatest thing that can come to a young man. And every family should be a friendshipping family. I say to you fathers, if you really want to strengthen and bless your family, if you want to strengthen them—help your family to be a friendshipping family.

Testimony

I witness to you that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, our Savior and Redeemer, and he speaks to us through his prophet, President Spencer W. Kimball.

I pray God to bless us that we might have the missionary spirit come into our hearts, that we might reach out and give to those who do not have the great blessings that we have. Remember now that Christ has no hands but our hands and no voice but our voice to do his work today. And I witness to you, it pays the greatest dividends, and I say this to you in the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord, amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now address us.

Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone

My beloved brothers and sisters, it has been my privilege through the past years as a stake president, a mission president, and a General Authority to serve as a common judge in

modern Israel. These experiences have led me to take the time allotted me today to discuss two principles—repentance and forgiveness.

Repent and confess sins

Not too long ago a young wife spoke at her husband's funeral and said, "We came to realize that unimportant things really are unimportant. When the spirit is sick, there can be no true healing, no matter how strong the physical body. If the spirit is well, then physical impairment is unimportant, regardless of the effects of a debilitating disease."

The Lord has provided the way whereby our spiritual sicknesses can be healed. In the first chapter of Isaiah, verse 18, we read, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

And, again in the Doctrine and Covenants, "Nevertheless, he that repents and does the commandments of the Lord shall be forgiven" (D&C 1:32).

Also, "Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more" (D&C 58:42).

For one to be forgiven of sin, the Lord requires that he come unto him, mourn over his sins, forsake the sins, be teachable, forgive others, and confess.

Again, in the fifty-eighth section of the Doctrine and Covenants, we read, "By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them" (D&C 58:43).

Sincerity

We must always be truly sincere. In *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, by Mark Twain, Huck says:

"It made me shiver. And I about made up my mind to pray and see if I couldn't try to quit being the kind of boy I was and be better. So I kneeled down. But the words

wouldn't come. Why wouldn't they? It weren't no use to try and hide it from Him . . . I knowed very well why they wouldn't come. It was because my heart warn't right; it was because I weren't square: it was because I was playing double. I was letting on to give up sin, but away inside of me I was holding on to the biggest one of all. I was trying to make my mouth say I would do the right thing and the clean thing. But deep down in me, I knowed it was a lie, and He knowed it. YOU CAN'T PRAY A LIE . . . I found that out." (New York: Platt & Munk, 1960, pp. 445-46.)

Huck Finn was right. You can't pray a lie; and regardless of what may be decided by a common judge, actual forgiveness cannot take place until true repentance has preceded it. The common judge serves as the Lord's agent. A bishop may be deceived, but the Holy Ghost cannot. When confession takes place, it ought to be from the inner-most depths of the heart and soul.

What a tragedy when someone finally gets enough courage to go to the bishop and then leaves his office having only partially confessed. Oh, beloved brothers and sisters, "the shepherd should not recoil from the diseased sheep" (Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables*, New York: Random House, n.d., p. 32). The bishops in this kingdom have been endowed with wisdom, judgment, and mercy from on high. They can relieve the burden of the repentant sufferer.

Importance of confession

Some years ago, a man knocked on my office door late at night and said, "President, may I speak to you? Are we all alone?" I assured him no one else was in the office. We sat across the corner of the desk, and he said, "Four times I have driven over to the stake office and have seen your light on, and four times I

have driven back home without coming in. But," he continued, "last night I was reading in *The Miracle of Forgiveness* again, and I realized that every major transgression must be confessed. I have come to confess a transgression. I have been on two high councils and have served as a bishop twice, and I believe the Lord called me."

I agreed, "I'm sure he called you."

He said, "Forty-two years ago, before my wife and I were married, we committed fornication once, the week prior to our going to the temple. We did not lie to the bishop, who was my wife's father; he simply talked with us and signed our recommends. We then went to the stake president, and he did not interview us. He signed our recommends, and we went to the temple unworthily. While we were on our honeymoon," he continued, "we decided to make it up to the Lord. We decided we would pay more than our share of tithing and more than our share of building fund; we would accept every assignment to the welfare farm and do all else we were asked to do. We decided we were not worthy to go to the temple, and we did not go for a year. It has been forty-two years since the transgression, and we have lived as near Christlike lives as we know how. I believe we have been forgiven, but I know that confession is necessary."

Then he quoted from 2 Nephi 9:41, which states, "Behold, the way for man is narrow, but it lieth in a straight course before him, and the keeper of the gate is the Holy One of Israel; and he employeth no servant there; and there is none other way save it be by the gate; for he cannot be deceived, for the Lord God is his name."

Then he said, "I would rather confess to you now. I am not a young man, and I do not have a lot of years left. I want to be able to

meet my Savior with nothing left undone."

I listened to his confession. I wept with him, and when he finished the confession, I told him on behalf of the Church that he was forgiven. He need not discuss it, think about it, or be concerned about it anymore. I told him never to mention it to me again, for I would not remember it and had no desire to. To this day, I cannot remember who it was, although I do remember the case.

We got up and walked to the door together. I said, "Where is your wife?"

He said, "She is in the car."

I asked, "Is she coming in?"

He replied, "No, she can't even think about it except it almost destroys her."

I said, "You tell your wife that I would like to visit with her now. Tell her I want to take this off her heart and close it. Tell her I know what it was that was done, and I will close it, and it need not be opened again. Tell her I will make it as easy as possible for her."

He said, "I'll tell her, but I don't think she will come in."

I answered, "You tell her that if I have to sit here all night, I will not go home until she comes in. I can't bear the thought of her carrying this on her heart one more day in this life; forty-two years is long enough."

He said, "Well, I'll tell her, but I don't think she'll come in."

He left and was gone fifteen minutes, thirty minutes, and forty-five minutes. I was tempted to check the parking lot to see if they had gone home. I resisted; then I heard a timid knock at the door. I went to the door, and there was this sweet woman standing there. Her eyes were wet from crying. She had probably told her husband she couldn't come in. He had insisted, telling her I would stay there all night. Finally, forty-five minutes later, she was at the door. I took her by both hands

and led her across the room. I sat across the corner of the desk, and then I said, "Your husband confessed to a transgression that happened over forty-two years ago of which you were a part. I want to make it easy for you. I know what the transgression is. Every major transgression must be confessed. You tell me, and I will take it off your heart."

It was like pulling wild horses to get a confession. Finally, about fifteen minutes later, she confessed. I wept; she wept. I told her it was closed and that I wouldn't remember it and for her to forget it and close it. Then I stood up and put my arm through hers and we walked down the long hallway to the parking lot. When we got just about to the door, I said, "How do you feel?"

She stopped, looked up at me and, with tears in her eyes, and said, "President, I feel clean for the first time in forty-two years."

A little publication put out by the Church states, "When one has washed his robes in the blood of the Lamb, they are no longer soiled" (Spencer W. Kimball, *A Letter to a Friend*, pamphlet, p. 23).

True repentance brings forgiveness

One day a woman came to my business office. She leaned across the desk and said, "President, I have carried a transgression on my heart for thirty-four years that I cannot carry one more step in this life. I know how tender-hearted you are, and I wouldn't add one particle of a burden to your soul."

I said, "My dear sister, before you go on, let me share with you a principle of the gospel. When you take a burden off your soul, it is lifted from the priesthood leader's soul also."

She said, "I know I will be cast out; I know I will be excommunicated, but does it have to be forever? Thirty-four years ago, before my first

husband and I were married, I was involved in an abortion. Since that time, I have felt like a murderess. It was my husband's idea, and I did not resist. I had an abortion. Later we got married. He was unfaithful constantly during the first two years of our marriage. I finally divorced him and have since remarried a wonderful man who is a convert to the Church. He knows everything, and he still wants to be sealed to me. President, do you think that either in time or in eternity we can be sealed together? I know I will be cast out, but does it have to be forever?" The tears flowed down her cheeks.

I had known this woman and thought she was one of the most Christlike women I had ever met. She always baked bread, rolls, or cookies for the people in the neighborhood. Whenever they had a ward party and the Relief Society sisters cleaned up, she always scrubbed the floor. She said that she didn't feel worthy to stand by them and do the dishes after what she had done; she only felt worthy to scrub the floor where they walked. She told me that she had never gossiped about anyone else. "How could I," she said, "after what I had done?"

I listened to her confession, humbled to tears, and told her, "I have never had a case of abortion before. I will need to write to President Kimball, President of the Quorum of the Twelve, and get his counsel."

I wrote to President Kimball and shared the entire story. I told him she was one of the most Christlike women I had known and that she was willing to submit to any decision he would have for her. Two weeks later I received his response. I called the sister and asked her to meet me at the stake office as soon as she could. When I arrived at the stake center, she was already there. Her eyes were red, and she was pale. I know she must have been on her

knees several times after my call, asking for mercy.

Again I sat across the desk from her and said, "I do not want to keep you waiting one second longer. We are not even going to stop for prayer. Let me read you President Kimball's letter.

"Dear President Featherstone: You inquired about a woman who had been involved in an abortion thirty-four years ago. From the way you describe her it sounds like she has long since repented. You may tell her on behalf of the Church she is forgiven.

"After a thorough and searching interview, you may issue this sweet sister a temple recommend so she can go to the temple and be sealed to her present husband."

If the Savior had been sitting where the woman sat, I would not have felt any closer to him. I believe that is exactly what he would have done. It was as though a two-thousand-pound burden had been lifted from the heart of this good woman. She wept great tears of relief and joy. To this day, I do not remember who the woman was.

President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., said, "I feel that [the Savior] will give that punishment which is the very least that our transgression will justify. . . .

"I believe that when it comes to making the rewards for our good conduct, he will give us the maximum that it is possible to give." (J. Reuben Clark, Jr., "As Ye Sow . . ." Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year, Provo, 3 May 1955, p. 7.) I, too, believe this with all my heart and soul.

In Exodus 32, Moses had gone up to the mountain. The children of Israel had fashioned a golden calf with a graving tool. The people offered burnt offerings, and they sat down to eat, drink, and play; and there was great wickedness when Moses came down out of the mountain. He cast the tablets out of his

hands, and they were broken; he burned the golden calf and caused the idolaters to be slain.

Then, when the people had repented (and that is the key), Moses went back before the Lord and prayed, "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written" (Ex. 32:32).

I have listened to possibly a thousand major transgressions; and each time after a truly repentant transgressor has left my office, I have either knelt behind the desk or bowed my head in prayer and said, "Lord, forgive him or her, I pray thee. If not, blot my name also out of thy book. I do not want to be where they aren't, for they are some of the most Christlike people I have ever met."

Though their sins be as scarlet, they may become white as the driven snow (see Isa. 1:18), and the Lord has promised he would remember their sins no more (see D&C 58:42).

Beloved, the Lord has provided every soul with a Christlike ecclesiastical leader who has been endowed with powers and keys from on high to be his agent in exercising forgiveness on behalf of the Church. I plead with you: if you have a major transgression on your heart that has not been confessed, go to your bishop. He will be filled with love and charity and will bless your life and take the burden of sin from your heart as a repentant soul in modern Israel.

I know that he, our Savior, loves us and that he is our Redeemer, our Atoner, and our Savior. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

We have just heard from Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our concluding speaker.

President Ezra Taft Benson

Self-reliance

For over forty years, in a spirit of love, members of the Church have been counseled to be thrifty and self-reliant; to avoid debt; pay tithes and a generous fast offering; be industrious; and have sufficient food, clothing, and fuel on hand to last at least one year.

Today there are compelling reasons to reemphasize this counsel. We heard it done effectively in that great welfare meeting this morning. May I add just a word.

Members of the Church are feeling the economic pinch of higher taxes and inflation coupled with conditions of continuing recession. Some have come to their bishops seeking assistance to pay for house payments, car loans, and utilities.

Unfortunately, there has been fostered in the minds of some an expectation that when we experience hard times, when we have been unwise and extravagant with our resources and have lived beyond our means, we should look to either the Church or government to bail us out. Forgotten by some of our members is an underlying principle of the Church welfare plan that "no true Latter-day Saint will, while physically able, voluntarily shift from himself the burden of his own support" (Marion G. Romney, in Conference Report, Oct. 1973, p. 106).

One of the first principles revealed to father Adam when he was driven out of the Garden of Eden was this: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground" (Gen. 3:19). All we obtain in life of a material nature comes as a product of labor and the providence of God. Work alone produces life's necessities.

In saying this, I am aware of and sympathetic to the plight of many young families who are

struggling to make ends meet. They are faced with the financial burden of providing for the three great necessities of life: food, clothing, and shelter. I am also sympathetic to the situation of widows and other sisters who rear families alone. By revelation, the Lord made provision for their care and support. (See D&C 83:1-2, 4-6.)

More than ever before, we need to learn and apply the principles of economic self-reliance. We do not know when the crisis involving sickness or unemployment may affect our own circumstances. We do know that the Lord has decreed global calamities for the future and has warned and forewarned us to be prepared. For this reason the Brethren have repeatedly stressed a "back to basics" program for temporal and spiritual welfare.

Home production and storage

Today, I emphasize a most basic principle: home production and storage. Have you ever paused to realize what would happen to your community or nation if transportation were paralyzed or if we had a war or depression? How would you and your neighbors obtain food? How long would the corner grocery store—or supermarket—sustain the needs of the community?

Shortly after World War II, I was called by the First Presidency to go to Europe to reestablish our missions and set up a program for the distribution of food and clothing to the Saints. Vivid in my memory are the people who got on trains each morning with all kinds of bric-a-brac in their arms to go out to the countryside to trade their possessions for food. At evening time, the train station was filled with people with arms full of vegetables and fruits, and a menagerie of squealing pigs and

chickens. You never heard such a commotion. These people were, of course, willing to barter practically anything for that commodity which sustains life—food.

An almost forgotten means of economic self-reliance is the home production of food. We are too accustomed to going to stores and purchasing what we need. By producing some of our food we reduce, to a great extent, the impact of inflation on our money. More importantly, we learn how to produce our own food and involve all family members in a beneficial project. No more timely counsel, I feel, has been given by President Kimball than his repeated emphasis to grow our own gardens. Here is one sample of his emphasis over the past seven years:

"We encourage you to grow all the food that you feasibly can on your own property. Berry bushes, grapevines, fruit trees—plant them if your climate is right for their growth. Grow vegetables and eat them from your own yard." (*Ensign*, May 1976, p. 124).

Many of you have listened and done as President Kimball counseled, and you have been blessed for it. Others have rationalized that they had no time or space. May I suggest you do what others have done. Get together with others and seek permission to use a vacant lot for a garden, or rent a plot of ground and grow your gardens. Some elders quorums have done this as a quorum, and all who have participated have reaped the benefits of a vegetable and fruit harvest and the blessings of cooperation and family involvement. Many families have dug up lawn space for gardens.

We encourage you to be more self-reliant so that, as the Lord has declared, "notwithstanding the tribulation which shall descend upon you, . . . the church may stand independent above all other creatures beneath the celestial world" (D&C 78:14).

The Lord wants us to be independent and self-reliant because these will be days of tribulation. He has warned and forewarned us of the eventuality.

President Brigham Young said, "If you are without bread, how much wisdom can you boast, and of what real utility are your talents, if you cannot procure for yourselves and save against a day of scarcity those substances designed to sustain your natural lives?" (In *Journal of Discourses*, 8:68.)

Producing and storing food

Food production is just one part of the repeated emphasis that you store a provision of food which will last for at least a year wherever it is legally permissible to do so. The Church has not told you what foods should be stored. This decision is left up to individual members. However, some excellent suggestions are available in the booklet produced by the Church entitled "Essentials of Home Production & Storage" (stock no. PGWE1125; 35¢ each). There are also booklets available on gardening from BYU.

From the standpoint of food production, storage, handling, and the Lord's counsel, wheat should have high priority. "There is more salvation and security in wheat," said Orson Hyde years ago, "than in all the political schemes of the world" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 2:207). Water, of course, is essential. Other basics could include honey or sugar, legumes, milk products or substitutes, and salt or its equivalent. The revelation to produce and store food may be as essential to our temporal welfare today as boarding the ark was to the people in the days of Noah.

Elder Harold B. Lee counseled, "Perhaps if we think not in terms of a year's supply of what we ordinarily would use, and think more in terms of what it would take to

keep us alive in case we didn't have anything else to eat, that last would be very easy to put in storage for a year . . . just enough to keep us alive if we didn't have anything else to eat. We wouldn't get fat on it, but we would live; and if you think in terms of that kind of annual storage rather than a whole year's supply of everything that you are accustomed to eat which, in most cases, is utterly impossible for the average family, I think we will come nearer to what President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., advised us way back in 1937." (In Welfare Conference, 1 October 1966.)

There are blessings in being close to the soil, in raising your own food even if it is only a garden in your yard and a fruit tree or two. Those families will be fortunate who, in the last days, have an adequate supply of food because of their foresight and ability to produce their own.

Avoid debt

The counsel from Church authorities has been consistent over the years and is well summarized in these words:

"First, and above and beyond everything else, let us live righteously. . . .

"Let us avoid debt as we would avoid a plague; where we are now in debt, let us get out of debt; if not today, then tomorrow.

"Let us straitly and strictly live within our incomes, and save a little.

"Let every head of every household see to it that he has on hand enough food and clothing, and, where possible, fuel also, for at least a year ahead. You of small means put your money in foodstuffs and wearing apparel, not in stocks and bonds; you of large means will think you know how to care for yourselves, but I may venture to suggest that you do not speculate. Let every

head of every household aim to own his own home, free from mortgage. Let every man who has a garden spot, garden it; every man who owns a farm, farm it. (President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., in Conference Report, Apr. 1937, p. 26.)

You do not need to go into debt, may I add, to obtain a year's supply. Plan to build up your food supply just as you would a savings account. Save a little for storage each pay-check. Can or bottle fruit and vegetables from your gardens and orchards. Learn how to preserve food through drying and possibly freezing. Make your storage a part of your budget. Store seeds and have sufficient tools on hand to do the job. If you are saving and planning for a second car or a TV set or some item which merely adds to your comfort or pleasure, you may need to change your priorities. We urge you to do this prayerfully and *do it now*.

Great urgency

I speak with a feeling of great urgency. I have seen what the days of tribulation can do to people. I have seen hunger stalk the streets of Europe. I have witnessed the appalling, emaciated shadows of human figures. I have seen women and children scavage army garbage dumps for scraps of food. Those scenes and nameless faces cannot be erased from my memory.

I shall never forget the Saints of Hamburg who appeared on the verge of collapse from starvation, or their small children whom I invited to come to the stand as we emptied our pockets of edibles. Most had never seen these items before because of the wartime conditions. Nor can I forget the expectant and nursing mothers whose eyes watered with tears when we gave them each an orange. We saw the terrible physical and social side effects of hunger and malnutrition. One sister walked over

a thousand miles with four small children, leaving her home in Poland. She lost all four to starvation and the freezing conditions. Yet she stood before us in her emaciated condition, her clothing shredded, and her feet wrapped in burlap, and bore testimony of how blessed she was.

I cannot forget the French Saints who, unable to obtain bread, used potato peelings for the emblems of the sacrament. Nor will I ever forget the faith of the Dutch Saints who accepted our suggestion to grow potatoes to alleviate their own starving conditions, and then sent a portion of their first harvest to the German people who had been their bitter enemies. The following year they sent them the entire harvest. The annals of Church history have seldom recorded a more Christlike act of love and compassion.

Too often we bask in our comfortable complacency and rationalize that the ravages of war, economic disaster, famine, and earthquake cannot happen here. Those who believe this are either not acquainted with the revelations of the Lord, or they do not believe them. Those who smugly think these calamities will not happen, that they somehow will be set aside because of the righteousness of the Saints, are deceived and will rue the day they harbored such a delusion.

The Lord has warned and forewarned us against a day of great tribulation and given us counsel, through His servants, on how we can be prepared for these difficult times. Have we heeded His counsel?

Welfare program is inspired

I bear you my testimony that President Heber J. Grant was inspired of the Lord in establishing the Church Welfare program. The First

Presidency was inspired when they made the first public announcement in 1936 and declared the prime purpose of Church welfare was "to help the people help themselves" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1936, p. 3). I bear witness to that inspired counsel from 1936 to the present day that the Saints lay up a year's supply of food. When President Spencer W. Kimball persistently admonishes the members to plant gardens and fruit trees and produce our own food, he is likewise inspired of the Lord.

Be faithful, my brothers and sisters, to this counsel and you will be blessed—yes, the most blessed people in all the earth. You are good people. I know that. But all of us need to be better than we are. Let us be in a position so we are able to not only feed ourselves through the home production and storage, but others as well.

May God bless us to be prepared for the days which lie ahead, which may be the most severe yet. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has been our concluding speaker.

We remind the brethren of the general priesthood meeting which will convene here in the Tabernacle this evening at 7:00 P.M.

The nationwide CBS Radio Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those desiring to attend this broadcast must be in their seats no later than 9:15 A.M.

The singing for this session has been furnished by the Mormon Youth Chorus. We are grateful for the presence of you young people and for the beautiful spirit your music has added to our meeting.

The chorus will now sing in closing "The Spirit of God Like a Fire." Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder Jacob de Jager, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Mormon Youth Chorus sang "The Spirit of God Like a Fire."

Elder Jacob de Jager pronounced the benediction.

GENERAL PRIESTHOOD MEETING

THIRD SESSION

The general priesthood meeting convened in the Tabernacle at 7:00 P.M. on Saturday, October 4, 1980.

President Spencer W. Kimball presided and President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for this session was provided by a combined men's choir from Ricks College directed by Richard Robison with Roy M. Darley at the organ.

President Romney opened this session with the following remarks:

President Marion G. Romney

Brethren, President Spencer W. Kimball, who presides at this general priesthood meeting, has asked me to conduct this session.

These services are being relayed by closed-circuit transmission and will reach members of the priesthood gathered in the Salt Palace, in the Marriott Center on the BYU campus, and in approximately 2,044 locations in many countries around the world.

We extend our greetings and blessings to all the priesthood brethren wherever they may be.

We note that Elders Royden G. Derrick and W. Grant Bangerter are seated on the stand in the Salt Palace, and Elders Hartman Rector, Jr., and Hugh W. Pinnock preside at the BYU Marriott Center.

The singing during this session will be furnished by the Ricks College

men's choir under the direction of Richard Robison with Roy M. Darley at the organ.

We shall begin this service by the choir singing "See, the Mighty Angel Flying!" Following the singing, Elder Adney Y. Komatsu, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "See, the Mighty Angel Flying!"

Elder Adney Y. Komatsu offered the invocation.

President Romney

The choir will now favor us with "Though Deepening Trials," after which we shall be pleased to hear from Elder James E. Faust, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The choir sang the hymn "Though Deepening Trials."

President Romney

Elder James E. Faust, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our first speaker this evening. He will be followed by Bishop H. Burke Peterson, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric.

Elder James E. Faust

I am humbled by the opportunity to address the priesthood this evening. I should like to direct my remarks to the leaders of the Church, and especially to the future leaders, the young men of the Aaronic Priesthood. Many of you young men will have leadership responsibilities sooner than you realize. It does not seem long since I was a deacons quorum president. As far as the worldwide, fast-growing Church is concerned, leadership is one of our greatest challenges.

Leaders receive and give assignments

A year or so ago I sat in an elders quorum meeting. The members of the presidency were fine, capable young men; but when they got around to sharing the quorum responsibilities and getting the work done, they limited it to those who were present and who would volunteer. Not one assignment was given.

One of the first principles we must keep in mind is that the work of the Lord goes forward through assignments. Leaders receive and give assignments. This is an important part of the necessary principle of delegating. No one appreciates a willing volunteer more than I, but the total work cannot be done as the Lord wants it done merely by those doing the work who may be present at meetings. I have often wondered what the earth would look like if the Lord in the Creation had left the work to be done only by volunteers.

If we look upon fulfilling of assignments as building the kingdom of God and as being an opportunity as well as a privilege and an honor, then assignments and challenges should certainly be given to every member of the quorum. Such involvement should include, with ap-

propriate wisdom and discretion, those who perhaps need them the most—the inactive and the partially active brethren. Assignments always should be given with the greatest love, consideration, and kindness. Those asked to respond should be treated with respect and appreciation.

General Authorities regularly receive assignments from the First Presidency and the President of the Council of the Twelve. Whether such assignments come in writing, as most do, or are personally given, they are always couched with “if you please” or “if it is convenient” or “Would you kindly attend to this or to that.” Never are these assignments framed in terms of a command or a demand.

Follow Savior's example

Ever since I was first in Egypt in World War II, I have been interested in ancient ruins. There is a fascination in observing why some columns still stand and others have toppled over. Very frequently those still standing do so because they bear a weight on top. There is, I believe, a parallel principle in leadership. Those who stand faithful to their priesthood are often those who bear some weight of responsibility. Those involved are those most likely to be committed. So a successful quorum leader will want all of those in his quorum to have an opportunity to serve with some kind of calling appropriate to the circumstances.

The most encompassing short course on leadership was given by the Savior himself: “And he saith unto them, Follow me” (Matt. 4:19). A leader cannot ask of others what he is not willing to do himself. Our safest course is to follow the example of the Savior, and our security is to listen to and follow the direction of his prophet, the President of the Church.

Good leader “expects much, inspires greatly”

Some years ago I was traveling in the Rosario Argentina Mission up in the northern part of Argentina. As we were traveling along the road, we passed a large herd of cattle being moved. The herd was moving peaceably and without difficulty. The herd was quiet. There were no dogs. Out in front leading the herd were three gauchos on horseback, each about fifteen or twenty yards apart. These three horsemen were slumped forward in their saddles, completely relaxed, confident that the herd would follow them. At the rear of the herd was a single rider bringing up the rear. He, too, was slumped forward in his saddle as if he were sleeping. The whole herd moved peacefully, quietly, and was subdued. From that experience it seemed obvious to me that leadership is about three-fourths show-the-way and about one-fourth follow-up.

The leader himself, when directing, does not have to be bombastic and loud. Those who are called to lead in the ministry of the Master are not called to be chiefs or dictators. They are called to be good shepherds. They are to be constantly training others to take their place and become greater leaders than their teachers. A good leader expects much, inspires greatly, and sets on fire those he is called to lead.

Now, a leader must cause things to happen and lives to be affected. Something should move and change. He must see that those under him do not fail. But it should be done in the Lord's way. He should be the instrument in the hands of the Almighty for changing lives. He needs to know where he is now, where he is going, and how he is going to get there.

Listening

A leader must be a good listener. He must be willing to take coun-

sel. He must show a genuine concern and love for those under his stewardship. No priesthood leader can ever be effective unless he has firmly in mind the transcending keys of leadership found in section 121 of the Doctrine and Covenants:

“No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned;

“By kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile—

“Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reprov'd, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy” (D&C 121:41-43).

In my experience, the Holy Ghost moves to reprove with sharpness only very rarely. Any reproving should be done gently in an effort to convince the one being reprov'd that it is done in his own interest.

President Joseph F. Smith reminds us:

“One of the highest qualities of all true leadership is a high standard of courage. . . . There has never been a time in the Church when its leaders were not required to be courageous men; not alone courageous in the sense that they were able to meet physical dangers, but also in the sense that they were steadfast and true to a clear and upright conviction.” (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939, p. 155.)

Divine assistance

With faith in the Lord and humility, a priesthood leader may confidently expect divine assistance in his problems. It may require struggling and pondering, but the reward is sure. The answer may come as it did

to Enos: "The voice of the Lord came into my mind," said he (Enos 1:10). Or, it may be the feeling in the bosom in accordance with section 9 of the Doctrine and Covenants.

After receiving such divine assurance by and through the power of the Holy Ghost, the humble leader can then pursue an unswerving course with the absolute conviction in mind and heart that that which is being done is on the right course and is what the Lord himself would do in the matter.

I am impressed with the deep humility of President Kimball. Years ago he related an experience that emphasizes that the person in a Church position is not as great as the calling. Elder Spencer W. Kimball gives us this story:

"In a hotel in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania long years ago, I learned an important lesson when the president of the Rotary International said to the district governors in the assembly:

"Gentlemen: This has been a great year for you. The people have honored you, praised you, banqueted you, applauded you, and given you lavish gifts. If you ever get the mistaken idea that they were doing this for you personally, just try going back to the clubs next year when the mantle is on other shoulders."

"This has kept me on my knees in my holy calling. Whenever I have been inclined to think the honors were coming to me as I go about the Church, then I remember that it is not to me, but to the *position* I hold that honors come. I am but a symbol." (In Conference Report, Oct. 1958, p. 57.)

Most of us who are called to leadership in the Church feel that we are inadequate because of inexperience, lack of ability, or meager learning and education. Of the many descriptions of Moses is the following: "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were

upon the face of the earth" (Num. 12:3).

Years ago I recall President John Kelly, who was then presiding over the Fort Worth Texas Stake, called Brother Felix Velasquez to be the president of the Spanish branch. This good man worked, as I recall, as a car inspector on the railroad. When President Kelly called him to this service, he responded, "President, I cannot be the president of the Spanish branch. I cannot read." President Kelly then promised him that if he would accept the calling and labor diligently to magnify it, he would be sustained and blessed. With the help of the Lord, this humble man, through his diligent efforts, became able to read. He served well as branch president and for many years subsequent and now is serving in the high council of that stake. The Lord blesses his servants in many ways.

Brethren, we can learn, we can study, we can comprehend the basic things we need to know as members of God's holy priesthood. We can learn the giant truths and teach them with intelligence and understanding to those who come to learn. We can also lean upon the strengths of others whose talents are greater than our own. The priesthood quorum is designed to give opportunity for its members to contribute their talents to the building of a strong quorum.

Counseling; "genius of leadership"

I come now to the genius of leadership, through the priesthood, in the government of the Church. I wish to quote President Stephen L. Richards, who said:

"As I conceive it, the genius of our Church government is government through *councils*. . . . Hardly a day passes but that I see the wisdom, God's wisdom, in creating councils: to govern his Kingdom. In the spirit under which we labor, men can get together with seemingly divergent

views and far different backgrounds, and under the operation of that spirit, by counseling together, they can arrive at an accord.” (In Conference Report, Oct. 1953, p. 86; italics added.)

Counseling together as leaders is the key to the successful functioning of a presidency or a bishopric. But what if unity in decision making is difficult or is absent? President Joseph F. Smith gave us this advice:

“When bishops and their counselors do not see eye to eye, or when presidents and their counselors have any difference whatever in their sentiments or in their policy, it is their duty to get together, to go before the Lord together and humble themselves before him until they get revelation from the Lord and see the truth alike, that they may go before their people unitedly” (*Gospel Doctrine*, p. 156).

Be example of personal righteousness

Those who would lead in this Church must set the example of personal righteousness. They should seek for the constant guidance of the Holy Spirit. They should have their lives and homes in order. They should be honest and prompt in the paying of their bills. They must be exemplary in all their conduct. They should be men of honor and integrity. As we seek for the constant guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Lord will answer.

While I was serving as Area Supervisor in South America, a most unforgettable experience happened in Montevideo, Uruguay. I wanted to change some money because I was living in Brazil at the time, so Brother Carlos Pratt took me to a money exchange house in downtown Montevideo. He introduced me to one of the officials, and the official said they would change \$1,000. I did not have \$1,000 in cash and had only a check drawn on a bank in Salt

Lake City. The exchange house had never done business with me before. In fact, they had never seen me before and could not expect to ever see me again. They had no way to verify if I had \$1,000 on deposit in the bank upon which I had drawn the check. But they accepted my check without hesitation—based solely on the fact that I was a Mormon and that they had previously done business with other Mormons. Frankly, I was both grateful and pleased because of their confidence.

The duty of a president is to preside, to sit in council, and to teach “according to the covenants” (D&C 107:89). There are many covenants, but the oath and covenant of the Melchizedek Priesthood in the Doctrine and Covenants, section 84, deserves special attention. In essence, the contract between the bearer of the priesthood and the Lord is this: If you abide by the law of the priesthood, every blessing within my power to give will be granted you, even to become as I am (see D&C 84:33-39).

“Strengthen thy brethren”

When the Savior was giving Peter some leadership training he said, “When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:32).

It is interesting that he used the word *strengthen*. It is very difficult to strengthen without being a good communicator. Often problems develop, not because the plan is faulty, but because the communication is inadequate.

Last year I called a new patriarch in one of the new stakes in Central America. I was greatly impressed by the great faith and righteous life of this humble man. His wife happened to be out of the country on a temple excursion. I felt as though something very special was missing in the experience of extending this great calling to this saintly man because his wife could not be present.

I have no hesitancy to urge those who are privileged to issue callings throughout the Church to appropriately involve the spouse of the one receiving the call. In addition, the head of the family should appropriately be consulted prior to calls being given to family members.

Priesthood leaders have the rare opportunity to conduct priesthood interviews. Specifically, through personal contacts and interviews the leader can accomplish the following:

1. Inspire and motivate.
2. Delegate and trust.
3. Hold accountable and follow up.
4. Teach by example and principle.
5. Be generous with appreciation.

Sometimes leaders hold the reins too tightly, often limiting the natural talents and gifts of those who are called to labor at their sides.

Leadership does not always produce a harmonious symphony of faith, skills, and talents of the group, producing maximum effectiveness and power. It is sometimes a loud solo. President Lee taught a fuller meaning of the scripture, "Wherefore, now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence" (D&C 107:99). In addition to having all of us learn our duties, leaders should let, or permit, their associates to be fully effective within their own office and callings, and helpers should be fully clothed with appropriate authority.

Recently Elder Howard W. Hunter effectively taught the Regional Representatives on this subject: "The

story is told of how in ancient Greece, Alexander the Great went to the brilliant Diogenes who was busy doing some research. Alexander hovered about Diogenes anxiously and asked: 'How can I help you?' Diogenes replied simply: 'Please stand out of my light!' "

I pray that, by laboring diligently under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, those who have and will be called to leadership will see our duty clearer and have farther vision to set goals and chart a more righteous course.

My testimony is that this Church grows and succeeds because we are under the guiding influence of the holy priesthood of God. I believe that our leaders can generate the great spiritual power needed to guide the work of God through personal revelation, to which in righteousness they are entitled. The counsel of the Lord to Joshua is priceless: "Have I not commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." (Josh. 1:9.)

That it may be so I pray humbly in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Marion G. Romney

Elder James E. Faust, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just addressed us.

We shall now hear from Bishop H. Burke Peterson, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric. He will be followed by Elder Robert L. Backman, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Bishop H. Burke Peterson

My brethren of the priesthood, by whatever right or responsibility I have because of this assignment tonight, I would like to raise another

voice of warning and a charge to prepare for the battle. The call is extended to all priesthood holders throughout the world. This message is

intended for the twelve-year-old deacon as well as his elder or high priest father or grandfather.

The destructive forces of Satan are becoming increasingly more effective in their relentless pursuit of the hearts and minds of men and boys everywhere. Many quite innocently have been led into habits that are gaining a stranglehold on some of the very elite in the army of the priesthood. I fear there are some here tonight who are far less effective than they could be or would be if they weren't so afflicted.

Purifying our minds

I would like to begin by painting a word picture of a setting in east-central Arizona. Here there are some high and often snow-packed mountains. We refer to them as the White Mountains. From this fountainhead stem most of the major water-producing streams that fill the agricultural and domestic needs of central Arizona. From these mountains comes the water supply for the homes in the city of Phoenix. In the wintertime the mountains are covered with snow, oftentimes many feet in depth. The streams, as they begin here, run cool and clear, filled with delicious, life-giving water. The streams run many miles in this unpolluted condition as they move down the mountains, through the valleys, eventually to empty into great reservoirs built to store the liquid during periods of drought.

There are also in eastern Arizona many high-grade ore deposits which are and have been mined for many years, copper being one of the principal metals. Some of the streams that originate in the White Mountains run through the mining towns, and their water is used by the smelters in the processing of the ore. The waste from this process, in some cases, finds its way back into the streams, causing discoloration and the addition

of harmful elements that make the water unfit for human consumption. These streams also empty into the great reservoirs.

There are seasons of the year when there are cloudbursts in the mountains upstream from the dam. The heavens literally open up and discharge their contents. When water comes in such great quantities as it does on these occasions, large amounts of soil are eroded; brush, and sometimes trees, are also washed down the rivers into the reservoirs.

These reservoirs have the unusual capacity of holding all that is put in them—the cool and clean, clear, and delicious water coming from the glistening snowpack, as well as the polluted water from the industries, and the brown, silt-filled waters resulting from the summer thunderstorms. All of it accumulates behind the huge rock and concrete dams. As we've said, part of the water that is held behind these dams is used as the domestic water supply for over a million people.

The water, of course, in the condition in which it is stored behind the dams, is now undrinkable because of the impurities that have been dumped into it. And so there must be a filtering system that prepares it for use.

First, there are large grates and nets of coarse screens that filter out leaves, branches, and dead animal life. The filtering system gets finer and finer as it removes other harmful impurities. Finally, after much careful attention and cleansing, it is released into the pipelines of the cities in a now-purified condition, ready to be used by the people of the valley.

When we were born in the earth, our minds and thoughts were clean and sweet and pure—unpolluted by the harmful impurities that are around us that become a part of the experiences of this life. In our infancy our minds are free from unrighteous and unwholesome thoughts. We are innocent and untouched by

most of the harmful effects and influences of Satan.

Our mind a reservoir

Our mind, which is like a tremendous reservoir itself, is capable of taking in whatever it may be fed—good and bad, trash and garbage, as well as righteous thoughts and experiences. As we go through life, we may be exposed to stories, pictures, books, jokes, and language that are filthy and vulgar, or to television shows and movies that are not right for us to see or hear. Our mind will take it all in. It has a capacity to store whatever we will give it. Unfortunately, what our mind takes in, it keeps—sometimes forever. It's a long, long process to cleanse a mind that has been polluted by unclean thoughts.

Sometimes our minds may be so cluttered with filth and pollution that they are unable to be a spiritual strength to us and our families, let alone mankind in general. When in this condition, we find our thinking processes are not clear or correct. Everyday problems are more difficult to solve. We say and do things we would otherwise never be a part of.

Stop flow of vulgarity

There are two things we must do. First, we must stop the flow into our minds of these unhealthy and unwholesome streams of experiences and thoughts. Evil acts are preceded by unrighteous thoughts. And unrighteous thoughts are born of vulgar stories, jokes, pictures, conversation, and a myriad of other satanic products.

Vulgarity appears in many ways. We live in a society where profanity and vulgarity are accepted means of conduct and expression—even a way of life for some. I remember being in a business meeting

some years ago with a group of men who were well educated, competent in their professions, and friendly to all—but their language was a dialogue in profanity.

Brother Boyd K. Packer has said, "The reality of profanity does not argue for the toleration of it" (*New Era*, Jan. 1976, p. 5). We are the victims of a vile habit. I would suggest that some are misled who think vulgarity occurs only now and then when a person utters obviously crude or offensive words. Vulgarity is not so rare as it should be. It is sustained by constant exposure to a steady diet of vulgar and filthy experiences. We might consider vulgarity in a couple of ways: first, *as an expression of personal weakness*, and second, *as a contribution to personal weakness*.

Some demonstrate or express a personal weakness when they tell jokes or stories about the body and its functions, when they joke about or make suggestive comments concerning women or girls, when they are casual about sacred things. There is vulgarity when some speak crudely of body parts or sexual matters. Too often, common slang, even gutter terms, are used by brethren of the priesthood—ofttimes anger is used as an excuse for such utterance. This is wrong. No one need swear or be vulgar at any time.

Some contribute to this personal weakness when they read or experience filthy magazines, vulgar movies or television shows, or remain in a group where unclean discussions occur. Each of these kinds of experiences will weaken any spirit, will make it less able to withstand "the fiery darts" of the adversary (Eph. 6:16).

Now, brethren of the priesthood, there should not be any X- or R-rated movies that we participate in viewing or talking about. There must be no pornographic magazines, pictures, or stories, no re-telling of filthy jokes or

crude experiences. Once in a while we should stop and ask ourselves, "In whose army are we fighting? Whose battle lines are we defending?" Do you have the courage to walk out of an off-color PG-rated movie—or do you watch and listen, and suggest to yourself, "This soon will pass," or "Everyone is doing it; it must be an acceptable type of entertainment"? Have you the courage to keep out of your home some television shows that are filled with suggestive sexual conversation—and even experiences? Have you thought lately how effective these shows are in piercing even the strongest spirits? Brethren, we must not feed ourselves a diet of trash!

Develop "filtering system"

Now, assuming we have cut off the flow—not cut it down, but cut it off—the second thing we must do is to develop a filtering system that will cleanse the great reservoir of our mind so that the life-giving thoughts coming from it may again be pure and fit for our use. The effectiveness of our filtration system depends upon the pattern of our life. We will be no more successful in helping ourselves and others than we are pure in our minds. True, we may systematically perform many of the tasks that are assigned us such as—teach a Sunday School or priesthood lesson, prepare reports, conduct a meeting—but unless our spirit is in tune and we speak, teach, and act under the direction of the Holy Spirit, we accomplish little of an eternal value.

The secret to cleansing our spirit of whatever the impurity is not very complicated. It begins with prayer every morning and ends with prayer every night. This is the most important step I know in the cleansing process. It may simply be a prayer for strength to turn from bad habits—remembering that all prayers are not answered the next day. With this step

in place, I have seen hundreds of miracles take place. Without it, there is continued frustration, unhappiness, ineffectiveness, and despair.

Secondly, an added refinement will come in the filtering process: An added measure of spiritual purity, if you please, can be found in a daily study of the scriptures—not long, perhaps, but *every day*. If I were an Aaronic Priesthood boy, I would start reading the scriptures tonight and never let a day pass without reading some in them. This was a commitment President Kimball made over seventy years ago when he was your age.

Third, feed refreshment to your spirit that comes when you do something good for another that he or she doesn't expect. Keep it simple, but *do it—daily*. It may only be a cheery hello, a short visit to a homebound, a phone call, or a note. Maybe even picking up your dirty socks will thrill an unsuspecting mother or wife. According to the scripture, a disciple of the Savior is first a servant to others (see Matt. 20:27).

And finally, pick up a commandment you are still struggling with and give it an honest chance to bless your life.

This, then, is the secret to a happy and productive life and to the eternal rewards of a loving Father in Heaven:

First, stop the flow of polluted thoughts. Be far more selective of the experiences we feed the great reservoir of our mind.

Second, develop an effective filtering system that will remove the impurities and cleanse the spirit.

And so, brethren, the cry goes out: Gird for the battle. Take off the apparel of the world and clothe yourselves in the armor of righteousness. Let the priesthood authority you now hold become a powerful influence for good in your homes, in your wards and quorums, in your communities, and in your countries. Power in the

priesthood is a *product* of righteousness; it is *not* an unearned gift.

Forever faithful

A short time ago in a temple meeting, President Romney closed his testimony with the prayer that he would forever be found faithful in defending his part of the battle line. In testifying tonight that the Savior is at the head of this priesthood army and of the work for which we are responsible, I, too, add my prayer that we will each be found faithful in the things with which we have been entrusted. For the Lord said, "O ye that embark in the service of God,

see that ye serve him with all your heart, might, mind, and strength, that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day" (D&C 4:2).

My brethren, as your friend and brother, I plead with you to prepare as you have never prepared before, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Marion G. Romney

Bishop H. Burke Peterson, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, has just addressed us.

Elder Robert L. Backman, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will be our next speaker.

Elder Robert L. Backman

During this past summer, it was my great privilege to stand in a circle while my son-in-law ordained one of my grandsons to the priesthood. That was a signal honor for a grandfather, and I know Robbie couldn't have been more proud of it than I was. Since that time, I have considered very much what I would like to say to Robbie concerning this honor that has come into his life and how desirous I am as his grandfather that he live worthy of what was promised him in the blessing that his father gave him under the inspiration of the Lord. So tonight I would like to address my remarks to Robbie and to all this grand army of Aaronic Priesthood who sit here in front of me and are listening throughout the world.

Growth of a missionary

While serving as a mission president it was my great privilege and responsibility to interview every missionary as he began his mission. That was always a great experience, but it sometimes gave me insights into the backgrounds of my mission-

aries that shocked me. One elder told me of his growing up in a small farming community as the son of the town drunkard. When, as a newly called missionary, he boarded the bus to come to Salt Lake City to enter the mission home, his father was there to bid him farewell. He must have been drunk, for his last words to his son were, "Son, you will never amount to a hill of beans."

As I talked with my missionary, I could sense that he had heard that phrase over and over again throughout his young life: "You will never amount to a hill of beans." And that choice young man, called by the Lord to be his representative, believed it. I resolved to prove that father wrong by seeing that the missionary had a successful mission. I assigned him to a great first companion and watched his progress with keen interest and daily prayers. And progress he did.

As my release date approached, I made a final tour of the mission to say good-bye to my beloved fellow workers. By this time the young man was a zone leader, a very important calling in the mission field. He con-

ducted that zone conference like a veteran bishop. I saw the deep bond of love that had developed between him and his missionaries. I thought of the scores of converts who had joined the Church through his devoted service and the power of his testimony. At an appropriate moment in the conference I stood beside him with my arm around him and said, with a lump in my throat, "You wouldn't believe this, but someone once said of this young man that he would never amount to a hill of beans." He turned and looked me in the eye and responded, "We sure showed him, didn't we, President?"

What had occurred to bring about such a dramatic change in that elder's life—to change him from a frightened little farm boy to a man of God? He had made some interesting discoveries that had prepared him to face the challenge of life and to be armed to succeed—the same discoveries every young Latter-day Saint must make as he matures if he is to achieve his potential here and hereafter. He had discovered that he really was a son of God—with the capacity to become as God is, with all of his power, his might, and his majesty. He knew the truth of Christ's oath: "All that my Father hath shall be given unto him" (D&C 84:38). What a discovery for a young man to make—that he is a son of God!

Doesn't that make you feel kind of special to know how much God is counting on you? The future of his Church is in your hands. You are the ones that God has chosen to be his leaders, reserved to come to this earth when you could influence your fellowmen by the power of your lives and by sharing the principles of the gospel. How well are you doing, young men?

One of our fine young men, living in the eastern part of this country where he was one of few Latter-day Saints in his high school, received

his mission call. As he prepared for his mission he asked his parents' permission to invite twenty-five of his nonmember friends to come to the home for a farewell party. During that party the young missionary showed his friends *Man's Search for Happiness*, explained why he was going on a mission for his church, and bore his testimony to them. They all in turn hugged him and let him know they loved him and sustained him.

My missionary had also discovered that, despite his weaknesses, his frailties, and his youth, he had a tremendous untapped capacity to serve his fellowmen and to influence them for good, even to being an instrument in the Lord's hands to change and save lives.

Righteous influence of friends

At a youth conference I met five young men. One of them, who had recently fallen into inactivity, had been persuaded to attend the conference by some strong-arm tactics of his friends, who would not let him fall away from the Church. Touched by the spirit of that youth conference and the love of his buddies, that inactive boy joined his four friends in pledging to one another that they would live righteous lives. Today he is serving a mission for the Lord, thankful for those companions who cared so much about him.

It is an interesting phenomenon, my young friends, how, as we serve, our capacity to serve grows and our opportunities for service expand. And we learn the great secret to a happy, rewarding life—that happiness, real happiness, doesn't come in acquiring wealth or gaining notoriety or position. True, lasting happiness comes in service.

My missionary had learned something about the magnificent power of the holy priesthood, which lifted him beyond his own natural

capacity. That knowledge had come as he exercised it in the service of others, blessing them as the Lord's representative.

Power of priesthood

You Aaronic Priesthood holders have that holy power as you prepare for the great spiritual gifts that come with the oath and covenant of the Melchizedek Priesthood, for you have been given the right to the ministering of angels (see D&C 84:33-39). The Lord has promised you: "I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up" (see D&C 84:88)—even on the football field, in the classrooms, in your studies, in your work, at play—in all you do.

While visiting a sacrament meeting on Okinawa, I was so impressed with the manner in which the Aaronic Priesthood prepared and passed the sacrament that, when my turn came to speak, I invited two of the deacons to join me at the pulpit. Of one I asked, "What are your goals in life?" His prompt reply: "To become like my Savior!" Of the other I asked, "What does it mean to you to know that you hold the Aaronic Priesthood?" He drew himself to his full height and looked out over that pulpit, and proudly said, "It is the greatest honor in my life!"

Are you honoring that sacred calling and responding in that sacred service as did my Japanese brethren? One deacon was asked what he did. He replied, "I do what I am supposed to do."

My beloved young brethren, God has singled you out from among all his sons to assist him in this great latter-day work. He trusts you and he has confidence in your meeting the mighty challenge to truly represent him. He is schooling you for your important missions and he expects

you to recognize that you are different from other boys and young men—not better, but different—because you have been blessed with the gospel of Jesus Christ and the priesthood of God. Because he has given you so much, he expects you to live beyond your friends and associates who do not have the light of the gospel—he expects you to be in the world but not of the world. He promises you the strength to resist temptation and Satan's power if you will cling to the iron rod of the gospel and honor your sacred calling.

What is it that deters us from being that faithful priesthood holder God desires?

Avoid "monkey traps"

The trouble with some of us is we get caught in monkey traps. In Africa, the natives have a unique, effective way to capture monkeys. They lop the top off a coconut, remove the meat, and leave a hole in the top of the coconut large enough for the monkey to put his paw in. Then they anchor the coconut to the ground with some peanuts in it. When the natives leave, the monkeys, smelling those delicious peanuts, approach the coconuts, see the peanuts in them, put their paws in to grasp the nuts, and attempt to remove the nuts—but find that the hole is too small for their doubled-up fists. The natives return with gunny sacks and pick up the monkeys—clawing, biting, screaming—but they won't drop the peanuts to save their lives.

Do you know anyone who is caught in a monkey trap, where the things that matter the most are at the mercy of those things that matter the least?

I'd like you to ponder that, my young brethren; then make certain you are not caught in like fashion by the siren songs of our society, by the mocking, the daring of so-called

friends, or those insidious evils Satan will place in your path in attractive packages which turn out to be empty and hollow. Develop the courage to stand for what you believe, to be true to the faith.

A spiritual young black joined the Church in West Virginia recently. Excited about the newfound truth that had come into his life, he sought eagerly to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with his fellow high-school students. Their response was that the gospel was too strict. How proud we can be of his reply to them: "What's strict about following the true Church of Christ?"

Happiness in keeping commandments

In my lifetime, my young friends, I have discovered that happiness comes in keeping the commandments of God. Alma learned the hard way that "wickedness never was happiness" (Alma 41:10). Believe his words. Lean on the experience and the faith of men and women you trust as you chart your course in life. If you will diligently search for truth and live those beautiful principles, your life will be full, rich, rewarding—and exciting. Our Father in Heaven needs strong men to build his kingdom, and as I look at you, I know you are the best he's got.

We sing, "Hope of Israel, Zion's army, Children of the promised day" (*Hymns*, no. 64). Did you realize that song was written about you? President Kimball has reminded us of that. He said, "We are rearing a royal generation . . . who have special things to do" (ENSIGN, May 1976, p. 45).

Those special things you have to do include being rulers of the nations, lawmakers, business and professional men, teachers, tradesmen, tillers of the soil, and so on. But

even more, the special things you have to do involve the establishment of the kingdom of Zion and the building of it. That, my young brethren, requires much more than the casual approach many of us take to preparation for life. It requires the establishment of goals—far-reaching goals that stretch into eternity, goals that require courage and determination to achieve.

How many of you have thought of what you're going to be doing five years, ten years, or twenty-five years from now? And what preparation are you making to make certain that you are in control and not victimized by life? Nothing stands in the way of a boy who knows where he is going.

If I were in your shoes I would set some important goals for myself right now.

Serve a mission

The first would be, "I am going on a mission!"

We sit here at the feet of President Kimball who has stated that every young man should serve a mission. Do you sustain him as a prophet? If you do, your only response should be, "When? I'll be prepared." That mission experience will be one of the most important events in your entire life, just as it was for my missionary who wasn't going to amount to a hill of beans.

Temple marriage

Second: "I am going to be married in the house of the Lord!"

If you would only realize how vitally important that is to your eternal goals, you wouldn't consider being married anyplace else; and that would affect who you date and how you date and would influence the entire fabric of your moral and spiritual life.

Remain active

Third: "I am always going to be active in God's Church!"

That will provide an anchor for you like nothing else on earth, for it will give you the opportunity to discover for yourself the real meaning of happiness. It will assure you that, no matter where you go, you belong—for you have brothers and sisters who love you and sustain you. You will know something of the brotherhood of the gospel of Jesus Christ: you will become acquainted with him as your Savior; and you will keep your testimony burning brightly.

Consider what such goals will do for you. When temptations come, as they surely will, you are going to be prepared. You will have made the choice in advance: "I am going on a mission!" "I am going to be married in the temple!" "I am always going to be active in God's Church!" "Therefore, I will not partake!" When you make those basic decisions in advance, think how many other decisions are already made: living the Word of Wisdom, keeping morally clean, attending your meetings, paying tithing, studying the gospel, and so forth. You will not compromise on any important principle. You will be in control of your life, and you will enjoy the peace and serenity that come with keeping the commandments of God.

Unique, important roles

How I pray that our Father in Heaven will bless you choice young men to understand that you are sons

of God with unique, important roles to play in life and heavy responsibilities to your fellowmen; that he will bless you with wisdom, courage, patience, understanding, love for your brothers and sisters, and deep faith in the Lord and his gospel; and that he will keep you clean and wholesome and strong in the face of temptations and evil.

And may you realize that this is your world, a beautiful world with unlimited opportunities to grow, to learn, and to serve. Will you make it a better world through the preparations you make now and the noble service you render throughout your life as a token of the love you have for your Father in Heaven and his Son, bearing witness of the truth of the gospel through your powerful example and the precepts you teach your fellowmen. "Hope of Israel, rise in might," and be that army that God can use to further his great purpose, I pray, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, amen.

President Marion G. Romney

Elder Robert L. Backman, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Praise to the Man."

The hymn "Praise to the Man" was sung by the choir and congregation.

President Romney speaks without announcement.

President Marion G. Romney

My beloved brethren, the schedule of this conference calls for me to make some remarks at this time. I

have in mind saying a few words about "the oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood" (D&C

84:39), since we're all priesthood bearers here in this great assemblage. As we have been celebrating this, the sesquicentennial anniversary of the organization of the Church, I have recalled that ten months prior to that organization the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery had received from Peter, James, and John the Melchizedek Priesthood.

Covenants

Traditionally, God's people have always been known as a covenant people. The gospel itself is the new and everlasting covenant. The posterity of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob constitute what is known as the covenant race. We come into the Church by covenant, which we enter into when we go into the waters of baptism. The new and everlasting covenant of celestial marriage is the gate to exaltation in the celestial kingdom. Men receive the Melchizedek Priesthood by an oath and covenant.

A covenant is an agreement between two or more parties. An oath is a sworn attestation to the inviolability of the promises in the agreement. In the covenant of the priesthood the parties are the Father—that's the Lord—and the receiver of the priesthood. Each party to the covenant undertakes certain obligations. The receiver undertakes to magnify his calling in the priesthood. The Father, by oath and covenant, promises the receiver that if he does so magnify his priesthood he will be sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of his body; that he will become a member of "the church and kingdom, and the elect of God," and receive the "Father's kingdom; therefore," said the Savior, "all that my Father hath shall be given unto him" (D&C 84:33-34, 38).

It is of such—that is, those who receive the priesthood and magnify it—that the following was written:

"They are they into whose hands the Father has given all things—

"They are they who are priests and kings, who have received of his fulness, and of his glory;

"And are priests of the Most High, after the order of . . . the Only Begotten Son.

"Wherefore, as it is written, they are gods, even the sons of God." (D&C 76:55-58.)

These transcendent blessings the Father promises the receiver of the Melchizedek Priesthood by an oath and covenant which he says "he cannot break, neither can it be moved" (D&C 84:40). But these blessings, as has already been indicated, do not come by ordination alone. Ordination to the priesthood is a prerequisite to receiving them, but it does not guarantee them. For a man to actually obtain them he must faithfully discharge the obligation which is placed upon him when he received the priesthood. That is, he must magnify his calling.

Magnify calling

Now let us consider for a moment just what magnifying one's calling in the priesthood means. Speaking to the assembled bearers of the priesthood at the time the oath and covenant was revealed, the Lord said, "*I have given the heavenly hosts and mine angels charge concerning you*" (D&C 84:42; italics added). This has always been an extremely impressive and sacred statement to me—to think that the Lord has given his angels and his heavenly hosts charge concerning those who receive the priesthood.

Then, addressing the elders, he continued:

"And I now give unto you [you bearers of the priesthood] a commandment to beware concerning yourselves, to give diligent heed to the words of eternal life.

"For you shall live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God." (D&C 84:43-44.) It is compliance with this charge which entitles the bearer of the priesthood to the blessings and rewards offered by the Father in "the oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood."

Status of one who breaks covenant

The status of one who receives the priesthood and then breaks the covenant is explained by the Lord in this language:

"Whoso breaketh this covenant after he hath received it, and altogether turneth therefrom, shall not have forgiveness of sins in this world nor in the world to come" (D&C 84:41). With such a penalty prescribed for breaking it, one might be prompted to question the advisability of accepting the obligations of the covenant; that is, he might question it until he reads the verse which follows the statement of the penalty. There he learns that those who do not receive the oath and covenant are not *much*, if any, better off than those who receive it and break it. For in that verse the Lord says: "And wo unto all those who come not unto this priesthood which ye have received" (D&C 84:42).

Such is the sober import of "the oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood" (italics added). You can read it in full just as the Lord gave it in section 84 of the Doctrine and Covenants beginning with verse 33.

It is apparent from this revelation that the only way a man can make the maximum progress towards eternal life, for which mortality is designed, is to obtain and magnify the Melchizedek Priesthood. With "eternal life, . . . the greatest of all the gifts of God" (D&C 14:7) depending upon it, it is of utmost importance that we keep clearly in mind

what the magnifying of our callings in the priesthood requires of us. I am persuaded that it requires at least the following three things:

1. That we obtain a knowledge of the gospel.
2. That we comply in our personal living with the standards of the gospel.
3. That we give dedicated service.

Obtain gospel knowledge

As to the importance of a knowledge of the gospel, the Prophet Joseph Smith said that "it is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance" (D&C 131:6). That he had in mind ignorance of gospel truths is evident from the fact that on another occasion he said:

"A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge, for if he does not get knowledge, he will be brought into captivity by some evil power in the other world, as evil spirits will have more knowledge, and consequently more power than many men who are on the earth. Hence it needs revelation to assist us, and give us knowledge of the things of God." (*History of the Church*, 4:588.)

There is no knowledge other than knowledge of the things of God that will save us. "Ye must grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth," said the Lord to the brethren in the infant days of the Church (D&C 50:40).

In the revelation given to President Brigham Young at Winter Quarters in January 1847, the Lord said:

"Let him that is ignorant learn wisdom by humbling himself and calling upon the Lord his God, that his eyes may be opened that he may see, and his ears opened that he may hear;

"For my Spirit is sent forth into the world to enlighten the humble and contrite, and to the con-

demnation of the ungodly" (D&C 136:32-33).

Fourteen years earlier the Lord had thus counseled the brethren:

"I give unto you a commandment that ye shall continue in prayer and fasting from this time forth.

"And I give unto you a commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom.

"Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you, that you may be instructed more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God, that are expedient for you to understand." (D&C 88:76-78.)

One of the best ways to learn the gospel is to search the scriptures. Our purpose in urging all bearers of the Melchizedek Priesthood to read the Book of Mormon is that they may learn more about the gospel. One cannot sincerely study the Book of Mormon without learning gospel truths, because it contains "the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles and to the Jews also" (D&C 20:9). So impressed was the Prophet Joseph with it that he "told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book" (*History of the Church*, 4:461).

Live the standards

Learning the gospel from books, however, is not enough. It must be lived by one who would magnify his calling in the priesthood. As a matter of fact, getting a knowledge of the gospel and living it are interdependent. They go hand in hand. One cannot fully learn the gospel without living it. A knowledge of the gospel comes by degrees. One learns a little, obeys what he learns, learns a little more, obeys that, and repeats

this cycle in an endless round. Such is the pattern by which one can move on to a full knowledge of the gospel.

John the Beloved says that this was the way Jesus himself attained a fullness. He wrote:

"I, John, saw that he received not of the fullness at the first, but received grace for grace;

"And he . . . continued from grace to grace, until he received a fullness" (D&C 93:12-13). Jesus prescribed the process for us in these words:

"If you keep my commandments you shall receive of his fullness, and be glorified in me as I am in the Father; therefore, I say unto you, you shall receive grace for grace" (D&C 93:20). And in another scripture:

"And no man receiveth a fullness unless he keepeth his commandments.

"He that keepeth his commandments receiveth truth and light, until he is glorified in truth and knoweth all things" (D&C 93:27-28). I can't understand how one can read these words without joy filling his heart.

Jesus further points out that the commandments we are required to keep are given in the scriptures, and adds: "If thou lovest me thou shalt serve me and keep all my commandments" (D&C 42:29). And "unto him that keepeth my commandments I will give the mysteries of my kingdom, and the same shall be in him a well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life" (D&C 63:23).

Many of the commandments concerning our personal conduct are to be found in section 42 of the Doctrine and Covenants, which the Prophet Joseph specifies "as embracing the law of the Church" (D&C 42, headnote). Every priesthood bearer should be familiar with this revelation and with the instructions given in section 59 and section 88, particularly verses 117 to 126. Indeed, a priesthood bearer with

serious intentions of so magnifying his calling as to merit the blessing of the "covenant which belongeth to the priesthood" should be conversant with all the instructions given to guide us in our personal conduct—both those recorded in the scriptures and those being received currently by the living prophets. One can scarcely hope to be fortified "against the wiles of the devil" by putting "on the whole armour of God" (see Eph. 6:11) unless he knows what that armor is.

Render dedicated service

But the commandments do not pertain alone to one's personal conduct. They put on every bearer of the priesthood the stimulating responsibility to render service—service in carrying the restored gospel, with all the blessings of the priesthood, to the peoples of the earth; and service in comforting, strengthening, and perfecting the lives of one another and all the Saints of God.

The nature of this service is spelled out in detail in the revelations and by the living prophets. The burden of it the Lord has laid upon his priesthood. It can be done properly only by men who are magnifying their priesthood—who know the gospel, conform their lives to its stan-

dards, and enthusiastically give dedicated service in the spirit of the divine proclamation that "men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness; for the power is in them" (D&C 58:27-28).

Such men are magnifying their callings, and they shall obtain the rewards promised by the Lord in the "oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood." That each of us may be found in this choice group, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Marion G. Romney

President Spencer W. Kimball, our beloved leader, will be our concluding speaker.

Before President Kimball speaks, we note that the nationwide CBS Radio Tabernacle Choir broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 Sunday morning. Those desiring to attend must be in their seats before 9:15 A.M.

Following President Kimball's address, the choir will close this meeting with "Beautiful Saviour," following which Elder G. Homer Durham, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the benediction.

President Spencer W. Kimball

My dear brethren, it is always a great joy for me to have the privilege of meeting with you in general priesthood meeting. We are gathered here in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City and in more than 2,000 other places around the world. Just think of the mighty and sacred power that is represented by this assemblage of men and boys. I rejoice with you, my brethren, in the manifold blessings which are ours in holding the priesthood of God!

Members urged to vote

Brethren, there is one matter I should like to mention at the very beginning of my remarks. To those of you who are citizens of the United States: I wish to urge you and your family members of voting age to go to the polls in large numbers next month on Tuesday, November 4, and vote for the strongest, finest people who are certain to do the most to safeguard the rights and freedoms of

this nation. We do not endorse any candidates, but we hope you will vote for good men and women of character, integrity, and ability. You are to be the judge. Further, we hope our Church buildings and our Church organizations will not be used to advance the candidacy or policies of any of the candidates.

Minister to needs of members

As we read and study the scriptures, we are made conscious of the fact that the Savior has always been concerned about the welfare of the members of his flock, both individually and collectively. It is about that principle of caring for and ministering to the needs of the Church membership in these troubled days that I desire to speak to you brethren tonight.

Bishops and branch presidents, please be ever alert to the needs of the precious individuals and families who make up the membership of your wards and branches. You are the nurturing shepherds of our people. To the greatest extent possible, let your counselors and others who serve and work under your direction be the managers of programs. If you will pursue this emphasis, you will often be able to detect very early some of those members who have serious difficulties, while their challenges and problems are still small and manageable. Be conscious of the little tensions and problems you may see in families so that you can give the required attention, counsel, and love when it is most needed. An hour with a troubled boy or girl now may save him or her, and is infinitely better than the hundreds of hours spent in their later lives in the reclamation of a boy or girl if they become inactive.

As we have said so many times, delegate those tasks which others can do so that you are free to do those

things which you, and you alone, can do. Home teachers are to help watch over the flock. Even though they don't counsel as bishops and branch presidents do, home teachers can render much appropriate and preventive help under the direction of the quorum leaders and bishoprics.

Improve quality of teaching

Stake presidents, bishops, and branch presidents, please take a particular interest in improving the quality of teaching in the Church. The Savior has told us to feed his sheep (see John 21:15-17). I fear that all too often many of our members come to church, sit through a class or meeting, and they then return home having been largely uninformed. It is especially unfortunate when this happens at a time when they may be entering a period of stress, temptation, or crisis. We all need to be touched and nurtured by the Spirit, and effective teaching is one of the most important ways this can happen. We often do vigorous enlistment work to get members to come to church but then do not adequately watch over what they receive when they do come.

Minorities

Yesterday while speaking to the Regional Representatives, I called attention to the challenge facing all of us as we fellowship and teach the gospel to cultural and minority groups living among us. When special attention of some kind is not provided for these good people, we lose them. In April of 1977, as I was speaking about the Lamanites, I said that we could "no longer merely teach and preach to them, but we must establish the Church among them" (Regional Representatives' seminar, 1 April 1977). This statement applies to all cultures.

Basic unit program

During the past few years, the basic unit program has been developed to assist where there are special language or cultural needs. Its guidebooks, manuals, and reports are much less complicated than those for the full Church program. They are wonderful and are now available in most languages. We have designed smaller, less expensive buildings to meet this need also. Couples can be trained in the basic unit program and can then assist in establishing the Church among all people in all lands. Where the program is being used as outlined, we are meeting with *great* success.

We encourage you priesthood leaders to become familiar with this program and use it to bless people. The Lord said, "For they cannot bear meat now, but milk they must receive" (D&C 19:22).

Be mindful of those who need special attention

One more very important thing, my brethren—especially you stake presidents, bishops, and branch presidents. Be mindful always of the members of your flock who are sad, lonely, bereaved, or bereft. There are always some among us who need our special care and attention. We must never forget or overlook them. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction" (James 1:27).

Do not neglect families

We are rightly known as a chapel-building people. I hope we will become even better known as a family-building people. Do not neglect your own families, brethren. The new consolidated schedule permits you, if you plan well, to hold all the meetings in the consolidated schedule along with the necessary administrative meetings and *still have several hours with your family every Sunday*. Please see to it that this is done, so that you priesthood brethren do not neglect your own families and so that our wonderful stake presidents, bishops, branch and quorum presidents, and others can do likewise.

Love and blessing

I love you, my brethren, my beloved brethren, and I am grateful for your faith, your devotion, and your love for the cause of truth, the cause of the Master. Brethren, I express my affection for you and all your people in the scattered portions of the world. May the Lord bless you, brethren, and know that you are much loved here at Church headquarters. God bless you; peace be with you, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Beautiful Saviour."

Elder G. Homer Durham offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY MORNING MEETING

FOURTH SESSION

The fourth general session of the conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, October 5, 1980. President Spencer W. Kimball presided at and conducted this session.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music for this session with Jerold Ottley directing and Robert Cundick at the organ.

Prior to the beginning of the session, the choir sang the hymn "Lo! The Mighty God Appearing" without announcement.

President Kimball then made the following remarks:

President Spencer W. Kimball

We welcome all who are present this morning in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on Temple Square in this fourth general session of the 150th Semi-annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We also acknowledge those tuned to this conference by radio and television and those who are seated in the overflow congregation in the Salt Palace where Elders A. Theodore Tuttle and John H. Groberg preside.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders and officers

and members of the Church from many lands who have assembled to worship and to counsel together in the conference.

The Tabernacle Choir under the direction of Jerold Ottley with Robert Cundick at the organ is providing the music for this session. The Choir opened these services by singing "Lo! The Mighty God Appearing," and will now sing "Sweet Hour of Prayer," following which Elder Franklin D. Richards, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "Sweet Hour of Prayer."

Elder Franklin D. Richards offered the invocation.

The choir rendered the hymn "The Morning Breaks; the Shadows Flee" without announcement.

President Kimball

The Tabernacle Choir has sung "The Morning Breaks; the Shadows Flee."

It will now be our privilege to hear from President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency of the Church.

President Marion G. Romney

"The elders . . . of this church" said the Lord, "shall teach the principles of my gospel, which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon" (D&C 41:12). Pursuant to this commandment, I shall make a few remarks concerning repentance, upon which much emphasis is placed in both the Bible and the Book of Mormon.

True repentance

True repentance, followed by baptism and the *laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost*, brings forgiveness. Such repentance is impossible without faith in the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This great truth is clearly and beautifully taught in the Book of

Mormon. Alma, crying unto his people pursuant to the directions of an angel, said:

"Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is nigh at hand;

"And not many days hence the Son of God. . . .

"... cometh to redeem those who will be baptized unto repentance, through faith on his name." (Al. 9:25-27.)

Alma did not say that Jesus would redeem everybody. The promise was restricted to those who, because of their faith in Christ, would repent and be baptized.

Amulek, Alma's missionary companion, testified to the same limitation. "I . . . know," said he, "that Christ shall come among . . . men, to take upon him the transgressions of his people, and that he shall atone for the sins of the world; for the Lord God hath spoken it.

"And . . . he shall bring salvation to all those who shall believe on his name; . . . the intent of [this] . . . sacrifice [being] to bring about the bowels of mercy, which overpowereth justice, and bringeth about *means unto men* that they may have faith unto repentance." (Al. 34:8, 15; italics added.)

In this way mercy satisfies "the demands of justice, and encircles them [that is, those who have faith unto repentance] in the arms of safety, while he that exercises no faith unto repentance is exposed to the whole law of the demands of justice; therefore *only unto him that has faith unto repentance* is brought about the great and eternal plan of redemption" (Al. 34:16; italics added).

Jesus, speaking to his Nephite disciples, said:

"No unclean thing can enter into his [speaking of his Father's] kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the

repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end.

"Now this is the commandment: Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me." (3 Ne. 27:19-20.)

It is this repentance, based upon faith in Jesus and "hope through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection, to be raised unto life eternal" of which I speak today (see Moro. 7:41). This is the repentance which would lead men to a solution of all their problems, individual and collective. This is the repentance to which Jesus Christ, our Lord, calls us.

Commanded to repent

To one of his modern disciples he said:

"I command you to repent—repent, lest I smite you by the rod of my mouth, and by my wrath, and by my anger, and your sufferings be sore—how sore you know not, how exquisite you know not, yea, how hard to bear you know not.

"For behold, [I'm still quoting the Redeemer] I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

"But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I;

"Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—"

He continues, "Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men." (D&C 19:15-19.)

That is, Jesus endured the suffering required to satisfy the demands of justice, thereby making it possible for men, through faith and repentance, to be cleansed from their sins.

"Wherefore," he continued, "I command you again to repent, lest I humble you with my almighty power;

and that you confess your sins, lest you suffer these punishments of which I have spoken" (D&C 19:20).

Foremost among men's sins are the refusal to accept Jesus Christ for what he is and the rejection of his gospel as the true way of life.

"In nothing doth man offend God," said the Lord, "or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all things, and obey not his commandments" (D&C 59:21).

"They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own God, whose image is in the likeness of the world, and whose substance is that of an idol, which waxeth old and shall perish in Babylon, even Babylon the great, which shall fall" (D&C 1:16).

As to the nature of repentance, the Lord has said, "By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them" (D&C 58:43).

Forsake and confess

There doesn't seem to be much uncertainty about the meaning of *forsake*. However, the requirement to *confess* is not so universally understood. As a matter of fact, there is considerable confusion in the world about the confessing of sins, and a lot of false doctrine. By way of an assist in clearing up the confusion, I repeat some comments heretofore made on this subject.

We are to confess all our sins to the Lord. For transgressions which are wholly personal, affecting none but ourselves and the Lord, confession to ourselves and him would seem to be sufficient.

As a matter of fact, no good can come from confessing to anyone else. President Brigham Young once said, "Keep your follies that do not concern others to yourselves, and keep your private wickedness as still

as possible; hide it from the eyes of the public gaze as far as you can" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1941, p. 158).

For misconduct which affects another, confession should also be made to the offended one and his forgiveness sought.

Finally, where one's transgressions are of such a nature as would, unrepented of, put in jeopardy his right to membership or fellowship in the Church of Christ, full and effective confession requires confession by the repentant sinner to his bishop or other proper presiding Church officer—not that the Church officer could forgive him the sin (for this power rests in the Lord himself and those only to whom he specifically delegates the power), but rather that the Church, acting through its duly appointed officers (the power is not in the officer but in the Church), might with full knowledge of the facts take such action with respect to Church discipline as the circumstances require and merit.

One having forsaken his sins and, by proper confession, cleared his conduct with the Lord, with the people he has offended, and with the Church of Jesus Christ, where necessary, may with full confidence seek the Lord's forgiveness and go forth in newness of life, relying upon the merits of Christ.

The Lord has said, "He who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more" (D&C 58:42).

Examples of forgiveness

As examples of how people feel who—through faith in Jesus and repentance—obtain forgiveness, I cite the following examples from the Book of Mormon.

First, from Enos, who wrote:

"I will tell you of the wrestle which I had before God, before I

received a remission of my sins.

"Behold, I went to hunt beasts in the forests; and the words which I had often heard my father speak concerning eternal life, and the joy of the saints, sunk deep into my heart.

"And my soul hungered; and I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul; and all the day long did I cry unto him; yea, and when the night came I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens.

"And there came a voice unto me, saying: Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed.

"And I, Enos, knew that God could not lie; wherefore, my guilt was swept away.

"And I said: Lord, how is it done?

"And he said unto me: Because of thy faith in Christ, whom thou hast never before heard nor seen. And many years pass away before he shall manifest himself in the flesh; wherefore, go to, thy faith hath made thee whole.

"Now, it came to pass that when I had heard these words," says Enos, "I began to feel a desire for the welfare of my brethren, the Nephites; wherefore, I did pour out my whole soul unto God for them." (Enos 2-9.)

Love and concern for the welfare of one's fellows always fills the heart of the redeemed, and peace comes into his heart, as the following incident illustrates.

At the conclusion of King Benjamin's powerful farewell address, "he cast his eyes round about on the multitude, and behold they had fallen to the earth, for the fear of the Lord had come upon them.

"And they had viewed themselves in their own carnal state, even less than the dust of the earth. And they all cried aloud with one voice, saying: O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may

receive forgiveness of our sins, and our hearts may be purified; for we believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who created heaven and earth, and all things; who shall come down among the children of men.

"And it came to pass that after they had spoken these words the Spirit of the Lord came upon them, and they were filled with joy, having received a remission of their sins, and having peace of conscience, because of the exceeding faith which they had in Jesus Christ who should come, according to the words which king Benjamin had spoken unto them." (Mosiah 4:1-3.)

This joy and peace of conscience which comes to one who has received a remission of his sins is graphically portrayed in the account Alma gives to his son, Helaman, of his conversion.

Alma said: "I went about with the sons of Mosiah, seeking to destroy the church of God; but behold, God sent his holy angel to stop [me on] the way.

"And behold, he spake unto [me], as [if] it were the voice of thunder, and the whole earth did tremble beneath [my] feet; and [I] fell to the earth, for the fear of the Lord came upon [me].

"But behold, the voice said unto me: Arise. And I arose and stood up, and beheld the angel.

"And he said unto me: If thou wilt of thyself be destroyed, seek no more to destroy the church of God."

And Alma says, "And it came to pass that I fell to the earth; and it was for the space of three days and three nights that I could not open my mouth, neither had I the use of my limbs.

"And the angel spake more things unto me, which were heard by my brethren, but I did not hear them; for when I heard the words—If thou wilt be destroyed of thyself, seek no more to destroy the church of God—I was struck with such great

fear and amazement lest perhaps I should be destroyed, that I fell to the earth and I did hear no more.

"But I was racked with eternal torment, for my soul was harrowed up to the greatest degree and racked with all my sins.

"Yea, I did remember all my sins and iniquities, for which I was tormented with the pains of hell; yea, I saw that I had rebelled against my God, and that I had not kept his holy commandments.

"Yea, and I had murdered many of his children, or rather led them away unto destruction; yea, and in fine so great had been my iniquities, that the very thought of coming into the presence of my God did rack my soul with inexpressible horror.

"Oh, thought I, that I could be banished and become extinct both soul and body, that I might not be brought to stand in the presence of my God, to be judged of my deeds.

"And now, for three days and for three nights was I racked, even with the pains of a damned soul.

"And it came to pass that as I was thus racked with torment, while I was harrowed up by the memory of my many sins, behold, I remembered also to have heard my father prophesy unto the people concerning the coming of one Jesus Christ, a Son of God, to atone for the sins of the world.

"Now, as my mind caught hold upon this thought, I cried within my heart: O Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy on me, who am in the gall of bitterness, and am encircled about by the everlasting chains of death.

"And now, behold, when I thought this, I could remember my pains no more; yea, I was harrowed up by the memory of my sins no more.

"And oh, what joy, and what marvelous light I did behold; yea, my soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain!

"Yea, I say unto you, my son, that there could be nothing so exquisite and so bitter as were my pains. Yea, and again I say unto you, my son, that on the other hand, there can be nothing so exquisite and sweet as was my joy." (Al. 36:6-21.)

To these witnesses I add my testimony that repentance brings to the soul who has faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and his gospel forgiveness, with the attendant blessings of "peace" and "rest."

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden [pleaded Jesus], and I will give you rest.

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

"For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matt. 11:28-30.)

That we may all, through repentance and by enduring to the end, obtain that rest, I humbly plead and pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

We have just heard from President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency of the Church. The Choir will continue now by singing "Shall the Youth of Zion Falter?" following which Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will speak to us.

The Tabernacle Choir rendered
"Shall the Youth of Zion Falter?"

Elder Bruce R. McConkie

We are the servants of the Lord, and he has sent us to deliver a message to the world.

The Lord has a message for people today, and he has revealed it to us. We are commanded to go forth, in his name and by his power, and tell all men everywhere what lies ahead and what the Lord wants them to do about it.

Peace taken from earth

Peace has been taken from the earth. This is a day of wars and rumors of wars (see D&C 45:26). Plagues and pestilence and desolation shall soon sweep the earth.

We live in a day of distress and perplexity; nations are ill at ease, and all things are in commotion. Men's hearts are failing them for fear, and the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the door (see D&C 45:26; 110:16).

We live in a day of evil and wickedness. The generality of men are carnal, sensual, and devilish. They have forgotten God and are reveling in the lusts of the flesh. Crime, immorality, abortions, and homosexual abominations are fast becoming the norm of life among the wicked and ungodly. The world will soon be as corrupt as it was in the days of Noah.

If any of us are to escape the perils that lie ahead, if any of us are to abide the day of the Lord's return, if any of us are to gain peace in this life and be inheritors of eternal life in the world to come, we must receive the message sent from on high and conform to the counsel it contains.

Message of the Restoration

That message—our message to the world—is the message of the Restoration. It is the announcement

that the heavens have been opened, that the voice of God is heard again. It is the proclamation of peace through obedience to the laws and ordinances of the holy gospel. It is the glad tidings that once again there are legal administrators who hold the keys of the kingdom and have power to bind on earth and seal in heaven (see D&C 27:13).

The only way for men to escape the abomination of desolation to be poured out upon the wicked in the last days is for them to repent and live the gospel (see D&C 84:117). The gospel is the message of peace and salvation for all men. And we have been commanded to proclaim its saving truths to all men everywhere.

And we do now proclaim that the great God, who sits enthroned in yonder heavens, has restored in this our day the fulness of his everlasting gospel. He has given anew to men on earth every doctrine, truth, and principle; every right, power, and key; all that is needed to save and exalt his children in the highest heaven.

Once again men have received the same glad tidings which enlightened the minds and enlivened the souls of faithful men of old. The Lord Jehovah—by his own voice, and by the ministering of angels sent from his presence, and by the gift of the Holy Ghost—has given anew that plan and system which saved Adam and Enoch and Abraham and Moses and all of the ancient Saints.

Our divine commission—the commandment we have received from him whose servants we are—directs us to teach the doctrines of salvation and to testify of their eternal verity. And so now in words of soberness we teach and testify of those wondrous truths that have come to us.

Nature of God

True religion is found only where men worship the true and living God. False religion always results from the worship of false gods. Eternal life itself, which is the greatest of all the gifts of God, is available to those and those only who know God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent (see D&C 6:13; John 17:3).

It is all the rage in this modern world to worship false gods of every sort and kind. There are those who bow before idols of wood and stone, and others who lisp their petitions to icons and images. There are those who worship cows and crocodiles, and others who acclaim Adam or Allah or Buddha as their supreme being.

There are those who apply the names of Deity to some spirit essence that is immaterial, uncreated, and unknowable and that fills the immensity of space and is everywhere and nowhere in particular present.

And there are even those who champion the almost unbelievable theory that God is an eternal student enrolled in the University of the Universe, where he is busily engaged in learning new truths and amassing new and strange knowledge that he never knew before.

How belittling it is—it borders on blasphemy—to demean the Lord God Omnipotent by saying he is an idol, or an image, or an animal, or a spirit essence, or that he is ever learning but never able to come to a knowledge of all truth (see 2 Tim. 3:7).

It is the first principle of revealed religion to know the nature and kind of being that God is. As for us, “we know [and testify] that there is a God in heaven, who is infinite and eternal, from everlasting to everlasting the same unchangeable God, the framer of heaven and earth, and all things which are in them” (D&C 20:17).

This great God, the Lord Al-

mighty, is a personage of tabernacle. He “has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s” (D&C 130:22). He is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. He has all power, knows all things, and, by the power of his Spirit, is in and through all things.

We know and testify “that he created man, male and female, after his own image and in his own likeness, created he them” (see D&C 20:18).

All men are the spirit children of the Eternal Father. We are the offspring of celestial parents. We lived and dwelt in the courts of glory before the foundations of this world were laid.

Our Eternal Father ordained and established those laws—called the gospel of God—which would enable us to advance and progress and become like him.

We know and testify that when he placed men on earth, he “gave unto them commandments that they should love and serve him, the only living and true God, and that he should be the only being whom they should worship” (D&C 20:19).

We know and testify that mighty Michael foremost fell that mortal man might be, and that “the Almighty God gave his Only Begotten Son” (D&C 20:21) to ransom men from the temporal and spiritual death brought into the world by this fall of Adam.

Salvation in Christ

We know and testify that Christ “was crucified, died, and rose again the third day”; that he “ascended into heaven, to sit down on the right hand of the Father, to reign with almighty power according to the will of the Father.

“That as many as would believe and be baptized in his holy name, and endure in faith to the end, should be saved” (D&C 20:23-25).

We know and testify that salvation is in Christ; that it comes because of his goodness and grace; and that he is our advocate with the Father.

We bear record that he is the only mediator between man and God; that through his atoning sacrifice fallen man may be reconciled with God; and that he "hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1:10).

We worship the Father, in the name of the Son, by the power of the Holy Ghost, and we invite all men everywhere to come and join with us.

There is no salvation in worshipping false gods; there is no salvation in false religion; there is no salvation in error in any form.

Man alone cannot save himself. No man can call forth his own crumbling dust from the grave and cause it to live again in immortal glory. No man can create a celestial heaven whose inhabitants shall dwell in eternal splendor forever.

All the idols and icons and images combined, since the world began until the end of time, will never have power to cleanse and perfect a single human soul.

Neither Adam, nor Allah, nor Buddha, nor any person real or imaginary will ever bring salvation to fallen man.

An unknown, uncreated, immaterial spirit nothingness never has and never will endow men with the gifts of the Spirit or assure them of an eternal celestial home.

And certainly a student god, with finite powers, who is just experimenting in the eternal laboratories, is not a being in whom I, at least, would feel inclined to repose an infinite trust.

True knowledge through revelation

The truth about God, the truth

about religion, the truth about salvation—these things can only be known by revelation.

Men in our time will never find peace, or safety, or salvation in the world. Wars and plagues and desolation shall continue to sweep the earth as with a flood.

Crime and evil will increase; iniquity will abound; the love of men toward each other shall wax cold (see Matt. 24:12). We need not look for a day when men of themselves shall usher in an age of righteousness.

But those who turn to Christ, who believe his gospel, and join his church, and live his laws, and who thereby worship the Father in his holy name—such shall find peace and safety and salvation. In the world men shall have tribulation; in Christ they shall find peace (see John 16:33).

And so we say: We are the servants of the Lord. He has revealed himself to us by the power of the Holy Ghost. We know whom we worship. It is our glorious privilege to speak of him and his ways, and we speak as those having authority and not as do the scribes.

We know by the revelations of the Holy Ghost to our souls that God is our Father, that Jesus Christ is Lord of all, and that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the kingdom of God on earth and has been set as a light upon a hill to proclaim the truth about God to a fallen world.

When we speak by the power of the Holy Ghost, our words are scripture and come as the voice and mind and will of him who sent us.

Testimony

Our testimony is that the Almighty God is our Eternal Father who lives in realms celestial; that the Lord Jesus Christ is his Son in the true and literal sense of the word; that the Holy Messiah came into the

world to die upon the cross for the sins of the world; and that the Holy Ghost—a personage of spirit, a spirit man—is their minister and witness, whose revelations and gifts and endowments are available to the faithful in every nation and among all people.

And we now say, as we have been commanded to do, “Fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come;

“And worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters” (D&C 133:38-39).

Turn to the Lord

We say: Come worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. Come worship the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation. Come unto Christ and believe and obey his law, for no man cometh unto the Father but by him or by his word. Come and rejoice in the revelations of the Lord to Joseph Smith and the prophets of latter days, for they are the revealers of Christ and the witnesses of God in these last days.

Turn ye to the Lord our God. Repent of all your sins. Forsake false doctrines; flee from false gods; seek the truth.

Do not be deceived by the doctrines of men or of devils. Cleave unto the truth and be believing as was the case with those of old for

whom the heavens were rent and who made their callings and election sure in the days of their mortal probation (see 2 Pet. 1:10).

Oh, God our Father, wilt thou look upon thy children everywhere in love and mercy, grant them repentance, and lead them in thy holy way so they may gain peace in this life and eternal life in the world to come. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

Following Elder McConkie's talk, the Choir sang “Go Ye into Every Nation,” without announcement.

President Spencer W. Kimball

We have just listened to Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, followed by the Choir singing “Go Ye into Every Nation.”

The choir and congregation will now join in singing “Now Let Us Rejoice,” following which Elder J. Thomas Fyans, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, shall speak to us.

The choir and congregation sang the hymn “Now Let Us Rejoice.”

Elder J. Thomas Fyans

Mount St. Helens

I, like you, heard of the eruptions of Mount St. Helens. We read in newspapers and magazines, heard on radio, and saw on television descriptions of this great phenomenon. All of my perception of what had gone on was secondhand.

Three weeks ago, however, I was in Longview, Washington, which figuratively speaking is at the foot of Mount St. Helens. For fifty miles the river runs from this volcano. I saw huge dredges and draglines pulling material from the river channel and depositing it, covering acres of ground, piling it higher than

the average man is tall. I saw. I partially understood the power unleashed by that great manifestation of discomfort of Mount St. Helens. It has been estimated that 1½ cubic miles of material spewed forth from the volcano.

I should like to paint another picture of power that transcends Mount St. Helens and Vesuvius and all the earthquakes and tornados and other like disruptions of our physical tranquillity.

May I pose to our nonmember friends a question or two first?

Perhaps you have wondered what your Mormon friend believes.

May we now go to the mountain of Mormonism and see and perhaps understand why your friend believes as he does. Because the power that comes from this mountain will affect your life—yes, your eternal life.

May we earnestly pray together that by your seeing and feeling hopefully there will come understanding.

There are seven events of great eternal consequence that your Mormon friend would like to share with you.

The First Vision

Event number one: This magnificent manifestation of power began on a beautiful spring morning in the year 1820. An earnest seeker after truth went to a grove of trees made sacred by this event and knelt in humble supplication to his Heavenly Father, the Creator of mountains and valleys and oceans and all that we see by day and the celestial lights of the stars and planets that we observe by night.

The heavens were opened and this great and noble spirit, Joseph Smith, entered into direct communication with heavenly beings. Let your eyes see and your hearts feel, and let there be at least partial under-

standing as we listen to the word picture of this event.

"I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

"... When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*" (JS—H, 1:16-17.)

All uncertainty fled away. Joseph Smith had personal knowledge of the reality of these divine beings. The Father and the Son, the creators of the universe, appeared to Joseph Smith.

Moroni's visit

Event number two: Three years have passed since this first great vision. It is now 1823. Another light appeared—and an angel instructed the boy prophet. May we again listen in.

"While I was thus in the act of calling upon God, I discovered a light appearing in my room, which continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noonday, when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside, standing in the air, for his feet did not touch the floor.

"He called me by name, and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me, and that his name was Moroni; that God had a work for me to do. . . .

"He said there was a book deposited, written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent, and the source from whence they sprang. He also said that the fulness of the everlasting Gospel was contained in it, as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants." (JS—H, 1:30, 33-34.)

Book of Mormon

Event number three: Four more years pass. "At length the time arrived for obtaining the plates. . . . On the twenty-second day of September, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-seven, . . . the same heavenly messenger delivered them up to me with this charge: that I should be responsible for them." (JS—H, 1:59.)

Golden plates were now delivered containing a precious message to be whispered as though from the dust through the divine instrumentation of the powers of translation.

Let's catch the spirit of the translation process as described by Oliver Cowdery: "These were days never to be forgotten—to sit under the sound of a voice dictated by the inspiration of heaven, awakened the utmost gratitude of this bosom! Day after day I continued, uninterrupted to write from his mouth, as he translated . . . the history or record called 'The Book of Mormon' . . ." (JS—H, p. 57.)

Restoration of the priesthood

Event number four: Two additional years pass. And now comes another visitation, bringing power from on high. The Aaronic Priesthood, which holds special keys, is restored to the earth. It's described in these words.

"We still continued the work of translation, when, in the ensuing month (May, 1829), we on a certain day went into the woods to pray and inquire of the Lord respecting baptism for the remission of sins, that we found mentioned in the translation of the plates. While we were thus employed, praying and calling upon the Lord, a messenger from heaven descended in a cloud of light, and having laid his hands upon us, he ordained us, saying:

"Upon you my fellow servants,

in the name of Messiah, I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, . . .

"The messenger who visited us on this occasion and conferred this Priesthood upon us, said that his name was John, the same that is called John the Baptist in the New Testament, and that he acted under the direction of Peter, James and John, who held the keys of the Priesthood of Melchizedek, which Priesthood, he said, would in due time be conferred on us." (JS—H 1:68-69, 72.)

Peter, James, and John came and ordained them to the Melchizedek Priesthood, which holds the power to act in the name of Deity.

An acquaintance of Joseph Smith made this interesting observation: "If you were to ask Joseph what sort of a looking man Adam was, he would tell you at once; he would tell you his size and appearance and all about him. You might have asked him what sort of men Peter, James and John were, and he could have told you." (John Taylor, in *Journal of Discourses*, 18:326.)

You see, my non-Mormon friends, he knew them because he had a personal relationship with them.

Visit of the Savior

Event number five: "It's the year 1836. Now comes a personal manifestation of the Savior to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, which they describe in these beautiful words:

"The veil was taken from our minds, and the eyes of our understanding were opened.

"We saw the Lord standing upon the breastwork of the pulpit, before us; and under his feet was a paved work of pure gold, in color like amber.

"His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying:

"I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father." (D&C 110:1-4.)

Let me share with you an eyewitness account of some of these events and I quote:

"I shall not attempt to paint to you the feelings of this heart, nor the majestic beauty and glory which surrounded us on this occasion; but you will believe me when I say, that earth, nor men, with the eloquence of time, cannot begin to clothe language in as interesting and sublime a manner as this holy personage. No; nor has this earth power to give the joy, to bestow the peace, or comprehend the wisdom which was contained in each sentence as they were delivered by the power of the Holy Spirit! . . . The assurance that we were in the presence of an angel, the certainty that we heard the voice of Jesus, and the truth unsullied as it flowed from a pure personage, dictated by the will of God, is to me past description." (JS—H, p. 58.)

Gathering of Israel

Event number six: Biblical prophets over the ages have foretold the gathering of Israel. Let's examine a visitation of Moses to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and his commitment of the keys of gathering.

"The heavens were again opened unto us; and Moses appeared before us, and committed unto us the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north" (D&C 110:11).

Power of Elijah

Event number seven: Now came

Elijah in direct fulfillment of Malachi's prediction. Let's listen to this heaven-sent truth.

"Another great and glorious vision burst upon us; for Elijah the prophet, was taken to heaven without tasting death, stood before us, and said:

"Behold, the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi—testifying that he [Elijah] should be sent, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come—

"To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers." (D&C 110:13-15.)

The power of Elijah is the sealing power of the priesthood by which things bound or loosed on earth are bound or loosed in heaven. Thus, the keys of this power are once again operative on the earth and are used in performing all the ordinances of the gospel for the living and the dead.

Great power has been manifest from mountains. Physical power came from Mount St. Helens, but that may soon be subdued and rest peacefully for an indeterminate number of years. The spiritual power that came from Sinai in olden times and the restorative powers of all ages that have come down from heaven in our day will not be subdued, but will affect us through all the eternities.

The Lord has said, "There is no eye that shall not see, neither ear that shall not hear" (D&C 1:2), "whether it be by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same" (D&C 1:38).

I raise my voice in solemn testimony that these earth-and-heaven encompassing events actually occurred, that the Savior literally lives, and that his power is vested in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. May the Lord bless you, my friends, that you will see and hear and understand. Why not begin that trek today? I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

We have just listened to Elder J. Thomas Fyans, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the

Seventy.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

The other day I enjoyed listening to two of my friends discuss their favorite football team. They were in agreement that possibly the greatest limiting factor in the team's achieving high national ranking was its game schedule. They felt the team, for its own good, should play against stronger competition.

Adversity

In football or in life, the adversaries, the ones with whom we compete, the ones we oppose or resist—our opponents, our foes, our enemies, or our problems—are often the determining factors in our ultimate strength and achievement.

Adversity will surface in some form in every life. How we prepare for it, how we meet it, makes the difference. We can be broken by adversity, or we can become stronger. The final result is up to the individual. Henry Fielding said: "Adversity is the trial of principle. Without it, a man hardly knows whether he is honest or not." In *The New Dictionary of Thoughts*, ed. Ralph Emerson Browns, n.p.: Standard Book Co., 1957, p. 6.)

Realizing that adversity can include suffering, destitution, affliction, calamity, or disaster, how can we best use it as an opportunity for personal growth and development? For one answer, let me share with you an incident in the life of a special friend, which he tells in his own words at my request. I find his experience a powerful sermon.

"It was the third Saturday in January a few years ago. I was ex-

cited to attend a seminar that morning. It was an agricultural seminar at the Brigham Young University, where I had been attending school. I had been home from my Honolulu Hawaii Mission six months and was going through all the adjustments of a returned missionary. The challenge of family, girls, school, and the fact that there were twenty-five thousand other students who were bright and aggressive—some with plenty of money; others, like myself, who were pinching every nickel—didn't make things easier.

"I landed a job running a hydraulic press earlier that week in a machine shop. We made seals for hydraulic equipment. Following the seminar that morning, I went to work. Kimball, my roommate and former missionary companion who had gone to work earlier that morning, instructed me in how to make a new seal. After approximately twenty minutes, one of the smallest seals stuck on the face of the plate. I struggled to get it off with my left hand. As I turned back to give it my full attention and use my right hand, the machine closed on my left hand, causing a horrible noise as it crushed my hand just below the wrist. After what seemed an eternity, the huge press finally opened. My first thought when looking at my hand was 'What a mess!' Then that inner voice which I had come to know, love, and appreciate, whispered, 'Jerry, you won't have your hand.'

"Four hours of surgery followed. The first thing I remember hearing was the surgeon's voice in the recovery room.

"'Jerry,' he said, 'Can you hear me?'"

"'Yes,' I said.

"'We had to take your hand off.'"

"The following four days were filled with tears, aches, friends, cards, letters, and family. Concerned people made it so much easier for me, especially Kimball. He let my parents and others close to me know and helped in every way he could. Never did I have to ask for one thing. It was already done. By his example and support, he gave me courage to face this new challenge.

"The days in the hospital were filled with painful, sleepless hours and nights. Those nights gave me an opportunity to think about the Savior and Joseph Smith as I had never done before. I reviewed the Prophet Joseph's life from everything I had learned. He faced physical, emotional, and spiritual trial upon trial. How I marveled at his well-won victories. At this difficult time I promised the Lord I would try to accept all of my challenges as the Prophet Joseph Smith had accepted his.

"Of course, during the first night there were thoughts of 'Why me? Was it something in my past? What have I done to deserve this?' Then I thought, 'No more rodeo, football, or skiing,' and I wondered what type of a woman would want a one-handed husband. I hadn't developed a good self-image or a great deal of self-esteem, so these thoughts magnified my concerns.

"Mom came to school and drove me home for the weekend. One thing she said that made me again appreciate her greatness was, 'Jerry, if I could only give you my left hand and make it work, I would.'

"Sunday was fast Sunday. As I stood favoring my bandaged, shortened arm, I thanked everyone for their thoughts, prayers, and cards. I realized as never before that good friends and faithful family

members make challenges less difficult.

"After the testimony meeting, an admired friend gave me a special blessing. So many questions were answered during his blessing. He told me this accident was not punishment for anything I had done but, rather, an opportunity to help me become a better person and to amplify those particular traits which needed to be developed. He shared the thought that this challenge could make me more understanding of people, problems, and life. As I look back now, each point of his blessing and encouragement has helped in a very fulfilling way.

"One of my greatest fears was the constant thought of how people would accept me. Would they be afraid of me, question my ability, or write me off before I could prove myself? Would girls turn down dates because I was different? Would it make them feel uncomfortable to be seen with me?

"I had dated several girls since my mission but had only dated Julie a couple of times. When I awoke the day following the operation in the hospital, she was there with other friends. I asked everyone else to leave the room, and I then proceeded to give her what I thought was the perfect speech. I told her that they had to take my hand off. If she felt embarrassed or ashamed to be with me or be seen with me on future dates, she need not feel obligated to continue in any future courtship. At that moment I could see fire in her eyes. She let me know in no uncertain terms that she was not there out of pity or duty, but only because she cared for me. She indicated she would help me but never feel sorry for me. Six months later we were married in the Salt Lake Temple.

"There were many job interviews, prejudices, and rejections of employment; but with continued encouragement, the Lord blessed us in

innumerable ways. When our first little girl, Bracken, arrived, it left us short of money to go to school. So after a major decision, we went into business, which proved to be another learning experience. After a couple of years—with many reverses—I was able to find a career in personnel management, which not only fulfilled my goals but also answered my prayers.

"Today as I look back, I see the challenge of adversity as something upon which to build. Of course, I cannot say the experience was pleasant; it was horrible. However, I hope I have used this adversity in a positive way. When I see others in trouble, in pain, when real adversity is knocking, I have an opportunity not only to feel something of what they feel but perhaps I can also help them because they can see that I have challenges of my own."

Strength from adversity

Following a recent discussion on the subject of adversity, a young man who was greatly concerned about the burdens being carried by his wonderful mother asked the question, "If God is omnipotent and knows all, why does He put my mother through the agony of continual sufferings when He already knows what the outcome will be?" Our response was, "Your mother's trials are not tests so the Lord can measure her. They are tests and trials so that your mother can measure herself. It is most important that she know her strengths in adversity and grow from the experiences."

When, with several companions, the Prophet Joseph Smith was a prisoner in Liberty, Missouri, for a number of months, conditions were deplorable. Their petitions and appeals directed to executive officers and the judiciary had failed to bring relief. In desperation Joseph pleaded for understanding and assistance from

his Heavenly Father. The message finally came:

"My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment;

"And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes" (D&C 121:7-8).

Victory over afflictions

It can be declared accurately and without hesitation that Joseph Smith's noble character and stature were shaped and achieved by constant victories over his afflictions. Jesus, too, developed unique balance mentally, physically, spiritually, and socially as he labored and served under all types of trying circumstances:

"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

"And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:8-9).

Difficulties can be a valuable tool in our pursuit for perfection. Adversity need have no necessary connection with failure. Proper self-management and self-discipline in all of our trials brings strength. If we are prepared, we can meet life's challenges victoriously. We become His disciples when we continue faithfully under all circumstances—including suffering and tragedy.

C. S. Lewis shared a meaningful observation when he said, "I have seen great beauty of spirit in some who were great sufferers. I have seen men, for the most part, grow better not worse with advancing years, and I have seen the last illness produce treasures of fortitude and meekness from most unpromising subjects."

I have another choice friend who has known very few days in his life which were not filled with pain,

discomfort, or disease. He shakes his fists at the forces of darkness and trial. His taxing trials of all of the yesterdays have been properly met and have assisted in making him what he is today. Like Caleb of old, he too can be heard to say, "As yet I am . . . strong. . . . Now therefore give me this mountain" (Josh. 14:11,12). More mountains, even those high in adversity, can better prepare us for tomorrow if we are but willing to climb.

Jesus Christ, the Master, shares his life of trials and victories with us for our motivation and direction. God strengthened His Son. He, too, will support us, His children, if we will turn to Him for guidance.

Live with dignity

What a blessing it is to know that we can be supported against all the fiery darts of the enemy if we are faithful. A worthy daily prayer is one asking for the power to be faithful under all circumstances.

Knowing that Satan and his hosts are relentless in their attempts to ridicule, embarrass, belittle, and cause all of us to yield and ultimately fall, what should be our attitude in today's society? There is an important step beyond avoiding contention and strife; and that is to live with dignity. There is something sacred about living with dignity. We need not quarrel or compete with those who promote and encourage controversy. We need not spend our time in retaliation. They who would deceive, destroy, or belittle reap their own rewards. Their works are neither praiseworthy nor of good report. How disarming it must be to the enemies to see the valiant moving forward with poise and dignity under all challenging circumstances. Scorn and ridicule are two of the greatest forms of adversity we are required to face in today's world. Doing the will of God on a daily basis leaves no

time for contention or confrontation.

From Harry Emerson Fosdick we read, "The most extraordinary thing about the oyster is this. Irritations get into his shell. He does not like them. But when he cannot get rid of them, he uses the irritation to do the loveliest thing an oyster ever has a chance to do. If there are irritations in our lives today, there is only one prescription: make a pearl. It may have to be a pearl of patience, but, anyhow, make a pearl. And it takes faith and love to do it." (In *The Treasure Chest*, ed. Charles L. Wallis, New York: Harper & Row).

Those who yield to adversity become weaker. To the valiant it is a stepping-stone to increased power. Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and God-fearing people worldwide will not pray for freedom from trials. They will not surrender or panic. They will strive to put themselves in condition to meet and master troublesome trials.

God's sustaining love

Usually there are no easy answers to most of our problems. Each individual must think, plan, work, and pray to find the help he needs and the courage he must have to conquer his problem or carry his cross—whatever his lot may be. Winners set achievable goals day by day. Their plans consist of things that can be done, not what can't be done. They remember that God has not given us the spirit of fear, but the power of love and of a sound mind.

God seems to have sustaining love for those like Jerry who are coping courageously with adversity. In many cases it seems they have a special relationship with Him. "Behold, I have refined thee. . . . I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction" (Isa. 48:10).

Individually, we should thank God for the examples of those about

us who battle and conquer daily challenges that are intense, real, and continuing. There are some persons who in our human eyes seem to have more than their share of trouble, as we measure, but with God's help they are made special. They will not break. They will not yield.

Satan wants us to feel unequal to our worldly tasks. If we turn to God, He will take us by the hand and lead us through our darkest hours. To these truths I bear my testimony and leave my special witness in the name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

We have just listened to Elder Marvin J. Ashton, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "Jesus! Name of Wondrous Love," following which Elder Gordon B. Hinckley, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our concluding speaker.

The choir sang "Jesus! Name of Wondrous Love."

Elder Gordon B. Hinckley

Sesquicentennial

I would like to say thank-you to the choir for that beautiful song of worship, which I hope will serve as something of a frame into which I can place my remarks. These past six months have been a wonderful season for us as a Church. Last spring we ushered in the 150th anniversary of the organization. On April 6th, when we were similarly convened in general conference, we spanned most of the continent and reached across a century and a half of history when we spoke from the humble birthplace of the Church to the vast congregation assembled in this Tabernacle. Since then, with music, with dancing, with drama we have portrayed the epic story of the building of Zion in the latter days.

We have refreshed the remembrance of our past and paid reverent tribute to those who gave so much to make possible that which we enjoy today. There has been stirred within us a spirit of thanksgiving to Almighty God for the wondrous manner in which he has woven the tapestry of his divine purpose. We have been reminded that we are an important

part of the fulfillment of a great prophecy.

All of this has been done in the spirit of jubilee. But there is much yet to be done. In ancient Israel each fiftieth year was observed as a jubilee year with remembrance and celebration. But there was also a mandate urging generous forgiveness and a lifting of the hand of oppression.

Need to forgive

Now in 1980, as we draw the curtain on 150 years of our history, it becomes us as a grateful people to reach out with a spirit of forgiveness and an attitude of love and compassion toward those whom we have felt may have wronged us.

We have need of this. The whole world has need of it. It is of the very essence of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He taught it. He exemplified it as none other has exemplified it. In the time of his agony on the cross of Calvary, with vile and hateful accusers before him, they who had brought him to this terrible crucifixion, he cried out, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what

they do" (Luke 23:34).

None of us is called on to forgive so generously, but each of us is under a divinely spoken obligation to reach out with pardon and mercy. The Lord has declared in words of revelation: "My disciples, in days of old, sought occasion against one another and forgave not one another in their hearts; and for this evil they were afflicted and sorely chastened.

"Wherefore, I say unto you, that ye ought to forgive one another; for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin.

"I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men.

"And ye ought to say in your hearts—let God judge between me and thee, and reward thee according to thy deeds." (D&C 64:8-11.)

How much we have need of the application of this God-given principle and its companion principle, repentance, of which President Romney has so persuasively spoken. We see the need for it in the homes of the people, where tiny molehills of misunderstanding are fanned into mountains of argument. We see it among neighbors, where insignificant differences lead to undying bitterness. We see it in business associates who quarrel and refuse to compromise and forgive when, in most instances, if there were a willingness to sit down together and speak quietly one to another, the matter could be resolved to the blessing of all. Rather, they spend their days nurturing grudges and planning retribution.

In that first year of the organization of the Church, when the Prophet Joseph Smith was repeatedly arrested and tried on false charges by those who sought to injure him, the Lord said to him through revelation, "Whosoever shall go to law with thee shall be cursed by the law" (D&C 24:17). I have seen that in our

time among some of those who have vindictively pursued their nurtured grudges. Even among some of those who win their contests there appears to be little peace of mind, and while they may have gained dollars, they have lost something more precious.

Avoid bitterness

Guy de Maupassant, the French writer, tells the story of a peasant named Hauchecome who came on market day to the village. While walking through the public square, his eye caught sight of a piece of string lying on the cobblestones. He picked it up and put it in his pocket. His actions were observed by the village harness maker with whom he had previously had a dispute.

Later in the day the loss of a purse was reported. Hauchecome was arrested on the accusation of the harness maker. He was taken before the mayor, to whom he protested his innocence, showing the piece of string that he had picked up. But he was not believed and was laughed at.

The next day the purse was found, and Hauchecome was absolved of any wrongdoing. But, resentful of the indignity he had suffered because of a false accusation, he became embittered and would not let the matter die. Unwilling to forgive and forget, he thought and talked of little else. He neglected his farm. Everywhere he went, everyone he met had to be told of the injustice. By day and by night he brooded over it. Obsessed with his grievance, he became desperately ill and died. In the delirium of his death struggles, he repeatedly murmured, "A piece of string, a piece of string." (*The Works of Guy de Maupassant*, Black's Reader Service: Roslyn, New York, pp. 34-38.)

With variations of characters and circumstances that story could be repeated many times over in our own day. How difficult it is for any of us

to forgive those who have injured us. We are all prone to brood on the evil done us. That brooding becomes as a gnawing and destructive canker. Is there a virtue more in need of application in our time than the virtue of forgiving and forgetting? There are those who would look upon this as a sign of weakness. Is it? I submit that it takes neither strength nor intelligence to brood in anger over wrongs suffered, to go through life with a spirit of vindictiveness, to dissipate one's abilities in planning retribution. There is no peace in the nursing of a grudge. There is no happiness in living for the day when you can "get even."

Paul speaks of "the weak and beggarly elements" of our lives (see Gal. 4:9). Is there anything more weak or beggarly than the disposition to wear out one's life in an unending round of bitter thoughts and scheming gestures toward those who may have affronted us?

Joseph F. Smith presided over the Church at a time of great bitterness toward our people. He was the target of vile accusations, of a veritable drumbeat of criticism by editorial writers even in this community. He was lampooned, cartooned, and ridiculed. Listen to his response to those who made sport of demeaning him: "Let them alone. Let them go. Give them the liberty of speech they want. Let them tell their own story and write their own doom." (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939, p. 339.) And then with an outreaching spirit of forgiving and forgetting, he went ahead with the great and positive work of leading the Church forward to new growth and remarkable accomplishments. At the time of his death, many of those who had ridiculed him wrote tributes of praise concerning him.

Not long ago I listened at length to a couple who sat across the desk from me. There was bitterness be-

tween them. I know that at one time their love was deep and true. But each had developed a habit of speaking of the faults of the other. Unwilling to forgive the kind of mistakes we all make, and unwilling to forget them and live above them with forbearance, they had carped at one another until the love they once knew had been smothered. It had turned to ashes with the decree of a so-called no fault divorce. Now there is only loneliness and recrimination. I am satisfied that had there been even a small measure of repentance and forgiveness, they would still be together, enjoying the companionship that had so richly blessed their earlier years.

Peace through forgiveness

If there be any within the sound of my voice who nurture in their hearts the poisonous brew of enmity toward another, I plead with you to ask the Lord for strength to forgive. This expression of desire will be of the very substance of your repentance. It may not be easy, and it may not come quickly. But if you will seek it with sincerity and cultivate it, it *will* come. And even though he whom you have forgiven continues to pursue and threaten you, you will know you have done what you could to effect a reconciliation. There will come into your heart a peace otherwise unattainable. That peace will be the peace of Him who said:

"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

"But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matt. 6:14-15).

Prodigal son

I know of no more beautiful story in all literature than that found in

the fifteenth chapter of Luke. It is the story of a repentant son and a forgiving father. It is the story of the son who wasted his inheritance in riotous living, rejecting his father's counsel, spurning those who loved him. When he had spent all, he was hungry and friendless, and "when he came to himself" (Luke 15:17), he turned back to his father, who, on seeing him afar off, "ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him" (Luke 15:20).

I ask you to read that story. Every parent ought to read it again and again. It is large enough to encompass every household, and enough larger than that to encompass all mankind, for are we not all prodigal sons and daughters who need to repent and partake of the forgiving mercy of our Heavenly Father and then follow his example?

His Beloved Son, our Redeemer, reaches out to us in forgiveness and mercy, but in so doing he commands repentance. A true and magnanimous spirit of forgiveness will become an expression of that required repentance. Said the Lord—and I quote from a revelation given to the Prophet Joseph:

"Therefore, I command you to repent—repent, lest I smite you by the rod of my mouth, and by my wrath, and by my anger, and your sufferings be sore—how sore you know not, how exquisite you know not, yea, how hard to bear you know not.

"For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

"But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I;

"Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit. . . .

"Learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me." (D&C 19:15-18, 23.)

Such is the commandment, and such is the promise of him who in his great exemplary prayer, pleaded, "Father, . . . forgive our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (see Matt. 6:9, 12).

"Bind up . . . wounds"

Are not the words of Lincoln beautiful which he spoke out of the tragedy of a terrible civil war: "With malice toward none, with charity for all, . . . let us . . . bind up the . . . wounds" (John Bartlett, *Familiar Quotations*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1968, p. 640).

My brothers and sisters, as we conclude this great season of jubilee, let us bind up the wounds—oh, the many wounds that have been caused by cutting words, by stubbornly cultivated grievances, by scheming plans to "get even" with those who may have wronged us. We all have a little of this spirit of revenge in us. Fortunately we all have the power to rise above it, if we will "clothe [ourselves] with the bond of charity, as with a mantle, which is the bond of perfectness and peace" (D&C 88:125).

Blessed are the peacemakers

"To err is human, to forgive divine." (Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*, 2:1711). There is no peace in harboring old grudges. There is no peace in reflecting on the pain of old wounds. There is peace only in repentance and forgiveness. This is the sweet peace of the Christ, who said, "Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God" (Matt. 5:9). Of that I testify in the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

Elder Gordon B. Hinckley, a member of the Council of the Twelve

Apostles, has just spoken to us.

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "Let the Mountains Shout for Joy."

We appreciate the courtesies shown by the owners and operators of the many radio and television stations who offered their facilities as a public service to make the proceedings of this conference available to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

The benediction will be pronounced by Elder James M. Paramore, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. This conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The choir sang the anthem "Let the Mountains Shout for Joy."

Elder James M. Paramore pronounced the benediction.

SECOND DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

FIFTH SESSION

The fifth and final general session of the 150th Semiannual Conference commenced at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, October 5, 1980.

President Spencer W. Kimball presided at and President Marion G. Romney conducted this session.

Music was provided by the Tabernacle Choir directed by Jerold Otley with John Longhurst at the organ.

President Romney made the following remarks at the outset of the meeting:

President Marion G. Romney

President Spencer W. Kimball, who presides at this and all other sessions of the conference, has asked me to conduct this session.

We extend a sincere welcome to all assembled this afternoon in the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, Utah in the fifth and concluding general session of the 150th Semiannual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We also welcome those seated in the Salt Palace where Elders Marion D. Hanks and Paul H. Dunn preside.

We send our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere participating in these proceedings by radio and television.

The Tabernacle Choir with Jerold Otley directing and John Longhurst at the organ is providing the music for this session. The choir will begin this service by singing "Come, Thou Glorious Day of Promise." The invocation will be offered by Elder Charles Didier, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Choir sang "Come, Thou Glorious Day of Promise."

Elder Charles Didier offered the invocation.

President Romney

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "Oh Lord I Would Hear Thy Word." Following the singing, we shall hear from Elder LeGrand Richards, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The Choir sang the number "Oh Lord I Would Hear Thy Word."

President Romney

Elder LeGrand Richards, a member of the Council of the Twelve

Apostles, will now address us. He will be followed by Elder George P. Lee, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder LeGrand Richards

If you are in possession of something that is dearer to you than life itself, and you know that by giving it away you could enrich the lives of your fellowmen without making your life any poorer, you would want to do it, wouldn't you? My testimony of the divinity of this Church is that treasure dearer to me than life itself, and I have given it away to many, many people whose lives have been enriched by virtue of the same.

Testimony

I have had the privilege of bearing testimony in ninety-eight general conferences of the Church from this pulpit, and I have written a book that is being used almost all over the world containing my testimony, and that testimony I obtained in my youth through the Holy Ghost whom I received by the laying on of hands by those who had authority to convey it upon me. And it made such an impression upon me as a boy that it has been a guiding star to me all my life, and I could hardly wait until I was old enough to go on a mission.

When I went on my first mission back in 1905, my cousin and I traveled together to Liverpool; he was sent up into Norway and I was sent to Holland. After we had been in the mission field a few months, I received a letter from him, addressing me by name, and he said: "I met a man the other day who knows more about religion than I ever dreamed of. I told him that if he had something better than I had, I would join his church."

I wrote him back, addressing him by name, and I said: "You told

him just the right thing. If he has something better than you have, you ought to join his church." Then I quoted some of the experiences that Brother Fyans related to us this morning. I said: "Does he have something better than a personal visitation of God the Father, and his Son, Jesus Christ, in a pillar of light, after centuries of spiritual darkness, to open the dispensation of the fullness of times and to reveal the true personality of the Godhead—that they are glorified personages?"

I said: "Does he have something better than the coming of Moroni with the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated? Does he have something better than the coming of John the Baptist with the Aaronic Priesthood, the power and authority to baptize by immersion for the remission of sins? Does he have something better than the coming of Peter, James, and John—Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ—with the holy Melchizedek Priesthood, the holy Apostleship, the authority to organize the church and kingdom of God for the last time to prepare the way for the coming of the Son of Man and to convey the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands?"

"Does he have something better than the coming of Moses with the keys of the latter-day gathering of Israel that has brought us here into these valleys of the mountains? Does he have something better than the coming of Elijah of whose coming Malachi bore testimony that if it were not for his coming, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, the whole earth would

be utterly wasted at his coming? Think of the consequences. Now," I said, "if he has something better than that, you join his church."

Help youth gain testimonies

I can't think of anything that we as parents and as leaders in Israel can plant into the hearts of our youth that will help them to avoid the evils and pitfalls and temptations of this world and the false philosophies of men and enable them to live in the world and yet not be a part of the world like having planted in their hearts through the power of the Holy Ghost a testimony of the truth of this restored gospel.

I like the words of the Apostle Peter. He said: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the . . . day star arise in your hearts:

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Pet. 1:19-21.)

That is what brings testimony.

Restitution of all things

And then Peter said to those who had put to death the Christ following the day of Pentecost: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

"And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

"Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets

since the world began." (Acts 3:19-21.)

No man can believe that Peter was a prophet of the living God and look for the coming of the Lord except there be a restitution of all things spoken by the mouths of all the holy prophets since the world began. And a restitution is not a reformation. All the churches of the world today have attempted to correct the mistakes of history until there are hundreds of churches because they can't agree. And if they had the truth, they would all be alike; and so there had to be a restitution. That means that those holy prophets had to come back to this earth, and that is what you have been told here in this conference.

And if they came back to this earth, they had to come to somebody, and that somebody could be none other than a prophet of God. Like Amos said, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). And that prophet was Joseph Smith.

We bear testimony of this restitution of all things—the coming of these holy prophets as has been pointed out here during this conference today.

Prophecies in the scriptures

I like the prophecies of the scriptures. Jesus walked along the way toward Emmaus with two of his disciples following his resurrection, and when he heard what they had to say regarding him and his crucifixion, he knew that they did not understand and comprehend what the prophets had said; so he said, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken" (Luke 24:25), and commencing with Moses and the prophets, He showed them how that in all things the prophets had testified of him.

I love the prophecies of Isaiah. It seems to me that he almost lived more in our day than when he was actually upon the earth. He saw so much of what would transpire in our day. He saw us settled here in these valleys of the mountains. He saw this desert, where we were once a thousand miles from transportation and supplies, made to blossom as a rose (see Isa. 35:1). He saw the rivers flow in the desert where we have built these great irrigation canals (see Isa. 43:19). He saw the water flow down from the high places where we have reservoired it in these mountain fastnesses for summer's use (see Isa. 41:18). He saw the redeemed of the Lord come up and sing in the heights of Zion (see Isa. 51:11). And where do you find anything in the world to fulfill that like the singing of the Tabernacle Choir for over fifty years without a break?

He saw the mountain of the Lord's house established in the top of the mountains in the latter days when all nations would flow unto it, and they would say, "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths" (Isa. 2:3).

Now in the scriptures there are many, many prophecies of the regathering of the Jews back to Jerusalem, but this prophecy said, "And all nations shall flow unto it."

"... and say . . . let us go up to the mountain of the Lord [the house]." (Isa. 2:2-3.)

I think this beautiful temple on this block is the house of the God of Jacob that Isaiah saw.

Jeremiah saw the day when it should no longer be said, "The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt;

"But, The Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of . . . all countries whither I had driven them" (Jer. 23:7-8).

He said that he would send for many fishers and many hunters and they would fish them and hunt them from the hills and the mountains and the holes in the rocks (see Jer. 16:16). They are the thirty-one thousand Mormon missionaries scattered all over the world gathering in the seed of Israel and bringing them to Zion.

He saw how they would be gathered one of a city and two of a family, and the Lord would bring them to Zion, and he would give them pastors after his own heart who should feed them with knowledge and with understanding (see Jer. 3:14-15). Could anybody sit through sessions of this conference and listen to these prophets of the living God and not realize that Jeremiah saw this day when we would come here, gathered one of a city and two of a family, and that He would give us pastors after His own heart?

I love the prophecies of Isaiah. I like the twenty-ninth chapter where he said: "Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

"Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." (Isa. 29:13-14.)

LDS understand prophecies

There are no wise men in this world today nor prudent men who can understand all of the prophecies like we Latter-day Saints can because of the restoration of this gospel and the receiving of some of the prophecies that I have already referred to and which have been referred to in this conference.

And then Isaiah in that very

same twenty-ninth chapter starts out like this: He said, "Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt [that was Jerusalem—that is where David dwelt]! add ye year to year [meaning coming generations]; let them kill sacrifices. And it shall be camped about and it shall be unto me as Ariel" (see Isa. 29:1-3.) In other words, not only did Isaiah see the destruction of the great city of Jerusalem, but he also saw the destruction of another great center here in America eleven hundred years after he made that prophecy. We read of that destruction in 2 Nephi 26 and 27, just like when he described the destruction of Babylon a hundred and seventy years before it was destroyed when he said it should never be rebuilt (see Jer. 50:9-13).

Now he said in that chapter that the wisdom of their wise men shall perish and the understanding of their

prudent men shall be hid. There are so many things that have transpired in this day that the wise men of this world cannot understand. I haven't time here today to enumerate any more to you, but my heart is full of gratitude to my Heavenly Father and full of testimony by the Holy Spirit of the divinity of this work, and I bear that testimony to you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Marion G. Romney

Elder LeGrand Richards, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder George P. Lee, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He will be followed by Elder Gene R. Cook, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder George P. Lee

Charles Dickens once wrote: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, . . . it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, . . . we had everything before us, we had nothing before us" (*A Tale of Two Cities*, New York: Washington Square Press, n.d., p. 3).

Current world conditions

This description of a period of time in his day reminds us of some of the conditions of our day. We live in a great age of miracles and wonders. We have a higher standard of living and more education than any generation of the past. We enjoy the greatest comforts and the finest luxuries. We have more goods and better services than any other people have ever had. Our nation is the most

prosperous and powerful ever known. Indeed, this is the best of times.

But this is also the very worst of times. We are confronted by bigger problems and greater dangers than man has ever faced before. Delinquencies, crime, destructive wars, immorality, and other sins are scoring new highs. Serious disturbances are taking place in nature. We constitute the most wicked age.

The most important responsibility that the Lord has ever laid upon us is that of making the best and the most of our lives. If we make the worst of times the best of times, we will be going directly toward heaven, but if we make the best of times the worst of times, we will be going backwards. We all know and are quite aware of the Lord's miracles, teachings, and doctrines. We know of his example; yet sometimes we live far away from that ex-

ample. We live in the very best of times, yet we may be far from living his teachings and doctrines.

Need for divine guidance

The scriptures clearly compare our day with the days of Noah, when the people of his time brought destruction upon themselves. It must be clear to each of us that the problem then and now is our poor relationship with the Lord. From the very beginning the Lord has tried to get man to follow divine counsel aimed at peace, prosperity, and happiness for all of us. Unfortunately, man's responses to his efforts have almost always been negative, and we continue to follow our own devices and wisdom in leading each other astray.

Jeremiah wrote, "Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord" (Jer. 17:5).

Both our past and our present prove that of ourselves we lack the ability to solve our own problems. More than anything else and more than ever before, we need direction from the Lord. Jesus diagnosed our problems when he said: "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,

"This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.

"But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," (Matt. 15:7-9.)

Again he said, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me" (John 7:16).

His divine instructions gave us all the answers to any problems that might confront us. But his doctrines and teachings did not go over very well with the people in his time, nor are they going over very well in our time. They fell on deaf ears. Many people in his time, like many of us

who live in this the dispensation of the fulness of times, chose to follow the false doctrines of man. This program of substituting the doctrines of man for those taught by the Lord has been very harmful and extensive.

Today in America, it is against the law to talk about God in the schools of some states. In these schools, one must not read the Bible, one must not sing Christmas carols, and prayer is prohibited because someone's sensibility might be offended. Atheism may be taught in the schools, but not the word of God.

Many seek "religion of convenience"

The sin and evil that the Lord came to free us from are, in many places, now running unchecked in many places throughout our nation and the rest of the world. Crime is at an all-time high. Sin is at an all-time high. Immorality, among the youth and the adults, is at an all-time high. Jesus came as our example. He lived a sinless life and furnished us with a working model of righteousness. His simple message was "Follow me" (Luke 9:59). He asked us to follow him in his teachings, to follow him in his righteousness, and to follow him in his love for others. Unfortunately and sadly, many have not followed him; rather, they have followed those who could find no room for his teachings, his miracles, or his doctrines. Many have made no room for him because their lives are loaded down with sin and pleasures. Others have made room for their physical comforts; they have made room to expand their educational opportunities; but they have crowded him out. Some have made room to work more hours to accumulate material possessions; still others have made room to multiply their luxury and increase their leisure time and have made room for more sports and

entertainment, but they have made no room for him. They have made room for many violations of the Sabbath day, but they have made no room for the Savior of the world—our Redeemer and Master.

Today the Lord is pleading with us through the spoken word, through the scriptures, through the Spirit, through his prophets, through the witness of faithful parents, friends, and teachers; but we still have no room for him. We have no room for his teachings and doctrines because most of us are looking for a religion of convenience—one that takes no time, costs no money, requires no effort, and fits our lives without any required changes. It is no wonder the Lord said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Matt. 8:20).

The Lord's answer

As we watch our government hopelessly grapple with the mighty problems of the day, perhaps we should take a look at the way the Lord would handle the problems of our day. The world in general works on the effects and results of the problems, while the Lord zeroes in on the roots and the causes. The Lord advocates preventive measures, while man attacks the problems after they have arisen. Man's answer to crime is better law enforcement, bigger and better locks on doors, bigger and better prisons, bigger and better rehabilitation, and bigger and better arms and weapons. But the Lord's answer is to love your neighbor as yourself and do good to others as you would have them do to you.

Man's answer to poverty is public welfare through food stamps, loans, guaranteed income, publicly financed housing, and other things. The Lord's answer is to teach self-reliance, to help people help themselves. Man's answer to the problem

of immorality is birth control pills, homes for unwed mothers, venereal disease clinics, sex education, and divorce counselors. The Lord's answer is to teach the virtues of chastity, love, and purity. The Lord's approach to problems and his approach to resolving them probably would not make headlines or the six o'clock news; but nevertheless, his approach would solve our nation's problems as well as the world's problems, and it would revolutionize our world.

Paul tried to teach the Ephesians how to be good Christians and good people. The lesson is also a good one for us. He said: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

"Put on the whole armour of God. . . .

"Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; . . .

"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." (Eph. 6:10-11, 14, 17.)

This is not only great counsel for all of us, but it is also a great success formula. It is a great philosophy of life which all of us need if we are to become bigger than the problems to be solved in our day. Man's attempts to solve his problems by legislation, bribery, force, or education have always failed. All of his problems could easily be solved by a return to the true religion of Christ. As members of his true Church, we should lead the way in fighting for God and country, for law and order, for health and strength, for industry and courage, for truth and righteousness, and for each other.

Know the Savior

We need to take the time to worship, to meditate, and to develop a more personal relationship with the

Lord. We need to get acquainted with his teachings. We need to fill our hearts with the things of the Spirit. We need to be more practical and to begin to think today what Jesus thought. We can fill our minds with our Heavenly Father's purpose and our hearts with an understanding of his ways. We can open the door of our soul and make room for the Savior to come in. The door of our heart can still be opened from within. Our invitation to the Lord to enter our hearts must come from the inside. The inspired counsel from the prophet Job should be ringing in our ears. He said, "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace" (Job 22:21).

The Lord is still saying to us as he did in his time when he declared: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

Elder Gene R. Cook

Miracles among the Lamanites

My family and I are presently living in South America among the Lamanites—the children of Lehi, the people of the Book of Mormon, a people of great promise. For a number of years we have been witnesses to spiritual miracles among that people:

1. We have seen thousands converted to the Lord who had his law put into their minds and written in their hearts (see Heb. 8:10).

2. We have seen them organized into numerous stakes of Zion.

3. We have truly seen them "blossom as the rose" as prophecy has been fulfilled through them (see D&C 49:24).

(Rev. 3:20-21.)

My prayer, my brothers and sisters, is that we will make the most of times the very best of times by making room for the Redeemer of the world in our personal lives. I testify that he is the living bread which came down from heaven. He is the promised Messiah and Savior of the human race. He is the eternal judge of the souls of men and conquerer of death and sin. He is our deliverer. He is our all because he gave his all for us. He is our salvation from sorrow and sin. He is Jesus the Christ! He lives! In his name, amen.

President Marion G. Romney

Elder George P. Lee, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder Gene R. Cook, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He will be followed by Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

4. We have literally seen the Lord perform miracles among them by their faith.

Why should that be so? Why are changes in that people occurring so dramatically? The title page of the record their ancestors gave to the world, entitled the Book of Mormon, indicates that the book was "written to the Lamanites, who are a remnant of the house of Israel." In the last chapter of the book, the prophet Moroni gives to the Lamanites farewell instructions, a portion of which contains the conditions on which individual testimonies of the truth may be obtained. The record is for all men, but from cover to cover the book is filled with prophecies concerning the Lamanites, indicating "that the

promises of the Lord [would] be fulfilled, which he made to his people" (see D&C 3:18, 19).

The promises were not exclusively given to the Lamanites but to all nations who would possess these lands. The land was blessed: "And thus they did leave a blessing upon this land in their prayers, that whosoever should believe in this gospel in this land might have eternal life" (see D&C 10:49, 50).

"And the gospel of Jesus Christ shall be declared among them; . . .

"And then shall they rejoice; for they shall know that it is a blessing unto them from the hand of God; and their scales of darkness shall begin to fall from their eyes." (2 Ne. 30:5-6.)

The Lord has blessed his people

There is even direction to us in our day from President Kimball and the scriptures: "Go unto the Lamanites and preach my gospel unto them; and inasmuch as they receive thy teachings thou shalt cause my church to be established among them" (D&C 28:8). Our living prophet has also said, "It is a people who . . . call for assistance from those who can push and lift and open doors. It is a people who pray for mercy, for forgiveness, and beg for membership in the kingdom with its opportunities to learn and do." (Spencer W. Kimball, in Conference Report, Apr. 1954, p. 107.)

How the Lord has blessed his people, this remnant of the house of Jacob. His words have been fulfilled. Where there was once a barren field, today they stand strong and truly "blossom as the rose" (D&C 49:24).

What a miracle to behold! Only in *part* of the Lamanite world, in Latin America alone, there are over 600,000 members of the Church, with 7,000 baptized nearly every month; 181 stakes at present with almost 2,400 congregations of Saints and 2,500 Latin missionaries serving;

thousands and thousands of priesthood holders—Regional Representatives, mission presidents, patriarchs, bishops—faithful sisters, and faithful children of a powerful generation yet to come.

Yes, the descendants of Lehi have learned much from us, the Church in general, as we have established the Church among them. They appreciate the fulfillment of the prophecy indicating "that every man shall hear the fulness of the gospel in his own tongue, and in his own language" (D&C 90:11). Thanks belong to you who serve or have served in these countries, and to the parents who worried about you but sent you anyway, trusting in the Lord, and who found that their sons and daughters received far more in their service to this people than they were capable of giving.

They appreciate the fulfillment of these words of the Lord also: "I will consecrate of the riches of those who embrace my gospel among the Gentiles unto the poor of my people who are of the house of Israel" (D&C 42:39). Thanks belong to the thousands of you who have contributed generously and enabled the work to go forth. You have given much for which the Lord will bless you.

You have also received much, as many of you have a personal debt to the Lamanites' forefathers for your own testimony obtained from their diligent record-keeping in the Book of Mormon. We are all blessed to participate with them in making latter-day history and assist in the fulfillment of prophecy.

Their lives teach truths

Now, what can the rest of the Church learn from this people? They would not have you think they are any better than anyone else. However, because of the prophetic nature of their role in the last days, because

the Lord has pre-prepared their hearts, one is able to see the Lord's handiwork in their very lives and understand why they are so susceptible to the gospel. This very understanding ought to teach all of us much about the sacred conversion process. Their lives teach of the basics of the gospel—godly traits—traits that we could do well to emulate in our progress toward exaltation. Repayment of temporal resources to the Church may never be made by them. However, the additional spiritual insight obtained from them may well represent an overpayment.

Their lives teach of simple truths like faith, confidence, trust in God. For example, a small village of Aymara Indians is converted within a matter of a few weeks—the entire village. Missionaries learn through the gift of tongues to speak Spanish, Aymara, Quechua, and many other Indian dialects. Lamanite Saints accept in faith instructions to become self-sufficient when the vision of that concept in their world seems to be totally impossible. They believe anyway and are on their way to making that become reality.

Their lives emanate the basics of the gospel, like repentance and love unfeigned. New leaders enter the Church from many kinds of worldly conditions but come forth cleansed and, in but "moments," stand tall as the Lord's leaders. They quickly learn by the Spirit that all can lead, even though many can't even read. A man who has not spoken for many years repents, is baptized, and speaks his first words as he leaves the baptismal font.

Their lives teach the simple truths of humility, meekness, teachableness. May I share another example? A Lamanite missionary baptizes eighteen souls in a matter of three weeks, where all last year none had been baptized. There are few problems with respect to teach-

ableness among this people. They are teachable, meek, open in their hearts, and, in this respect, much like submissive children.

When nonmembers are first taught gospel truths, with little or no difficulty they believe. They believe in the Savior of the world. They believe in prophets. It seems as though they always have. The premortal existence seems to be common knowledge. The Joseph Smith story is believable and reasonable. They are not the least bit astonished by the coming of angels. They truly do hearken unto the voice of the Good Shepherd and thus truly do come unto God (see Mosiah 26:21; D&C 84:47).

Their lives teach the basics of prayer, fasting, priesthood blessings. A sister unable to have children has a daughter, receiving that gift indirectly through a blessing given to her husband in which the promise was extended to her. A sick sister is raised at the very moment from her sick-bed by a priesthood blessing. The devil openly opposes the work and as needed is controlled by the priesthood. Servants of the Lord partake of food and water that is poison to them and receive no harm. A sister, as a young girl thousands of miles from her present home, is promised in a patriarchal blessing that one day General Authorities will be served at her humble table. Today she is married to a Lamanite stake president with the prophetic statement fulfilled.

Their lives emanate basic truths of kindness, long-suffering, and sacrifice. A man sells his only watch to purchase gasoline for his car so that he might find a man the Brethren desire to interview. A leader who struggles for years to own a car sells it that he might take his family to the temple. Men, women, and children give rings, watches, corn, grain, animals, and even the gold from their teeth that they may show the Lord

their desire to help him raise up in their lands a temple to the Lord.

Even though the Spirit has manifested itself in the lives of these people in many miraculous ways, the common way—the most effective way—continues to be by the still small voice simply going forth, converting them “in their inward parts” by the thousands (see Jer. 31:33).

Blessed according to righteousness

These are the children of Lehi, the children of the prophets, great in many respects but blessed, as are all the children of God, according to their righteousness.

None of us would ever boast in our own strength nor in our own wisdom, but as Ammon said about the Lamanites:

“[Our] joy is full . . . and [we] will rejoice in [our] God.

“ . . . For in his strength [we] can do all things; . . .

“ . . . Behold, who can glory too much in the Lord? Yea, who can say too much of his great power, and of his mercy, and of his long-suffering towards the children of men? Behold, [we] say unto you, [we] cannot

say the smallest part which [we] feel.” (Al. 26:11-12, 16.)

My brothers and sisters, we must do all that we have been counseled to do here in this conference. Let us not forget the simple truths—those godly traits, the weightier matters of the law, that have been described (see Matt. 23:23). They are the very basics, the essence of the gospel, and possession of them in great abundance by Latter-day Saints will be in the end the greatest miracle of all. Yes, miracles have not ceased. Today is a day of miracles. We believe in miracles. The Latter-day Saints may expect miracles according to their faith in Jesus Christ, the only being under heaven whereby we and all mankind may be saved (see D&C 18:23), in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Marion G. Romney

Elder Gene R. Cook, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

Jamaica Branch

In my assignments I have some responsibility for directing the work of the Church in the southeast area of the United States, and this extends to include Jamaica. Sister Wirthlin and I recently had occasion to visit that beautiful tropical island and met with one of our very faithful leaders, President Victor Nugent of the Jamaica Branch. Our conversation went something like this:

“President Nugent, How are you doing with your home teaching?”

“One hundred percent.”

“How about visiting teaching?”

“One hundred percent.”

“Attendance at sacrament meeting?”

“One hundred percent.”

“Tithe payers?”

“One hundred percent.”

For a group of some eighty-five members of the Church to perform so admirably and to set such a wonderful example, I think that we can assume that they know their duty and perform it faithfully. They truly understand the meaning of an impressive revelation given to the Prophet

Joseph Smith:

"Wherefore, now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence.

"He that is slothful shall not be counted worthy to stand, and he that learns not his duty and shows himself not approved shall not be counted worthy to stand." (D&C 107:99-100.)

Do your duty

Inscribed beneath Robert E. Lee's bust in the Hall of Fame are his words: "Duty is the sublimest word in our language. Do your duty in all things. You cannot do more. You should never wish to do less." (In John Bartlett, *Familiar Quotations*, Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1968, p. 620.)

Most of us don't mind doing what we *ought* to do when it doesn't interfere with what we *want* to do, but it takes discipline and maturity to do what we ought to do whether we want to or not. Duty is too often what one expects from others and not what one does. What people think and believe and plan are all very important, but what they *do* is the thing that counts most. It is a call to throw out selfishness and to think of the common good of all.

We must always remember that duty reminds us we are stewards of all that our Creator has entrusted to us. When we accept duties willingly and faithfully, we find happiness. Those who make happiness the chief objective of life are bound to fail, for happiness is a by-product rather than an end in itself. Happiness comes from doing one's duty and knowing that his life is in harmony with God and his commandments. The members of the Jamaica Branch know that they are living in harmony with our Father's commandments, and this brings them great happiness.

A group of missionaries, also in

Jamaica, understood their duties to teach the gospel to everyone who would hear their message. As all missionaries are, they were very dependent on their monthly checks from home, but in Jamaica the banking rules dictated that after the checks were presented at the bank for cash, a two-month waiting period had to elapse before the cash could be provided. This was very inconvenient and frustrating to the missionaries, and they agreed that it would be impossible for them to continue to endure such an arrangement. They would have to do something about it—and do something they did! The bank manager was taught the gospel, was baptized, and as a result the check-cashing problem was magically solved. Those elders knew their duty and accomplished it with faith and diligence.

Also, it was a problem there for the missionaries to get the proper kinds and quantities of food in Jamaica. They could obtain some staples essential to good nutrition but only after prolonged and tedious trouble and waiting. Another problem, another solution: teach and baptize the grocer. This they did, and thereafter had no problem in obtaining the food they needed and wanted.

In Jamaica, as in many other parts of the world, missionaries ride bicycles to carry out the Lord's work. But bicycles often break down and parts wear out. And there are often delays in obtaining parts and having repairs made. Again, the solution was obvious—teach and baptize the bicycle repairman. At last report, he was responding to the missionaries' friendship and testimonies.

Proper pattern of duty

It is obvious that doing our duty is the best way to solve our problems. The proper pattern of duty has been set by those who have gone before us and is continued today by

devoted teachers and leaders throughout the Church. The attitude and spirit central to a lifetime of duty is pinpointed in this poem.

*Who does his task from day to day
And meets whatever comes his way,
Believing God has willed it so,
Has found true greatness here below.
Who guards his post no matter where,
Believing God must need him there,
Although but lowly toil it be,
Has risen to nobility.
For great and low there is one test,
'Tis that each man shall do his best.
Who works with all the strength he can
Shall never die in debt to man.*
(Anonymous.)

Every successful man and woman in the history of the world has known his or her duty and has had a firm desire to fulfill it. The Savior had a perfect sense of duty. Even though what was required of him surpassed the limits of human capabilities, he submitted himself to his Father's will and fulfilled his divine duty by atoning for the sins of mankind.

Joseph Smith was true to his calling and fulfilled his duty even in the face of severe persecution and great personal sacrifice. He persevered, he endured, and he accomplished the restoration of the true gospel of Jesus Christ.

Brigham Young also carried out his responsibilities. Over a period of many years of faithful service and duty, he brought the Saints to the valley of freedom and established a great and mighty empire. He was duty-bound and thereby achieved great things.

President Spencer W. Kimball has accepted the charge to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. He faithfully pursues his duty and is a wonderful example to us in all that he does to spread the gospel of love. The result is a worldwide Church and the fulfillment of latter-day prophecy.

These great men have all had the agency to choose. They might have chosen to follow a path easier than the one where duty led. But they did not. Certainly their duty did not always lead to personal comfort or casual convenience. Their duty frequently meant great sacrifice and personal hardship; but nevertheless, duty they chose, and duty they performed.

Obligation to fulfill duties

Life requires us to perform many duties—some routine, others more meaningful and important. An integral part of duty is to set the proper example and to take every opportunity to bolster others along this uphill road of life. This might be done with an encouraging word, a compliment, a handshake—any indication of caring. And we need to keep in mind that as we learn our duties well here, we also are preparing for the performance of eternal duties.

Every member of the Church—every man, woman, and child—is faced with an obligation to fulfill his duty. Every member of the Church is commanded to live the laws of God and keep his commandments. Each has the duty to pray daily, study the scriptures, draw close to the Savior, and serve others. Each should partake of the sacrament worthily and labor to strengthen the influence of the Holy Ghost in his life.

Each father has the duty to provide for his family and to teach them by example to obey the statutes of God. Our lovely wives have a glorious duty to bring children into this life and to create a loving, learning, and supporting home atmosphere. Together, parents have the divine duty to bring up their children in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4).

It is the duty of children to obey their parents, to learn, and to help

with household chores. They carry the scriptural charge not to contend and quarrel with one another but to accept their part in fostering family unity and progress.

All have the duty to share the gospel with others and to serve formally and informally as missionaries. All have a duty to identify their deceased ancestors and to help bring to them the blessings of the temple. All should diligently strive to be temporarily prepared and to care for the poor and the needy. All should seek to strengthen the less active members of the Church and to magnify their callings in their wards and stakes by giving faithful and devoted service.

These are some of our duties. They may not always be exciting or even enjoyable, but they are important. They will refine the spirit and strengthen the soul. They will aid the work of the Lord in great measure.

“Be not weary in well-doing”

The absolute necessity to do our duties at home, in the Church, in our daily work, and also for our beloved country—as do our wonderful chaplains and other members of the Church in the military—is vividly and beautifully described by the Master Teacher, Jesus the Christ. He declared: “For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

“For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.

“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

“And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

“Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like:

“He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.

“But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.” (Luke 6:43-49.)

“Be not weary in well-doing” (D&C 64:33), my brothers and sisters. Being true to one’s duty is a mark of true disciples of the Lord and the children of God. Be valiant in your duty. Stay in step. Do not fail in your most important task, that of keeping your second estate. Be true to your duty, for it will bring you to God.

I bear you my deep and sincere testimony that this is the only way to obtain happiness and help the kingdom grow and flourish, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Marion G. Romney

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing “We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet.”

After the singing, Elder Rex D. Pinegar, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will speak to us.

The congregation and the Tabernacle Choir joined in singing “We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet.”

President Romney

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Rex D. Pinegar, a member

of the First Quorum of the Seventy. We shall then be pleased to hear from Elder David B. Haight, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Rex D. Pinegar

Each time we sing that lovely song ("We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet"), my heart pounds in rhythm with that testimony, and I bear witness to you of the divinity of the call of Spencer W. Kimball, who is our living prophet of God today.

I am grateful for my assignment with the young men of the Church. Those in the Aaronic Priesthood quorums of the Church are our future missionaries, Church leaders, and leaders in the world. With so great an opportunity, I desire today to speak to this vast army of youth about their power to be whatever they decide to be.

Boy Scout experience

This summer I had the unforgettable experience of camping with twenty-six hundred of these wonderful Aaronic Priesthood Young Men and their leaders. Amid a colorful array of tents and Boy Scout uniforms, the encampment took the shape of a giant twelve-spoked wheel. Each spoke housed one of Israel's twelve "tribes." The six days of camping at the Florida Desert Ranch provided camping skills, special demonstrations, tests of physical fitness, inspirational programs, and numerous other activities (not to mention consumption of fifty-eight hundred gallons of milk, sixty-three thousand pounds of ice, one thousand cases of soft drinks, and one and one-half tons of bread). The young men and their priesthood leaders participated together, focusing upon priesthood objectives.

On the first evening at dusk, with each "tribe" in place, all of

"Israel" marched to an arena for the opening campfire. The golden rays of sunset formed a magnificent backdrop for the mile-long line of young men as they marched two abreast toward the arena. With colorful banners held aloft, the modern-day sons of Israel passed beneath an archway emblazoned with the Scout Promise: "On My Honor." Sentries stood holding torch-lighted signs inscribed with the Scout Oath and Law and Aaronic Priesthood objectives. As the priesthood leaders led their young men past these sentries, it was anticipated that each young man would make a personal commitment to strive daily toward eternal life, to be a worthy priesthood bearer, worthy to serve a mission; worthy to marry in the temple.

The decisions made that night were followed up during the next four days by special "mountaintop" experiences. The leaders of ancient Israel often went to a designated mountaintop to receive special instruction from the Lord. It was planned that these "Israelite" priesthood bearers would prepare themselves to come to especially designated locations at the encampment where they might receive spiritual guidance and counsel. Here they learned that, having committed themselves to live the basic principles of the gospel, they had also committed themselves to make other important decisions regarding such things as being morally clean, being honest in word and deed, keeping the Word of Wisdom, and so forth.

These are some of the "certain things" to which President Kimball referred in a recent conference address:

"We hope we can help our young men and young women to realize, even sooner than they do now, that they need to make *certain* decisions only *once*. . . . We can push some things away from us once and have done with them! We can make a single decision about certain things that we will incorporate in our lives and then make them ours—without having to brood and redecide a hundred times what it is we will do and what we will not do.

" . . . My young brothers, if you have not done so yet, decide to decide!" (ENSIGN, May 1976, p. 46; italics added.)

"Decide to decide"

You can do it, my young brethren. You can become the men of righteousness and stature that your dreams and ambitions hold up before you. To accomplish this objective, you need to make some important decisions now, early in your life. *This is the time to decide to decide!*

First, decide to set goals. In his same conference address, President Kimball said:

"It is most appropriate for Aaronic Priesthood youth, as well as Melchizedek Priesthood men [and I would add, the women of the Church], to quietly, and with determination, set some serious personal goals in which they will seek to improve by selecting certain things that they will accomplish within a specified period of time." (ENSIGN, May 1976, p. 46).

A friend of mine helped his son set goals in this manner. Don asked his son what he wanted to be, whom he would want to be like. His son named a member of the ward who lived nearby, a man he had admired for some time. Don drove his son to where the man lived.

As they sat in their automobile in front of his home, they observed the man's possessions and his way of

life. They also discussed his kindness and generosity, his good name and integrity. They discussed the price their neighbor had paid to become what he was: the years of hard work, the schooling and training required, the sacrifices made, the challenges encountered. The affluence and seeming ease with which he now lived had come about as the result of diligent toil toward his righteous goals and the blessings of the Lord.

The son selected other men whom he deemed models of successful and righteous living and learned from a wise father the stories of their lives. Thereupon at an early age he set his own goal of what he wanted to become. And with his goal before him as a guide by which to make other decisions along the way, he was prepared to stay on his chosen course.

Decide to work

Next, decide to work. Work is necessary if you are to reach your goal. J. Paul Getty, considered to be at one time one of the world's wealthiest men, gave this formula for success: "Rise early, work late, and strike oil!" Mr. Getty has also made the thought-provoking comment that "it is possible for a man to get on a train that goes 60 miles per hour and say to himself, 'I am going 60 miles per hour.' But it is not true. Unless he is moving ahead on his own power, he is standing still." (J. Paul Getty, *Reader's Digest*, Sept. 1980, p. 94.)

Isaac Stern, the world-famous musician-violinist, was asked by a television talk show host at what point in his life he determined to devote his energies toward a career as a concert violinist. Mr. Stern told of having given his first concert in San Francisco at a young age. Music critics were extremely impressed and predicted a fine future for the promising young talent. With this encour-

agement, Isaac Stern began preparations for another concert a year later in New York City. The critics were not so kind to him there. It would require a tremendous amount of work, they judged, if Isaac Stern were to achieve success as a soloist.

Dejected and discouraged, the young Mr. Stern boarded one of New York City's double-decker buses and rode it up and down Manhattan a number of times. He was, in his words, "crying inside" as he tried to decide where he was going from there. Were his critics correct? Had he gone as far as he was capable of going? Should he now seek a profession as just another member of an orchestra?

After his fourth bus ride through the city, he returned to his apartment where his mother was waiting. He had made his decision. "I am going to work, mother—work at my music until it *works for me*." Today Isaac Stern is acclaimed as one of the finest violinists in the world. Work is a principle with a blessing. Work builds us physically and spiritually. It increased both our strength of body and our strength of character.

A basketball coach claimed, "If you find a man on top of a mountain, he didn't fall there." If you and I are to reach the summit of our divine potential, we must work each step of the way. The path may be rugged, difficult, unheralded; but it can be successfully climbed if we are willing to work with all our strength and commitment.

Decide to believe

Next, decide to believe. Believe in God. Believe in yourself. Believe that God is very interested in you as an individual, that he is anxious for you to succeed. He has provided in the gospel of his Son Jesus Christ the sure pattern for ultimate success.

When our lives are consistent with his gospel, we receive confidence through his Spirit to meet the challenges of each day. We can say with Nephi: "The Lord is able to do all things according to his will, for the children of men, if it so be that they exercise faith in him. . . . Wherefore, let us be faithful to him." (1 Ne. 7:12.)

The Prophet Joseph Smith's belief in God, his faith in God's interest in him, gave him the courage and optimism to say:

"Never get discouraged, whatever difficulties might surround [you]. If [you were] sunk in the lowest pit of Nova Scotia, and all the Rocky Mountains piled on top of [you], [you] ought not to be discouraged, but hang on, exercise faith and keep up good courage and [you] should come out on top of the heap." (George A. Smith's journal, quoted by Preston Nibley, in *Church Section*, 12 Mar. 1950, p. 16.)

Critical period of life

You, our beloved young men and women, are in the most critical period of life. Youth is the time when habits are formed, when ideas are adopted. It is the time of decision. Decide today to heed these words of our prophet: "Decide to decide!"

Decide to make decisions about certain things once—those things will push from you that might otherwise destroy you—and decide about other things that you will incorporate into your life, things that will bring you eternal happiness. Decide to set goals which are consistent with your divine destiny. Decide to believe in God, who created you. Decide to believe in yourself, that you truly can reach goals—your goals. Decide to work. You can be successful in any righteous endeavor when you are willing to work under the guiding hand of the Lord.

May we all make our decisions in the favorable light of the gospel of Jesus Christ, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Marion G. Romney

Elder Rex D. Pinegar, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy,

has just spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder David B. Haight, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. He will be followed by President Spencer W. Kimball, President of the Church, who will be our concluding speaker.

Elder David B. Haight

By divine instruction we assemble semiannually in these great conferences to worship God, our Eternal Father, and declare—through the gift and power of the Holy Ghost—the sonship of Jesus, our Savior and Redeemer, whom to know is to have life eternal (see John 17:3).

By participating in these conferences and witnessing the spirit of prophecy, each of us builds up our faith and our desire to live in righteousness. We receive inspired counsel from those appointed to administer the affairs of His kingdom, a kingdom destined to grow in power and to expand until it shall fill the earth. It is the kingdom which the prophet Daniel declared “shall never be destroyed: . . . it shall stand for ever” (Dan. 2:44).

As we near the close of this historic conference, we declare that true doctrine has been spoken by men who seek the Savior and who believe in him, thus making known his will—not only to his Church, but to individuals who humbly seek him. Our position among the Christian denominations of the world is unique. We are not affiliated, either directly or indirectly, with any other so-called Christian or non-Christian church. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints does not have, nor has it ever had, any connection or relation with any other church or religious group.

Keys of salvation

This Church holds the keys of the power of God unto salvation unto every soul that will receive the gospel honestly and obey it (see Rom. 1:16). As covenant children of God, we have been promised that if we are faithful, we will prevail over the enemies of his work. By our faithfulness and righteousness, the evil influences of wicked and designing men and women will be subdued. We are those who have the responsibility to prepare the world for the coming of the Savior, who—in power and glory—will again return to earth.

Some have asked, “Is your claim of authority more valid than that of other churches?” Our answer is, “Yes. We possess the same divine priesthood power and authority that was held anciently.”

At the time the Savior and his twelve Apostles were laboring along the coast of Caesarea Philippi, the Savior asked them, “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? (Matt. 16:13).

“And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

“He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

“And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

"And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

"And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matt. 16:14-19.)

Rock of revelation

The Lord taught that his Church was to be built on the rock of revelation, of divine truths revealed by God himself, and that Christ is the Son of the living God; therefore, the gates of hell shall not prevail against his Church.

The keys of the kingdom were promised to Peter, and he exercised that authority as he associated with the other members of the Twelve and presided over them.

There were a number of occasions when the Savior took only Peter, James, and John with him, undoubtedly for additional spiritual experiences and instruction. When Jesus went up into the Mount of Transfiguration to prepare for his coming ordeal, he took these three Apostles with him so that, having seen his glory—the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father—their hearts would be fortified and their faith strengthened as they gazed upon this heavenly event. There they received the promised keys of the priesthood. During this heavenly event Moses and Elias also appeared, and the three Apostles heard the voice of the Father bearing witness that Jesus is his Beloved Son and the command that they were to hear and obey.

In August of 1830, a revelation from the Lord confirms the ordination of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery to the Apostleship and their receiving the keys.

The revelation reads: "Peter, and James, and John . . . I have sent unto you, by whom I have ordained you and confirmed you to be apostles, and especial witnesses of my name, and bear the keys of your ministry and of the same things which I revealed unto them;

"Unto whom I have committed the keys of my kingdom, and a dispensation of the gospel for the last times; and for the fulness of times, in the which I will gather together in one all things, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth." (D&C 27:12-13.)

Keys of kingdom restored

The keys of the kingdom were bestowed upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery by these three ancient Apostles to whom Jesus had given authority following his resurrection and after he had ministered among them.

When the Lord called Frederick G. Williams, by revelation, as a counselor to Joseph Smith, He instructed, "Hearken to the calling wherewith you are called, even to be a high priest in my church, and a counselor unto my servant Joseph Smith, Jun.;

"Unto whom I have given the keys of the kingdom, which belong always unto the Presidency of the High Priesthood" (D&C 81:1-2).

On April 3, 1836, in the Kirtland Temple, the same heavenly beings that appeared to the Savior and his three Apostles on the Mount, appeared and conferred additional priesthood authority and keys upon the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery for the building up of the Church preparatory to the coming of

Christ to rule and reign on the earth forever. Moses appeared and conferred the keys of the gathering of Israel. Elias restored the covenants and authority given to Abraham. Elijah bestowed the keys and power of turning the hearts of the fathers to the children and of the children to their fathers. (See D&C 110:11-16.)

These same keys of the kingdom held by Peter, James, and John, who served in the First Presidency in the dispensation of the meridian of time, and conferred upon Joseph Smith and all subsequent Presidents of the Church, are now held by President Spencer W. Kimball today. He holds this supreme authority. He holds the right of revelation and decision for the priesthood and for the Church.

President Kimball

In President Kimball is concentrated the governing power of the priesthood. He possesses the keys pertaining to the dispensation of the fulness of times, including all the keys of former dispensations (see D&C 112:30-32). There is never but one on the earth at a time on whom these keys and powers are conferred. President Kimball, who will speak to us in a few moments, is God's prophet.

News reporters listened intently for a possible dramatic story that might indicate new direction to the Church when Spencer W. Kimball became President of the Church and held his first press interview. But he reaffirmed the ageless advice that would come from a prophet when he said, "Keep the commandments of God. Follow the pathway of the Lord. Walk in his footsteps."

To associate closely with President Kimball, to be near him, is to feel of his love for the Lord and his love for people—people everywhere. The Lord has preserved him to preside over His church at this critical period of the history of the Church

and of the world. It is for him to decide the course we follow. We are witnesses of his inspired decisions and directions, which give to us a feeling of assurance and calmness. We can follow his direction with utmost confidence and trust, for God has placed a holy man, His servant, to guide His people.

William Fowler, a British convert of 1849, was so moved by the very thought of a prophet of God living among the people that he wrote those stirring words: *We thank thee, O God, for a prophet to guide us in these latter days* (Hymns, no. 196).

As you listen to President Kimball's admonitions given with love to us all, pray about them in your homes, and I promise you that you will be inspired to stand by the tried and proven counsel of lofty principles that come from divine direction. In a revelation to Joseph Smith a few months after the Church was organized, the Lord gave careful instructions and counsel to the new leaders. He said, "Ask of God, . . . and that which the Spirit testifies unto you . . . do in all holiness of heart. . . ."

"... Seek ye earnestly the best gifts, always remembering for what they are given;

"... they are given for the benefit of those who love me and keep all my commandments." (D&C 46:7-9.)

That revelation continues: "All have not every gift [but] . . . every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God.

"To some it is given by the Holy Ghost to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. . . .

"To others it is given to believe on their words." (D&C 46:11, 13-14.)

Personal revelation

We can receive direction for ourselves and our families by per-

sonal revelation in answer to our humble prayers and by being in tune with God's prophet. The Lord has always communicated to his people through his prophet. The Lord's spokesmen are not self-appointed, but called of God. No man can take it unto himself. He must be called of God as was Aaron. (See Heb. 5:4.)

The day the Church was organized, 150 years ago, the Lord cautioned the members to carefully follow his newly called prophet: "Wherefore, . . . thou shalt give heed unto all his words and commandments which he shall give unto you as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me;

"For his word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith" (D&C 21:4-5).

The Lord then follows with this promise, if we obey: "For by doing these things the gates of hell shall not prevail against you; yea, and the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before you, and cause the heavens to shake for your good, and his name's glory" (D&C 21:6).

Prophet holds all keys for Church

The work we have been assigned to do has been placed by the Almighty in the hands of a fearless leader. By your sustaining with uplifted hands, you have pledged to follow our prophet. He is the mouthpiece of the Lord. The Lord, speaking to the Church in this dispensation and referring to its authorized leaders, said: "They shall speak as they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost.

"And whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation." (D&C 68:3-4.)

President Kimball holds all the keys for the Church to accomplish its divine mission—keys to preach the gospel to every nation and people, to organize stakes of Zion throughout the world for the gathering of Israel, to build holy temples for performing sacred ordinances for the living and for the dead.

This holy work, as revealed through latter-day prophets, is to prepare for the glorious coming of the Son of God to reign over the earth. Nothing is more explicitly stated in all scripture than that the Son of God will come again in the glory of the Father to reward the righteous and to establish his kingdom in power, bringing in a reign of righteousness, and peace. "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works" (Matt. 16:27).

This is the Church of Jesus Christ—reestablished by the Savior and his ancient Apostles.

We are witnesses that President Kimball is God's prophet, and that he is leading us in teaching the world the true gospel of Christ.

God, our Eternal Father, lives, as does his Only Begotten Son, the Savior of us all, in whose holy name I testify, amen.

President Marion G. Romney

Elder David B. Haight, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

Before hearing President Kimball's concluding remarks, we should like to express, on behalf of all who have listened to the singing during sessions of this general conference, appreciation and our sincere gratitude to all the choirs that have performed and to their conductors and accompanists.

We appreciate the attention given by local and national press representatives of radio and television in report-

ing the sessions of the conference.

We thank our city officials for the cooperation given this conference; the Relief Society and Church Health Unit nurses, who have been on hand to render service throughout the conference; and the ushers and interpreters.

We again express appreciation to the owners and managers of the many radio and television stations who have given public service time to carry

sessions of this conference in many countries.

Our beloved prophet, President Spencer W. Kimball, will be the concluding speaker of the conference, after which the Tabernacle Choir will sing "I Need Thee Every Hour."

The benediction will be offered by Elder Richard G. Scott, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

This conference will then stand adjourned for six months.

President Spencer W. Kimball

What a joy it is to be in this conference and to hear the word of the Lord as it has been given by so many of the Brethren. As always, my brothers and sisters, I am thankful, personally, as well as in behalf of the Church members, for the counsel and encouragement we have received in this general conference. Those who have provided the music have added so much to these sessions. Those of you who are in attendance have listened thoughtfully, and you have been fed the bread of life. Most of all, the Lord has blessed us with his Spirit, for which we are deeply grateful.

Determination to do better

What has been received, however, must not be put out of our thoughts with the singing of the closing hymn. As we have listened to each sermon, we have added our own emphatic *amens*. With the final *amen* this afternoon still ringing in our ears, let us go back to our homes with a determination to do better and to put into practice those principles we have learned about in the last two days.

Brothers and sisters, our challenge is the same as it always is when we have been taught correct principles. The challenge has been put well by an ancient prophet who

said, "Now, if you believe all these things see that ye do them" (Mosiah 4:10). We must not let the inner resolves we have made during this conference be forgotten as we return to the trials and tribulations and responsibilities of a workaday world, a world of turmoil and strife.

Christ our shepherd to lead us

For a few hours we have been apart from the world in general conference, and the Spirit has whispered peace to our souls. Now we must return to our places again in the world, but we are better prepared to improve the world. Let us more fully and confidently go ahead and meet the problems that beset us. Let us move forward confidently, not with halting steps, but steadily, and with persistent dedication borne of the Spirit.

It has been a great time of rejoicing during these days of conference, when friends have met friends and where the Saints have received much counsel. If all who have been to this conference will return to their homes and make up their minds that they are going to fulfill the obligations they have agreed to—that will be splendid!

We are bound to note events and trends in the world which will

constitute special challenges. We cannot expect to live in times of turbulence without experiencing some of that turbulence ourselves. But we do not need to be "tossed to and fro, and carried about [by] every wind of doctrine" without anchor (see Eph. 4:14). We have fellowship in a divine church. We have present-day prophets to guide us. We have Christ as our shepherd to lead us.

Church to fill the earth

Even so, brethren and sisters, modern communications have a way of bringing the world into our homes, and we must not lose our perspective, even if others are confused. If we hear discouraging reports and are sobered by events in the world, let us not become faint-hearted—"Do not weary by the way." The Lord's program will succeed even if some individuals in the Church fail. We will see the constant progress of the Lord's work, even in the midst of problems in the world. It will roll forth until it fills the whole earth. He has given us his assurances so many, many times. He has told us that if we will keep his commandments he is bound to keep his promises to us. He does! He will!

I suppose if I have learned anything in life, it is that we are to keep moving, keep trying—as long as we breathe! If we do, we will be surprised at how much more can still be done.

We are very much impressed by the Lamanite program, which is so very impressive to me, and we come to realize that this program is a reality. It is not a question in our minds; it is a reality, and it is spread far and wide in the world. We are very proud of the work that is being done. We are grateful for it. We are greatly conscious of the fact that among the Lamanites—as well as among all peoples of the other countries—we have a responsibility to see that the

gospel reaches their hearts and minds and that they understand it.

Love for all nations

We say again to the good people of this Church: Now let us go forth, having been edified, to bless and edify our families, our neighbors, and our friends. We are bound together by the fact that we are all literal children of our Heavenly Father and that he loves us.

We have spoken much about love today. Whenever I think of the countries of the world which I have visited in my lifetime, I have a very great love for them and their peoples—for them as individuals and as a people who have responded to us at one time or another.

Brethren and sisters, I would like to be known as one who loves his brothers and sisters. I would like that love to be extended far and near by all the visitors who leave this conference and go to other places to carry on the work of the Lord.

Blessing and testimony

The Lord lives, God lives, and Jesus is the Christ. He is the Only Begotten Son, the Savior and the Redeemer of this world. It is my solemn testimony that we are the Lord's witnesses, and we are grateful indeed in our hearts for the constant surveillance of the Lord Jesus Christ, for all that he means to us, and for all that he does and gives to us.

The Lord bless you, my dear brethren and sisters. I hope that you will go forward now with a new spring in your walk and that you may be able to carry forward the things that you have planned all your life to do. I hope that you will do them well and do them better than they have ever been done before. And I hope that you will give to the numerous people who need the Lord's blessings

that which they need so much: the assurance that the Gospel is here, that the Lord is God, that Jesus Christ is the Redeemer, and that we can depend on him totally in our work.

We pray that the Lord may continue to bless you, and we would be glad if you take back to your homes and to your people our sincere and

deep love. God bless you, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "I Need Thee Every Hour."

Elder Richard G. Scott offered the benediction.

GENERAL WELFARE SESSION SATURDAY MORNING

A general welfare services session was held in connection with general conference on Saturday, October 4, 1980, beginning at 7:00 A.M. In attendance at this meeting were General Authorities, Regional Representatives, stake presidencies, high councilors involved in welfare work, bishoprics, stake and ward Relief Society presidencies, and others responsible for operating welfare production projects.

President Spencer W. Kimball presided at and conducted this session.

President Kimball opened the meeting with the following remarks:

President Spencer W. Kimball

Beloved brothers and sisters, we welcome you to this general welfare services meeting.

In this day of economic uncertainty, it is more important than ever that we as leaders learn and teach to our people the principles of welfare. The instructions to be given to you today have been prepared

especially to aid you at this critical time. We urge you, therefore, to give careful consideration to what is said and to pass on to others within your local organizations what you learn here.

Under the direction of Donald Ripplinger with Roy Darley at the organ, we shall begin this meeting by singing hymn number 64, "Hope of Israel."

The congregation sang "Hope of Israel"

President Kimball

Elder William R. Bradford of the First Quorum of the Seventy will offer the invocation.

The invocation was given by Elder William R. Bradford.

President Spencer W. Kimball

Law of tithing

My dear brothers and sisters, my message today is not a new one. Prophets of all dispensations have clearly taught the law of tithing and the principles of the gospel with regard thereto. From the beginning we have been taught that "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof" (1 Cor. 10:26). From this fulness, the Lord requires that we dedicate one-tenth to him. Tithing is a law of God and is required of his followers. To fail to meet this obligation is to fail in a very weighty matter.

On this subject, we may read the word of the Lord in this dispensation in section 119 of the Doctrine and Covenants.

Inquiries are received at the office of the First Presidency from time to time from officers and members of the Church asking for information as to what is considered a proper tithe.

We have uniformly replied that the simplest statement we know of is the statement of the Lord himself, namely, that the members of the Church should pay "one-tenth of all their interest annually" which is understood to mean income (see D&C 119:4).

At times when we are inclined to think it is vain to serve the Lord, we should stir our faith, believe in the rich promises of God, and obey—and patiently wait. The Lord will fulfill all his rich promises to us. Paul says: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. 2:9).

Promise

Even for the present life, great blessings are promised to the obedient. Take, for example, the promise to the tithe payer:

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

"And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts.

"And all nations shall call you blessed." (Mal. 3:10-12.)

Tithing in our day

As I have already noted, the word of the Lord establishing the law of tithing in this dispensation was revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith at Far West, Missouri, on July 8, 1838, and is recorded in section 119 of the Doctrine and Covenants. Ten days later the Lord gave the Prophet Joseph a further revelation, section 120 of the Doctrine and Covenants, making known the proper disposition of the tithes of the Church by a council composed of the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve, and the Presiding Bishopric. To this day, the Council on the Disposition of Tithes, composed of the eighteen presiding Brethren designated in the revelation, meets regularly under the inspiration of the Lord to determine and approve the disbursement of the tithes of the Lord's church. As you are well aware, the Church does not engage in deficit spending. The sacred funds of the Church are carefully budgeted so that the expenditures never exceed the income.

President Joseph F. Smith, in speaking on the law of tithing from this very pulpit at the October conference in 1897, said:

"The purpose of the law of tith-

ing is similar to that of the law of revenue which is enacted by every state, every country, and every municipality in the world, I suppose. There is no such thing as an organization of men for any purpose of importance, without provisions for carrying out its designs. The law of tithing is the law of revenue for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Without it, it would be impossible to carry on the purposes of the Lord." (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938, p. 226.)

Mary Fielding Smith's example

Time will not permit me to tell you in detail a beautiful story on tithing told by my uncle, President Joseph F. Smith. It concerns an experience his mother, Mary Fielding Smith, the widow of Patriarch Hyrum Smith, had after she came into the Salt Lake Valley. It is heart-warming and faith promoting. She said to a man at the tithing office, across the street where the Hotel Utah now stands, who chided her for paying tithing: "You ought to be ashamed of yourself. Would you deny me a blessing? If I did not pay my tithing, I should expect the Lord to withhold his blessings from me. I pay my tithing, not only because it is a law of God, but because I expect a blessing by doing it. By keeping this and other laws, I expect to prosper, and to be able to provide for my family."

I would recommend that all of you read the full story in the book

Gospel Doctrine, a selection of President Smith's writings and sermons, pages 228, 229, and 230.

Tithing required of God's followers

My brethren and sisters, again I say, tithing is a law of God and is required of his followers. To fail to meet this obligation in full is to omit a weighty matter. It is a transgression, not an inconsequential oversight.

Brethren and sisters, the law of tithing is a divine commandment and applies to all the children of our Heavenly Father. All who believe the Bible ought to believe that it is a law of God. But none understand it and live it like the Latter-day Saints attempt to live it, because it has been renewed to us by modern-day prophets.

There echo again and again the words of the Master: "Render . . . unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22:21).

I bear my testimony, brothers and sisters, and witness to the divinity of this important law of the Lord and pray our Heavenly Father to bless you and all the Saints with that same testimony and leave my blessings with you, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

We shall now be pleased to hear from Presiding Bishop Victor L. Brown.

Bishop Victor L. Brown

My dear brothers and sisters, my message this morning is one of deep concern.

You will recall that ancient Israel was kept wandering in the wilderness for forty years before the

people were prepared to cross over Jordan and enter the promised land. For over forty years we as a people have been taught the importance of personal and family preparedness. We have been taught that the first

responsibility for our welfare rests upon our own shoulders and then upon our families. Only when these resources fail do we have call upon the Church. Yet, in recent months, it has been increasingly evident that there are many who are not prepared.

Within the last twelve months, the distribution of fast offerings and commodities by the bishops has been alarming. At the present rate of demand, the Church resources will be almost expended in a short time. As a matter of fact, some commodities have already been depleted, and this when the evidence is that the recession will be of a short duration. It would appear that in altogether too many cases the teachings about preparedness have been either misunderstood or knowingly rejected. Many of our members appear to feel that when difficulty comes, the Church will come to their aid, even when they could have prepared themselves had their priorities been appropriate.

Contrasting priorities

Some time ago while visiting two stakes, I saw the evidence of the point I am trying to make. Both stakes were in predominantly Latter-day Saint communities. Both were affected seriously by the same severe but temporary disruption of employment. Generally, when I arrive in a new community for stake conference, I drive around the neighborhood or countryside to get a feel for the kind of people who live there. For example: Are their yards well taken care of? Are their homes well cared for? Are there old dilapidated barns and outbuildings, or are the properties neatly maintained and fenced? In other words, how much pride do the people have in themselves and their community?

In the first stake I refer to, I saw well-cared-for homes and yards. It seemed that this was a prosperous, so-called middle-class area. Some

would have thought it an affluent area from the number of recreation vehicles in the driveways—boats, campers, and motor homes. As I met with the stake presidency, I commented on the apparent prosperity of the people. However, when reviewing the welfare needs of the people, I was shocked to see the demands made on the fast-offering funds and the bishops' storehouse.

The stake president informed me that within a week or two of the closing down of the major employer, many families came to their bishops for assistance. They had very limited reserves from which to take care of themselves. He also mentioned there were some faithful members in his stake who from their reserves had taken care of their own needs as well as assisting some of their neighbors.

In the second stake, which was some distance from the first but which was impacted heavily by the same employment problem, I saw few recreation vehicles. As a matter of fact, I saw little evidence of affluence, although the properties were neat and tidy. Here I was surprised to see practically no fast offerings or bishop's orders being used.

I asked the stake president if his bishops understood and were discharging their responsibilities for the poor and those in need. He indicated that, while some families had needed to seek assistance from their bishops, most of the members recognized their responsibility for their own welfare and were prepared to take care of themselves.

You see, the priorities of the members of these two stakes were very different. Many in the first stake were not prepared and expected the Church to take care of them, while in the second stake the situation was reversed—the majority of the people had prepared to meet their own needs.

May I also share some individual examples which are indicative of a growing problem?

Improper planning

A few months ago a young couple decided to cancel their health insurance. They felt they just could not afford it. The high cost of graduate school, in a time of rampant inflation, led them to disregard the counsel of the Brethren. Then came a baby—premature, with serious complications resulting in incredibly expensive care. Heartsick and frightened, they turned first to their families, who responded with substantial help. That not being nearly enough, they then turned to their bishop, who, from the fast offerings, supplied additional help. They would have been almost self-sustaining had they retained their insurance.

A young man decided that trade school was too demanding and too expensive. He dropped out of school, got married, and took a low-paying job in a grocery store. When a baby came, he found that his income was not adequate even for the family's basic needs. Too embarrassed to approach his parents, he turned to his bishop for help.

Another family chose Monday night sports on television in preference to family home evening. For weeks and months there was no family prayer, no gospel discussions, no reading of the scriptures, no other meaningful family activities. Now a teenage daughter has run away from home, and the parents have turned to the bishop for help.

Importance of personal and family preparedness

In each of these examples, the central problem could probably have been avoided if the members had applied the principles of personal and family preparedness. The principles apply universally to all members of the Church all over the world, notwithstanding the fact that the full welfare services program is not in

place in most countries outside the United States and Canada. We recognize there may be legal restrictions in some countries on certain phases of the program. Nevertheless, our people should follow these teachings to the extent the law allows.

I implore you stake leaders to see that the messages of this welfare services meeting get to the bishops, the quorum leaders, and the ward Relief Society presidents so that the members of the Church can be taught and converted sufficiently to live the basic principles of which we speak and thus put their houses in order (see D&C 90:18).

The bishop is responsible to administer to the needs of the poor and needy. He determines who will receive assistance and in what form that assistance will be. His judgment is basic to the wise administration of this program. He determines whether it blesses the people or becomes simply a dole. He also is responsible to see that no one who should properly be helped is overlooked.

Earlier I indicated that these principles have been taught for forty years. As a matter of fact, as President Kimball said, they have been taught for a much longer period of time. President Brigham Young, in remarks given in the Mill Creek Ward on July 25, 1868, had this to say, among other things:

"I believe the Latter-day Saints are the best people on the earth of whom we have any knowledge. Still, I believe that we are, in many things, very negligent, slothful and slow to obey the words of the Lord. Many seem to act upon the faith that God will sustain us instead of our trying to sustain ourselves. We are frightened at seeing the grasshoppers coming and destroying our crops. . . . I remember saying in the School of the Prophets, that I would rather the people would exercise a little more sense and save means to provide for themselves, instead of squandering it

away and asking the Lord to feed them. In my reflections I have carried this matter a considerable length. I have paid attention to the counsel that has been given me. For years past it has been sounded in my ears, year after year, to lay up grain, so that we might have an abundance in the day of want. Perhaps the Lord would bring a partial famine on us; perhaps a famine would come upon our neighbors. I have been told that He might bring just such a time as we are now having. But suppose I had taken no heed to this counsel, and had not regarded the coming time, what would have been my condition to-day.

"View the actions of the Latter-day Saints on this matter, and their neglect of the counsel given; and suppose the Lord would allow these insects to destroy our crops this season and the next, what would be the result? I can see death, misery and want on the faces of this people. But some may say, 'I have faith the Lord will turn them away.' What ground have we to hope this? Have I any good reason to say to my Father in heaven, 'Fight my battles,' when He has given me the sword to wield, the arm and the brain that I can fight for myself? Can I ask Him to fight my battles and sit quietly down waiting for Him to do so? I cannot. I can pray the people to hearken to wisdom, to listen to counsel; but to ask God to do for me that which I can do for myself is preposterous to my mind. Look at the Latter-day Saints. We have had our fields laden with grain for years; and if we had been so disposed, our bins might have been filled to overflowing, and with seven years' provisions on hand we might have disregarded the ravages of these insects, and have gone to the canyon and got our lumber, procured the materials, and built up and beautified our places, instead of devoting our time to fighting and endeavoring to replace that which has been lost

through their destructiveness. We might have made our fences, improved our buildings, beautified Zion, let our ground rest, and prepared for the time when these insects would have gone. But now the people are running distracted here and there. . . . They are in want and in trouble, and they are perplexed. They do not know what to do. They have been told what to do, but they did not hearken to this counsel." (In *Journal of Discourses*, 12:240-41.)

President Young goes on to say: "We must learn to listen to the whispering of the Holy Spirit, and the counsels of the servants of God, until we come to the unity of the faith. If we had obeyed counsel we would have had granaries today, and they would have been full of grain; and we would have had wheat and oats and barley for ourselves and for our animals, to last us for years." (In *Journal of Discourses*, 12:241.)

Quoting further from President Young: "When Moses was on the mount they [the Israelites] went to Aaron and inquired where Moses was, and demanded gods to go before them. And Aaron told them to bring him their ear rings and their jewelry, and they did so, and he made of them a golden calf; and the people ran around it, and said these be the gods which brought us out of the land of Egypt. How much credit was due to them? Just as much as to us, for not saving our grain when we had an abundance, and, when grasshoppers come, crying, 'Lord turn them away and save us.' It is just as consistent as for a man on board a steamboat on the wide ocean to say, I will show you what faith I have, and then to jump overboard, crying, 'Lord save me.' It may not seem so daring; but is it any more inconsistent than to throw away and waste the substance the Lord has given us, and when we come to want, crying to Him for what we have wasted and squandered? The Lord has been

blessing us all the time, and He asks us why we have not been blessing ourselves." (In *Journal of Discourses*, 12:243.)

I do not want to leave the impression that nothing has been done. There are those faithful Saints who have their year's supply and are taking care of themselves. They know of that peace which comes from being obedient and being prepared. From letters we receive, we know that many other families are planting gardens and working toward their year's supply of food, clothing, and other necessities. Some parents are striving to get the whole family involved in temporal welfare.

One recent letter reads: "I am over our food storage at home. I'm ten years old. I would like your manual called 'Home Storage and Production.' If you can send me any other information I'd like that too. [Signed] Travis Leal"

Our concern and the thrust of my message, which has been repeated from this pulpit many times, is that the welfare program rests on the basic principle of personal and family preparedness, not on Church preparedness. We are concerned that because the Church program includes production projects, canneries, bishops' storehouses, Deseret Industries, and other visible activities, our people are mistakenly led to believe these things replace the need for them to provide for themselves. This simply is not so. The evidence that this illusion exists is seen in the experience of the last few months as the draw on fast offerings and storehouse commodities has spiraled.

Difficult times

We are very much aware that we live in difficult times, perhaps as difficult as any recent period in history. The economy in general seems to be out of control; there is high unemployment in many areas. In-

flation is running rampant in most countries of the world. Personal debt is staggering. It seems almost impossible for young people to buy a home. Many who have purchased a home have monthly payments which leave no room to handle the slightest emergency.

We have been taught that we should build our reserves over a period of time, that we should not go into debt to do so, that we should buy those things we use and use them on a rotation basis, that we should use common sense in preparing ourselves to be independent and self-reliant. There has never been extremism or fanaticism associated with these teachings. I fear we today are somewhat like those referred to by President Brigham Young in this quotation:

"We have seen one grasshopper war before this. Then we had two years of it. We are having two years now. Suppose we have good crops next year, the people will think less of this visitation than they do now; and still less the next year; until in four or five years it will be almost gone from their minds. We are capable of being perfectly independent of these insects. If we had thousands on thousands of bushels of wheat, rye, and barley, and corn we might have said to them, [that is, the insects] 'you may go, we are not going to plant for you.' Then we could have plowed up the ground, put in the manure, and let the land rest, and the grasshoppers would not have destroyed the fruits of our labors which could have been directed to the beautifying of Zion and making our habitations places of loveliness." (In *Journal of Discourses*, 12:242.)

"Prepare every needful thing"

My brothers and sisters, I feel our anxieties are justified. It is the opinion of many that more difficult times lie ahead. We are deeply con-

cerned about the welfare of our people and recognize the potential privation and suffering that will exist if each person and family does not accept the word of the Lord when he says, "Prepare every needful thing" (D&C 88:119), and "It must needs be done in mine own way" (D&C 104:16).

May I again implore you priesthood and Relief Society leaders to see that all members of the Church everywhere understand the responsi-

bility they have for their own welfare, that our people will be blessed to live provident and righteous lives. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

We have just listened to Bishop Victor L. Brown.

He will now be followed by Bishop J. Richard Clarke and by Sister Barbara B. Smith, General President of the Relief Society.

Bishop J. Richard Clarke

Straightforward counsel

My dear brothers and sisters, the greatest test for any generation is how it responds to the voice of the prophets. Our prophets have admonished us to—

1. Increase our personal righteousness.
2. Live within our means and get out of debt.
3. Produce, can, and store enough food, clothing, and, where possible, fuel for one year.

This straightforward counsel has not been followed by all of you. Some have believed and complied; others have waited until they could be sure the storm clouds were really gathering; and still others have rejected the counsel.

There was once a group of villagers who instructed their young shepherd, "When you see a wolf, cry 'Wolf! Wolf!' and we'll come with guns and pitchforks."

The next day the boy was tending his sheep when he saw a mountain lion in the distance. He cried out, "Lion! Lion!" But no one came. The lion killed several sheep. The boy was distressed: "Why didn't you come when I yelled?"

"There are no lions in this part of the country," they replied. "It is wolves that we are afraid of."

The young shepherd learned a very valuable lesson:

People respond only to what they are prepared to believe. The Brethren hesitate sometimes to talk in bold terms regarding the realities of the economy and the need for individual and family preparedness. Such talk is interpreted by the black-cloud watchers as a time of general calamity, and many stampede to the grocery stores to get ahead of the hoarders.

In April 1976 Bishop Featherstone suggested a one-year goal for members to store a year's supply of food. Some of those who had not yet begun a home storage program rushed out and plunged deeply into debt to buy hundreds of dollars of groceries. They then sat back, as did the Prophet Jonah, to see what was going to happen to Nineveh: It was as if Brother Featherstone had officially set doomsday as April 1, 1977. This was not his intention. The Lord's way has always been an orderly preparation, not one of second-guessing, confusion, and panic.

Fallen civilizations

Let us be wise stewards. Let us ponder the lessons of history and profit from the experiences of those

who have not heeded the prophets. Gibbons, Toynbee, Durant, and other noted historians have analyzed the reasons for the fall of the mighty civilizations. The repetition is monotonous. In summarizing cause and effect, an American educator lists six common reasons why each civilization fell:

"1. They lost their religious convictions and flouted basic morality.

"2. They became obsessed with sex.

"3. They debased their money of its intrinsic value and let inflation run rampant.

"4. Honest work ceased to be a virtue.

"5. Respect for law disintegrated and violence became an accepted method of achieving individual and group desires.

"6. Finally, citizens were no longer willing to be soldiers and fight for the defense of their nation and their heritage." (Dr. Kenneth McFarland speech, "Bicentennial America's Opportunity," given at Fairmont Hotel, San Francisco, at the National Convention of the Independent Petroleum Association of America.)

Permanent security through following prophets

Brothers and sisters, will our modern nations be wise enough to escape similar destruction? Are we prepared to reverse the course of history? Through the exercise of our political rights and responsibilities, through community service, and through personal righteousness, we must free our nations from tyranny and from fiscal and moral bankruptcy to the extent of our ability. But we must never forget that permanent security is possible only on the condition that we follow the prophets of the Lord.

In section 101 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord reminds us that when the Saints are slow to hearken to his words, he is "slow to hearken unto their prayers, to answer them in the day of their trouble.

"In the day of their peace," he explains, "they esteemed lightly my counsel; but, in the day of their trouble, of necessity they feel after me." (D&C 101:7-8.)

Later in this same revelation a very powerful lesson is taught in the parable of the husbandmen. You will recall that husbandmen were hired to plant twelve olive trees in the vineyard, to build a hedge around it, to build a tower, and to set a watchman thereon. As they counseled together, however, they couldn't understand why the Lord would have need for a tower, "seeing this is a time of peace" (D&C 101:48). While they held a committee meeting, contending, "at variance one with another they became very slothful. . . .

"And the enemy came by night, and broke down the hedge," scattered the frightened servants, and "destroyed their works, and broke down the olive trees." (D&C 101:50-51.) It was a terrible way to learn the consequences of disobedience. How much better just to follow the simple instruction of the Master.

Obedience to God

Each gospel dispensation produces a number of valiant, faithful Saints—the truly elect and noble of God. They may be one individual or an entire family. They are honored and remembered not by worldly standards but for their simple majestic faith. They have placed obedience to God as their sacred obligation. They love him. They trust him. They are committed to serve him. They are the bone, muscle, and sinew of the

church of God in every age. They form the household of faith. Here are some classic statements from their ranks:

"I know not, save the Lord commanded me" (Moses 5:6).

"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Josh. 24:15).

"I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded" (1 Ne. 3:7).

"Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38).

"I . . . feel to say to the Lord, humbly, 'Give me this mountain' (Josh. 14:12), give me these challenges. . . .

"I will 'wholly follow the Lord my God' (see Josh. 14:8) to the fullest extent of my energy and ability." (Spencer W. Kimball, in Conference Report, Oct. 1979, p. 115.)

Brothers and sisters, we do not always know why the Lord commands us to do certain things. His ways are not man's ways. But this much we do know—his paths are straight. They are not the crooked paths of men. We accept faith as the first principle of the gospel; but do we trust the Lord enough to act first and receive confirmation later? Some may call this blind obedience. An Idaho bishop used to say, "Any kind of obedience is better than any kind of disobedience." Faith is not blind. However, we will often receive no witness until *after* a trial of our faith. If we have been disobedient in the past, let us commit today to repent and to put our house in order.

I believe we can best accomplish this by applying the counsel of the prophets in three critical temporal problems confronting the Saints: (1) the management of personal income and expenditures; (2) the dwindling of work quality and productivity; and (3) the insufficiency of reserves, in the form of both cash and commodities.

Personal financial management

Regarding the need for financial management, let me refer you to President Tanner's classic talk, "Constancy and Change," given during October 1979 general conference and suggest that you study it carefully. Proper budgeting is essential to sound management. There is no question that we all need the discipline of a budget.

We have been counseled to get out of debt. This directive has been confusing to many of us over the years. How is it possible to be out of debt and to buy a home, finance education, or start a business? When President Clark advised us to avoid debt as we would the plague, I believe he was teaching us a vital principle of temporal harmony. Debt is always a burden, but some debt is necessary. Sound business debt, home mortgages, and other forms of "secured" debt are unavoidable for most of us. However, extravagant use of credit, which comes from yielding to our emotions rather than reason, creates burden.

For most of us, consumer debt is dangerous and difficult to contain because it is so readily available. It can appease an immediate want as well as a bona fide need. Enticing advertisements convince us that luxuries are our right and our need. Isn't it interesting how a luxury once enjoyed soon becomes a necessity?

Our guide for credit management should be: borrow only what we must, at the lowest rate available, for the shortest time possible. This requires restraint of appetites and practice of the time-honored virtue of frugality. There is an insidious philosophy that advocates plunging into debt and letting inflation pay it off. I reject this philosophy. If we all operated on that premise, we would completely subvert our economic system. As long as we secure our debt with

equity, we can manage it; but to amass debt by pledging future earnings submerges us in financial quicksand.

In order to balance our personal income and expenditures, we obviously reduce expenses or increase our earnings. Too often, however, people find it easier to adjust to a tighter budget than to find ways to generate additional income. Is it possible that our members are becoming part of a "conspiracy for mediocrity" by being content with their present knowledge and skills? Pride of workmanship has always been the heart of a competitive free-enterprise system. There are too many tradesmen who will not pay the price to become craftsmen, teachers who do not teach, repairmen who do not repair, farmers who do not farm, leaders who do not lead, and problem solvers in every field who do not solve problems.

Quality labor

Our labor should be honest labor and quality labor. The only honorable way for each of us to share in the world's wealth is to exchange our own goods and services for those produced by someone else. The Saints would be in demand everywhere and could command premium compensation if we would accept the challenge to set a Mormon standard of quality, unique because of its excellence. This is part of our religion.

Let me repeat what has been taught from the beginning. Adam learned, as part of his first lesson by the Lord on economics, that the earth was to be subdued and dominion gained by sweat, by brain and brawn. The divine law of work shall never be repealed—for God established it. He has cursed idleness and commanded parents in Zion to teach their children to work. There is a high price for excellence, but the compensation and soul satisfaction

are truly worth it. To work below our capabilities creates a deep hunger in ourselves and enormous waste in society. Our doctrine of eternal progression certainly encompasses our occupational progress. Each of us should be on a career path which will require us to stretch to our full potential.

Build proper reserves

Finally, concerning the insufficiency of reserves, God gave a natural instinct to the animals he created to preserve their surplus against a time of need. But man has developed the tendency to squander all that he harvests and to leave to chance or to others his satisfaction of future needs. This is contrary to divine law. Frugality is a principle of righteousness. Consumption should never exceed our production. Economic freedom comes from the surpluses we create.

In addition to our reserve of food, we should build a cash reserve. We should form habits of thrift and teach our children that part of everything we earn should be ours to keep. It is true that inflation reduces the purchasing power of savings, but how much purchasing power do no savings have?

Another major reserve is home equity. Our major concern is that too many families have overextended themselves so that the debt burden overshadows the benefit of home ownership. Again, let us be sure we do not confuse wants with needs.

One final concern of reserve deficiency is the need to insure against our greatest potential loss. I think we all would agree that our ability to earn is our greatest asset. When the provider insures his life, he is insuring his future income for his family. As husbands, let us not force our wives into the marketplace to be both the provider and homemaker should our lives be cut short

by premature death. We can increase their options by proper insurance planning.

We would also urge each family to carry adequate health insurance. Medical costs are soaring, and trying to self-insure from personal savings is very risky. During inflation, medical costs increase faster than our savings accumulate.

Proper concept of welfare program

Since its inception, there have been critics of the welfare program—but some people have a problem for every solution. I am sure there were Israelites in Egypt who did not want to leave their homes until Moses could explain how they were going to get across the Red Sea. It was not until they followed Moses to the shores of the Red Sea that the Lord opened up the way to them.

Brothers and sisters, we do not know by what means or when a crisis will occur in our family. Residents of Michigan did not need a nationwide, full-scale depression to tax their economic resources and cause many to lose their jobs. If I have a crippling disability for a prolonged period, my income stops just as surely as if it were caused by a national catastrophe. We tend to view distasteful circumstances in a rather detached way; but, as one of the American presidential candidates recently said, "If my neighbor loses his job, it is a recession; but if I lose my job, that's a depression."

There are some who feel that they are secure as long as they have funds to purchase food. Money is not food. If there is no food in the stores

or in the warehouses, you cannot sustain life with money. Both President Romney and President Clark have warned us that we will yet live on what we produce.

I would like to make one point very clear. The welfare services program of the Church is essentially you and I being self-sufficient within our own families. The Church storehouse system is a backup system for the small number of members who are poor or physically handicapped, or for emergencies or disasters. There is *no way* the Church, as an institution, intends to assume the responsibility that rightfully belongs to the individual. The welfare program was never designed to do so. Personal and family preparedness is the Lord's way. Then, by uniting together to pay generous fast offerings and by providing commodities from our projects and canneries, we can help our neighbor who cannot help himself.

Most important of all, brothers and sisters, with all our storing, let us store righteousness that we may stand approved of the Lord. In 1833 the Lord said,

"Therefore, let your hearts be comforted, for all things shall work together for good to them that walk uprightly, and to the sanctification of the church.

"For I will raise up unto myself a pure people, that will serve me in righteousness;

"And all that call upon the name of the Lord, and keep his commandments, shall be saved." (D&C 100:15-17.)

Such a people will be known as the "household of faith" (D&C 121:45). That we may be found in their midst is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Sister Barbara B. Smith

My dear brothers and sisters, I have been thinking what a difference we could make in each household if

we as women accept and follow the wise counsel given this morning, if we wholeheartedly respond to it—not

in a spirit of sacrifice or out of a sense of duty, but because of our devotion to the Lord. Our response, then, would be out of the fullness of our hearts—with joy, with faith, and with a feeling of challenge and innovation.

Joseph in Egypt

I am reminded of a visit I had with President Kimball. At that time he had been reading again the account of Joseph who was sold into Egypt. President Kimball made the comment that Joseph was a great teacher of the welfare program.

Since then, as I have read the story of Joseph, I have been impressed with his great qualities of mind and spirit that made his experience one of the greatest welfare sagas of ecclesiastical history.

Recall the circumstances of Joseph's Egyptian servitude, his time in the household of Potiphar as overseer of the house (see Gen. 39). Remember the test of faith during his unjust imprisonment. Consider his interpretation of dreams that ultimately led to his elevation to the highest office in Pharaoh's government.

Note Joseph's obedience to the Lord's warning of impending famine, that "the land perish not through the famine" (Gen. 41:36). "Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea" (Gen. 41:49) during the seven plenteous years against the seven years of famine.

Observe the drama unfold which brought Joseph's brothers to him to plead for food. Joseph was the agent of their deliverance. Feel the emotion as Joseph revealed his true identity to his family.

Finally, recognize the discipline of Joseph's life that brought to fruition his absolute faith in the Lord, his endurance, his deep affection for his kindred.

We, as women in the Church, can be Josephlike in faith and in obedience and in following the direction

of the Lord given us through his chosen leaders.

Increased involvement in welfare matters

In this time of international uncertainty, worldwide inflation, and financial stress, I see the need for the Relief Society to become increasingly involved in welfare matters and for its members to implement welfare principles more fully.

In the organization, the wheels have already been set in motion for a closer, more efficient response in welfare. The first of these major moves was made in April 1979, when President Ezra Taft Benson announced the establishment of priesthood councils at every level of Church government. Last October the Relief Society's role in priesthood councils was explained. We directed Relief Society leaders regarding their participation and involvement. From reports received, this instruction is now beginning to be implemented, and a better working relationship between priesthood and Relief Society leaders is resulting.

Role of ward and stake board members

The next action taken by Relief Society to carry out its responsibilities and contribute more effectively in the welfare program came last spring. At that time a new administrative plan was adopted to fully utilize the stake and ward Relief Society boards.

Acting under the direction of the ward and stake Relief Society presidencies, each board member is assigned to a specific division of work. She is to serve as a resource to her presidency in planning, goal setting, and implementing the assigned facet of work.

In the area of welfare, the board member, working under the direction

of the president, is expected to become knowledgeable about *all* aspects of welfare and to help the presidency by—

1. Interpreting welfare services material; studying, compiling, and evaluating welfare services information.

2. Investigating resources; becoming familiar with Church and community resources.

3. Increasing understanding; meeting regularly with the presidency to discuss Relief Society's role in welfare services.

4. Initiating goal setting; setting short- and long-term goals with the Relief Society president.

5. Implementing approved plans and revising plans when directed.

Duties of Relief Society presidencies

She correlates her work with other board members as she helps to carry out approved welfare plans. In this assignment, the board member extends the effectiveness of the president and her counselors, but she does *not* assume their responsibilities nor replace them on welfare services committees, nor does she handle confidential matters.

The presidency works under the direction of priesthood leadership as defined in the new *Welfare Services Resource Handbook*.

We feel this new assignment will strengthen and extend Relief Society's capability to respond to ward or stake welfare responsibilities.

We ask that Relief Society presidencies become thoroughly familiar with the Storehouse Resource System and that they learn how to complete a bishop's order for commodities accurately and with sensitivity. The Relief Society president must complete all orders *before* the bishop signs them. The two signatures assure agreement that the kinds of products and the amounts are correct and that Church resources are safeguarded.

As Relief Society leaders, we now look forward to an era of increased activity in the welfare aspect of our work. We have a specific goal to be implemented immediately which we offer as a challenge and a guide for Relief Society leaders and members alike. We ask, in this time of inflation and great financial stress on individuals and families, that our teachings of "provident living" be further expanded and fully practiced by every member.

We encourage women to economize in creative ways such as—

1. Exchanging skills, when practical, instead of money; exchanging excess vegetable produce from one garden for fruit from another; exchanging rather than buying books, musical instruments, Scout uniforms, etc.

2. Becoming more knowledgeable gardeners; developing their own garden seeds gathered from their

Encourage economy

own high quality produce.

3. Saving time and money by organizing their homes into efficient work and storage centers and by preparing food with their own mixes.

This means that all will make wise use of the resources available to them as they live each day and prepare for the future.

Let us become better managers of our economic resources. The first step could be to plan a workable budget. This should be one that is uniquely right for us. Our budget, in addition to allowing for the basic payments to the butcher, the baker, and the mortgage loan banker, should include a payment to ourselves—in the form of savings, even though it may be meager at first.

In an interesting book entitled *The Richest Man in Babylon*, the story is told of a poor scribe who bargained with the rich man for his formula for economic success. That

early Babylonian gave a surprisingly simple answer: "A lean purse is easier to cure than endure.

"... learn to make your treasure work for you. Make it your slave.

"Pay for what you eat and wear but pay yourself as well." (George S. Clason, *The Richest Man in Babylon*, New York: Hawthorne Books, 1955, p. 31.)

Practice prudence

Let us practice prudence in our homes, become better meal planners, housekeepers, and home decorators. Let us acquire the sewing and tailoring skills that will help our clothing look custom-made and that will help keep it in good repair. Let us make our kitchens creative centers from which emanate some of the most delightful of all home experiences.

I know that many women already do this. One such family does not like to miss a meal at home. The children want to bring their friends home because of the mother's excellent cooking and the inviting table on which the food is served. The parents always engender gracious, stimulating conversation with their children at mealtime.

The mother is what I would call a provident homemaker, especially in her kitchen. When she cooks, she cooks in quantity, not only for the immediate meal but for other meals as well. She is creative and innovative with foods. She makes nourishing soups, such as split pea, onion, minestrone, and consommé, using marrow bones and soup meat. Then she serves the meat as a main-course dish with a savory sauce or garnish. Colorful fresh vegetables are added to make a complete and satisfying meal. Occasionally she prepares chicken from which she makes delicious chicken dumplings, chicken salad, or chicken sandwiches. This homemaker uses necks, backs, and

other less meaty parts that many discard to provide a base for the aromatic broth from which soups are made for the days ahead. This woman draws from a home garden of beautiful fruits, vegetables, and herbal seasonings to make the family meals to "please the eye and to gladden the heart; . . . for taste and for smell, to strengthen the body and to enliven the soul" (D&C 59:18-19).

I sense in this homemaker a happy, creative spirit that makes provident living an enriched way of life.

She understands—as we each should—that life is made up of small daily acts. Savings in food budgets come by pennies, not only by dollars. Clothing budgets are cut by mending—stitch by stitch, seam by seam. Houses are kept in good repair nail by nail. Provident homes come not by decree or by broad brush-stroke. Provident homes come from small acts performed well day after day. When we see in our minds the great vision, then we discipline ourselves by steady, small steps that make it happen. It is important to realize this correlation between the large and the small.

Let us as women in the Church today make happy, provident living a life-style in our homes, approaching this goal in a spirit of challenge and innovation and thanksgiving. Let us see what creativity can do to heighten the standard of our living, not reduce it—to be provident without becoming penny-pinching, miserly, or ungenerous. We have many ideas displayed in the Relief Society Building, and we invite you to come and see them.

Then as we attend area and multiregion council meetings and as we serve in this vital welfare work, may we be great teachers of welfare services principles. Led by chosen priesthood leaders, may we all work together, as Joseph of old proclaimed, "to preserve . . . a posterity

ty in the earth, and to save . . . lives by a great deliverance" (Gen. 45:7), I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

Brother Ripplinger will now lead us in singing hymn number 110,

"Choose the Right," following which we shall hear from President Douglas W. DeHaan of the Portland Oregon East Stake.

The congregation sang "Choose the Right."

President Douglas W. DeHaan

At times, working on a Church welfare production project can seem to be largely a temporal experience. We may have just spent a long, hot day on one of our farms thinning, weeding, or lifting. Or perhaps we are returning home near midnight, knowing that we are expected to be on our own jobs at 7:00 A.M. after working a swing shift in one of our canneries. While we may have a tired but satisfying feeling inside, it may not register with us that much of it was a spiritual experience. Yet Doctrine and Covenants 29:34 makes it clear that requirements the Lord places upon us are always spiritual. He says to us, in part, "And not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal."

Example of dairy farm

Just three years ago, at this same time of year, I had this great principle demonstrated to me at the hands of the Lord in a very special way. The Portland Oregon East Stake has been developing a dairy farm over the past half dozen years or more. It is located on an island in the Columbia River and is one of the largest single-stake projects in the Church. This fact, coupled with the need to develop the project almost from scratch, has placed a heavy burden upon our people, both in time and in money.

With a new project, we had run in the red each year, but 1977 was to be our turnabout year. The final result depended upon harvesting about seventy-five acres of corn, which was to be made into silage for feed. Unseasonably, it had rained almost every day during the month of September, and by the first day of October, our scheduled harvest date, I knew the crop was in trouble. We have a very high water table on the island, and when the ground gets saturated with too much water we get so much mud our harvest equipment cannot get into the fields without sinking. Once the land is saturated, it takes about a month of dry weather to make the fields passable to vehicles. During the winter months and right up until June, the corn ground is entirely under water.

I visit the farm about once a week, so I keep a pair of rubber boots in my car. I drove to the farm that October day and decided to pull on my boots and walk down into the corn fields. I immediately found even the road turned to mud and puddles. In places the mud came near the top of my eighteen-inch-high boots, and I don't really know why I continued walking. It was a dark gray, overcast day, and drops of rain were splashing in the open puddles everywhere. The farm crew told me they had taken a corn chopper down into the fields a few days earlier but had it down to

the axles in mud somewhere in the long corn rows.

"Is anything too hard for the Lord?"

As I walked I noticed that the corn itself was a fine crop, with row after row ten to fourteen feet high. Now, I rarely get depressed, but I was feeling really low that day. I knew how hard everyone had worked and what it meant to lose that fine crop. I eventually came to the spot where the chopper had gone in, and looking way down the rows I saw it sunk deep into the mud. For some reason I decided to walk to the chopper, and as I entered the rows and splashed on through the mud and water, I was startled to hear a voice. I am sure that the voice came to me only in my mind, but I could hear the voice and admonition of President Kimball. He said softly, "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" (Gen. 18:14.) Now, like you, I have heard him say that many times, but I did not fully focus upon it before this time. I smiled to myself as I walked and said, "Yes, President, I believe this mess may be too hard even for the Lord."

As I neared the chopper, I was impressed to climb up on it and upon doing so found my head was about two feet above seventy-five acres of that tall, splendid corn. As I looked about in discouragement, the voice seemed to come to me again, but this time in a more serious tone, "President, is there anything too hard for the Lord?" At once I felt ashamed of my attitude of depression, and soon I was no longer looking down but up into the sky. Before I realized it, I was talking, yes, pleading aloud with the Lord in faith. When I had finished, I had committed that crop and the harvesting of it into the hands of the Lord and had done so by the power of the priesthood of God. I recall that as I climbed down from

the chopper, tears were still streaming from my eyes. I grew concerned as I slowly walked away considering what it was that I had just done. Yet I knew that I had done it in total faith, that there was a proper need, and that it was a righteous request of the Lord.

Because of the spiritual nature of my experience, I think I had decided not to tell anyone of it. But the very next Sunday I was sitting on the stand during one of our ward sacrament meetings. I was not scheduled to speak, but the bishop got up with about ten minutes remaining and said, "I feel President DeHaan has had a spiritual experience that he needs to share with us." I got up reluctantly, knowing what it was I had to relate. I did so and asked the congregation to join me with their faith. Now, we have Saints with great testimonies in our stake, and my experience spread rapidly throughout the wards. I learned several weeks later that members were even telling their nonmember friends to go ahead and plan picnics and outdoor activities, because even in Oregon it was not going to rain throughout October. On the day following my experience in the corn fields, the sun came out for the first time in nearly thirty days. Then the next day we had sun, and the day following that. Before long the temperature was back into the high seventies. Every day for the next three weeks the weather forecast called for rain, but each day no rain fell.

I recall that about two weeks later I flew to Seattle, about two hundred miles to the north, on business. It rained very hard there all day, and as I made the return trip to Portland it rained all the way until we reached the Columbia River, which surrounds our farm. Miraculously, the clouds parted and the rain ceased. That day I cut a little weather map from the newspaper showing the rain ending at the river and put it

on our refrigerator as a reminder to keep my faith. Three weeks after my original experience in the fields, I drove to the farm once again. I put on my boots and went back into the corn. This time the ground was soft but firming. That was on a Friday, and our fine farm crew was already making plans to begin the harvest on the following Monday.

That same day an acquaintance of mine from a local television station called. He said, "I understand the Mormons are developing a fine dairy farm on Sauvies Island." I answered in the affirmative, and he inquired, "Is there a story there?" I told him there was, but I knew he could never capture the *real* story. That very Monday, as we began our harvest, we had a camera crew on the farm for several hours, and we did get some fine publicity for the Church.

Feelings of gratitude

With the loyal assistance of many of the members, we worked day and night for the next five days. By the following Saturday, all of the freshly chopped corn was safely in our silage pits, and we finished covering it over with plastic. At last we had the feed needed to get us through the winter. Within an hour after having covered the crop, the heavens just seemed to open and commenced one of the heaviest and longest downpours I can remember. The fields from which the corn had just been removed were flooded and remained under water from that day until the following June. As I stood in the rain with feelings of gratitude

that I'll never be able to adequately describe, it seemed to me that the Lord had just saved it up until our spiritual understanding had been fulfilled.

Now, you could say to me that all of this is simply coincidence, and I would understand that. But I bear you my witness that I know exactly *what* happened and *why* it happened. May I recount with you some of my spiritual reflections that came from this and other experiences of my life:

The temporal requirements placed upon the Church and our members are never simply temporal. They only seem temporal because our vision is lacking. The Lord's requirements are always spiritual.

The welfare programs of the Church are considered vital by the Lord, and if we will do our part, he will do his and more. It matters not that often we cannot see the end from the beginning.

Most of the blessings of the Lord seem to come in the second mile. The first mile is doing what is expected of us. As we move beyond the first mile in faith and determination, we may draw down the powers of heaven, but this only so far as we are in spiritual condition to do so.

Finally, I bear my solemn witness that there is nothing too hard for the Lord. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

Elder Thomas S. Monson of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our next speaker. He will be followed by President Marion G. Romney.

Elder Thomas S. Monson

Long years ago, the Apostle Paul wrote an epistle to his beloved associate Timothy in which he spoke of the qualifications a bishop should possess. He began:

"This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work."

Today we might add, "and a good workout!" He continues:

"A bishop then must be blameless . . . vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

" . . . not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient. . . .

"Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without." (1 Tim. 3:1-3, 7.)

Experience as a bishop

These words burned into my soul when I read them as a newly called bishop thirty years ago. I was young—just twenty-two. The ward was large, with over 1,050 members, 87 of whom were widows. The welfare load was the heaviest of any ward in the entire Church.

The street addresses in that ward did not read like some: Colonial Hills Circle, Mountain View Estates, or Skyline Drive. Rather, they were noted as Orchard Place, Gale Street, Elford Court. The ward was not east of the tracks in Salt Lake City. It was not west of the tracks. That ward spanned the railroad tracks. Many of the widows and those in financial need were hidden away in basement apartments, upstairs back rooms, or dilapidated houses situated at the rear of little-known streets. I became the shepherd. This was my flock. I was reminded of God's warning through Ezekiel: "Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that feed not my flock" (see Ezek. 34:2-3).

Counsel from Church leaders

My teachers were heaven-sent. May I mention but a few: our former stake president, Harold B. Lee; President Marion G. Romney; and President J. Reuben Clark.

Brother Lee attended our stake conference the year I was appointed as a bishop. Looking over the priesthood leadership congregation on Saturday evening, he stepped from the

pulpit, called for a chalkboard, came down from the stand, stood among us, and, as the master teacher, taught us our duty. He drew five circles under the heading "The Responsibilities of a Bishop." He then gave to each circle a designation such as "The Father of the Ward," "The President of the Aaronic Priesthood," "The Common Judge in Israel," and then placed emphasis on the bishop's role in welfare. He cautioned us to seek after the poor, to care for them, and to do so in a spirit of love, kindness, and confidentiality.

Brother Romney was a frequent visitor to our stake and region. One evening he taught us the principle of faith by retelling the inspiring account of Elijah and the widow at Zarephath (see 1 Kgs. 17:8-16). He likened her circumstances to those of some widows in our area. As he taught welfare precepts from the handbook and responded to questions, one brother asked him, "Brother Romney, why do you seem to know whatever's in that handbook?" to which Brother Romney, with that twinkle in his eye and smile upon his lips, responded, "I wrote it!"

President Clark too was a master teacher. It was my privilege during those years to assist him in the preparation of his manuscripts that they might find their way into printed volumes. What a unique and profitable experience to be with him frequently. Knowing that I was a new bishop presiding over a difficult ward, he emphasized the need for me to know my people, to understand their circumstances, and, in the spirit of tenderness, to minister to their needs. One day he recounted the example of the Savior as recorded in Luke, chapter seven, verses eleven through fifteen:

"And it came to pass . . . that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him. . . .

"When he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. . . .

"And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

"And he came and touched the bier. . . . And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.

"And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother."

When President Clark closed the Bible, I noticed that he was weeping. In a quiet voice he said, "Tom, be kind to the widows, and look after the poor."

Bishop's welfare role

Our bishops today need the same instruction and counsel. Many are new. They hear from every side that this program or that requires emphasis. Theirs is a sacred trust. Frequently that which counts most is recorded least. The visit to the elderly, the blessing to the sick, the comfort to the weary, the food to the hungry may not be recorded here, but I am convinced that they are known above and that we are guided in such ministrations.

The dimensions of the bishop's welfare role are many. He is aided by his counselors, priesthood quorum leaders, and, of course, the ward Relief Society presidency. Perhaps a review would be helpful.

Prevention

First, *prevention*. Paramount is the responsibility to coordinate personal and family preparedness efforts, including food storage. Also to be emphasized is the continuing need to insure that gainful employment is had by heads of families. Beyond this effort is the desirability to upgrade employment for those who

may be underemployed. Such a duty involves the encouragement of wage earners to become skilled, that they will not be the last to be hired or the first to be fired.

Production

Second, *production*. Participation on ward and stake welfare projects is a vital concern. Though times change, fields yet need to be plowed, crops to be thinned, buildings to be built, and storehouses to be filled.

I am grateful I learned to top sugar beets on our stake welfare farm. I am also grateful that we do not have to top beets in the same way today. That farm was not situated in a fertile belt of land but rather in the area of today's industrial section of Salt Lake City. I testify, however, that when put to this sacred service, the soil was sanctified, the harvest blessed, and faith rewarded.

Processing

Third, *processing*. Oh, the joy of harvest time! Picture the scene of ward members canning peaches, sorting eggs, or cleaning vegetables, all for the use of those who are in need. Brows are sweat-lined, clothing is soiled, bodies are tired—but human souls are refreshed and lifted towards heaven.

Storage

Fourth, *storage*. The Lord in the revelations spoke frequently of his storehouses. On one occasion he counseled, "The storehouse shall be kept by the consecrations of the church; and widows and orphans shall be provided for, as also the poor" (D&C 83:6). I am happy that over the entrance to our storehouses are the words *Bishops' Storehouse!* Those who labor therein are recommended and sent by their respective

bishops. Within such buildings there is found an atmosphere of love, of respect, and, indeed, of reverence. I am inspired each time I visit such a storehouse. There is no steeple or spire, no carpeted floors or stained-glass windows, but here is found the spirit of the Lord.

Distribution

Fifth, *distribution*. This is where the bishop's judgment is most severely tested. He cannot shirk this God-given responsibility. President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., summarized the bishop's role in welfare services: He 'is 'to administer all temporal things' . . . ; in his calling he is to 'administer to the . . . poor and needy'; he is to search 'after the poor to administer to their wants' [see D&C 107:68; 42:34; 84:112]. . . .

"Thus to the bishop is given all the powers, and responsibilities which the Lord has specifically prescribed in the Doctrine and Covenants for the caring of the poor. . . . No one else is charged with this duty and responsibility, no one else is endowed with the power and functions necessary for this work.

"Thus, 'by the word of the Lord the sole mandate to care for and the sole discretion in caring for, the poor of the Church is lodged in the bishop.' . . . 'It is his duty and his only to determine to whom, when, how, and how much shall be given to any member of his ward from Church funds and as ward help.

" 'This is his high and solemn obligation, imposed by the Lord Himself. The bishop cannot escape this duty; he cannot shirk it; he cannot pass it on to someone else, and so relieve himself. Whatever help he calls in, he is still responsible.' " (Unpublished article, Church Historical Department, Salt Lake City, 9 July 1941, pp. 3-4.)

Pray for guidance

Every bishop needs a sacred grove to which he can retire to meditate and to pray for guidance. Mine was our old ward chapel. I could not begin to count the occasions when on a dark night at a late hour I would make my way to the stand of this building where I was blessed, confirmed, ordained, taught, and eventually called to preside. The chapel was dimly lighted by the street light in front; not a sound would be heard, no intruder to disturb. With my hand on the pulpit I would kneel and share with Him above my thoughts, my concerns, my problems.

On one occasion, a year of drought, the commodities at the storehouse had not been their usual quality, nor had they been found in abundance. Many products were missing, especially fresh fruit. My prayer that night is sacred to me. I pleaded that these widows were the finest women I knew in mortality, that their needs were simple and conservative, that they had no resources on which they might rely. The next morning I received a call from a ward member, a proprietor of a produce business. "Bishop," he said, "I would like to send a semitrailer filled with oranges, grapefruit, and bananas to the bishops' storehouse to be given to those in need. Could you make arrangements?" Could I make arrangements! The storehouse was alerted. Then each bishop was telephoned and the entire shipment distributed. Bishop Jesse M. Drury, that beloved welfare pioneer and storekeeper, said he had never witnessed a day like it before. He described the occasion with one word— "Wonderful!"

Other experiences may not be so dramatic but are nevertheless real and heartwarming. I recall an elderly couple whose frame home, situated at the end of a dirt lane, had not seen a coat of paint for too many years.

These were neat and tidy people; they were concerned about the appearance of their small house. In a moment of inspiration I called, not upon the elders quorum or upon volunteers to wield paint brushes, but rather, following the welfare handbook, upon the family members who lived in other areas. Four sons-in-law and four daughters took brushes in hand and participated in the project. The paint had been provided by a dealer located in our area. The result was a transformation not only of the house but of the family. The children determined how they might best help mother and dad in their old age. They did so voluntarily and with gladness of heart. A house was painted, a family united, and respect preserved.

Fortunately, the blessings the welfare program provides are not received by the bishop alone. Rather, all who participate can share and share abundantly.

Faith-promoting incident

On a cold winter's night in 1951 there was a knock at my door, and a German brother from Ogden, Utah, announced himself and said, "Are you Bishop Monson?" I answered in the affirmative. He began to weep and said, "My brother and his wife and family are coming here from Germany. They are going to live in your ward. Will you come with us to see the apartment we have rented for them?" On the way to the apartment, he told me he had not seen his brother for many years. Yet all through the holocaust of World War II, his brother had been faithful to the Church, serving as a branch president before the war took him to the Russian front.

I looked at the apartment. It was cold and dreary. The paint was peeling, the wallpaper soiled, the cupboards empty. A forty-watt bulb hanging from the living room ceiling

revealed a linoleum floor covering with a large hole in the center. I was heartsick. I thought, "What a dismal welcome for a family which has endured so much."

My thoughts were interrupted by the brother's statement, "It isn't much, but it's better than they have in Germany." With that, the key was left with me, along with the information that the family would arrive in Salt Lake City in three weeks—just two days before Christmas.

Sleep was slow in coming to me that night. The next morning was Sunday. In our ward welfare committee meeting, one of my counselors said, "Bishop, you look worried. Is something wrong?" I recounted to those present my experience of the night before, the details of the uninviting apartment. There were a few moments of silence. Then the group leader of the high priests said, "Bishop, did you say that apartment was inadequately lighted and that the kitchen appliances were in need of replacement?" I answered in the affirmative. He continued, "I am an electrical contractor. Would you permit the high priests of this ward to rewire that apartment? I would also like to invite my suppliers to contribute a new stove and a new refrigerator. Do I have your permission?" I answered with a glad "Certainly."

Then the seventies president responded: "Bishop, as you know I'm in the carpet business. I would like to invite my suppliers to contribute some carpet, and the seventies can easily lay it and eliminate that worn linoleum."

Then the president of the elders quorum spoke up. He was a painting contractor. He said, "I'll furnish the paint. May the elders paint and wallpaper that apartment?"

The Relief Society president was next to speak: "We in the Relief Society cannot stand the thought of empty cupboards. May we fill them?"

The next three weeks are ever to be remembered. It seemed that the entire ward joined in the project. The days passed, and at the appointed time the family arrived from Germany. Again at my door stood the brother from Ogden. With an emotion-filled voice, he introduced to me his brother, wife, and their family. Then he asked, "Could we go visit the apartment?" As we walked up the staircase to the apartment, he repeated, "It isn't much, but it's more than they have had in Germany." Little did he know what a transformation had taken place, that many who participated were inside waiting for our arrival.

The door opened to reveal a literal newness of life. We were greeted by the aroma of freshly painted woodwork and newly papered walls. Gone was the forty-watt bulb, along with the worn linoleum it had illuminated. We stepped on carpet deep and beautiful. A walk to the kitchen presented to our view a new stove and refrigerator. The cupboard doors were still open; however, they now revealed that every shelf was filled with food. The Relief Society as usual had done its work.

In the living room we began to sing Christmas hymns. We sang "Silent night! Holy night! All is calm; all is bright." (*Hymns*, no. 160.) We sang in English; they sang in German. At the conclusion, the father, realizing that all of this was his, took me by the hand to express his thanks. His emotion was too great. He buried his head in my shoulder and repeated the words, "Mein Bruder, mein Bruder, mein Bruder."

As we walked down the stairs and out into the night air, it was snowing. Not a word was spoken. Then a young girl asked, "Bishop, I feel better inside than I have ever felt before. Can you tell me why?"

I responded with the words of

the Master: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40). Suddenly there came to mind the words from "O Little Town of Bethlehem":

*How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of his heaven.*

*No ear may hear his coming;
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him,
still
The dear Christ enters in.
(Hymns, no. 165.)*

The poet said, "God gave his children memory, that in life's garden there might be June roses in December" (C. Anketall Studdert-Kennedy, "Roses in December," in *The Best Loved Poems of the American People*, sel. Hazel Felleman, Garden City, N.Y.: Garden City Publishing Co., 1936, p. 363). In my garden of memories no rose is more beautiful or fragrant than the rose brought to bloom by my participation in the welfare effort.

May our Heavenly Father ever bless our bishops in their sacred welfare responsibilities. Such duties are God-given. They were authored in heaven to bless in our day those who stand in need.

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

It will now be our pleasure to hear from President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, who will be our concluding speaker.

The first general session of the 150th Semiannual Conference of the Church will convene in the Tabernacle at ten o'clock this morning.

President Marion G. Romney

My beloved brethren and sisters, we've had a great meeting this morning. I trust that I can conclude this meeting with the Spirit of the Lord guiding and sustaining us.

The Savior's program

They have asked me to talk on the subject that the welfare program is the Savior's program, which I am glad to do. The Savior said:

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; . . .

"For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matt. 11:28-30.)

Thus did Jesus promise spiritual refreshment and physical relief to all who will obey his gospel.

"And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people" (Matt. 9:35).

Responding to questions asked by two of John's disciples, Jesus said:

"Go and shew John . . . those things which ye do hear and see:

"The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matt. 11:4-5).

All who are acquainted with the Lord's earthly ministry seem to conclude, as President J. Reuben Clark did, that "when the Savior came upon the earth he had two great missions; one was to work out the *Messiahship*, the atonement for the fall, and . . . the other was the work which he did among his brethren and sisters in the flesh by way of *relieving their sufferings*. . . . He left as a heritage to those who should come

after him . . . the carrying on of those two great things— *work for the relief of the ills and the sufferings of humanity*, and the *teaching of the spiritual truths* which should bring us back into the presence of our Heavenly Father." (In Conference Report, Apr. 1937, p. 22; italics added.)

Continue ministering to needy

I am persuaded that we should continue his work of ministering to those in need, whether in things spiritual or in things temporal. I have long since concluded that the work which you and I call welfare service is the work of the Savior. This welfare plan is his plan; its principles are his principles; its spirit is his spirit; he it is who sends us to minister one to another. His gospel requires us to love our neighbors as ourselves (see Matt. 19:19).

"If ye do this," King Benjamin said, "ye shall always rejoice, and be filled with the love of God, and always retain a remission of your sins; . . .

"And ye will not have a mind to injure one another, *but to live peaceably, and to render to every man according to that which is his due.*

"And ye will not suffer your children that they go hungry, or naked; neither will ye suffer that they transgress the laws of God. . . .

"But ye will teach them to walk in the ways of truth and soberness; *ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve one another.*

"And also, *ye yourselves will succor those that stand in need of your succor; ye will administer of your substance unto him that standeth in need.*" (Mosiah 4:12-16; italics added.)

"And now," King Benjamin continued, "*for the sake of these things which I have spoken unto*

you—that is, for the sake of retaining a remission of your sins from day to day, that ye may walk guiltless before God—I would that ye should impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally, according to their wants” (Mosiah 4:26; italics added).

Is there any question, brothers and sisters, about our obligation in this program? Is there any doubt that retaining a remission of sins depends on our caring for one another? If we believe these teachings, if we profess to follow the Savior and his prophets, if we want to be true to our covenants and have the Spirit of the Lord in our lives, then we must do the things that the Savior said and did. He it was who said:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also” (John 14:12).

May I suggest several ways in which we as leaders and members can and should improve our work in this, his service.

Personal involvement

First, we must be personally involved! We often receive reports that some of our people, and even some of our leaders, would rather contribute their money than take their time and talents and devote them *personally*. May I remind each of us that we need the spiritual uplift that comes from giving of ourselves and working shoulder to shoulder. It is healthy and sanctifying for the barber, the merchant, the lawyer, the doctor, the teacher, and the mechanic *to get together*; to hoe the same row—together; to pray for the same rain—together; to prune the same tree—together; and to harvest the same crop—together.

While our financial contributions are needed, we must work *together* with our hearts and hands if we are to come to that unity and oneness required of the Saints. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “The greatest temporal and spiritual blessings which always come from faithfulness and concerted effort, never attended individual exertion or enterprise” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938, p. 183; italics added).

Counsel together

Second, *in order to work wholeheartedly together, we must counsel together.* We hear reports that some bishops are committed to a course of action taken by their stake president without the involvement and consent of the bishops. While we do and must support our leaders, every leader would be wise to pursue this work in the spirit of section 38. For the Lord has said, “If ye are not one ye are not mine” (D&C 38:27).

Many of you will be allocating a significantly increased annual production budget throughout the last quarter of this year. I hope that *all will feel good about their assignment because the principle of common consent* has been followed at each level of council government, through which we operate the Church at its successive ecclesiastical levels. It has been said that the family who prays together stays together; might I add that a priesthood body that *counsels together succeeds together!*

Share stewardship report

Third, if we as leaders want the support of those we lead, then we *will do well to share with them a report on how our assigned stewardship is doing.* I hope we have not gotten away from the practice of taking an annual report of our produc-

tion projects to our ward or stake Melchizedek Priesthood brethren. I also hope that bishoprics and stake presidencies are providing some appropriate report to their respective file leaders on both the progress and the problems that they are encountering in implementing welfare services. Remember, brethren, to return and report is the final act of the faithful and wise steward.

"Give yourself rich"

Fourth and finally, *may I remind you that you cannot give yourself poor in this work; you can only give yourself rich.* I have satisfied myself regarding the truthfulness of the statement made to me by Elder Melvin J. Ballard as he set me apart for my mission in 1920: "A person cannot give a crust to the Lord without receiving a loaf in return."

The Savior taught that it is more blessed to give than to receive (see Acts 20:35). Through Church welfare, both the giver and the receiver are blessed in unique ways—each to the sanctification and salvation of his eternal soul.

"Remember in all things the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted," said Jesus, "for he that doeth not these things, the same is not my disciple" (D&C 52:40).

When discipleship is seen in light of this understanding of the gospel, we may, perhaps, understand something which I have believed for a long time: *The living of the principles upon which the welfare program is built will be the final step, the capstone, of a Christian life.* Living its principles leads one to the fullness of the stature of Christ.

According to Amulek, the efficacy of our prayers depends on how we care for one another. According to the teachings of the Savior him-

self, the door of salvation at the final judgment turns on the hinge of loving our neighbor as ourselves. As recorded in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, when the Lord returns in his glory he will divide the people "as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats" (Matt. 25:32). To those on his right hand he will say:

"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

"For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

"Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me" (Matt. 25:34-36).

It is my prayer that each of us will derive from this session of conference today a greater conviction and a deeper understanding that welfare services is the work of Jesus Christ, that the welfare plan is his plan, that its principles are his principles, that its spirit is his spirit, and that its achievements are the surest guarantee of peace in this life and immortal glory in the world to come. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

We will sing in closing hymn number 58, "Have I Done Any Good?" following which the benediction will be offered by Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The congregation sang the hymn "Have I Done Any Good?"

Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi pronounced the benediction.

SALT LAKE TABERNACLE CHOIR AND ORGAN BROADCAST

The following broadcast, announced by J. Spencer Kinard, and originating with KSL Radio, Salt Lake City, Utah was presented from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, October 5, 1980, through the courtesy of the Columbia Broadcasting System's network throughout the United States, parts of Canada, and through other facilities to several points overseas:

Announcer: Once more we welcome you within these walls with Music and the Spoken Word from the crossroads of the West.

CBS and its affiliated stations bring you at this hour the Mormon Tabernacle Choir from Temple Square in Salt Lake City, with Donald Ripplinger conducting the Choir, Robert Cundick, Tabernacle organist, and the Spoken Word by Spencer Kinard.

(Choir without announcement: "The King of Love My Shepherd Is" — Shelley/Scholin)

Announcer: "The King of love my shepherd is . . . I nothing lack if I am His and He is mine forever." The Tabernacle Choir has begun this broadcast with a paraphrase of the Twenty-third Psalm set to music by Harry Rowe Shelley.

That will now be followed by Johann Schein's seventeenth century setting of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "Zion Speaks: I Am by God Forsaken."

(Choir: "Zion Speaks: I Am by God Forsaken" — Schein/Scholten)

Announcer: With the music of Crawford Gates we turn to the words of another Old Testament prophet. The Choir sings from Jeremiah, "Thy word was unto me the . . . rejoicing

of mine heart: For I am called by Thy Name."

(Choir: "For I Am Called by Thy Name" — Gates)

Announcer: At the Tabernacle organ on Temple Square, in Salt Lake City, Robert Cundick plays one of his own compositions, "Prelude on a Swedish Folk Song."

(Organ: "Prelude on a Swedish Folk Song" — Cundick)

Announcer: One of the great lessons of life is that all areas of endeavor have their fundamentals, their basic principles which stand as the foundation for knowledge and action. In science we must turn repeatedly to the basic laws of physics and chemistry. In education there are the rudiments of language and reasoning which must precede all other learning. The free enterprise system operates upon the basic axiom of supply and demand.

This same principle of basics applies to religion as well. Despite the various theologies and diverse claims which characterize the Christian churches of today, we must all return again and again to the basic and fundamental tenet of Christianity and that is Jesus Christ.

It is he who is and must be the spiritual cornerstone of Christianity. The Savior, by his own admission, did not come principally as a social reformer, an inspired philosopher, or even as an organizer of religion. His principal mission was that he came as the Son of God, the Redeemer of mankind.

This claim makes Christ unique among the world's religious figures. No other individual has so boldly maintained that he alone is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6).

Now, we cannot discount

Christ's assertion that he was the Son of God and maintain at the same time that he was only a sublime teacher, a moral leader, a great thinker—for truth is not clothed in deceptions and falsehoods. He could not be both a great leader and dishonest about his divine mission. Either Jesus was what he claimed to be, the Savior of mankind, or he was a great imposter.

Thus, whatever we pursue in the name of Christianity—whether it is social reform, charity, or religious instruction—we must recognize Jesus' claim to divine authority.

And so it is that we turn again to the fundamental truth of Christian belief. We turn to Christ, the Messiah, the Redeemer of mankind even the Son of God.

(Choir without announcement: "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name"—Holden)

Announcer: The Choir has sung words by Edward Perronet and the music of Oliver Holden, "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name."

We close today's broadcast of Music and the Spoken Word with

Wilbur Chenoweth's arrangement of an ancient plain song, "Of the Father's Love Begotten."

(Choir: "Of the Father's Love Begotten"—Chenoweth)

Announcer: Again we leave you from within the shadows of the everlasting hills. May peace be with you this day . . . and always.

Announcer (on radio): This concludes the two-thousand six-hundred sixty-eighth performance, continuing the fifty-second year of this traditional broadcast from the Mormon Tabernacle on Temple Square, brought to you by CBS and its affiliated stations, originating with Station KSL in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Donald Ripplinger conducted the Choir, Robert Cundick was at the organ, the Spoken Word by Spencer Kinard.

In another seven days at this same hour, Music and the Spoken Word will be heard again from the crossroads of the West.

This is the CBS Radio Network.

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE MUSIC

The Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir furnished the choral numbers for the Saturday morning, Sunday morning, and Sunday afternoon sessions of the conference with Jerold Ottley and Donald H. Ripplinger conducting.

The music for the Saturday afternoon session was provided by the Mormon Youth Chorus directed by Robert C. Bowden.

At the general priesthood meeting, a combined men's choir from

Ricks College furnished the music, directed by Richard Robison.

Prelude, postlude, and interlude music and accompaniments on the Tabernacle organ throughout the conference sessions were played by Robert Cundick, Roy M. Darley, and John Longhurst, Tabernacle organists.

Francis M. Gibbons

Clerk of the Conference

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THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY
SAINTS

Official Report of the
One Hundred Fifty-first
Annual General

CONFERENCE

of The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints

held in the Tabernacle
Salt Lake City, Utah

April 4 and 5, 1981

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THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-FIRST ANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The 151st Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 4, 1981, at 10:00 A.M.

The general sessions of the conference were held at 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday, April 4 and 5, 1981. The general welfare session was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, April 4, 1981, at 7:00 A.M. The general priesthood meeting was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, April 4, 1981, beginning at 7:00 P.M.

President Spencer W. Kimball presided at all sessions of the conference and conducted the welfare, Saturday afternoon, and Sunday morning sessions. President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday morning, general priesthood, and Sunday afternoon sessions of the conference.

At the Saturday morning session, Elder Angel Abrea was sustained as a new member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Television and radio stations carried portions or all of some of the conference sessions to large audiences throughout the world. The general priesthood session was carried by closed-circuit transmission to approximately 2,246 locations in many different countries.

General Authorities present

The following General Authorities of the Church attended one or more of the general sessions:

The First Presidency: Spencer W. Kimball, N. Eldon Tanner, Marion G. Romney.

The Council of the Twelve: Ezra Taft Benson, Mark E. Petersen, LeGrand Richards, Howard W. Hunter, Gordon B. Hinckley, Thomas S. Monson, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, Bruce R. McConkie, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, and James E. Faust.

The First Quorum of the Seventy:
Presidents: Franklin D. Richards, J. Thomas Fyans, Neal A. Maxwell, Carlos E. Asay, M. Russell Ballard, Dean L. Larsen, and Royden G. Derrick. *Additional Members:* Marion D. Hanks, A. Theodore Tuttle, Theodore M. Burton, Paul H. Dunn, Hartman Rector, Jr., Loren C. Dunn, Robert L. Simpson, Rex D. Pinegar, Wm. Grant Bangerter, Robert D. Hales, Adney Y. Komatsu, Joseph B. Wirthlin, Gene R. Cook, Charles A. Didier, William R. Bradford, George P. Lee, John H. Groberg, Jacob de Jager, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Robert E. Wells, G. Homer Durham, James M. Paramore, Richard G. Scott, Hugh W. Pinnock, F. Enzio Busche, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Ronald E. Poelman, Derek A. Cuthbert, Robert L. Backman, Rex C. Reeve, Sr., F. Burton Howard, Teddy E. Brewerton, Jack H. Goasland, Jr., and Angel Abrea.

The Presiding Bishopric: Victor L. Brown, H. Burke Peterson, and J. Richard Clarke.

Emeritus General Authorities: Eldred G. Smith, S. Dilworth Young, Sterling W. Sill, Henry D. Taylor, Bernard P. Brockbank, James A. Cullimore, Joseph Anderson, John H. Vandenberg, and O. Leslie Stone.

Other authorities present

Other authorities of the Church in attendance included Regional Rep-

representatives, presidents of stakes and their counselors, presidents of temples, bishoprics of wards, and presidencies and members of the

Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood quorums.

Many general, stake, and ward auxiliary officers also attended.

FIRST DAY MORNING MEETING

FIRST SESSION

The first general session of the conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 4, 1981, at 10:00 A.M. President Spencer W. Kimball presided at this session. President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for the opening session was provided by the Tabernacle Choir with Donald Ripplinger conducting and Robert Cundick at the organ.

Before the commencement of the meeting, the Tabernacle Choir sang "For the Strength of the Hills" without announcement.

President Romney then made the following remarks:

President Marion G. Romney

President Spencer W. Kimball, who presides at this conference, has asked that I conduct this first general session.

We welcome all assembled in the Tabernacle on Temple Square at the beginning of this, the first general session of the 151st Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We also welcome all others who are participating by television, radio, and direct wire.

Seated on the stand are all of the General Authorities of the Church ex-

cept Elders Carlos E. Asay and Charles Didier who are presiding in the Salt Palace. Present also are other general leaders and many local Church leaders from around the world.

We extend a special welcome to government, education, and civic leaders who are present.

We also express gratitude that President Ronald Reagan and those who were injured at the same time appear to be convalescing satisfactorily and extend our love and best wishes to them.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Donald Ripplinger with Robert Cundick at the organ, rendered the opening hymn, "For the Strength of the Hills." This session will continue by the Choir singing "Jesus! Name of Wondrous Love." Following the singing, the invocation will be offered by Elder J. Thomas Fyans, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Choir sang "Jesus! Name of Wondrous Love."

Elder J. Thomas Fyans offered the invocation.

The Choir sang "Praise to the Lord" without announcement.

President Romney

The Tabernacle Choir has just rendered "Praise to the Lord."

It is proposed that we sustain Brother Angel Abrea as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

All in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed, so manifest it.

With the exception of Elder Abrea, whom you have just sustained, there have been no other changes among the General Authorities since the last general conference. It is proposed, therefore, that we sustain all of

the General Authorities and general officers of the Church as at present constituted.

All in favor, manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

We shall now be pleased to hear from our beloved friend and leader, President Spencer W. Kimball, President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

President Spencer W. Kimball

Once again I rejoice, my brothers and sisters, at the opportunity to be with you in a general conference of the Church. In many ways, the October conference of six months ago seems like yesterday, yet we have been so busy, and so much has happened, it almost seems more like six years.

Since last we met in this historic Tabernacle, two new temples have been dedicated, and ground has been broken for four more temples. New converts who joined the Church in 1980 numbered 210,777 — and there will be even more in 1981. A miraculous upsurge in the work of the Lord has occurred among the wonderful people of the Caribbean Islands. Surely the Lord has blessed us abundantly!

Our message is to proclaim, perfect, redeem

My brothers and sisters, as the Brethren of the First Presidency and the Twelve have meditated upon and prayed about the great latter-day work the Lord has given us to do, we are impressed that the mission of the Church is threefold:

- To proclaim the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people;

- To perfect the Saints by preparing them to receive the ordinances

of the gospel and by instruction and discipline to gain exaltation;

- To redeem the dead by performing vicarious ordinances of the gospel for those who have lived on the earth.

All three are part of one work—to assist our Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ, in Their grand and glorious mission “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.” (Moses 1:39.)

Having these sacred principles in mind—to *proclaim the gospel, to perfect the Saints, and to redeem the dead*—we have endeavored these past six months to carry out our responsibilities among the Saints at home and abroad. I should like, therefore, to give you a brief report on my stewardship since last we met in October 1980.

Conferences and temples in Orient

Ten days after the close of the October conference, President Marion G. Romney and I left, in company with a number of others, to conduct area conferences in the Orient. Our first meetings were held in Manila, Philippine Islands, October 18 and 19, where twenty thousand Saints attended the sessions in the Araneta Colosseum. We also looked over possible sites for the new temple which has just been an-

Saturday, April 4

First Day

nounced for that land. We had a very pleasant visit with Philippine President Ferdinand E. Marcos, who gave up his Saturday morning with his family to meet with us at the presidential palace.

From Manila we traveled to Hong Kong, perhaps the world's most densely populated city, where there are about four hundred thousand people per square mile. There we held meetings in our own excellent stake center on October 20 and 21. The following day we flew to Taipei, Taiwan, where we met on October 22 and 23 in the beautiful Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall. We had breakfast at our hotel with the two top leaders of the Republic of China, Prime Minister Sun and President Chiang, son of the late Chiang Kai-shek. We later had lunch as guests of the governor of Taiwan Province. After leaving Taiwan, we went to Seoul, South Korea, the "Land of the Morning Calm." Meetings were held for two days, October 25 and 26. We met outside in the Korea Seoul Mission compound with more than six thousand present in bitter, subfreezing temperature due to an overnight change in the weather. At our hotel we had lunch as guests of the former Deputy Prime Minister of Korea.

We arrived in Tokyo late Sunday evening, October 26. On Monday, October 27, President Romney and I laid the cornerstone for the Tokyo Temple, and then at 3:00 P.M. the first dedicatory session was held in the celestial room, with color television provided in all other rooms of the temple. During the next two days, six more dedicatory sessions were held. Following the dedication of the temple, the Tokyo area conference was held on October 30 and 31 in the famed Budokan Hall. In every place we visited we also held special meetings with the missionaries, with fifteen hundred being present in one meeting in Tokyo. It was indeed a

thrilling and inspiring sight to see. On Saturday, November 1, we held morning and afternoon sessions of the Osaka, Japan, area conference. We left that evening to fly home, stopping off in Hawaii for three hours for the purpose of setting apart several sealers for the Hawaii Temple.

Provo and Seattle

On November 14, we installed Dr. Jeffrey R. Holland as the ninth president of the Brigham Young University, succeeding newly appointed Utah Supreme Court justice Dallin H. Oaks.

Three days later, the First Presidency traveled to Seattle, Washington, where we dedicated the new Seattle Temple at nearby Bellevue. Monday through Friday, November 17 to 21, thirteen dedicatory sessions were well attended. Over forty-three thousand members from the great Northwest attended the various sessions.

There followed a very busy period at home during the Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons.

Temples and meetings in South Pacific

On Wednesday, February 11, 1981, Sister Kimball and I journeyed to the South Pacific. In Tahiti we broke ground for a new temple in Papeete and met with the missionaries. We also visited with the Deputy to the High Commissioner of Tahiti at the official government residence.

On Saturday, February 14, enroute to New Zealand, we stopped over in Rarotonga and held a meeting with the Saints in an airplane hangar at the airport. I am told it was the first time a President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has ever visited that island.

In New Zealand we held a meeting with several hundred Saints on the grounds of the Auckland Airport. We conducted meetings at the temple and the Church College of New Zealand and with the missionaries. On Wednesday, the eighteenth, we flew to Tonga, where we broke ground for the new temple in a beautiful coconut grove at Nukualofa. The king and queen of Tonga and many of the nobles of that kingdom were in attendance throughout the entire day's activities. Of the 247 missionaries we met with in Tonga, 235 are natives and 12 are from America.

On Thursday, the nineteenth, we proceeded to Samoa, where we broke ground in Apia for a temple in those lovely islands. Several thousand Saints sat out in the open during a heavy tropical rainstorm during the entire service. Present for this occasion were the Chief of State of Western Samoa, the Prime Minister, and several members of Parliament.

Early the next morning we had one of the loveliest experiences of our lives, as we visited the Church School of Western Samoa. As we entered the gymnasium, the largest building on the campus, we saw seventeen hundred children sitting cross-legged on the gymnasium floor, crowded in as tightly as little sardines in a can. They ranged from small four- and five-year-old kindergarten children in the front to teen-aged high-school youngsters in the back of the hall. What a beautiful, thrilling sight they were as they sang "I Am a Child of God"! They were all dressed in their school uniforms in colors of blue and gold. With their beautiful dark hair and big brown eyes, they presented a picture of youth and beauty that was breathtaking. The tears came to our eyes quickly and without shame. At the close of my remarks, I announced to the students that in honor of the occasion I was declaring a holiday for the rest of the day. Judging by the

sound of the applause, I think I may have become an instant hero—at least for that day. After the brief meeting, we left the hall with the haunting strains of the Samoan farewell song, "Tofa My Faleni," ringing in our ears and warming our hearts.

Hawaii, Southern States, Caribbean

We flew to Hawaii that night, arriving the morning of Saturday, February 21. During the day we visited the BYU-Hawaii campus and the Polynesian Cultural Center. Sunday morning we attended the Oahu Stake conference, and then, in company with Elders Gordon B. Hinckley, Thomas S. Monson, and Boyd K. Packer, we held a meeting in the Hawaii Temple. We then toured the newly remodeled visitors' center and there met with the missionaries. On Monday, February 23, 1981, we returned to Church headquarters.

After four days at home and the office, Sister Kimball and I left on Saturday, February 28, for Florida for a week-long series of meetings with the Saints and some business leaders. On Saturday, March 7, we broke ground for the new temple in Atlanta, Georgia. Ten thousand were present for this occasion, including the governor of Georgia and his wife, several legislators, and U.S. senators Jake Garn and Paula Hawkins. Immediately following that service, we flew to San Juan, Puerto Rico. The next morning, Sunday, March 8, we held a meeting with over twenty-six hundred members of the stake and mission on that island. We next visited the Dominican Republic and held a meeting at Santo Domingo on Monday. Two years ago there were only two families of members on that island, but at our meeting we had over fifteen hundred members present. We left Santo Domingo on Tuesday, March 10, and

that night dedicated a new visitors' center on the Church's Deseret Ranch near Orlando, Florida.

Washington, D.C.

On Thursday, we visited the Washington, D.C., Visitors' Center and then met with the Washington Temple presidency and set apart several sealers. The next morning, Friday, March 13, in company with Elder Gordon B. Hinckley, we visited with President Ronald Reagan in the Oval Office of the White House. We presented to him his genealogy on his mother's side. We then met with Mrs. Reagan. Both were very warm and gracious and very appreciative of the genealogical record.

Sister Kimball and I then traveled directly to Arizona, where on Saturday we attended the funeral of my sister, Alice Nelson, who had passed away during our absence. On Sunday, March 15, we returned home to prepare for this general conference.

Love and greetings

This has been a busy but enjoyable and fruitful six months, during which we have traveled some fifty thousand miles by air. We are grateful to the Lord as he has blessed us,

and we have observed the vitality and progress of the Church in many parts of the world. Wherever we have gone, we have been thrilled and humbled by the love and devotion of the members of the Church.

As we begin this conference this morning, I bring you love and greetings from the Saints and missionaries in the Orient, the South Pacific, and the Caribbean. I add my own love and greetings and leave my blessings with you.

I know that God lives and that His Son, Jesus Christ, lives. He is our Savior and our Redeemer and our Mediator with the Father. May He bless us all during this great conference, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Following President Kimball's address, the Choir sang "Jesus, Once of Humble Birth" without announcement.

President Romney

We have just heard from President Spencer W. Kimball, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "Jesus, Once of Humble Birth."

We shall now hear from Elder James E. Faust, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder James E. Faust

"We thank thee, O God, for a prophet to guide us in these latter days."

This morning I desire to say something which hopefully might give some help and perhaps another focus to the minds of young people. I have never felt more keenly the need for both the aid of the divine Spirit and the understanding of those who hear. I humbly pray that I might not be misunderstood.

Vision of Jesus and the Twelve

I should like to begin by relating a marvelous vision Joseph Smith the Prophet had concerning the Twelve Apostles in his day, which has profound significance for me. Heber C. Kimball recorded, "The following vision was manifested to him [Joseph Smith] as near as I can recollect:

"He saw the Twelve going forth, and they appeared to be in a

far distant land. After some time they unexpectedly met together, apparently in great tribulation, their clothes all ragged, and their knees and feet sore. They formed into a circle, and all stood with their eyes fixed upon the ground. The Savior appeared and stood in their midst and wept over them, and wanted to show Himself to them, but they did not discover Him." (Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, 2d ed., Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, p. 93; see also *History of the Church*, 2:381.)

A message that can be inferred from this is that, because the Twelve had suffered so much, had endured so greatly, and had so exhausted themselves in leading the battle of righteousness, they were bowed down and did not look up. Had they only looked up they might have beheld the Lord Jesus, who wanted them to see him, weeping over them, suffering with them, and standing in their midst.

Not many months ago we were in one of the oldest cities on earth. Some of the greatest wonders of the world are there; so are crime, squalor, poverty, and filth. Our kind hosts observed as we were making our way through the teeming masses—past the overloaded donkeys, the filth, the smells—that everything was beautiful in that city if you would raise your sights and only look a foot or more above the ground.

In recent times the price of oil, gold, and other precious minerals has greatly increased. These treasures are all obtained by looking down. They are useful and necessary, but they are tangible riches. What of the treasures that are to be found by raising our vision? What of the intangible riches which come from the pursuit of holiness? Stephen looked upward: "Being full of the Holy Ghost, [he] looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." (Acts 7:55.)

Where are self-respect and personal integrity?

My heart and understanding go out to our young people. They have to cope with a darkness and moral fog as dense as many of us can ever remember. We live in a world where success seems largely measured by possessions. How the possessions may have been acquired often seems immaterial. Honesty, decency, chastity, and holiness are frequently downgraded as being of lesser worth than possessions. Are our young people enticed to look up or down?

The desire for profitable gain and popularity in the entertainment world has unmasked in the most appealing way all of the evils of the human race. The most revolting practices and perversions have been masqueraded and even urged upon our inexperienced young people by some seeking to seductively merchandise the evil side of human behavior. Consciences seem seared with a hot iron; spiritual cells seem closed. Ideals of emptiness and uselessness of life are fostered. Nobility of thought and purpose seems not to be sufficiently taught, encouraged, or valued.

The standard of the common thief, "What can we get away with?" has become the standard for many in the world rather than what our own integrity ought to demand that we do. What has happened to self-respect and personal integrity, which would not permit even entertaining the idea of doing cheap or small things? An example might be our relationship with the financial credit by which the world's commerce is carried on. Often we forget that those who extend credit to us are also extending trust and confidence in us. Our own integrity is involved. I recall my father speaking with profound respect of a man whom father as a lawyer had taken through bankruptcy. Given time, this man paid in

full all of his creditors who had trusted him and extended confidence in him, even though he was legally relieved of paying the debts. Our own integrity is a substantial part of our individual worth.

Building self-esteem

How can Christian belief and morality translate more completely into Christian action? Does our commitment fall short of being a consecration? The doubting Thomas wanted to believe; he believed part way. It is my firm persuasion that building self-esteem sufficiently to forsake all evil requires a consecration to the saving principles and ordinances of the gospel under divine priesthood authority. It must be consecration to simple, basic Christian principles, including honesty to self and others, forgetting of self, integrity of thought and action. The principles of the restored gospel are so plain, so clear, so compassionate, so endowed with beauty, so graced with love unfeigned, as to be imprinted with the indisputable impress of the Savior himself.

There also needs to be a confrontation with and mastery of life's challenges, especially those that come with temptation. Instead of squarely and honestly meeting the problems of life, many negotiate their way through difficulties, rationalizing their departure from the great truths which bring happiness and justifying the leaving of their sacred promises and holy commitments for seemingly logical but fragile and unjustifiable reasons.

I cannot help wondering if we have not fallen short of the mark. Have we been measuring by standards that are too short and unworthy of those in the pursuit of holiness? Have we taken too much comfort in feeling that we have qualified through our attendance at meetings or through minimal involvement in a

conscience-easing effort? Have our guidelines been a ceiling instead of a floor?

Upon returning from living in South America I was struck by the lack of self-esteem revealed in the manner by which so many people now clothe themselves in public. To attract attention or in the name of comfort and informality, many have sunk not only to immodesty but to slovenliness. Against their own self-interest, they present themselves to others in the worst possible way.

In forsaking the great principle of modesty, society has paid a price in the violation of a greater but related principle—that of chastity. The purveyors of the concept of irresponsible sexual relations that degrade and brutalize the participants have grossly masqueraded and completely missed the purpose of these divine gifts.

Measuring faith and virtue

Chastity before marriage and faithfulness after marriage are cardinal ingredients for the full flowering of sacred love between husband and wife. Chastity nurtures and builds feelings of self-worth and indemnifies against the destruction of self-image.

One of the root social problems of our day concerns the lack of self-esteem.

A shallow self-image is not reinforced by always letting others establish our standards and by habitually succumbing to peer pressure. Young people too often depend upon someone else's image rather than their own.

Insecurity and lack of self-esteem may be related to lack of self-respect. Can we respect ourselves when we do things that we do not admire and may even condemn in others? Repenting of transgressions and forsaking of weaknesses represent, however, a great restorative

salve for the strengthening of human worth and dignity.

Since virtue and faith too often do not readily trade in the marketplace, some may feel that they can live by whatever standards their whim or fancy suggest. In a value-free society—free of morals, free of standards—many also live free of feelings of self-worth, self-respect, and dignity. Far too many young people, and older ones, too, fail to realize, as the motto of the city of Nottingham, England, affirms: *Vivet post funera virtus* ("Virtue lives on after death").

In the intellectual approach to human worth, the values of faith in God and virtuous behavior cannot be quantitatively proven or measured, and so faith and virtue are often rejected by many as worthless. This is a route destined to failure because it does not take into account the powerful importance of the subjective things we can know but not measure. For instance, I love my wife and family, and I feel their love for me. You cannot measure how deep our feelings of love are for each other, but that love is very real to us. Pain is also difficult to measure, but it is real. The same is true of faith in God. We can know of his existence without being able to quantitatively measure it. Paul states, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Rom. 8:16.)

What are the limits on commitment of the heart of those who pursue holiness? Fortunately, this is a matter for each to decide. We achieve perfection, however, in the doing of many things, and can be perfect in our intent to do all things.

In my opinion, it was not contemplated by the great Creator that man- and womankind are intended to wallow in selfishness and self-gratification. After all, "in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." (Gen. 1:27.)

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" says the Psalmist.

"For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

"Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." (Ps. 8:4-6.)

What is the standard of holiness? The answer comes from the scriptures: "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, . . . glorious in holiness?" (Ex. 15:11.)

Like Stephen, those who pursue holiness see the glory of God. (See Acts 7:55.) The blessings that shall come in the pursuit of holiness were in part described by the Lord:

"Verily, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am." (D&C 93:1.)

As I began, I referred to the vision of Joseph the Prophet concerning the Twelve Apostles in his time. No one need assume that the Twelve who failed to see the Savior because they stood with their eyes fixed upon the ground had in any way failed in their labors. As a body they continued strong and steadfast in their ministry. Their discouragement was only temporary. Their labors were heroic; their acts were bold and courageous. Joseph the Prophet, at the conclusion of that vision, was privileged to see the completion of the work of the Twelve. Heber C. Kimball records: "He (Joseph) saw until they had accomplished their work, and arrived at the gate of the celestial city; there Father Adam stood and opened the gate to them, and as they entered he embraced them one by one and kissed them. He [Adam] then led them to the throne of God, and then the Savior embraced each one of them and kis-

sed them, and crowned each one of them in the presence of God. . . . The impression this vision left on Brother Joseph's mind was of so acute a nature, that he never could refrain from weeping while rehearsing it." (Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, pp. 93-94.)

Dignity of self

The dignity of self is greatly enhanced by looking upward in the search for holiness. Like the giant trees, we should reach up for the light. The most important source of light we can come to know is the gift of the Holy Ghost. It is the source of inner strength and peace.

I have seen human dignity and self-worth expressed eloquently in the lives of the humblest of the humble, in the lives of the poor as well as in the lives of the formally educated and the affluent. The fruits of the search for holiness in their lives have been transparent, expressed through their inner dignity, their feelings of self-respect and personal worth. Shakespeare, speaking through Polonius, reminds us:

*This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.*
(*Hamlet*, act 1, scene 3, lines 78-80.)

Much of our self-respect is built by our own hard work, our thrift, and by trying to be independent as far as possible.

May we all have a feeling of personal worth and dignity born of

the knowledge that each of us is a child of God, and be strengthened by looking upwards in the pursuit of holiness. As we look up may we be worthy to receive the inspiration that comes constantly from God, which inspiration is sacred, real, and often very private.

I have a conviction of these matters from sacred inner whisperings. I know that Jesus lives and is the head of this church, which testimony I leave, in the name of the Savior, Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

Elder James E. Faust, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

The Choir and congregation will now join in singing "Israel, Israel, God Is Calling."

The Choir and congregation sang "Israel, Israel, God Is Calling."

President Romney

We welcome those who have just joined us on radio and television. We are gathered in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, in the first session of the 151st Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Elder Jacob de Jager, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Jacob de Jager

My dear brothers and sisters: Thirty-one years ago today, the fourth of April, 1950, I left Holland on a three-year company assignment to Southeast Asia.

Electric lighting in Southeast Asia

This assignment enabled me to make extended trips to various remote islands in that part of the world to assist in the planning and development of rural electrification.

It also gave me a chance to see firsthand after World War II how the people in that part of the world were going through a rapid development.

In their homes simple oil lamps with coconut oil and a wick were replaced by electric lighting. With the coming of electricity to their islands, for many, night turned into day with new possibilities for individual study and recreation after sunset. To make this possible, power stations had to be built. High-voltage power lines and electrical substations had to be installed in order to carry electricity into every home.

I remember the happy looks on the faces and the sparkle in the eyes of the youngsters, but also the tears of gratitude in the eyes of the elderly people, when the mayor of their native village switched on the electric lighting system for the first time. Well-planned festivities followed with music, singing, and dancing from sunset till sunrise the next morning.

There truly was great joy among the people!

Gospel light in Southeast Asia

Twenty-six years later, again on the fourth of April, the Lord called me out of the world into his permanent service; and shortly thereafter, this time as a member of the

First Quorum of the Seventy of the Church, I once more departed for Southeast Asia, but now to spread another light—the light of the gospel. And so, for numerous people, another remarkable change came into their lives.

The light to be spread was carried by a group of dedicated young men and women who had taken upon themselves to bring the light of the gospel into every home that they were allowed to enter. Their power stations were the mission headquarters in Southeast Asia, and their power lines were the lines of priesthood authority, without which the system could never function.

These missionaries also witnessed joy and gratitude when the first glimpses of eternal light were brought into the lives of their converts and when the new members learned to sing in their own language during family home evening, "There is beauty all around, when there's love at home." ("There Is Beauty All Around," *Hymns*, no. 169.)

Every time a new mission is opened up, branches of the Church are established, or stakes of Zion are organized, bright lights start to shine forth, bringing to mind the words of the hymn:

The morning breaks; the shadows flee;

Lo, Zion's standard is unfurled!

The dawning of a brighter day

Majestic rises on the world.

("The Morning Breaks; the Shadows Flee," *Hymns*, no. 269.)

Sacred obligation

Brothers and sisters, is this spreading of the light to every nation not a miracle?

Is this charge to reach out to every household in order to bring

light, love, and happiness to our fellowmen not a sacred obligation? Especially when we know that the Savior said, "Verily I say unto you all: Arise and shine forth, that thy light may be a standard for the nations." (D&C 115:5.)

Who are "you all" now, on this very day, the fourth of April, 1981?

As far as I can determine from the missionary recommendations that are daily received in the Missionary Department, the majority are still the nineteen-year-old elders and the twenty-one-year-old sisters who, by a long-established tradition, come forward to serve as full-time missionaries.

There are also faithful older sisters, who make such outstanding missionaries wherever they are called to serve.

And finally, there are a limited number of married couples of retirement age. I say a limited number because there are many, many more healthy couples between the ages of sixty and seventy who could happily serve in the mission field.

Increasing need for missionary couples

As the work continues to expand into the many nations of the earth, there will be an increasing need for couples to serve as full-time missionaries. In addition to their basic assignment of teaching the gospel, they may be assigned to perform additional functions.

For instance, in missions where qualified leadership is not yet available, missionary couples may serve as leadership trainers.

We also have among the senior members of the Church retired office workers, bookkeepers, and even certified accountants. Couples with these qualifications may serve in the mission offices as mission secretaries, recorders, or financial secretaries. Moreover, there are among the

mature couples those who have acquired a great expertise in genealogy and they can use their knowledge and experience, when specifically assigned to do so, to teach genealogical skills to members in wards and branches.

Furthermore, there are also possibilities for giving faithful service to build the kingdom by teaching the gospel in a visitors' center or in opening up the work in international areas outside the boundaries of existing missions.

Come forward and ask for mission call

However, there is still the mistaken idea among many couples that their missionary work would be proselyting only. I hope by what I have just said that they now have a better insight and will reconsider the possibility of service, especially when they hear that, contrary to the established policy for other callings in the kingdom, they can come forward and express their desire to go on a six-, twelve-, or eighteen-month mission.

But many say, "Elder de Jager, it is too hard to leave our grandchildren." Apparently, leaving their own children for a while seems no problem, but to leave little Billy and darling little Susie, oh, seems really difficult to them.

I have heard of truly great experiences of couples in the mission field.

Brother and Sister Ralph Lambert served their eighteen months' mission in the Oklahoma Tulsa Mission. While serving in a small branch they had a sister and her teenage son coming to church every Sunday. Although the father in this family was a member of record, he never came along.

Before his retirement in Oklahoma, he had lived in Utah, and as a young deacon he was so shy that he

did not attend church because he was afraid to be asked to pray or to carry out some other assignment.

From time to time he met young missionaries who talked to him about the Church, but they were never able to bring him back into activity. However, Brother and Sister Lambert, being of the same age and having great maturity, were able to develop a warm relationship with him.

He started coming to church with his wife and son, and he was never pressured to do anything he did not feel like doing. After a while, he started to ask how much money was expected as a contribution to the branch budget. When this was explained to him in a loving way, he made his first contribution.

About a month later, when fast Sunday was approaching, he asked what the present procedure was for paying tithing. It was explained to him that it hadn't changed in the fifty years since he had lived in Utah! He then started paying this voluntary contribution to the kingdom.

Shortly thereafter, he said that he would accept any call that would be extended to him in that small branch. He was ordained a priest, and this enabled him to ordain his youngest son a priest in the Aaronic Priesthood.

He later became a counselor in the branch presidency, and last year he was ordained an elder and his whole family was sealed together in the Salt Lake Temple.

Blessing of missionary work

I testify that Brother and Sister Lambert, with thousands of faithful couples who have served in the past and those who are serving now, will be greatly blessed by our Heavenly Father and that they have gained a sound understanding of the true meaning of the scripture:

"And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repen-

tance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!" (D&C 18:15.)

Finally, I would like to share with you one more interesting experience, which Brother and Sister Edwin Q. Cannon, Jr., had on their mission in West Africa.

The story concerns an outstanding black Latter-day Saint family by the name of Sampson-Davis, who reside in Accra, Ghana.

In 1963 Brother Sampson-Davis graduated with a degree in electronics from Oxford University in England and was hired by the Philips Electronics Company in Eindhoven, Holland. Sister Sampson-Davis came over from Africa to join her husband in that Dutch town, and one day she met the Mormon missionaries, received a Book of Mormon, and had the first missionary discussion in the boarding house where she was living.

I feel somewhat embarrassed, however, to tell you that the Dutch landlady with whom Sister Sampson-Davis boarded told her in no uncertain terms to have no further contact with those Mormons.

The Sampson-Davis family eventually went back to Ghana, and fifteen years later, in 1978, Sister Sampson-Davis came in contact with the Church again and faithfully started to attend the Sunday meetings. The family was taught the missionary discussions, gained a strong testimony; and Brother Ted Cannon baptized the mother, two sons, and a daughter in a swimming pool in Accra.

The oldest boy, Crosby Sampson-Davis, started to prepare himself for a mission, which resulted in his mission call earlier this year. Two weeks ago Elder Sampson-Davis left the Missionary Training Center to serve in the England Manchester Mission. Interestingly enough, the father joined the Church

one month before his son left for his mission. So the whole family is now united in the faith!

Brother and Sister Cannon really have seen the fruits of their labors, and they have choice memories of the time they spent with our Heavenly Father's children in Africa.

I share the experiences of these two couples with you to let you feel the importance of missionary service for senior couples and the blessings that come to all who are engaged in the work of the Master.

I testify, as a convert to the Church, that no greater joy can come to men than being involved in carrying the gospel to all nations, kin-

dreds, tongues, and people.

I humbly pray that the missionary spirit will be with us all in the time ahead and that we may be an instrument in the hand of the Lord to build his kingdom here on earth prior to his glorious return, and do so in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

Elder Jacob de Jager, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us.

Elder Boyd K. Packer

The prophet Jacob foretold the destruction of a people because they were blind to ordinary things, "which blindness," he said, "came by looking beyond the mark." (Jacob 4:14.)

We often seek for things we cannot seem to find when they are within easy reach—ordinary, obvious things.

I wish to talk about an ordinary word. I have tried for months—really tried—to find some way to hold this word up in such a way that you would be very impressed with what it means.

Marriage

The word is *marriage*.

I have wished that I could set before you a finely carved chest, placing it where the light is just right. I would carefully unlatch it and reverently uncover the word—*marriage*.

Perhaps then you would see that it is priceless!

I cannot show it to you that way, so I will do the best I can using other ordinary words.

It is my purpose to endorse and to favor, to encourage and defend marriage.

Many regard it nowadays as being, at best, semiprecious, and by some it is thought to be worth nothing at all.

I have seen and heard, as you have seen and heard, the signals all about us, carefully orchestrated to convince us that marriage is out of date and in the way.

Counterfeit of marriage

There is a practice, now quite prevalent, for unmarried couples to live together, a counterfeit of marriage. They suppose that they shall have all that marriage can offer without the obligations connected with it. They are wrong!

However much they hope to find in a relationship of that kind, they will lose more. Living together without marriage destroys something inside all who participate. Virtue, self-esteem, and refinement of character wither away.

Claiming that it will not happen does not prevent the loss; and these virtues, once lost, are not easily reclaimed.

To suppose that one day they may nonchalantly change their habits and immediately claim all that might have been theirs had they not made a mockery of marriage is to suppose something that will not be.

One day, when they come to themselves, they will reap disappointment.

One cannot degrade marriage without tarnishing other words as well, such words as *boy, girl, manhood, womanhood, husband, wife, father, mother, baby, children, family, home*.

Such words as *unselfishness* and *sacrifice* will then be tossed aside. Then self-respect will fade and love itself will not want to stay.

If you have been tempted to enter such a relationship or if you now live with another without marriage, leave! Withdraw from it! Run away from it! Do not continue with it! Or, if you can, make a marriage out of it.

Marriage is sacred

Even a rickety marriage will serve good purpose as long as two people struggle to keep it from falling down around them.

And now a word of warning. One who destroys a marriage takes upon himself a very great responsibility indeed. Marriage is sacred!

To willfully destroy a marriage, either your own or that of another couple, is to offend our God. Such a thing will not be lightly considered in the judgments of the Almighty and in the eternal scheme of things will not easily be forgiven.

Do not threaten nor break up a marriage. Do not translate some disenchantment with your own marriage partner or an attraction for someone

else into justification for any conduct that would destroy a marriage.

This monumental transgression frequently places heavy burdens upon little children. They do not understand the selfish yearnings of unhappy adults who are willing to buy their own satisfaction at the expense of the innocent.

God Himself decreed that the physical expression of love, that union of male and female which has power to generate life, is authorized only in marriage.

Marriage is the shelter where families are created. That society which puts low value on marriage sows the wind and, in time, will reap the whirlwind—and thereafter, unless they repent, bring upon themselves a holocaust!

Trouble attracts attention

Some think that every marriage must expect to end in unhappiness and divorce, with the hopes and dreams predestined to end in a broken, sad wreck of things.

Some marriages do bend, and some will break, but we must not, because of this, lose faith in marriage nor become afraid of it.

Broken marriages are not typical.

Remember that trouble attracts attention! We travel the highway with thousands of cars moving in either direction without paying much attention to any of them. But should an accident occur, we notice immediately.

If it happens again, we get the false impression that no one can go safely down the road.

One accident may make the front page, while a hundred million cars that safely pass are not regarded as worth mentioning.

Writers think that a happy, stable marriage does not have the dramatic appeal, the conflict worth

featuring in a book or a play or a film. Therefore, we constantly hear about the ruined ones and we lose our perspective.

I believe in marriage. I believe it to be the ideal pattern for human living. I know it to be ordained of God. The restraints relating to it were designed to protect our happiness.

Keep faith in marriage

I do not know of any better time in all of the history of the world for a young couple who are of age and prepared and who are in love to think of marriage. There is no better time because it is *your* time.

I know that these are very troubled times. Troubles like we have now are very hard on marriages.

Do not lose faith in marriage. Not even if you have been through the unhappiness of a divorce and are surrounded with pieces of a marriage that has fallen apart.

If you have honored your vows and your partner did not do so, remember God is watching over us. One day, after all of the tomorrows have passed, there will be recompense. Those who have been moral and faithful to their covenants will be happy and those who have not will be otherwise.

Some marriages have broken up in spite of all that one partner could do to hold the marriage together. While there may be faults on both sides, I do not condemn the innocent one who suffers in spite of all that was desired and done to save the marriage.

And to you I say, do not lose faith in marriage itself. Do not let your disappointment leave you bitter or cynical or justify any conduct that is unworthy.

If you have had no opportunity for marriage or if you have lost your companion in death, keep your faith in marriage.

Some years ago an associate of mine lost his beloved wife. She died after a lingering illness, and he watched in helpless agony as the doctors withdrew all hope.

One day near the end she told him that when she was gone she wanted him to marry again and he was not to wait too long a time. He protested! The children were nearly grown and he would go the rest of the way alone.

She turned away and wept and said, "Have I been such a failure that after all our years together you would rather go unmarried? Have I been such a failure?"

In due time there came another, and their life together has reaffirmed his faith in marriage. And I have the feeling that his first beloved wife is deeply grateful to the second one, who filled the place that she could not keep.

Joys and tests of marriage

Marriage is yet safe, with all its sweet fulfillment, with all its joy and love. In marriage all of the worthy yearnings of the human soul, all that is physical and emotional and spiritual, can be fulfilled.

Marriage is not without trials of many kinds. These tests forge virtue and strength. The tempering that comes in marriage and family life produces men and women who will someday be exalted.

God has ordained that life should have its beginning within the protecting shelter of marriage, conceived in a consummate expression of love and nurtured and fostered with that deeper love which is accompanied always by sacrifice.

Marriage offers fulfillment all the way through life—in youth and young love, the wedding and on the honeymoon, with the coming of little children and the nurturing of them. Then come the golden years when

young ones leave the nest to build one of their own. The cycle then repeats itself, as God has decreed it should.

Eternal love, eternal marriage, eternal increase

There is another dimension to marriage that we know of in the Church. It came by revelation. This glorious, supernal truth teaches us that marriage is meant to be eternal.

There are covenants we can make if we are willing, and bounds we can seal if we are worthy, that will keep marriage safe and intact beyond the veil of death.

The Lord has declared, "For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." (Moses 1:39.)

The ultimate end of all activity in the Church is that a man and his wife and their children can be happy at home and that the family can continue through eternity. All Christian doctrine is formulated to protect the individual, the home, and the family.

These lines express something of the place of marriage in the eternal progress of man:

*We have within a burning flame,
A light to kindle lights,
The sacred fire of life itself,
Which if misused ignites
A smold'ring, suffocating cloud
Of sorrow and distress.
When used by law this power brings
forth
A life, a family, happiness.*

*Temptors from the darkest realm
Seek to pervert this power
In acts of wickedness and waste
Until there comes the hour
Of judgment and of recompense,
When bitter tears are shed
O'er power once held to foster life
That now is gone and dead.*

*I know this power to be a key,
A very key to God's own plan
Which brings to pass eternal life
And immortality for man.
And marriage is the crucible
Where elements of life combine,
Where mortal temples are conceived
Within that plan divine.*

*Then spirit offspring of our God
Can come through mortal birth
To have a choice, to face the test—
The purpose of our stay on earth.
Here good and evil stand alike
Before decision's sovereign nod.
Those who elect the righteous path
Will part the veil, return to God.*

*A gift from God, the plan provides
That mortal beings in humble strait
Be given power, supernal power,
To share their love and help create
A living child, a living soul,
Image of man, and of Deity.
How we regard this sacred gift
Will fix our course, our destiny!*

Eternal love, eternal marriage, eternal increase! This ideal, which is new to many, when thoughtfully considered, can keep a marriage strong and safe. No relationship has more potential to exalt a man and a woman than the marriage covenant. No obligation in society or in the Church supersedes it in importance.

I thank God for marriage. I thank God for temples. I thank God for the glorious sealing power, that power which transcends all that we have been given, through which our marriages may become eternal. May we be worthy of this sacred gift, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Following Elder Packer's talk, the Choir sang "More Holiness Give Me" without announcement.

President Romney

The Tabernacle Choir has just sung "More Holiness Give Me."

President Romney speaks without announcement.

President Marion G. Romney

Restoration of Israel

My beloved brethren and sisters, I am sure we all realize that we are living in the dispensation of the fulness of times, which will culminate in the second coming of the Savior.

Among the predicted signs of his second coming was the restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ, to the fulfillment of which we are all witnesses; another is to be the establishment of Zion in America; and a third is the prediction that the children of Israel will be restored to the lands of their inheritance.

Much interest in the fulfillment of this third prediction has been aroused recently by the dedication of the Orson Hyde Memorial Gardens in Jerusalem and the diplomatic maneuvering of the involved nations over the Holy Land. Against this background, it has been interesting to me, and I believe it will be interesting and informative to all of us, to consider what is written in the Book of Mormon concerning the restoration of the children of Israel to the lands of their inheritance and the second coming of the Savior.

Soon after Lehi's colony arrived in the promised land (about 580 B.C.), Nephi, having written concerning Christ's then future birth, ministry, and crucifixion, continued:

"And as for those who are at Jerusalem, saith the prophet, they shall be scourged by all people, because they crucify the God of Israel, and turn their hearts aside, rejecting signs and wonders, and the power and glory of the God of Israel.

"And because they turn their

hearts aside, saith the prophet, and have despised the Holy One of Israel, they shall wander in the flesh, and perish, and become a hiss and a byword, and be hated among all nations.

"Nevertheless, when that day cometh, saith the prophet, that they no more turn aside their hearts against the Holy One of Israel, then will he remember the covenants which he made to their fathers.

"Yea, then will he remember the isles of the sea; yea, and all the people who are of the house of Israel, will I gather in, saith the Lord, according to the words of the prophet Zenos, from the four quarters of the earth." (1 Ne. 19:13-16.)

Nephi had earlier—before they crossed the ocean—spoken unto his brothers "concerning the restoration of the Jews in the latter days.

"And I did rehearse unto them," he said, "the words of Isaiah, who spake concerning the restoration of the Jews, or of the house of Israel; and after they were restored they should no more be confounded, neither should they be scattered again." (1 Ne. 15:19-20.)

Prophecies of gathering

Some twenty-five years later, Nephi's brother Jacob, speaking concerning the inhabitants of Jerusalem, said "that the Lord . . . should manifest himself unto them in the flesh; and after he should manifest himself they should scourge him and crucify him, according to the words of the angel who spake it unto me.

"And after they have hardened their hearts and stiffened their necks against the Holy One of Israel, behold, the judgments of the Holy One of Israel shall come upon them. And the day cometh that they shall be smitten and afflicted.

"Wherefore, after they are driven to and fro, for thus saith the angel, many shall be afflicted in the flesh, and shall not be suffered to perish, because of the prayers of the faithful; they shall be scattered, and smitten, and hated; nevertheless, the Lord will be merciful unto them, that when they shall come to the knowledge of their Redeemer, they shall be gathered together again to the lands of their inheritance." (2 Ne. 6:9-11.)

Later Jacob, the brother of Nephi, added:

"And now, my beloved brethren, I have read these things that ye might know concerning the covenants of the Lord that he has covenanted with all the house of Israel—

"That he has spoken unto the Jews, by the mouth of his holy prophets, even from the beginning down, from generation to generation, until the time comes that they shall be restored to the true church and fold of God; when they shall be gathered home to the lands of their inheritance, and shall be established in all their lands of promise." (2 Ne. 9:1-2.)

"But behold, thus saith the Lord God: When the day cometh that they shall believe in me, that I am Christ, then have I covenanted with their fathers that they shall be restored in the flesh, upon the earth, unto the lands of their inheritance.

"And it shall come to pass that they shall be gathered in from their long dispersion, from the isles of the sea, and from the four parts of the earth; and the nations of the Gentiles shall be great in the eyes of me, saith God, in carrying them forth to the lands of their inheritance." (2 Ne. 10:7-8.)

Near the end of his life, Nephi, foretelling the future history of the Jews, said that, following the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, "the Jews shall be scattered among all nations; yea, and also Babylon shall be destroyed; wherefore, the Jews shall be scattered by other nations. [It was Babylon that scattered the Jews, of course, before the birth of Christ.]

"And after they have been scattered, and the Lord God hath scourged them by other nations for the space of many generations, yea, even down from generation to generation until they shall be persuaded to believe in Christ, the Son of God, and the atonement, which is infinite for all mankind—and when that day shall come that they shall believe in Christ, and worship the Father in his name, with pure hearts and clean hands, and look not forward any more for another Messiah, then, at that time, the day will come that it must needs be expedient that they should believe these things.

"And the Lord will set his hand again the second time to restore his people from their lost and fallen state." (2 Ne. 25:15-17.)

"I will remember the covenant"

In the twentieth chapter of 3 Nephi, the resurrected Jesus—speaking of our day when the gospel would be restored among the Gentiles as it has now been—said: "When they [the Gentiles] shall have received the fulness of my gospel, then if they shall harden their hearts against me . . .

"I will remember the covenant which I have made with my people; and I have covenanted with them that I would gather them together in mine own due time, that I would give unto them again the land of their fathers for their inheritance, which is the land of Jerusalem, which is the promised land unto them forever, saith the Father.

"And it shall come to pass that the time cometh, when the fulness of my gospel shall be preached unto them;

"And they shall believe in me, that I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and shall pray unto the Father in my name.

"Then shall their watchmen lift up their voice, and with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye.

"Then will the Father gather them together again, and give unto them Jerusalem for the land of their inheritance.

"Then shall they break forth into joy—Sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the Father hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. . . .

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, all these things shall surely come, even as the Father hath commanded me. Then shall this covenant which the Father hath covenanted with his people be fulfilled; and then shall Jerusalem be inhabited again with my people, and it shall be the land of their inheritance." (3 Ne. 20:28-34, 46.)

"Verily I say unto you," said the Savior to the Nephites, "I give unto you a sign, that ye may know the time when these things shall be about to take place. . . .

"... at that day, even when this gospel shall be preached among the remnant of this people. Verily I say unto you, at that day shall the work of the Father commence among all the dispersed of my people, yea, even the tribes which have been lost, which the Father hath led away out of Jerusalem.

"Yea, the work shall commence among all the dispersed of my people, with the Father, to prepare the way whereby they may come unto me, that they may call on the Father in my name.

"Yea, and then shall the work commence, with the Father, among all nations, in preparing the way

whereby his people may be gathered home to the land of their inheritance." (3 Ne. 21:1, 26-28.)

Signal of Israel's acceptance of Christ

Mormon, finishing his abridged account of Christ's ministry among the Nephites, said:

"And now behold, I say unto you that when the Lord shall see fit, in his wisdom, that these sayings shall come unto the Gentiles according to his word, then ye may know that the covenant which the Father hath made with the children of Israel, concerning their restoration to the lands of their inheritance, is already beginning to be fulfilled.

"And ye may know that the words of the Lord, which have been spoken by the holy prophets, shall all be fulfilled; and ye need not say that the Lord delays his coming unto the children of Israel.

"And ye need not imagine in your hearts that the words which have been spoken are vain, for behold, the Lord will remember his covenant which he hath made unto his people of the house of Israel. . . .

"Yea, and ye need not any longer hiss, nor spurn, nor make game of the Jews, nor any of the remnant of the house of Israel; for behold, the Lord remembereth his covenant unto them, and he will do unto them according to that which he hath sworn." (3 Ne. 29:1-3, 8.)

Concluding the record which Moroni would deposit in the Hill Cumorah, which Joseph Smith would bring forth 1,400 years later, Mormon wrote:

"Now these things are written unto the remnant of the house of Jacob; . . . and they are to be hid up unto the Lord that they may come forth in his own due time. . . .

"And behold, they shall go unto

the unbelieving of the Jews; and for this intent shall they go—that they may be persuaded that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God; that the Father may bring about, through his most Beloved, his great and eternal purpose, in restoring the Jews, or all the house of Israel, to the land of their inheritance, which the Lord their God hath given them, unto the fulfilling of his covenant.” (Morm. 5:12, 14.)

These predictions by the Book of Mormon prophets make it perfectly clear that the restoration of the house of Israel to the lands of their inheritance will signal their acceptance of Jesus Christ as their Redeemer, to which I testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang “All Glory, Laud and Honor” without announcement.

President Romney

The Tabernacle Choir has just sung “All Glory, Laud and Honor.”

We are grateful to the managers and operators of the many television and radio stations for offering their facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this conference to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

We shall conclude this session of the conference with the Tabernacle Choir singing “Most Holy Spirit.”

Following the singing, the benediction will be pronounced by Elder W. Grant Bangerter, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. This conference will then be adjourned until two o’clock this afternoon.

The Choir sang “Most Holy Spirit.”

Elder W. Grant Bangerter pronounced the benediction.

FIRST DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

SECOND SESSION

The second session of the 151st Annual General Conference began at 2:00 P.M. on Saturday, April 4, 1981. President Spencer W. Kimball presided at and conducted this session.

Music for this session was provided by the combined institute choir from Salt Lake, Weber, and Logan institutes of religion directed by Paul A. Hanks with Roy M. Darley at the organ.

At the beginning of the meeting, President Kimball made the following remarks:

President Spencer W. Kimball

We welcome all assembled in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on Temple Square in this, the second session of the 151st Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We also welcome the many members and friends of the Church tuned to these proceedings by radio, television, and direct wire. There is an overflow congregation in the Salt Palace where Elders Robert L. Simpson and William R. Bradford are presiding.

We are pleased to acknowledge especially our guests who are present this afternoon, along with general and local Church leaders and members from many parts of the world.

We express our appreciation to the owners and operators of many radio and television stations for their cooperation in making these proceedings available to members and friends of the Church in many countries.

The music for this session will be provided by a combined institute choir from Salt Lake, Weber, and Logan institutes of religion. This choir is under the direction of Paul A. Hanks with Roy Darley at the organ.

The choir will begin this service by singing "True to the Faith." The

invocation will be offered by Elder Marion D. Hanks, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "True to the Faith."

The invocation was given by Elder Marion D. Hanks.

President Kimball

Elder Wilford G. Edling will now read the auditor's report. Afterward Elder Francis M. Gibbons will present the statistical report of the Church for the year 1980.

Auditor's Report 1980

Elder Wilford G. Edling

We have reviewed the annual financial report of the Church as of December 31, 1980, and the operations for the year then ended. The financial statements and operations reviewed by the committee include the general funds of the Church and of other controlled organizations, the accounts of which are maintained by the Financial Department of the Church. We have also examined the budgeting, accounting, and auditing procedures employed, and the manner in which funds are received and expenditures are controlled. We determined that expenditures of general Church funds were authorized by the First Presidency and by budgetary procedures. The budget is authorized by the Council on Disposition of the Tithes, comprised of the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, and the Presiding Bishopric. The Budget and Appropriations Committee, in weekly meetings, administers the expenditure of funds under the budget.

Modern accounting technology and equipment are employed by the Financial Department and other departments in keeping abreast of rapid Church expansion and changing methods of electronic data processing. The committee and the Law Department are conjointly giving continuous attention to matters relating to taxation of churches by the federal government, the states, and foreign governments.

The Auditing Department, which is independent of all other departments, functions in the three-fold capacity of performing financial audits, operational audits, and audits of the computer systems employed by the Church. These services are conducted on a continuous basis and include all Church departments, other Church-controlled organizations (the accounts of which are maintained in the Financial Department), and worldwide operations, including missions, financial centers, and departmental activities conducted in foreign countries. The extent and scope of the Auditing Department in safe-

guarding the resources of the Church are increasing commensurate with the growth and the widening activities of the Church. The audit of local funds of wards and stakes is assigned to stake auditors. Incorporated businesses owned or controlled by the Church, for which accounts are not maintained in the Financial Department, are audited by professional auditing firms or by governmental regulatory agencies.

Based on our review of the annual financial report and other accounting data, and our study of the accounting and auditing methods by which financial operations are controlled, together with continuing dis-

cussions with personnel of the Financial, Auditing, and Law departments, we are of the opinion that the general funds of the Church received and expended during the year 1980 have been properly accounted for in accordance with established procedures which are outlined herein.

Respectfully submitted,
Church Audit
Committee

Wilford G. Edling
David M. Kennedy
Warren E. Pugh
Merrill J. Bateman
Ted E. Davis

Statistical Report 1980

Elder Francis M. Gibbons

For the information of the members of the Church, the First Presidency has issued the following statistical report concerning the growth and status of the Church as of December 31, 1980. (Membership figures are estimates based on 1980 reports available prior to conference.)

Church Units

Number of stakes of Zion	1,218
Number of full-time missions.....	188
Number of wards.....	7,868
Number of independent branches in stakes.....	2,456
Number of mission branches..	2,267
(These statistics reflect an increase of 1,105 wards and branches during 1980.)	
Number of countries with organized wards or branches	83

Church Membership

Total membership reported by stakes, missions, and Church offices at the close of 1980	4,638,000
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Church Growth during 1980

Children blessed	103,000
Children of record baptized.....	65,000
Converts baptized	211,000
(This convert baptism figure is an estimate based on 1980 reports received at Church headquarters prior to conference.)	

Social Statistics

Birthrate per thousand	28.2
Number of persons married per thousand	12.2
Death rate per thousand	3.9

Genealogical Society

Names cleared in 1980 for temple endowments.....	5,414,600
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Temples

Numbers of endowments performed during 1980:	
For the living	52,000
For the dead	3,962,000
Temples in operation	19
Temples planned or under construction	8
(There were 89,100 more endowments done in 1980 than in 1979.)	

Priesthood

Deacons	156,000
Teachers	122,000
Priests	236,000
Elders	382,000
Seventies	30,000
High priests	157,000
(An estimated increase of 42,000 priesthood members during 1980)	
Full-time missionaries	29,953

Church School System

Total enrollment during 1979-80 school year:	
Seminaries and Institutes including special programs	309,000
Church schools, colleges, and continuing education	75,000

Welfare Services

Persons assisted with cash or commodities	160,600
Persons assisted by LDS Social Services	51,600
Persons placed in gainful employment	26,400
Man-days of labor donated to welfare services	527,900
Commodities distributed from storehouses in pounds	35,441,200

**Prominent Members Who Passed
Away during the Year**

Elder William H. Bennett,
emeritus member of the First Quorum

of the Seventy; William Pakimana Taurima, president of the Gisborne New Zealand Stake; Thomas Lee Chappell, president of the Loa Utah Stake; Donald Leon Hansen, president of the San Bernardino California East Stake; Clara Alberta Wright Moyle, widow of Henry D. Moyle, former First Counselor in the First Presidency; Betsy Hollings Richards, widow of George F. Richards, former President of the Quorum of the Twelve; Edgar B. Brossard, former member of the United States Tariff Commission for 36 years; Leona Holbrook, president of the American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, former member of the U.S. Olympic Committee, and participant in the International Olympic Academy; Junius M. Jackson, former president of the Church Genealogical Society; Pearl B. Johnson, secretary to members of the First Presidency or Quorum of the Twelve for over forty years and former member of the YWMA General Board.

President Kimball

Elder Gordon B. Hinckley, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be the first speaker. Elder Marvin J. Ashton, also a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will follow.

Elder Gordon B. Hinckley

In behalf of all, I should like to welcome Brother Angel Abrea, a great and faithful and devoted leader of the Church for many years in Argentina, whose influence has been felt not only there but throughout South America.

**Purported blessing given to Joseph
Smith III**

I think I should like to say a

few words this afternoon about the recently discovered transcript of a blessing, reported to have been given January 17, 1844, by Joseph Smith to his eleven-year-old son. This has received much attention in the media of late. The document is evidently in the handwriting of Thomas Bullock, who served as clerk to the Prophet.

Our Historical Department secured it in pursuit of their practice of obtaining artifacts of many kinds re-

lated to our early history. We determined that we would give full publicity to the discovery, even though we were confident that critics, knowing little of the factual history of the Church, would seize upon it as suggesting a flaw in our line of authority.

Furthermore, and this is of significant importance, we recognized the wording of the document as a father's blessing, having great sentimental value for the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, whose presidents have been lineal descendants of Joseph Smith. The First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve determined to offer it to the Reorganized Church.

Officers of that church responded with appreciation, and indicated that they would accept the document only by giving us in return another valuable artifact. An exchange was made on March 19th last.

I do not wish to open old discussions, but for those who may feel that the document casts a cloud on the principle of transfer of authority through the Council of the Twelve Apostles, I desire to review briefly a few facts concerning the document and the history of the period to which it is related, and then conclude with some observations that arise out of the circumstances.

First, it should be said that the document is a transcript of a blessing. It is not a record of ordination to an office. As a matter of fact, the recipient of the blessing, Joseph Smith III, himself testified in 1893, in the U.S. Circuit Court in Kansas City: "I did not state that I was ordained by my father: I did not make that statement. I was not ordained by my father as his successor: according to my understanding of the word *ordain*, I was not. I was blessed by him and designated, well in a sense chosen. . . ."

Possible successors

It should be noted further that at various times Joseph Smith had indicated a number of men or groups of men who might possibly succeed him. These included his brother Hyrum, Sidney Rigdon, Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, his son Joseph III, even his yet unborn son David; and, most importantly, on a number of occasions, the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Nor was it unusual for fathers to give their sons blessings of this kind. Orson Pratt, an Apostle, similarly blessed his son in a spirit of hopefulness that he would rise to leadership. Brigham Young and others similarly blessed their sons.

We in the Church recognize that the fulfillment of all blessings given under authority of the priesthood is conditioned upon two things: one, the worthiness and faithfulness of the recipient, and, two, the overriding will and wisdom of God.

Keys and authority of the priesthood

As all students of our history know, we have maintained and followed the position that the keys and the authority of the priesthood, that authority without which there can be no true Church of Jesus Christ, were given to the Council of the Twelve Apostles in the very early days of the Church so that in the event of the death of the president the authority would remain and be passed on legally and properly for so long as the Church should continue.

For instance, in the great revelation on priesthood which we know as section 107 of the Doctrine and Covenants, which was received and recorded on March 28, 1835, the Lord spoke of the governance of his Church and said of the Twelve after

speaking of the Presidency: "They form a quorum, equal in authority and power to" the presidency. (D&C 107:24.)

Two years later, on July 23, 1837, this principle was again affirmed through revelation: "For unto you, the Twelve, and those, the First Presidency, who are appointed with you to be your counselors and your leaders, is the power of this priesthood given, for the last days and for the last time." (D&C 112:30.)

Again on January 19, 1841, the Lord said through the Prophet Joseph: "I give unto you my servant Brigham Young to be a president over the Twelve traveling council;

"Which Twelve hold the keys to open up the authority of my kingdom upon the four corners of the earth, and after that to send my word to every creature." (D&C 124:127-28.)

The record of a special conference held in Nauvoo on August 16, 1841, states: "The time had come when the Twelve should be called upon to stand in their place next to the First Presidency, . . . and assist to bear off the kingdom victorious to the nations. . . .

"Motion seconded and carried that the conference approve of the instructions of President Smith, in relation to the Twelve, and that they proceed accordingly, to attend to the duties of their office." ("Conference Minutes," *Times and Seasons*, 2 [1 Sept. 1841]: 521-22.)

It is abundantly clear that the Lord placed the Council of the Twelve, with Brigham Young as its president, next to the Prophet Joseph Smith and gave unto them the keys and the authority to advance the Church under the direction of the Prophet while he was alive, and to govern after his death. The revelations I have just read and the minutes of the Nauvoo meeting were recorded from three to nine years before the blessing of which we are speaking.

"The kingdom of God will roll on"

The winter of 1843-1844 was a season of great tension in Nauvoo. Enemies were plotting the destruction of the Church. During that winter, on a number of occasions, Joseph assembled the Twelve in the upper room of his brick store on Water Street in Nauvoo. Our archives contain a number of documents attesting to these meetings and what was done in them. I have time to quote from the record of only one who was present. There were many. Wrote he of Joseph Smith:

"This great and good man was led, before his death, to call the Twelve together, from time to time, and to instruct them in all things pertaining to the kingdom, ordinances, and government of God. He often observed that he was laying the foundation, but it would remain for the Twelve to complete the building. Said he, 'I know not why; but for some reason I am constrained to hasten my preparations, and to confer upon the Twelve all the ordinances, keys, covenants, endowments, and sealing ordinances of the priesthood . . . for, said he, the Lord is about to lay the burden on your shoulders and let me rest awhile; and if they kill me . . . the kingdom of God will roll on, as I have now finished the work which was laid upon me, by committing to you all things for the building up of the kingdom according to the heavenly vision, and the pattern shown me from heaven.' " (Parley P. Pratt, "Proclamation," *Millennial Star*, 5 [March 1845]: 151.)

As you know, Joseph Smith was killed by the Carthage mob on June 27, 1844. On the following 8th of August a congregation of thousands assembled in Nauvoo. Sidney Rigdon, who had served as a counselor to Joseph Smith, spoke for an hour and a half, proposing that he be appointed guardian of the Church.

There was no affirmative response. That afternoon Brigham Young spoke on behalf of the Apostles. Many present testified that he looked and sounded like the martyred Prophet. When, following his talk, a proposal was put that the Twelve lead the Church, having been given the keys by Joseph, the vote was overwhelmingly in favor.

Surely no one who is acquainted with the subsequent history can doubt the strength of that leadership. Work went forward on the temple and other projects. Then in February of 1846 the unparalleled movement began from Nauvoo on the Mississippi to Winter Quarters on the Missouri, and subsequently to this valley of the Great Salt Lake. So great was the faith of the tens of thousands involved, so strong their testimony, that many gave their lives rather than falter. Where could one find a more powerful witness for the validity of their leadership than in the actions of those who left their homes in Nauvoo to gather here in the valleys of the mountains in response to the call of the Twelve with Brigham Young at their head and subsequently as president of the Church?

Take for instance this man, Thomas Bullock, whose hand evidently recorded the document we are discussing. If he wrote that blessing, he knew about it. It was reportedly found among papers left at his death.

Thomas Bullock had joined the Church in England in November 1841, and had emigrated to Nauvoo in 1843. He served as a clerk to Joseph Smith. He and his family were among the last group of Saints to leave Nauvoo in the fall of 1846. While desperately ill he was faced by the mob with rifles and bayonets at point-blank range and ordered to leave the city within twenty minutes or be shot. He challenged the men to shoot, suggesting that he would probably die soon anyway. The captain responded, "If you will re-

nounce Mormonism you may stay here, and we will protect you." Brother Bullock replied that he had legal ownership of his home, that he had committed no crime. "But," said he, "I am a Mormon, and if I live, I shall follow the Twelve." He was one of the sick and dying carried from that place, whose life, along with those of others of his company, was preserved by the miraculous coming of flocks of quail into their Iowa camp.

When the Saints left Winter Quarters in the early spring of 1847, he was chosen as clerk of the first company. He kept a valuable record of that long trek. He made a second trip East and again back to the valley in 1848. He served a mission to England from 1856 to 1858.

Unbroken chain of authority

The question naturally follows: Would he have been willing to pay so heavy a price for his membership in the Church and to have suffered so much to advance its cause as a missionary at the call of Brigham Young if he had any doubt that President Young was the proper leader of the Church and that this right belonged to another according to a blessing which he had in his possession and which he had written with his own pen?

Brethren and sisters, from the tragedy of that 27th of June, 1844, when Joseph Smith sealed his testimony with his blood, from the confirmation that came into the hearts of the thousands assembled in Nauvoo on that subsequent August 8th, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has gone steadily forward and has never taken a backward step. That same authority which Joseph held, those same keys and powers which were the very essence of his divinely given right to preside, were by him conferred upon the Twelve

Apostles with Brigham Young at their head. Every president of the Church since then has come to that most high and sacred office out of the Council of the Twelve. Each of these men has been blessed with the spirit and power of revelation from on high. There has been an unbroken chain from Joseph Smith, Jr., to Spencer W. Kimball. Of that I bear solemn witness and testimony before you this day. This Church is built upon the sure word of prophecy and revelation—built, as Paul wrote to the Ephesians, “upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.” (Eph. 2:20.)

We were glad to see our brethren of the Reorganized Church get the document which contains a

father’s blessing given upon the head of a son he loved. It is a precious artifact, with great sentimental value for the family of Joseph Smith. It does not seriously raise any question concerning the validity of succession in the presidency through the Council of the Twelve Apostles as that body was established by the Prophet and as it has functioned under the revelations of God. Of this I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Kimball

Elder Gordon B. Hinckley, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us. We shall now hear from Elder Marvin J. Ashton, also a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

Love is important

A few weeks ago, just before 6:00 A.M., my wife and I boarded a taxi to begin the last lap of our trip to Salt Lake City from Australia. Our driver, who had been on duty since 3:00 A.M., was anxious to talk with us, his first passengers of the day. We learned his parents were born just outside of Mexico City. They moved to Chicago, where he was born, and then moved to New Mexico. Twenty years earlier our friend had come for a short visit to San Francisco and had never left. During our trip to the airport, this man related a few incidents from which some great truths were reemphasized.

His parents, he told us, had remained in New Mexico, but liked to visit him and his brother whenever they could afford it because they loved being with their children and grandchildren. In New Mexico his mother’s health was rather poor, but

whenever she was in San Francisco, she seemed to feel much better. This discerning son had said to his brother, “I know just exactly what mother needs.”

He said, “I found a large truck. My brother and I drove to New Mexico, loaded our parents and all their possessions into the truck, and brought them to live near those who loved them most. Mother’s health improved noticeably.” Then he added, “You know, love is very important if it is done right.”

Teach children to work

The second incident related by this humble but wise man was also significant. He said, “I teach all my children to work. I want them to have schooling, but they must learn to work to get it. I just finished helping my sixteen-year-old son get a part-time job at a bank. While he is

going to school, he only works two hours a day, but he is learning to work. He knows I love him because I do my part, too. Due to the uncertainty of my driving hours, I can't always take him to work, but I'm always there to bring him home. He looks forward to our ride together, and so do I."

Family-oriented objectives

One other important point was made by this unusual taxi operator. He told us that some of his unmarried friends who are also taxi drivers are often out of money. They come to him to borrow. He indicated that he is generally able to help them over tight money spots. When his companions asked how he is able to support his family on his salary when they can't even keep themselves, he said, "I tell them I don't waste money at the races or on liquor or tobacco. My wife fixes our meals at home, and we don't have to pay for expensive restaurant food." He smiled when he added, "We do our partying with our family." This man's objectives are family-oriented, and he has learned the folly of serving the gambling, drinking, and momentary expensive habits.

A happy man, this driver; he has realized through experience important areas of love. He knows that nurturing love is healing; it is teaching. It requires sacrifice, and that which we love will be that to which we give our allegiance. He had shared some basic principles of love in action that were potent. Frankly, we were enjoying his comments so much we could have wished the airport terminal were another half an hour away.

Choose carefully where to serve

This taxi driver knew where to place his love. We, too, must choose

carefully the areas in which we serve, because where we serve, there will be our love. During our lifetime, areas of love must be put in proper perspective.

In childhood we anxiously strive to ride that bicycle, to skate, to ski, to learn the laws of balance. Then our love of wheels and speed and balance may become one of the joys of life. As we mature and serve and sacrifice for other interests, new loves develop. A farmer grows to love his land; a scholar his books; a businessman his company. We have all witnessed the love of parents for their children, the love of a bishop for members of his ward, the love of a young man for his new car, the love an engaged young lady has for a ring just received from someone very special.

Equally apparent in the world today is the love of that which is evil. We may jeopardize our future by loving and sacrificing for that which is not conducive to our health or our progress.

Many today are caught up in their love for worldly goods which they think will bring them fame, fortune, and popularity. They, too, reap the rewards of loving incorrectly. In these cases also, that which they serve they will learn to love. What we learn to love can make or break our lives.

Love of money, drugs, and alcohol can turn men into thieves, murderers, and derelicts. First they love the effects of those evil things; then they sacrifice all—life, health, and liberty—for that which they thought were treasures. Love of the sensual, drugs, and lies grows as we serve in these appealing areas offered by Satan. Love bonds become strong and intense in proportion to our continuing service. A man who learns to love a lie serves dishonesty all his life. In fact, a drug addict can usually be cured more quickly than a liar.

One of the greatest accomplishments of Satan in these last days is his success in turning men's affection towards the destructive, the fleeting, or the worldly. Rather than planning for that which is best for all, the world is becoming increasingly "me-centered." On every hand we have many group leaders saying, "We have a right," "We demand." Many young people believe that love has "rights," one can demand of a loved one. For example, a young man often says, "If you love me, you will let me . . ." He would take what he supposes are his rights rather than serving the higher standards of morality. Such a request does not bespeak love.

Serve best interests

Day-to-day acts of service, whether for good or evil, may not seem important, but they are building cords of love that become so strong they can seldom be broken. Ours is to place our areas of love in proper perspective. Meaningful love always works for our eternal progress and not against it.

One who loves has and feels responsibility. Paul in 1 Corinthians says love thinketh no evil, is not self-seeking, is long-suffering, and is kind. (See 1 Cor. 13:4-5.) If we look at love between two who are preparing for temple marriage, we see the elements of sacrifice and of serving each other's best interests, not a shortsighted "me" interest. True love and happiness in courtship and marriage are based upon honesty, self-respect, sacrifice, consideration, courtesy, kindness, and placing "we" ahead of "me." Those who would have us forfeit virtue and chastity to prove our love in sexual participation out of wedlock are neither friends nor eternally family-oriented. To classify them as selfish and unwise is not too severe. Those who

serve the flesh will never know the love and fruits of purity.

Sacrifice with rewards

A new convert to the Church recently shared this story. "I was in and out of enforced confinement most of my teen years. It wasn't so bad being there because the food was pretty good, and we were treated all right. But it did get boring, so when anyone had any reading material, funny books, magazines, or anything, we would trade our food for a chance to borrow those items. One day I saw a fellow with a nice, thick book. I knew it would take a long time to read, so I offered him my pork chops, my potatoes, and all my main course food items for a week. He accepted my offer and loaned me the book. As I read it, I knew I was reading something very special and very true. The book for which I had sacrificed my food was titled the Book of Mormon. When I had a chance, I found the missionaries, changed my habits, and am now finding a new way of life. I love that book for which I traded my food."

Here was an unusual but worthwhile sacrifice with rewarding results. This convert indicated that the more time he spends with this book, the greater his love becomes for the truths he is finding between its covers.

Love for one's family is not the love of a martyr. Think back about the practical sermon of our taxi driver. "I teach my children to work, but I let them know I care. I do my part, too." Giving our time, the listening ear, the understanding heart, and the unconditional love, even opening doors of opportunity at times are some ways to serve those we love. But if we deprive family members of opportunities to learn to work, if we teach them to avoid or escape the responsibilities for their own actions,

if we use them to further our own ambitions, then we do not serve them well or love them prudently.

Give a child an opportunity to work and contribute in the home, and his love of family will increase. As he is encouraged to give time and sacrifice to develop his talents—whether they be academic, music, drama, sports, leadership, or whatever—he will develop a love for that which brings him success. Children will love those talents or possessions to which we encourage them to give time and effort.

We serve what we love

As adults, if our top priorities are constantly directed toward the acquisition of more and better worldly goods, it will not take long to increase our love in those directions. The purchase of a larger house or a nicer car or a more expensive boat may cause us to sacrifice our resources and develop an unwise love for these symbols of success and pleasure. We learn to love that which we serve, and we serve that which we love.

How can we decrease our love for things not for our best good? We must examine our lives, see what services we are rendering and what sacrifices are being made, and then stop the expenditure of time and effort in these directions. If this can be managed, then that love will wither and die. Our love should be channeled into sources that are eternally oriented. Our neighbors and families will respond to our love if we will but follow through with sustaining support and self-sharing. True love is as eternal as life itself. Some callings and assignments in the Church may seem insignificant and unimportant at the time, but with each willingly fulfilled assignment, love of the Lord will grow. We learn to love God as we serve and know Him.

We love that to which we give time

How can we help a new convert to learn to love the gospel? By finding ways for him to serve and sacrifice. We must constantly emphasize the truth that we love that to which we give time, whether it be the gospel, God, or gold. Often we hear expressions of love for the scriptures, including Jesus' teachings. Those who study, practice, and apply the truths not only know them best, but are fortified to use them for guidance all along life's paths. The man who most appreciated the opportunity of tithing payment is he who experiences the joys and blessings that come through sacrifice, and obedience to that law. Our appreciation and love of the gospel and its teachings will always be in proportion to our service and commitment to the gospel.

The greatest example of love available to all of us is, of course, found in the scripture from John: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." (John 3:16.) By the greatest of all acts of love and by this supreme sacrifice, God set the pattern. He demonstrated to us that His love was unconditional and sufficient to encircle every person.

Love is path to eternal life

While Jesus was on earth, He taught us ways to use love correctly. We recall the situation when the scribes and Pharisees brought before the Savior a woman taken in adultery. Their purpose was not to show love for either the woman or the Savior, but to embarrass and trick Jesus. They quoted the Law of Moses which said, "Such should be stoned," and asked of the Master, "What sayest thou?" The accusers walked away one by one when Jesus encouraged the one without sin to cast the first stone. We recall that Jesus asked of

the woman, "Where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?" She answered "No man, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." (See John 8:1-11.)

Jesus did not condone adultery; there is no doubt about His attitude toward proper moral conduct. He chose to teach with love—to show the scribes and Pharisees the need of serving the individual for her best good, and to show the destructive forces of trickery and embarrassment.

Jesus demonstrated to us that under all circumstances there is a proper way to show love.

Perhaps our taxi driver has learned to apply the same Christian principle in his life when he wisely said, "You know, love is very important if it is done right." The Savior's conduct would entitle all of us to conclude also that love is right when it is channeled to proper areas and given the right priorities in our lives.

We live in a complex world. There are many forces calling out, "Love me." A sure way to set our guidelines for that which we choose to serve and learn to love is to follow the admonition of Joshua: "As for

me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Josh. 24:15.)

Let us look to our own lives. We serve that which we love. If we sacrifice and give our love for that which our Father in Heaven asks of us, it will help us set our footsteps upon the path of eternal life. Again I conclude, what we serve we learn to love, and what we love takes our time, and what takes our time is what we love.

May God help us to love the right, love the truth, and love areas of service that are rewarding and eternal, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Kimball

We have just listened to Elder Marvin J. Ashton, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Oh Say, What Is Truth?" After the singing, Elder Loren C. Dunn, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will address us.

The choir and congregation sang "Oh Say, What Is Truth?"

Elder Loren C. Dunn

I have been inspired, as I know you have, with the singing of this lovely choir, and I think especially of their song at the beginning of this meeting, "True to the Faith." It is faith that I would like to speak about this afternoon.

Individual faith

We have been referred to as a believing people. Certainly individual faith is the foundation stone of the gospel and the quality which is most important to us as individuals.

Joseph Smith said, "Faith is the assurance which men have of the existence of things which they have not seen, and the principle of action in all intelligent beings. . . . [It] is the first great governing principle." (*Lectures on Faith*, comp. N. B. Lundwall, Salt Lake City: N. B. Lundwall, n.d., pp. 7, 10.)

And Jacob teaches that the Lord commands all men that they must have "perfect faith in the Holy One of Israel, or they cannot be saved in the Kingdom of God." (2 Ne. 9:23.)

As a principle of power and of

action, and as the key to our salvation, our individual faith, then, becomes of absolute importance to us.

Paul admonished us to "be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." (1 Tim. 4:12.)

"If ye can no more than desire to believe," said Alma, "let this desire work in you, even until ye believe in a manner that ye can give place for a portion of my words." (Alma 32:27.)

Moroni says, "Dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith." (Ether 12:6.)

There are many steps a person can take to develop the gift and power of faith. In the next few minutes I would like to suggest six of these steps.

"Believe in God"

Number one: Faith is the ability to recognize the Lord as all-powerful and the giver of all blessings.

As King Benjamin put it:

"Believe in God; believe that he is, and that he created all things, both in heaven and in earth; believe that he has all wisdom, and all power, both in heaven and in earth; believe that man doth not comprehend all things which the Lord can comprehend." (Mosiah 4:9.)

Sometimes we compartmentalize. We pray about one thing and worry about something else. We seem to limit the ability of the Lord to help us in every aspect of our lives.

John A. Widtsoe tells us the following:

"For several years, under a Federal grant with my staff of workers we had gathered thousands of data in the field of soil moisture; but I could not extract any general law running through them. I gave up at last. My wife and I went to the temple that

day to forget the failure. In the third endowment room, out of the unseen, came the solution, which has long since gone into print." (*In A Sunlit Land: The Autobiography of John A. Widtsoe*, Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1952, p. 177.)

Faith, then, is the realization that the Lord can help us with all things.

Follow promptings

Number two: Faith is the ability to do what we are prompted to do, and when we are prompted to do it.

A few years ago when we were presiding over the Sydney Mission, I was earnestly seeking a blessing from the Lord. The mission had done well but was pausing on a plateau, and we needed to move ahead once again.

On one particular day I was fasting and praying that the Lord would lead us to a new level of achievement. In the midst of my prayers came the clear impression to seek out my son and give him a blessing. I followed the prompting and found my son, whom I am close to, in another part of the house, attending to his high school studies.

I said, "How are things going?"

He answered, in typical teenage fashion, "Why?"

Not knowing what else to say, I asked, "Do you want a blessing?"

He looked at me in stunned silence for a few seconds and then said, "Yes."

The inspiration that followed from that blessing proved to be of great importance to both my son and me. It was an experience that neither of us will forget.

Yet this would have been lost had I stopped to question why the Lord was turning me to my first responsibility, my family, when I was seeking a blessing for the mission.

Live laws of God

Number three: Faith is the ability to live the laws of God that control the blessings we are in need of. While we should not keep the commandments just to receive blessings, nevertheless, the blessings are there.

Harold B. Lee tells the experience of praying very hard for a material blessing he needed badly. He states that one day while he was praying for this blessing, he remembered that he had recently received some income that he had not yet tithed. It was as if, he said, the accusing voice of the Lord was saying: You want a blessing from me but you have not been obedient to the laws upon which such blessings are based. ("Faith," address delivered at Brigham Young University, 28 Jun 1955, tape in Historical Department Archives.)

He said that he went and paid the tithing on that income, and then he again sought that particular blessing of the Lord.

Build an "ark"

Number four: Faith is the ability to act "as if."

In his teachings, Paul said:

"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen . . . prepared an ark to the saving of his house." (Heb. 11:7.)

President Kimball gives us this insight to Noah and the ark:

"As yet there was no evidence of rain and flood. . . . His warnings were considered irrational. . . . How foolish to build an ark on dry ground with the sun shining and life moving forward as usual! But time ran out. . . . The floods came. The disobedient . . . Were drowned. The miracle of the ark followed the faith manifested in its building." (*Faith Precedes the Miracle*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972, pp. 5-6.)

Many years ago during the dark days of World War II, Elvon W. Orme, the president of the Australia Mission was invited to a faithful widow's house for Sunday dinner. Rationing had taken its toll, and many of the good foods had long since disappeared from the shelves of the local stores.

When the president arrived, he was shocked to find a table filled with foods that were in short supply and had not been seen for months.

"I can't eat this," he said, almost embarrassed that he was taking it out of the mouth of a widow.

"I'm afraid you'll have to," she said. "You see, I listened to the Brethren years ago and put in my year's supply, and this is the only kind of food I have."

She showed the faith to act "as if" by storing food, and the faith produced a miracle in the time of need.

I wonder how many Saints will be able to withstand the disaster of their own personal flood by showing faith in the advice of modern prophets and building an ark of family preparedness.

Believe in people

Number five: Faith is the ability to be charitable and to believe in people.

The Savior of the world is the foremost example of this love. After having been rejected and despised, he asked his Father to forgive those who crucified him because "they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34.)

Joseph Smith is another example. After living a life filled with trials and betrayals, he said as he was going to Carthage:

"I am going like a lamb to the slaughter, but . . . I have a conscience void of offense toward . . . all men." (*History of the Church*, 6:555; italics omitted.)

I knew a man once whom I respected very much and who had this quality. On one occasion, a beggar came from out of town and appeared at his door and asked for money. My friend said, "I have an old barn that needs painting. If you want to paint it, I'll pay you for it." They went out to look at the barn, and then the man was sent to England's paint store and arrangements were made for him to pick up the paint he needed.

The barn was painted, and the man was paid and left town. Shortly after, Mr. England called my friend and said that the man had picked up far more paint than was needed to paint the barn. In short, my friend had been taken.

Yet, he took the opportunity to teach his sons a lesson.

"Had I known what he did, I would have stopped him," he said. "But we have our painted barn, and the painter, whatever his problems, will always know that there was someone willing to believe in him."

Faith cannot be nourished in a heart that has been made hard by continued cynicism, skepticism, and unforgiveness.

A person who cannot see the good in people not only destroys his own faith, but also becomes a basically unhappy person.

Follow inspired leaders

Number six: Faith is the ability to allow ourselves to be guided by the priesthood.

Paul teaches us this important truth:

"And he [the Lord] gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." And here he tells us why these priesthood leaders have been given to the Saints: "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure

of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (Eph. 4:11, 13.)

Priesthood leaders, all leaders who have been called by revelation under the hands of the priesthood, have been given to us so we can come to a unity of the faith, to the end that we might know the Savior and have his image in our countenance and become like him, "that every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world." (D&C 1:20.)

Years ago, President Joseph Fielding Smith, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, attended a stake conference where a relatively new stake president had been called. A man repeatedly came up to President Smith and asked him for counsel concerning a personal matter. Finally, President Smith said he would see the man, provided the new stake president could be there. As the man unfolded his situation, the stake president was prompted with what the person needed to do. Yet President Smith listened to the brother and surprised everyone by saying, "I have no counsel for you." The man was surprised, and he left. After he had gone, President Smith turned to the stake president and said, "I knew how to counsel that man, but I was also prompted to know that he would go against the counsel. So rather than condemn him for going against the counsel of the priesthood, I told him nothing."

From this we learn that it is not enough to seek the direction of those whom God has called to lead us—but we must come with a willingness to follow the counsel of inspired leaders in order to develop our faith.

Beacon and foundation stone

Latter-day Saints need to believe. They need to take every opportunity to develop faith, both in their own lives and in the lives of others.

Faith is a part of our heritage.

Those who embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ are the blood of Israel, and characteristic of the house of Israel is the ability to believe. Some have referred to it as "believing blood."

My faith is both a beacon and a foundation stone. It is born of the Spirit and enriched by a multitude of prayers and promptings. It lifts my soul upwards. It opens my heart to peace and joy. It nourishes and reaffirms those things that I fully know. My faith is such that I know God lives. I know he lives and Jesus is the Christ and Joseph Smith was a true prophet and we sit in the midst

of apostles and prophets today.

May the Lord bless us with faith as we go forward in our lives, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Kimball

Elder Loren C. Dunn, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

Elder Angel Abrea, who was sustained this morning as a new member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Theodore M. Burton, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Angel Abrea

Gracias

A few days ago, when I received a phone call at the mission home in Rosario, Argentina, and President Kimball extended to me this calling, Sister Abrea and I were not only touched emotionally, but also overwhelmed by the tremendous responsibility. A feeling and a word immediately filled me. The feeling, gratitude; the word, *gracias*—thank you.

Thank you to those two lady missionaries who, almost thirty-eight years ago, arrived at my door and brought the good news of the gospel. Thank you to my dear mother, who took me to Primary, to each meeting of the Church, with whom I read for the first time the Book of Mormon, and who even now, by means of her activity and faithful life in the Church, continues to set for me an example worth emulating.

Thank you to my father, who I know has accepted the word of the gospel and baptism beyond the veil, who, when I was a youth of eleven years, sat with me at my bed one

Sunday morning and said to me, "Angel, if you are going to be a member of the Church, you will always have to comply with everything that it asks of you. You have accepted a commitment, and you should honor it."

Thank you to my beloved wife, who has helped and sustained me, always full of faith and love for the gospel, a constant inspiration in my life.

Thank you for my three daughters, who, because of their love and dedication to the Church, are a pride, joy, and happiness in my life.

Thank you to my leaders and teachers, who, many times under unfavorable circumstances, have done their part. Thank you to the hundreds of missionaries who have made possible the development of the Church in the countries of South America. And especially thank you to the parents of those missionaries who have sent their sons and daughters to unknown countries, perhaps with fear and anxiety, but with the surety that they would be doing what the Lord required at the time.

“My surety, my rock, my sustenance”

And finally, thank you, Father, for my testimony, for knowing without the slightest doubt that my Father in Heaven sent his Only Begotten Son in order to bring about the great work of redemption. Thank you, too, for the knowledge that Christ was resurrected and that he lives. Thank you for knowing that Joseph Smith received a divine mission to fulfill, that he carried it out, and that by his mission we arrived at the true knowledge of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Thank you because I know that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is true and is the kingdom of God upon the earth and that it is presided over and directed by a modern prophet, President Kimball, who has been a continuous influence in my life, ever since the years of my early youth.

For this testimony, which is my surety, my rock, my sustenance, which I have received by the mediation of the Holy Ghost, I give infinite thanks, and I place all my talents, time, efforts, and all that I possess to the work to which I have been called. That would be my way to express in part my thanks. *Gracias*. I say these things in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Kimball

Elder Angel Abrea, who was sustained this morning as a new member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us. We shall now hear from Elder Theodore M. Burton. He will be followed by Elder LeGrand Richards of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Theodore M. Burton

In our church we often speak of light and truth, but just what do these words mean? In my earlier years as a scientist, I was interested in the concept of absolute zero, where, theoretically, there is a complete absence of thermal energy. Such a degree of coldness is difficult to comprehend. However, we all know how uncomfortable we feel when the temperature drops toward freezing. Water boils at 100 degrees Celsius and freezes at 0 degrees Celsius, but absolute zero is about 273 degrees Celsius below freezing. Such temperatures are approached in outer space.

Cold and utter darkness

When I was a young boy, I went with my father to inspect a mine in Nevada. We each had flashlights, but took no extra batteries with us, for we did not expect

to be in the mine very long. But the tunnel was longer, colder, and deeper than we anticipated. Before we got to the end of the mine, where the mineral was, father told me to turn off my flashlight to save my batteries. By the time father had finished inspecting the mine, his flashlight began to dim, and he suggested we had better turn back. Before long his flashlight gave out completely, and I can still remember—until I again turned on my light—the panic I felt to be in such cold and utter blackness. Although my own batteries gave out before we reached the mine entrance, we were by then guided by the dim light coming from the mouth of the tunnel. How good it felt to see the light increase as we made our way back to the entrance and found ourselves in warm, brilliant sunlight.

I have since wondered how anyone could knowingly prefer to live

where it is dark and cold. How could anybody willingly prefer darkness and misery over light and warmth? Yet darkness, cold, and misery will be the lot of those who willingly and knowingly reject the Lord. John wrote, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." (1 John 1:5.)

Light versus darkness

I would like to speak about God's realm of light in contrast to the dark realm of Satan. Those who follow Satan will be cast into outer darkness, "where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth." (D&C 133:73.) How terrible to live in such a place of darkness and cold. It is entirely different from what we usually think of as "burning in hell." That burning is the lasting regret one feels who has chosen the darkness of Satan in preference to the light of Christ.

Through modern revelation we have been taught that "the glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth." Such light and truth forsake the evil one. (See D&C 93:36-37.)

We have been advised that if our eye be single to the glory of God, our whole body shall be filled with light, and there shall be no darkness in us, for a body which is filled with God's light will be able to comprehend all things. (See D&C 88:67.)

We further read that the light of God "shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not; nevertheless, the day shall come when you shall comprehend even God, being quickened in him and by him.

"Then shall ye know that ye have seen me, that I am, and that I am the true light that is in you, and that you are in me; otherwise ye could not abound." (D&C 88:49-50.)

There is great promise in these words for those who seek the light of truth.

The light of God

We need not think that the light of God is limited only to the things of the Spirit. We are taught that "the light which shineth, which giveth you light, is through him who enlighteneth your eyes, which is the same light that quickeneth your understandings;

"Which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space—

"The light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed, even the power of God who sitteth upon his throne, who is in the bosom of eternity, who is in the midst of all things." (D&C 88:11-13.)

God's light includes the physical light we see, which makes us feel so warm and comfortable. God's light is also the power to understand and comprehend all things. In other words, all kinds of light are related to intelligence and truth.

This is substantiated by modern revelation, which teaches us more about Jesus Christ, who is "he that ascended up on high, as also he descended below all things, in that he comprehended all things, that he might be in all and through all things, the light of truth;

"Which truth shineth. This [truth] is the light of Christ. As also he is in the sun, and the light of the sun, and the power thereof by which it was made.

"As also he is in the moon, and is the light of the moon, and the power thereof by which it was made;

"As also the light of the stars, and the power thereof by which they were made;

"And the earth also, and the power thereof, even the earth upon which you stand." (D&C 88:6-10.)

The light of Christ therefore includes not only spiritual light but also physical light, and is a key to

understanding that form of energy which is represented by the light we see all around us.

Man may know good from evil

Satan is that wicked one who comes and takes away light and truth from the children of men through their disobedience and because of the traditions of their fathers. But the Lord has commanded us to bring up our children in light and truth. (See D&C 93:39-40.) The opposite of light is darkness, and the opposite of truth is falsehood.

The admonition of the prophet Moroni becomes important for us to understand as he tells us to take heed "that ye do not judge that which is evil to be of God, or that which is good and of God to be of the devil.

"For behold, my brethren, it is given unto you to judge, that ye may know good from evil; and the way to judge is as plain, that ye may know with a perfect knowledge, as the daylight is from the dark night.

"For behold, the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil; wherefore, I show unto you the way to judge; for every thing which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ; wherefore ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God.

"But whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do evil, and believe not in Christ, and deny him, and serve not God, then ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of the devil; for after this manner doth the devil work, for he persuadeth no man to do good, no, not one; neither do his angels; neither do they who subject themselves unto him." (Moro. 7:14-17.)

Spirit more powerful than body

The spirit within man is eternal, whereas his present body is mortal or

temporal. Therefore, the spirit is more powerful than the body and is able to control the body. Sometimes we think ourselves sick. There are also times when we can think ourselves well. But there is no need to let the body and bodily appetites control our actions. The spirit within us is more powerful than the body, and we can use that spirit to commit ourselves to righteous actions. We *can* control the body and its bodily appetites. It is fallacious to say that we were created with propensities and appetites we cannot control. It is simply not true that people are born with such powerful appetites and passions that they are powerless to control them. God would not be a righteous God if man were created with drives he could not control.

I admit that some people have greater drives and appetites than others, but I say that a righteous God has given us minds and wills by means of which, if we desire, we can control and limit those passions and appetites. Satan has no control over us unless we give him that control.

I admit that except for the Savior no person alone can completely harness his appetites and passions. I do say, however, that with the help of God we can all learn to control those appetites and passions. As we practice righteousness and approach ever closer to God, the easier it becomes to resist temptation and to live in accordance with that light and truth which emanates from Jesus Christ.

God's laws are spiritual

I have been thinking more and more about a scripture which I am just beginning to understand. Let me read it: "Wherefore, verily I say unto you that all things unto me are spiritual, and not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal; neither any man, nor the children of men; neither Adam, your father, whom I created.

"Behold, I gave unto him that he should be an agent unto himself; and I gave unto him commandment, but no temporal commandment gave I unto him, for my commandments are spiritual; they are not natural nor temporal, neither carnal nor sensual." (D&C 29:34-35.)

As I begin to understand this scripture, my whole concept of physical existence and these physical bodies is changing.

Take the payment of tithes and offerings as an example. Is anything apparently more temporal than money, or any other offering that we can bring from the earth? Yet since that is a law of God, there must be a spiritual basis for it or eternal reason behind this payment of tithes and offerings. When God asked us to prove him to see if he will not open the windows of heaven to us (see Mal. 3:10), what was he referring to? Was he referring only to the blessings of this earth and the promises of temporal rewards which come to us if we keep this law? Or was he referring to something spiritual, of an eternal nature, which I believe is the revelation of truth and wisdom, which can come to us from that opened window whereby we can communicate with God and know all things?

In giving us the Word of Wisdom, was God referring only to the temporal blessings of health and endurance which come to us through obedience to that law? God referred also to the "hidden treasures" of knowledge (see D&C 89:19), which, in my opinion, constitute an eternal treasure, which if used will bring us back into the warmth and light of God. Those who sit in outer dark-

ness, in the cold and misery of that existence, can never know such comfort.

Light and truth

Let me come back, then, to absolute zero, where, theoretically, there is no heat at all. It appears to me that Satan and those who follow him are on the road to losing whatever degree of light and truth they have and are approaching a similar limit of darkness and cold where all joy and happiness cease.

To summarize then, light and truth is, simply, pure intelligence.

Now, there are those who believe that this is just another church. There are even some members within the Church who regard the restored gospel as just another religious philosophy. As one of the especial witnesses, I testify to you in all earnestness that this Church was divinely founded. It is not just another church. It is *the* Church of Jesus Christ. The gospel doctrine it teaches is the divine word of God. It is light. It is truth. To ignore it or treat it as just another religious philosophy is one of the greatest mistakes a person can make. This doctrine I bear to you is the light and truth I have received to strengthen my own witness, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Kimball

Elder Theodore M. Burton, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us. Elder LeGrand Richards, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our concluding speaker.

Elder LeGrand Richards

I have had the privilege of filling four missions for this church and that has provided me an opportunity to

compare the teachings of this church, as we have received them through the restoration of the gospel through the

Prophet Joseph Smith, with the teachings of many other churches. My, how grateful I am to be a member of this church.

Great truths through the Restoration

Now, just to mention one or two teachings. Just think what we learn from the visit of the Father and the Son to the Prophet Joseph—a realization that the Father and the Son are two separate individuals and that they are real personages like Jesus was when he came forth from the tomb. There wasn't a church in the world that believed in that kind of God at the time the Prophet Joseph received that wonderful vision.

Then we learn that marriage can be eternal, that this is the plan of the Lord. How grateful I am for this principle, because it gives me the assurance that someday I will be reunited with that sweet companion of mine who has already preceded me into the eternal worlds. As I have said before, I would just as soon believe that death was a complete annihilation of both body and spirit as to think that I had to live on throughout the eternities that are to come without a continuation of the love ties that bind me and my wife together with the wonderful family that the Lord has given to us.

One of the other great truths that we learn through the Restoration is the fact that infants should not be baptized. The idea that young children need baptism is a mistake of men. That isn't to be found anywhere in the Lord's teachings, for Jesus took little children in his arms and blessed them.

Premortal existence

When I have discussed some of our beautiful philosophies with people of other churches, many of them have said, "We could accept your teachings, but we can't believe

that Joseph Smith was a prophet." I have thought a lot about that. I suppose that it would be almost impossible to believe that God was naive enough to choose a fourteen-year-old boy to usher in the dispensation of the fulness of times, as Paul said, in which dispensation he would "gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth." (Eph. 1:10.)

That opens the door for the consideration of another beautiful principle, and that is the principle of the premortal existence of spirits, that we are literally the children of God, the Eternal Father, that we lived with him before we came here upon this earth.

The Apostle Paul said that the Lord "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation." (Acts 17:26.) And he said: "We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?" (Heb. 12:9.) I like the thought that he is my father. When Jesus prayed, he didn't pray, "My Father which art in heaven"; he prayed, "Our Father which art in heaven" (Matt. 6:9), and that is a wonderful thing. That is why our Primary children sing "I am a child of God."

The calling of prophets

The Lord has his own way of calling prophets. He knew them before they were ever born here in mortality. We read in the Book of Abraham that the Lord stood in the midst of the spirits, and among them there were noble and great ones—and they couldn't be noble and great if they hadn't done something to make them noble and great. The Lord said of them: "These I will make my

rulers; . . . Abraham, thou art one of them; thou was chosen before thou wast born." (Abr. 3:22-23.) Isn't that a beautiful thought? The Lord stood in the midst of those spirits, and there were some there who became his prophets here in mortality.

We read about Jeremiah when he was called to be a prophet. He couldn't understand it, and the Lord said: "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." (Jer. 1:5.) The Lord couldn't have ordained him if he didn't exist, and he wouldn't have ordained him before he was born if he hadn't done something in that spiritual life to prepare him to become one of the Lord's mouthpieces here upon this earth. The same thing is true with the Prophet Joseph. I will come back to that.

We read that there was war in heaven—that "Michael and his angels fought against the dragon," and the dragon (or Satan) was cast down to the earth, and the cry went out: "Wo to the inhabitants of the earth . . . for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath" (Rev. 12:7-9, 12), and he "walketh about, seeking whom he can devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). And that is what he has been doing. He drew a third of the host of heaven with him (see Rev. 12:4), and when they were cast out, that third of the host of heaven brought with them the knowledge that they had in the spirit world, while our knowledge was temporarily taken from us through our birth into mortality.

The Apostle Paul said: "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

"But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. . . .

"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I

know even as also I am known." (1 Cor. 13:9-10, 12.)

To me, that says there will be a complete restoration of all that we knew before we came here into mortality when we lived in the spirit world.

The best illustration we have about how we lose our knowledge is the life of the Savior. We read in the first chapter of the Gospel of John that "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

"All things were made by him: and without him was not any thing made that was made.

"In him was life; and the life was the light of men." (John 1:1, 3, 4.)

Then it goes on: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." (John 1:14.)

According to this scripture, Jesus created everything; nevertheless, when he was born into mortality he had to learn to walk and talk like other children. At the age of twelve, we find him reasoning with the wise men in the temple, and later on he said: "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do." (John 5:19.)

Satan tries to kill prophets

Now, because Satan brought with him the knowledge that he had in the spirit world, he knew whom he had fought against in that war in heaven and he has tried to put to death the prophets of God. That is why Jesus, standing on the Mount of Olives overlooking the city of Jerusalem, said:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gath-

ereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

"Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." (Matt. 23:37-39.)

Today we are coming because we have been sent in the name of the Lord. Like Paul said,

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. . . .

"And how shall they hear without a preacher?

"And how shall they preach, except they be sent?" (Rom. 10:17, 14-15.)

We have been sent.

Moses

I would like to illustrate what I am trying to tell you. When Moses was born, the devil put it into the heart of Pharaoh to have all the male children in Israel put to death. Thousands had been born before that time, but Satan knew that he would have to reckon with Moses. And you remember how Moses' mother saved his life by making a basket of bulrushes and putting him in the river and how Pharaoh's daughter took him out and cared for him.

Jesus

When Jesus was born, Satan put it into the heart of Herod to put to death all the children in Bethlehem and the surrounding territory that were under two years of age. There had been thousands born before that time, but Satan knew he would have to reckon with the Savior. He was in that war that was fought in heaven when Satan and a third of the spirits were cast out.

Joseph Smith

When Joseph Smith went into the woods to pray, a boy of only four-

teen years of age, a power of darkness rested upon him until he felt like it would crush the very life out of his body; but through his prayer, finally a pillar of light descended and he was released from the power of Satan. Satan knew that he would have to reckon with that man Joseph Smith because he was one of those noble and great ones that God said he would make his rulers.

We read in the Book of Mormon that when Lehi was in the desert, he told his son Joseph that the Lord had promised Joseph who was sold into Egypt that in the latter days He would raise up a prophet from his loins like unto Moses. (See 2 Ne. 3:6-9.) And we are told in holy writ that there was no prophet in Israel like unto Moses because he walked and talked with God. (See Deut. 34:10.) This is the kind of prophet that, three thousand years before Joseph Smith was born, the Lord promised Joseph of Egypt He would raise up through his loins. He said his name should be Joseph, and his father's name should be Joseph; and he said: "Unto him will I give power to bring forth my word." (2 Ne. 3:11, 15.)

The Prophet Joseph Smith brought us the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, and many other writings. As far as our records show, he has given us more revealed truth than any prophet who has ever lived upon the face of the earth. And the Lord said: "And not to the bringing forth my word only, . . . but to the convincing them of my word, which shall have already gone forth among them." (2 Ne. 3:11.) What did he mean by that? That in the midst of these hundreds of churches of men—the result of men's interpretations of the scriptures because they can't agree, and these churches keep multiplying—that the Lord would give to this new prophet the ability to comprehend the scriptures

that had already been sent forth among them.

Then he adds that he shall "bring my people unto salvation." (2 Ne. 3:15.) Why? Because he would receive the holy priesthood, the power to administer the saving ordinances of the gospel. Then he adds, "And I will make him great in mine eyes." (2 Ne. 3:8.) Whatever the world may think of the Prophet Joseph Smith, there is the statement of the Lord that he would be great in His eyes.

Missionary experience in Holland

Now I would like to tell you of a little experience I had in the mission field that illustrates what I think the Lord meant when he indicated that not only would the Prophet bring forth His word, but he would bring men to a conviction of His word that had already gone forth among them.

When I was in Holland, I was invited to talk to a Bible class of businessmen. We met in the home of a prominent furniture dealer. There were about twenty men; each had his Bible. The only woman there was the daughter of the man of the house. They gave me an hour and a half to discuss universal salvation, which includes our work for the dead, preaching in the spirit world, and baptism of the living for the dead. I just gave them chapter and verse and let them read the passages in their own Bibles. Then when I was through, I closed my Bible and waited for comments.

The first comment came from the daughter of the man of the house. She said: "Father, I just can't understand it. I have never attended one of these Bible classes in my life that you haven't had the last word to say on everything. And tonight you haven't said a word."

The man shook his head and said: "My daughter, there isn't anything to say. This man has been teaching us things we have never heard of, and he has been teaching them to us out of our own Bibles."

I could tell you many more stories like that!

God bless you! Thank God for the restoration of the gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith. I leave you my testimony, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Kimball

Elder LeGrand Richards, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just been speaking to us.

We remind the brethren of the general priesthood meeting which will convene here in the Tabernacle this evening at seven o'clock.

The nationwide CBS Radio Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. All those desiring to attend this broadcast must be in their seats no later than 9:15 A.M.

The singing for this session has been furnished by the combined institute choir. We are grateful for the presence of this young people's choir and for the beautiful spirit their music has added to this meeting.

The choir will now sing in closing "Still, Still with Thee." Following the singing, the benediction will be given by Elder John H. Groberg, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Still, Still with Thee."

Elder John H. Groberg offered the benediction.

GENERAL PRIESTHOOD MEETING

THIRD SESSION

The general priesthood meeting convened in the Tabernacle at 7:00 P.M. on Saturday, April 4, 1981.

President Spencer W. Kimball presided and President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for this session was provided by a combined men's choir from the Tabernacle Choir and the Mormon Youth Chorus directed by Robert C. Bowden with Roy M. Darley at the organ.

President Romney opened this session with the following remarks:

President Marion G. Romney

Brethren, President Spencer W. Kimball, who presides at this general priesthood meeting, has asked me to conduct it.

These services are being relayed by closed-circuit transmission and will reach members of the priesthood gathered in the Salt Palace, in the Marriott Center on the BYU campus, and in approximately 2,246 other locations in many countries around the world.

We extend our greetings and blessings to all the priesthood brethren wherever they may be.

We note that Elders Rex D. Pinegar and George P. Lee are seated on the stand in the Salt Palace, and Elders Joseph B. Wirthlin and Vaughn J. Featherstone preside at the BYU Marriott Center.

The singing during this session will be furnished by the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth Chorus combined men's choir under the di-

rection of Robert C. Bowden with Roy Darley at the organ.

We shall begin these services by the choir singing "Beautiful Savior." Following the singing, Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The combined men's choir sang "Beautiful Savior."

Elder Neal A. Maxwell offered the invocation.

President Romney

The choir will now favor us with "O My Father," after which we shall be pleased to hear from President Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

For the benefit of those brethren who did not hear the proceedings of either of the general sessions earlier today, we announce that Elder Angel Abrea of Argentina has been sustained as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The combined men's choir sang "O My Father."

President Romney

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our first speaker this evening. He will be followed by Bishop Victor L. Brown, Presiding Bishop of the Church.

President Ezra Taft Benson

Great things required of fathers

When the Lord declared that "power is not given unto Satan to tempt little children, until they begin to become accountable," He revealed that this period of childhood and unaccountability was given to children so that "great things may be required at the hand of their fathers." (See D&C 29:47-48.)

"That great things may be required at the hand of their fathers"! What confidence the Lord has in fathers, and what a responsibility He has placed on fathers! Great things are required of fathers today.

When I think of fathers, I think of Adam—progenitor of us all—who faithfully taught his posterity in the ways of righteousness. I think of father Abraham, whose faith knows no peer among mortal fathers. I esteem Jacob, or Israel, with a feeling akin to reverence for his diligence and long-suffering. I honor the name of Lehi for the example he gave to his sons.

In this dispensation, I think of Joseph Smith, Sr., first to give credence to his prophet-son's testimony. I think of the noble example of Joseph F. Smith, sixth President of the Church and father of the tenth President.

I revere these noble men—not just because they were great prophets, but because they were great fathers, who realized what the Lord required of them, and they lived up to that expectation.

I wish to speak on this occasion to you fathers about three particular things that the Lord requires of us. These are things that every father with an ordinary amount of diligence may do. If we will do them, our homes will be blessed with peace, our names will be proudly borne by our descendants, and our association with our family may be eternal.

Fathers, what great things does the Lord require of us?

Influence for good in the home

First, provide a home where love and the Spirit of the Lord may abide. Children are born innocent, not evil. They are not sent to earth, however, to neutral environments. They are sent to homes that, for good or evil, influence their ideas, emotions, thoughts, and standards, by which future choices will be made.

One great thing the Lord requires of each of us is to provide a home where a happy, positive influence for good exists. In future years the costliness of home furnishings or the number of bathrooms will not matter much, but what will matter significantly is whether our children felt love and acceptance in the home. It will greatly matter whether there was happiness and laughter, or bickering and contention.

I am convinced that before a child can be influenced for good by his or her parents, there must be a demonstration of respect and love.

President Joseph F. Smith said: "Fathers, if you wish your children to be taught in the principles of the gospel, . . . if you wish them to be obedient to and united with you, love them! and prove to them that you do love them by your every word or act to them. For your own sake, for the love that should exist between you and your boys—however wayward they might be, . . . when you speak or talk to them, do it not in anger; do it not harshly, in a condemning spirit. Speak to them kindly; get down and weep with them, if necessary, and get them to shed tears with you if possible. Soften their hearts; get them to feel tenderly towards you. Use no lash and no violence,

but . . . approach them with reason, with persuasion and love unfeigned. With this means, if you cannot gain your boys and your girls, . . . there will be no means left in the world by which you can win them to yourselves." (*Liahona, The Elders' Journal*, 17 Oct. 1911, pp. 260-61.)

Many suggestions could be enumerated as to what we can and should do to make our homes places of refuge and happiness. I believe, however, that to tell a man what is expected of him is more important than to prescribe exactly how he is to get the job done.

Once you determine that a high priority in your life is to see that your wife and your children are happy, then you will do all in your power to do so. I am not just speaking of satisfying material desires, but of filling other vital needs such as appreciation, compliments, comforting, encouraging, listening, and giving love and affection.

*If with pleasure you are viewing
Anything your child is doing,
If you like him, if you love him,
Let him know.*

*Don't withhold appreciation
Until others give expression —
If he wins your commendation
Tell him so.*

*More than fame and more than money
Is a disposition sunny,
And some hearty warm approval
Makes one glad.*

*So if you think some praise is due
him,
Now's the time to give it to him;
Tie him close with loving language
From his dad.*

Your supreme opportunity in life is fatherhood! These words directed to fathers by President David O. McKay should be framed by every father:

"When one puts businesses or

pleasure, or the earning of additional income, above his home, he that moment starts on the downgrade to soul weakness. When the club becomes more attractive to any man than his home, it is time for him to confess in bitter shame that he has failed to measure up to the supreme opportunity of his life, and flunked in the final test of true manhood.

"The poorest shack in which love prevails over a united family is of far greater value to God and future humanity than any other riches. In such a home God can work miracles, and will work miracles. Pure hearts in a pure home are always in whispering distance of Heaven." (*Church News*, 7 Sept. 1968, p. 4.)

Fathers, what is the spirit in your homes?

Lead your children to Christ

Second, teach your children to understand principles of truth. In a revelation to the Prophet Joseph, the Lord directed fathers to bring up their children in light and truth. He rebuked several because of their failure to do so. Each of us would do well to review those principles given in section 93 to Joseph Smith, Jr., Frederick G. Williams, Sidney Rigdon, and Newel K. Whitney.

In this revelation the Lord states that Satan "cometh and taketh away light and truth, through disobedience, from the children of men, and because of the tradition of their fathers." (D&C 93:39.) The "tradition of their fathers" refers, of course, to the bad examples and teachings of fathers.

We must remember this world is a telestial environment. Our children grow up in this environment. They are constantly exposed to television programs and movie entertainment which depict the most seamy and perverse side of life. They are barraged with slogans and advertising designed to induce them to practices

that rob them of spirituality. Even some textbooks and teaching aids used in our public school systems present theory and, in some instances, falsehood as truth.

Some fathers leave solely to the mother or to the school the responsibility of shaping a child's ideas and standards. Too often television and movie screens shape our children's values.

We should not assume that public schools always reinforce teachings given in the home concerning ethical and moral conduct. We have seen introduced into many school systems false ideas about the theory of man's development from lower forms of life, teachings that there are no absolute moral values, repudiation of all beliefs regarded as supernatural, permissiveness about sexual freedom that gives sanction to immoral behavior and "alternative life-styles" such as lesbianism, homosexuality, and other perverse practices.

Such teachings not only tend to undermine the faith and morals of our young people, but they deny the existence of God, who gave absolute laws, and the divinity of Jesus Christ. Surely we can see the moral contradiction of some who argue for the preservation of endangered species, but sanction the abortion of unborn humans.

There is a solution, and it is that the Lord expects great things from the fathers of Israel. Fathers must take time to find out what their children are being taught and then take steps to correct false information and teaching.

I know fathers who inquire of their children each evening to determine firsthand what their children are being taught in school and what needs to be corrected. Then, if necessary, they instruct them in what the Lord has revealed. This is application of the principle that "light and truth forsake that evil one." (D&C 93:37.)

The new consolidated Sunday

meeting schedule has been implemented to give fathers more time on the Sabbath to teach their children. This is a golden opportunity for families to study the scriptures and receive instruction from their parents. Blessed is the household that does this on a consistent basis.

What should we teach? The Lord has revealed the specific curriculum that parents should teach. Hear His words: "Teach . . . unto your children, that all men, everywhere, must repent, or they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God, for no unclean thing can dwell there, or dwell in his presence." (Moses 6:57.)

As further noted in this revelation, the fundamental doctrines consist of the doctrine of the Fall, the mission of Christ and His atonement, and the first principles and ordinances of the gospel, which include faith in Christ, repentance, baptism for the remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost as the means to a sanctified life (see Moses 6:58-59).

Brethren, we are to teach the fundamental doctrines of the Church in such a way that our children may understand. Some fathers teach, but their children do not understand. This places responsibility on fathers to study and learn the gospel.

With few exceptions, righteous sons and daughters who have attained eternal blessings are not just physically begotten by their fathers. They are spiritually regenerated by the examples and teachings of their fathers.

Great fathers lead their children to Christ.

Set your household in order

Third, set in order your own household. Such was the Lord's counsel to fathers in early Church history, and such is His timely counsel to us today!

Setting your home in order is keeping the commandments of God.

This brings harmony and love in the home between you and your companion and between you and your children. It is daily family prayer. It is teaching your family to understand the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is each family member keeping the commandments of God. It is you and your companion being worthy to receive a temple recommend, all family members receiving the ordinances of exaltation, and your family being sealed together for eternity. It is being free from excessive debt, with family members paying honest tithes and offerings.

Fathers, are your homes in order?

In a revelation given to President John Taylor, the Lord directed this message to the priesthood: "I call upon the heads of families to put their houses in order according to the law of God, . . . and to purify themselves before me, and to purge out iniquity from their households. And I will bless and be with you, saith the Lord, and ye shall gather together in your holy places wherein ye assemble to call upon me, and ye shall ask for such things as are right, and I will hear your prayers, and my Spirit and power shall be with you, and my blessing shall rest upon you, upon your families, your dwellings and your households, upon your flocks and herds and fields, your orchards and vineyards, and upon all that pertains to you; and you shall be my people and I will be your God; . . . for my word shall go forth, and my work shall be accomplished, and my Zion shall be established." (*Revelation given through President John Taylor, at Salt Lake City, Utah Territory, October 13th, 1882, typeset ms. in Church Historical Department Archives, pp. 2-3.*)

Sacred title of "father"

Yes, these times require great things from fathers, and so does the

Lord. Three requirements are: create a home where love and the Spirit of the Lord may abide; bring up children in light and truth; and set your homes in order.

The sacred title of "father" is shared with the Almighty. In the Church men are called and released. Did you ever hear of a mortal father being released?

As I travel throughout the Church and see faithful families, I say, "Thank God for exemplary fathers and mothers." As I see faithful young people and am proud of their accomplishments, I say, "Thank God for diligent fathers and mothers."

Fatherhood is not a matter of station or wealth; it is a matter of desire, diligence, and determination to see one's family exalted in the celestial kingdom. If that prize is lost, nothing else really matters.

I know of one family who has as its goal that each member of the family and posterity will arrive in their heavenly home—the celestial kingdom—with no vacant chairs. That is their objective. They review it at every family reunion and mention it frequently as they mingle together between reunions.

God bless all the fathers in Israel to do well the work within the walls of our own homes. With the Lord's help we shall succeed in this, our most important responsibility. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just addressed us.

We shall now hear from Bishop Victor L. Brown, Presiding Bishop of the Church. He will be followed by Elder David B. Haight, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Bishop Victor L. Brown

Fast offerings

As I address this vast body of priesthood brethren tonight, I do so in humility and with a prayer in my heart. The two subjects I will discuss come by assignment. The introduction to my first subject is recorded in the Old Testament as spoken by the prophet Isaiah:

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?"

"Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?"

Four wonderful blessings are promised by the Lord to those who obey the law of the fast:

"Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward.

"Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am.

"And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday:

"And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not." (Isa. 58:6-11.)

Regarding this scripture, President Harold B. Lee had this to say:

"The tremendous blessings that come [from fasting] have been spelled out in every dispensation. . . . If you analyze . . . the 58th chapter of the book of Isaiah you will find unrav-

eled why the Lord wants us to pay fast offerings, why he wants us to fast. It's because by qualifying thus we can call and the Lord can answer. We can cry and the Lord will say, 'Here I am.' Do we ever want to be in a condition where we can call and he won't answer? We will cry in our distress and he won't be with us? I think it is time we are thinking about these fundamentals because these are the days that lie ahead, when we are going to need more and more the blessings of the Lord, when the judgments are poured out without mixture upon the whole earth." ("Listen and Obey," Welfare Agricultural Meeting, 3 April 1971, copy of typescript, p. 14; Church Historical Library.)

President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., had this to say: "The fundamental principle of all Church relief work is that it must be carried on by fast offerings and other voluntary donations and contributions. This is the order established by the Lord. Tithing is not primarily designed for that purpose and must not be used except in the last extremity." (As quoted by Marion G. Romney, "Our Primary Purpose," Welfare Agricultural Meeting, 3 April 1971, copy of typescript, p. 8; Church Historical Library.)

The Lord's financial law

Fast offering is the Lord's financial law given for the blessing of the poor. For many years it was understood that fast offerings should represent the cost of the two meals not eaten. This understanding came into being because, in the early days, members were generally asked to give the actual food saved by fasting. Conditions were so desperate that money would have been of little use. Later, the understanding seemed to

be that \$1 per capita would be adequate.

However, in recent years, President Kimball has said of the fast offering: "I think we should be very generous and give, instead of the amount we saved by our two meals of fasting, perhaps much, much more—ten times more where we are in a position to do it." (In Conference Report, Apr. 1974, p. 184.)

It is important to recognize that the fast offering is a freewill offering, the amount of which each individual is responsible to determine. It is not the same as tithing, which is 10 percent of our interest annually. The amount is left up to each individual, and yet a living prophet has said we should be very generous. Wouldn't it be wonderful if our faithfulness would generate fast offering funds sufficient to operate the entire storehouse system?

Perhaps the following scriptures will give us some guidance as to how generous we should be:

First, from the Doctrine and Covenants, section 42, beginning with verse 30. This is a revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith regarding the law of consecration:

"And behold, thou wilt remember the poor, and consecrate of thy properties for their support that which thou hast to impart unto them, with a covenant and a deed which cannot be broken.

"And inasmuch as ye impart of your substance unto the poor, ye will do it unto me; and they shall be laid before the bishop of my church and his counselors. . . .

"Therefore, the residue shall be kept in my storehouse, to administer to the poor and the needy." (D&C 42:30-31, 34.)

The Lord restates this principle many times, including section 70 of the Doctrine and Covenants, verse 7:

"Nevertheless, inasmuch as they receive more than is needful for their necessities and their wants, it shall

be given into my storehouse."

Further, you will recall when a certain ruler asked Jesus what he should do to inherit eternal life, the Savior responded:

"Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother.

"And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up.

"Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.

"And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.

"And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

"For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." (Luke 18:20-25.)

Again, from the Doctrine and Covenants, we learn:

"For it is expedient that I, the Lord, should make every man accountable, as a steward over earthly blessings, which I have made and prepared for my creatures.

"I, the Lord, stretched out the heavens, and built the earth, my very handiwork; and all things therein are mine.

"But it must needs be done in mine own way; and behold this is the way that I, the Lord, have decreed to provide for my saints, that the poor shall be exalted, in that the rich are made low.

"For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare; yea, I prepared all things, and have given unto the children of men to be agents unto themselves.

"Therefore, if any man shall take of the abundance which I have

made, and impart not his portion, according to the law of my gospel, unto the poor and the needy, he shall, with the wicked, lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment." (D&C 104:13-14, 16-18.)

Teach law of fast

May I conclude my remarks on fast offerings with portions of a letter I received several years ago from Elder John H. Groberg, who at that time was president of the Tongan Mission.

"Enclosed find a check for \$1,000 for excess fast offerings from the Tongan Mission. Normally this letter would end here, but because of an experience I recently had I would like to add a little more.

"As you may or may not be aware, Tonga is one of the poorest countries financially in the world. The average wage rate is only around 12¢ per hour if you are lucky enough to have a job. . . .

"Recently, while visiting one of the far distant islands that is very difficult to get to, I went late in the day to the home of one of the good widow sisters there.

"When I first approached her hut the sun was still quite bright and I could not help but notice the stark poverty of her surroundings. It had been raining earlier. The mud and decay and the ever-present smell of drying fish were at first repulsive. But the warmth of meeting with a fellow Church member—especially after years of separation—together with tears of appreciation for the long-awaited visit, soon pushed the unpleasantness of the surroundings temporarily into the background.

"As we conversed in her fluid native tongue and she told of her love for and faith in the Church and of all the blessings she had received, I could not help but think about her apparently miserable circumstances. . . . All sorts of ideas went

through my mind, and I must have let my thoughts wander as I suddenly became aware that somewhere between phrases about blessings and poverty and service she had gone to her hut and was now returning with a small knotted rag.

"Suddenly my mind seemed to fill with light, and the words 'fast offerings' flooded in. I was so excited with the idea that had come so suddenly and so clearly, that you can imagine my utter amazement and unpreparedness when she took a threepence (a coin worth about 3¢) from her rag and said softly, 'Here is my fast offering . . . to help the poor.'

"I wanted to explain that fast offering was to help her, not for her to help others. The explanation never came, for as I looked through misty eyes, first at the threepence then back at the good sister, the whole scene changed.

"The hut was a glowing mansion and the mud was gold. . . . The world seemed to stand still for a moment. All of nature seemed to stop and listen as from the heavens the whole universe seemed filled with the reassuring words: 'Blessed are the poor . . . for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' (Matt. 5:3.)

"As the setting sun signaled the end of the day, so it also told of the approaching end of her beautiful life of service.

"I took the threepence, and as I write this check the whole experience once again fills my mind and I wonder, 'How many threepences to make a thousand dollars?' "

May I encourage all bishops present tonight to remember this wonderful Tongan widow as you teach the law of the fast and as you bless the poor by wisely and judiciously expending these sacred funds.

Evaluate stake and ward budgets

In the sweet glow of this experience, let me talk now with you about

stake and ward budgets. We are very concerned about the financial stress under which many of our people are laboring. Bishops, particularly, have the responsibility not to let programs become too expensive and thereby become a financial burden to the members.

It is all too easy for leaders to assume that others have discretionary income similar to their own. May I illustrate what I am talking about by quoting portions of a letter from a concerned mother:

"In September, it was making and selling pizzas three nights a week and Saturday mornings to raise money for volleyball uniforms. There were class parties, New Beginnings, leadership workshops, and ward service projects.

"In October and November it was volleyball practice and games three nights a week, a ward dinner, a Halloween party, a stake midweek fireside, and a barn dance.

"In January there have been basketball practices and games to start the sports program going again, a stake standards night, and a fund-raising project.

"In February, along with the basketball games, there have been roadshow rehearsals three days of the week, a skiing party, a snow party, a stake camp meeting, and a workshop to finish up the Sesquicentennial projects to take up at least twenty-two days of this month.

"I'm sure I need not go on and on with this word picture. But still there is more you should know about: Coming up is a 'slave auction,' a car wash, a doughnut sale, a singing telegram project, lawn raking every Saturday morning until summer to raise money for a super activity in Idaho. There's an Aaronic Priesthood outing for both the boys and girls in May, two Scout overnights besides Beehive camp and Scout camp."

We are sufficiently concerned, that Elder Gordon B. Hinckley ad-

ressed this subject last evening in a special joint meeting with Regional Representatives and stake presidents. May I quote just a sentence or two from his remarks: "I should like to say that sacrifice, where needed, is an important aspect of the gospel. It is of the very essence of true worship. But unnecessary sacrifice, that requested because of extravagance or poor management, is evil." You bishops should expect that your stake president will meet with you almost immediately upon returning from conference to evaluate both stake and ward budgets. The stake budget, of course, has an important impact on the ward budget.

There are some very specific areas which you should carefully evaluate.

1. Energy costs: Lights should be turned off when rooms are not in use. Air conditioning and heating should not be used unless absolutely necessary and particularly when the building or portions thereof are not in use.

2. Paid custodial services: Such services should be reviewed with an eye to using ward members on a rotation basis to take care of the grounds and the basic cleaning. Thus professional custodial hours could be reduced and their efforts concentrated on maintaining mechanical and other complex systems. On this particular item, written suggestions will be forthcoming very soon.

3. Welfare projects: Each project, through efficient management, should contribute to the commodity production budget to the maximum degree so as to reduce the need for cash contributions from the individual ward members to meet this commitment.

4. Activities: Current policy is that the yearly budget include all ward and stake activity funding and that there not be any fund raising going on in addition to the budget. Youth conferences or activities that

require expensive and extensive travel should be eliminated.

These are but a few of the ways of reducing the financial burden on the people.

Clearly we are preparing for the day when the higher law, that of consecration, will again become the financial law of the Church through which we will properly take care of the poor. Until that time, it is our responsibility and blessing—as a matter of fact, our covenant—to give generously from our surplus to bless the poor.

We stress the teaching of personal and family preparedness as the first principle of the welfare services program. It is, therefore, incumbent upon each stake president and bishop

to make sure that excessive financial demands are not made upon the people which will weaken their financial security and make it impossible for them to take care of their own needs.

May the Lord bless us to be wise and sound stewards in blessing the people with our teachings and our leadership, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

Bishop Victor L. Brown, Presiding Bishop of the Church, has just addressed us.

Elder David B. Haight, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our next speaker.

Elder David B. Haight

Scott Hall is an unusual young man. His father, Garth, is an assistant coach for the Brigham Young University football team.

Recently Scott asked his mother for a white shirt.

"But you have all of these other beautiful colored shirts. Why do you want a white shirt?" asked his mother.

"I just have to have a white shirt," he said.

"But why?" his mother asked.

Scott replied, "I can't be a missionary without a white shirt."

Scott is two years old.

Expansion of the Church

The story of the expansion of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints throughout the world not only is a miracle but is "as the stone . . . cut out of the mountain without hands [that] shall roll forth, until it has filled the whole earth." (See D&C 65:2.)

Recently a California family, driving through St. George, Utah, on vacation, was attracted by the unusual architecture of the St. George Temple. They walked around the building, admiring its beauty.

Having a little time to spare, the parents entered the information center; their two young children crossed the street to sit under the shade of a tree near our meetinghouse.

A teacher, calling the children in to Primary and seeing the two young visitors, said, "Come on in to Primary." They went in.

The parents, now finished at the information center, started looking for the children. After searching for nearly an hour, they saw them come out of the chapel.

The father said, "We've been looking all over for you. Where have you been?"

They replied, "We've been to Primary."

"Primary! What's Primary?"

"Primary is where you learn

about Jesus; and, besides, Daddy, you shouldn't be smoking!" Their father just about swallowed his cigar.

He remarked, "Let's get on our way. We're way behind schedule."

The children said, "We can't go."

"Can't go! Why not?"

"We are in a play."

"A play?" he asked.

"Yes," they replied, "and the play isn't until next week, and we have to stay all week for rehearsals."

The family stayed in St. George for a week!

The children rehearsed; the parents were taught the gospel; and the whole family was baptized.

The truth of our message—the impact of its spiritual influence upon hearts *previously prepared*—is the greatest influence for good in the world.

Senior Classman Kevin Scott was assigned to preside over a dining table of ten freshmen midshipmen at the United States Naval Academy. Seniors at the Naval Academy at Annapolis assist in training new midshipmen not only in tactics, but also in courtesy and discipline.

During the dinner Senior Scott requested that each midshipman give his full name, his hometown, and his state.

One of the freshmen answered, "Midshipman Ernest Ward Sax, sir, from Salt Lake City, Utah."

Senior Scott said, "Are you a Mormon?"

"Yes, sir."

"Does that mean you do not smoke or drink liquor or coffee?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you have a copy of the Book of Mormon?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have you read it?" was the next question.

"Yes, sir."

"Will you loan it to me?" requested Scott.

"Yes, sir."

An unusual but friendly relationship developed, with an exchange of books and pamphlets between young Midshipman Sax of Salt Lake City and Senior Classman Scott of North Carolina.

Annapolis graduate Kevin Scott is now a Marine lieutenant in flight training in Florida. Newly baptized Kevin Scott is the ward mission leader, the "spark plug" of the ward missionary effort. He is now testifying to others about the restoration of the gospel and enthusiastically encouraging our members to spread the message.

Midshipman Ward Sax, now in his second year at Annapolis, is the son of a caring Mormon family, a young man who honored his priesthood responsibility.

Young generation of champions needed

As I look at a map of the world—its vastness, its billions of people—and ponder the responsibility our Lord has placed upon the young Aaronic Priesthood bearers, I marvel at how the Lord has placed each of you in families or special circumstances at this particular time.

America and every country in the world desperately need a young generation of champions—champions of truth, of honesty, of purity, of high moral standards, of faith in a living God.

Our Lord counseled us to "seek . . . first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all . . . things shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6:33.) As you study the scriptures, pray to understand them, and live in harmony with their inspired teachings, then you will grow in wisdom and strength.

You hold sacred priesthood keys, rights, and responsibilities. A troubled world is waiting to hear from you. What will you say? How

will you say it? Will the world know that you know for sure where you are going?

Paul taught his young friend Timothy, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." (2 Tim. 1:7.)

The Lord has placed in our hands the divine power and authority to act in all things, to preach the gospel and perform the ordinances of salvation by which men are sealed up into eternal life. You *are* different from the rest of the world.

While Joseph Smith was translating the Book of Mormon with Oliver Cowdery as the scribe, they went into the woods to pray and inquire of the Lord regarding baptism. While calling upon the Lord, "a messenger from heaven descended in a cloud of light" and laid his hands upon them and ordained them, saying:

"Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins." (JS-H 1:68-69.)

Joseph Smith received direction to baptize Oliver Cowdery and Oliver to baptize Joseph. Then the Aaronic Priesthood was conferred upon each.

The heavenly messenger "said that his name was . . . John the Baptist, . . . and that he acted under the direction of Peter, James and John, who held the keys of the Priesthood of Melchizedek, which . . . would in due time be conferred on" Joseph and Oliver. (See JS-H 1:72.)

You hold this same sacred authority to declare repentance, to baptize, to administer the sacrament, to assist the bishop, and to be concerned for those needing special encouragement.

Restoration through Joseph Smith

Our Lord has used young men your age in many miraculous ways.

Jesus taught and confounded the priests in the temple when only twelve.

David, the young shepherd boy, with complete faith in the Lord, met the Philistine giant, Goliath, on the battlefield. With a prayer in his heart and unafraid, David took a stone out of his bag and, whirling the sling around his head, flung the stone at Goliath, and it sank deep into his forehead. Goliath fell to the earth. A young boy's courage and faith in God had saved the Israelites. (See 1 Sam. 17.)

Joseph Smith at age fourteen read in James: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, . . . and it shall be given him." (James 1:5.) Later he said:

"Never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the heart of man. . . . It seemed to enter with great force into every feeling of my heart. . . .

"I retired to the woods. . . .

"I knelt down and began to offer up the desire of my heart to God." (JS-H 2:12, 14-15.)

Thus began the events that led to the restoration of The Church of Jesus Christ when God the Father and His Son appeared to the boy, Joseph.

Values and truths are ageless

Beloved young friends, much of our future rests with you. You are needed—not to be weak, but to be strong. You can hold high the beacon of light in a darkened world as you testify of a living God.

You have our love and encouragement. We believe in you. We are not out of touch with you and your challenges. We have "walked in the same moccasins." We dated lovely girls and know that associations with them can be uplifting, wholesome, and a beautiful experience.

Live so your memories can bless the full length of your life. Live for

that glorious day when you will go to the holy temple for eternal blessings and joy. Resist the temptations and pressures of those who might urge you to stray, to use marijuana or beer or hard liquor. You understand how deadly they become to your body and then to your spirit. You must not succumb. You are different. Pornography, filthy literature and movies, vile language, and suggestive music are not part of your life. They can destroy you.

We know you are maturing in a world promoting a quest for fun, excitement, material possessions, immediate gratification, and an attitude of "do it now." Develop the strength to defer gratification—to understand there is a time and season for everything and a maturing process that is part of God's eternal plan.

We remind you of values and truths that are ageless and eternal—like "duty, truth, justice, and mercy." They "become the measure of decision. . . . The straight and righteous path is the shortest and the surest." (Walter Lippman, "The Fascination of Greatness," *New York Herald Tribune*, 7 Sept. 1943.)

Following the sensational Brigham Young University basketball victory over Notre Dame, Danny Ainge's father was asked if his son might break his professional baseball contract for a better offer in basketball. His father replied, "Danny has a contract. Honor and integrity are more important than money."

Jesus taught, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36.)

Your character is yours alone to build. No one can injure your character but you.

Life is a competition not with others, but with ourselves. We should seek each day to live stronger, better, truer lives; each day to master some weakness of yesterday;

each day to repair a mistake; each day to surpass ourselves.

Elder Howard W. Hunter's grandson attended tithing settlement with his father some time ago. The bishop indicated his pleasure in the young lad's wanting to pay a full tithing and asked him if he thought the gospel was true. This seven-year-old boy, having paid his full tithe of fourteen cents, said he guessed the gospel was true, "but it sure costs a lot of money."

We learn in our youth to pay an honest tithing. The Lord requires one-tenth of what we earn. If you work as a bagger in a grocery store, the money you are paid for every tenth bag of groceries you carry out to a car belongs to the Lord. Pay your tithing monthly or weekly as you are paid. Never be in debt to the Lord. Spiritual and temporal blessings will be yours as you carefully honor this commandment.

A learning experience

Football came to our country town later than most. The school board had neither the money for equipment nor a coach. Then the great day arrived. Our high school principal was able to buy twelve inexpensive football outfits, except the expensive cleated football shoes (we used our basketball shoes), and our coach was recruited from the faculty because he had witnessed a game.

We learned a few simple plays, how to tackle—or so we thought—and set off for our first game with Twin Falls, the previous year's Idaho state champions.

We dressed and went out on the field to warm up. Their school band started to play (they had more students in the band than we had in our entire high school), and then through the gates came their team. The twelve of us—a full team of eleven plus one all-round substitute—watched in amazement as they kept

coming through the gates—all thirty-nine of them in full uniform.

The game was most interesting! To say it was a learning experience is rather mild. After two plays we didn't have any desire to have the ball—so we would kick it, and soon they would score. When they got the ball, they would run a baffling play and score. Our problem was to get rid of the ball—it was less punishing.

In the final minutes of the game they became a little reckless. A wild pass fell into the arms of Clifford Lee, who was playing halfback with me. He was startled, not knowing for sure what to do—until he saw the "Dallas Cowboys" thundering after him. Then he knew what to do. He was fast. He wasn't running for points, but for his life! Clifford made a touchdown; six points went up on the board. The final score—106 to 6! We really didn't deserve the six points, but with our torn shirts and socks and our bruises, we took them anyway.

A learning experience? Of course! An individual or a team must be prepared. In all things success depends upon previous preparation.

A new world opened

My father was our bishop, but he died before I received the priesthood. I remember so clearly being ordained a deacon. A new world opened up for me. I was now living on a higher plane. As I would hear people say, "You hold the priesthood," it was not easy to fully comprehend. But with humble teachers, we began to understand that as dea-

cons we had been given blessings and authority to do sacred things.

As quorum officers we accounted for all of our members and would see that they were all at church. We enjoyed being together. We chopped wood for the elderly and the widows, filled the coal bins at church, cleaned the meetinghouse every Saturday afternoon, swept the steps, raked the gravel yard, saw that the sacrament trays and lace sacrament cloths were clean and fresh, and had real pride in the appearance of our little meetinghouse.

We were part of the Church and the Church was part of us. We knew it; we felt it! We held the priesthood of God! Understanding teachers guided us and helped us broaden our vision and our ever-expanding role as young men; but more important, they helped prepare us to be called in our youth to be servants of our Savior. He needs every one of you young men who hold the priesthood. I testify that this work is true. I do it humbly, in the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

Elder David B. Haight, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Rejoice, the Lord Is King."

The choir and congregation sang "Rejoice, the Lord Is King."

President Marion G. Romney

Gospel covenants

In our priesthood meeting last October we considered "The Oath

and Covenant Which Belongeth to the Priesthood." (See *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, pp.43-45.) Tonight I have in mind calling attention to some spe-

cific gospel covenants which every priesthood bearer should honor.

In saying to William E. M'Lellin, "Blessed are you for receiving mine everlasting covenant, even the fulness of my gospel" (D&C 66:2), the Lord identified the gospel as the great and all-embracing covenant. As a matter of fact, the Lord had himself presented it as such to us, his spirit children, in the great pre-earth Council in Heaven. Standing among us at that time in that premortal assembly, the Lord "said unto those who were with him: We will go down . . . and . . . make an earth whereon these may dwell;

"And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them;

"And they who keep their first estate shall be added upon; and they who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate; and they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever." (Abr. 3:24-26.)

In that council, a third of the spirits rejected the gospel covenant.

All who obtain the promised reward that "they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever" must accept and comply with gospel covenants.

With Abraham, the Lord entered into a special covenant when he said:

"I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee above measure, and make thy name great among all nations, and thou shalt be a blessing unto thy seed after thee, that in their hands they shall bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations;

"And I will bless them through thy name; for as many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name, and shall be accounted thy seed, and shall rise up and bless

thee, as their father;

"And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee; and in thee . . . and in thy seed . . . shall all the families of the earth be blessed, even with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal." (Abr. 2:9-11.)

Abraham's posterity, through Isaac and Jacob—with whom these covenants were renewed—have ever since been known by those who have understood the gospel as "children of the covenant."

Baptismal covenant

The first gospel covenant we mortals enter into with the Lord is the baptismal covenant. Alma thus set forth the nature of this covenant when he and others who believed the teachings of Abinadi fled into the wilderness to the "place . . . [called] Mormon."

There he (Alma) "said unto them: Behold, here are the waters of Mormon . . . and now, as ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another's burdens, . . .

"And are willing to mourn with those that mourn; . . . and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places . . . even until death, that ye may be redeemed of God, . . . that ye may have eternal life—

"What have you against being baptized in the name of the Lord, as a witness before him that ye have entered into a covenant with him, that ye will serve him and keep his commandments, that he may pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon you?" (Mosiah 18:7-10.)

In this dispensation, the Lord has stated for us the terms of the baptismal covenant in the Doctrine and Covenants, section 20, verse 37, as follows:

"And again, by way of commandment to the church concerning the manner of baptism—All those who humble themselves before God, and desire to be baptized, and come forth with broken hearts and contrite spirits, and witness before the church that they have truly repented of all their sins, and are willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end, and truly manifest by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins, shall be received by baptism into his church."

Sacraments on holy day

Another instruction the Lord has given us is:

"That thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day." (D&C 59:9.)

The sacrament prayers—dictated by the Lord himself—should keep us constantly reminded of the gospel covenants we have entered into with the Lord. These prayers are much alike. The one on the bread reads:

"O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to the souls of all those who partake of it, that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given them; that they may always have his Spirit to be with them. Amen." (D&C 20:77.)

Tithing

Many of the Lord's commandments are in the form of covenants promising specific blessings—tithing, for example: "Behold, now it is

called today until the coming of the Son of Man, and verily it is a day of sacrifice, and a day for the tithing of my people; for he that is tithed shall not be burned at his coming." (D&C 64:23.)

"And I say unto you, if my people observe not this law [of tithing], to keep it holy, and by this law sanctify the land of Zion unto me, . . . it shall not be a land of Zion unto you." (D&C 119:6.)

These statements make it clear that by failing to honor the tithing covenant one forfeits great blessings. On the other hand, complying with it assures great blessings.

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse . . . and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

"And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts." (Mal. 3:10-11.)

Word of Wisdom

Another example of a covenant is the Word of Wisdom, which also promises a specific blessing.

"Behold, verily, thus saith the Lord unto you: In consequence of evils and designs which do and will exist in the hearts of conspiring men in the last days, I have warned you, and forewarn you, by giving unto you this word of wisdom by revelation—

"That inasmuch as any man drinketh wine or strong drink among you, behold it is not good, neither meet in the sight of your Father. . . .

"And, again, strong drinks are not for the belly, but for the washing of your bodies."

"And again, tobacco is not for the body, neither for the belly, and is

not good for man, but is an herb for bruises and all sick cattle, to be used with judgment and skill.

"And again, hot drinks are not for the body or belly. . . .

"And all saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones;

"And shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures;

"And shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint.

"And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them." (D&C 89:4-5, 7-9, 18-21.)

Covenants essential to exaltation

You will remember that it was necessary for the "destroying angel" referred to in this scripture to fatally afflict the firstborn of men and beast throughout Egypt in order to persuade Pharaoh to let Israel go.

Destroying angels are mentioned several times in modern scriptures. Two years before the Word of Wisdom promise was given, the Lord said that "the angels [were] waiting the great command to reap down the earth, to gather the tares that they may be burned." (D&C 38:12.)

Observing the gospel covenants we make with the Lord qualifies us

to enter the temple and there receive the ordinances and covenants essential to exaltation, including the new and everlasting covenant of celestial marriage.

That the Lord will help all of us to magnify our callings in the priesthood by proving faithful to every covenant and commandment and obligation which rests upon us, the holders of the holy priesthood, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

President Spencer W. Kimball, our beloved leader, will be our concluding speaker.

Before President Kimball speaks, we note that the nationwide CBS Radio Tabernacle Choir broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 o'clock Sunday morning. Those desiring to attend must be in their seats before 9:15 A.M.

As we leave this priesthood meeting tonight, we remind you to obey traffic rules, to use caution, and to be courteous in driving.

The beautiful music for this priesthood session has been furnished by the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth Chorus combined men's choir. We are grateful to you men for your inspiring music and express sincere thanks for the service you have given us tonight.

President Spencer W. Kimball

Church—a support to family

My dear brethren, I greet you as you are assembled here in the Salt Lake Tabernacle and in hundreds of other meeting places around the world. We are so pleased with the able leadership provided by the priesthood bearers of the Church—at all levels! As we magnify our priesthood

callings, I hope we will always remember that the Church is a support to the family. The Church does not and must not seek to displace the family, but is organized to help create and nurture righteous families as well as righteous individuals.

In this connection, brethren, we hope you will be mindful of your own needs and preserve some of that

precious time for your own wives and families. Be mindful, too, of your associates in the work of the Church, so that time is not taken unnecessarily from them and their families.

Avoid the tendency to crowd too many meetings in on the Sabbath day. When holding your regular meetings, make them as spiritual and effective as possible. Meetings need not be hurried nor rushed, for they can be planned in a manner that permits their sacred purposes to be accomplished without difficulty.

The consolidated meeting schedule was implemented largely in order to provide several more Sabbath hours for families. Therefore, take time to be together as families to converse with one another, to study the scriptures, to visit friends, relatives, and the sick and lonely. This is also an excellent time to work on your journals and genealogy.

Do not neglect those among us who do not now have the blessings of living in traditional families. These are special souls who often have special needs. Do not let them become isolated from you or the activities of your ward or your branch.

Strengthen teaching in the Church

My dear brethren, especially those of you who preside over stakes, wards, or branches, I should like to reiterate a plea I made to you in the October 1980 priesthood meeting.

Please take a particular interest in strengthening and improving the quality of teaching in the Church. The Savior charged us with feeding his sheep. (See John 21:15-17.) I fear at times that all too often many of our members come to church, sit through a class or meeting, and then return home having been largely uninformed. It is especially unfortunate if this happens at a time when they may be entering a period of

stress, temptation, or personal or family crisis. We all need to be touched and nurtured by the Spirit, and effective teaching is one of the most important ways this can happen. We regularly do vigorous enlistment and reactivation work to get members to come to church, but often do not watch over what they receive when they do attend.

Render service to others

Brethren, as you may remember, while speaking this morning I referred to our recent visit to the Caribbean Islands and the wonderful missionary work that has been accomplished in the two short years since we opened up those islands for the preaching of the gospel.

One incident occurred in Santo Domingo that I did not have time to tell you about. I think I should like to relate it to you now.

We held an evening general meeting in Santo Domingo, the capital city of the Dominican Republic. Nearly 1600 souls were present.

About an hour after the close of the general meeting, a busload of one hundred members from the Puerto Plata Branch arrived at the meeting place. They had been delayed because their bus broke down. Under ordinary circumstances, they could have made the trip in about four hours, but they finally arrived after 10:00 P.M. to find the hall dark and empty. Many wept because they were so disappointed. All were converts, some for a few months and others only weeks or days.

Sister Kimball and I had gone to bed after a long and tiring day. Upon learning of the plight of these faithful souls, my secretary knocked on the door of our hotel room and woke us up. He apologized for disturbing us but thought that I would want to know about the late arrivals and perhaps dictate a personal message to them. However, I felt that wouldn't

be good enough and not fair to those who had come so far under such trying circumstances—one hundred people jammed into one bus. I got out of bed and dressed and went downstairs to see the members who had made such an effort only to be disappointed because of engine trouble. The Saints were still weeping as we entered the hall, so I spent more than an hour visiting with them.

They then seemed relieved and satisfied and got back on the bus for the long ride home. They had to get back by morning to go to work and to school. Those good people seemed so appreciative of a brief visit together that I felt we just couldn't let them down. As I returned to my bed, I did so with a sense of peace and contentment in my soul.

Brethren, we all have opportunities to render service to others. That is our calling and our privilege. In serving the needs of others, we are mindful of the words of the Savior: "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Matt. 25:40.)

Husband resources

Brethren, may we counsel you on another matter close to all of us? As we seek contributions from our Saints for tithes and fast offerings, let us speak, more often than we sometimes do, in terms of blessings which will flow to us as we keep the commandments and do our duty. From time to time, we hear reports of unwarranted pressures which accompany the financial requests made of our Church members.

This is a matter of grave importance. In these days of inflation and emotional and political unrest, our people everywhere are being met with difficult and trying experiences on almost every hand. Prudence and

wisdom not only suggest but dictate that we take some steps to retrench and husband our resources. We must not overburden our people. With this in mind, the First Presidency has prepared a letter which was released yesterday in which we set out the concerns of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve relating to the increasing financial burdens on members of the Church, in addition to their payment of tithing and fast offerings. With our letter, we prepared some guidelines to assist ward, stake, and mission leaders in complying with the counsel and direction given. We have instructed the Regional Representatives of the Twelve to give this matter immediate attention and implementation.

Live within own means

Let us as individuals, as families, and as wards and stakes learn to live within our means. There is strength and salvation in this principle. Someone has said that we are rich in proportion to that with which we can do without. As families and as a Church, we can and should provide that which is *truly essential* for our people, but we must be careful not to extend beyond that which is essential or for purposes which are not directly related to our families' welfare and the basic mission of the Church.

I love you, my brethren, young and old, and I am grateful for your faith and your devotion to the cause of the Master. I express my affection for you and leave my blessing with you. And I pray our Heavenly Father to bless you and your families, your homes, and your work. God bless you, peace be with you, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

The choir will close this meeting by singing "Swell the Full Chorus,"

following which Elder A. Theodore Tuttle, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the benediction.

The choir sang "Swell the Full Chorus."

Elder A. Theodore Tuttle gave the benediction.

SECOND DAY MORNING MEETING

FOURTH SESSION

The fourth session of the general conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 5, 1981. President Spencer W. Kimball presided at and conducted this session.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music for this session with Jerold Ottley directing and John Longhurst at the organ.

Prior to the opening of the session, the Choir sang "Come, O Thou King of Kings" without announcement.

President Kimball made the following remarks:

President Spencer W. Kimball

We welcome all who are present this morning in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on Temple Square in this, the fourth session of the 151st Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We also acknowledge those tuned to this conference by radio and television and those who are seated in the overflow congregation in the Salt Palace where Elders Adney Y. Komatsu and Robert E. Wells preside.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders, and officers

and members of the Church from many lands who have assembled to worship and to counsel together in this conference.

The Tabernacle Choir under the direction of Jerold Ottley with John Longhurst at the organ is providing the music for this session. The Choir opened these services by singing "Come, O Thou King of Kings" and will now sing "Sweet Is the Work, My God, My King," following which Elder Dean L. Larsen, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The Tabernacle Choir sang "Sweet Is the Work, My God, My King."

Elder Dean L. Larsen offered the invocation.

The Choir sang "Father, Thy Children to Thee Now Raise" without announcement.

President Kimball

The Tabernacle Choir has sung "Father, Thy Children to Thee Now Raise." It will now be our privilege to hear from Elder Thomas S. Monson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Thomas S. Monson

Today I desire to preach no sermon nor deliver a formal message. Rather, may I simply share with you my innermost thoughts. President David O. McKay referred to such as "heart petals." I open to your view a window to my soul.

Concern for the widow

The Epistle of James has long been a favorite book of the Holy Bible. I find his brief message heart-warming and filled with life. Each of us can quote that well-known passage, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." (James 1:5.) How many of us, however, remember his definition of religion? "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." (James 1:27.)

The word *widow* appears to have had a most significant meaning to our Lord. He cautioned His disciples to beware the example of the scribes, who feigned righteousness by their long apparel and their lengthy prayers, but who devoured the houses of widows. (See Mark 12:38, 40.)

To the Nephites came the direct warning, "I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against . . . those that oppress the . . . widow." (3 Ne. 24:5.)

To the Prophet Joseph Smith He directed, "The storehouse shall be kept by the consecrations of the church; and widows and orphans shall be provided for, as also the poor." (D&C 83:6.)

Such teachings were not new then. They are not new now. Consistently the Master has taught, by example, His concern for the widow.

To the grieving widow at Nain, bereft of her only son, He came personally and to the dead son restored the breath of life—and to the astonished widow her son. To the widow at Zarephath, who with her son faced imminent starvation, He sent the prophet Elijah with the power to teach faith as well as provide food.

We may say to ourselves, "But that was long ago and ever so far away." I respond: "Is there a city called Zarephath near your home? Is there a town known as Nain?" We may know our cities as Columbus or Coalville, Detroit or Denver. Whatever the name, there lives within each city the widow deprived of her companion and often her child. The need is the same. The affliction is real.

The widow's home is generally not large or ornate. Frequently it is modest in size and humble in appearance. Often it is tucked away at the top of the stairs or the back of the hallway and consists of but one room. To such homes He sends you and me.

There may exist an actual need for food, clothing—even shelter. Such can be supplied. Almost always there remains the hope for that special hyacinth to feed the soul.

*Go visit the lonely, the dreary;
Go comfort the weeping, the weary.
Oh, scatter kind deeds on your way
And make the world brighter today.*

"Long Line of the Lonely"

The ranks of those in special need grow larger day by day. Note the obituary page of your newspaper. Here the drama of life unfolds to our view. Death comes to all mankind. It comes to the aged as they walk on faltering feet. Its summons are heard by those who have scarcely reached midway in life's journey, and it often

hushes the laughter of little children.

After the funeral flowers fade, the well wishes of friends become memories, the prayers offered and words spoken dim in the corridors of the mind. Those who grieve frequently join that vast throng I shall entitle "The Long Line of the Lonely." Missed is the laughter of children, the commotion of teenagers, and the tender, loving concern of a departed companion. The clock ticks more loudly, time passes more slowly, and four walls do indeed a prison make.

Hopefully, all of us may again hear the echo of words spoken by the Master: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these. . . , ye have done it unto me." (Matt. 25:40.)

As we resolve to minister more diligently to those in need, let us remember to include our children in these learning lessons of life.

I have many memories of my boyhood days. Anticipating Sunday dinner was one of them. Just as we children hovered at our so-called starvation level and sat anxiously at the table with the aroma of roast beef filling the room, mother would say to me, "Tommy, before we eat, take this plate I've prepared down the street to Old Bob and hurry back."

I could never understand why we couldn't first eat and later deliver his plate of food. I never questioned aloud but would run down to his house and then wait anxiously as Bob's aged feet brought him eventually to the door. Then I would hand him the plate of food. He would present to me the clean plate from the previous Sunday and offer me a dime as pay for my services. My answer was always the same: "I can't accept the money. My mother would tan my hide." He would then run his wrinkled hand through my blond hair and say, "My boy, you have a wonderful mother. Tell her thank you."

You know, I think I never did tell her. I sort of felt mother didn't need to be told. She seemed to sense his gratitude. I remember, too, that Sunday dinner always seemed to taste a bit better after I had returned from my errand.

Old Bob came into our lives in an interesting way. He was a widower in his eighties when the house in which he was living was to be demolished. I heard him tell my grandfather his plight as the three of us sat on the old front porch swing. With a plaintive voice, he said to grandfather, "Mr. Condie, I don't know what to do. I have no family. I have no place to go. I have no money." I wondered how grandfather would answer. Slowly grandfather reached into his pocket and took from it that old leather purse from which, in response to my hounding, he had produced many a penny or nickel for a special treat. This time he removed a key and handed it to Old Bob. Tenderly he said, "Bob, here is the key to that house I own next door. Take it. Move in your things. Stay as long as you like. There will be no rent to pay and nobody will ever put you out again."

Tears welled up in the eyes of Old Bob, coursed down his cheeks, then disappeared in his long, white beard. Grandfather's eyes were also moist. I spoke no word, but that day my grandfather stood ten feet tall. I was proud to bear his given name. Though I was but a boy, that lesson has influenced my life.

Let's make a call or two

Each of us has his own way of remembering. At Christmas time I take delight in visiting the widows and widowers from the ward where I served as bishop. There were eighty-seven then—just nine today. On such visits, I never know what to expect; but this I do know: visits like these provide for me the Christmas spirit,

which is, in reality, the Spirit of Christ.

Come with me, and we'll together make a call or two. There's the nursing home on West Temple where four widows reside. You never walk up the pathway but what you notice the parted curtain, as one inside waits hour after hour for the approaching step of a friend. What a welcome! Good times are remembered, perhaps a gift given, a blessing provided; but then it is time to leave. Never could I depart without first responding to the request of a widow almost one hundred years of age. Though she was blind, she would say, "Bishop, you're to speak at my funeral and recite from memory Tennyson's poem, 'Crossing the Bar.' Let's hear you do it right now!" I would proceed:

*Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea, . . .*

*Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;*

*For tho' from out our bourne of
Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar.*

(In *Major British Writers*, ed. G. B. Harrison, enl. ed., New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1959, 2:466.)

Tears came easily, and then, with a smile, she would say, "Tommy, that was pretty good, but see that you do it a wee bit better at the funeral!" I later honored her request.

At another nursing home on First South, we might interrupt, as I

did a few years ago, a professional football game. There, before the TV, were seated two widows. They were warmly and beautifully dressed, absorbed in the game. I asked, "Who's winning?" They responded, "We don't even know who's playing, but at least it's company." I sat between those two angels and explained the game of football. I enjoyed the best contest I can remember. I may have missed a meeting, but I harvested a memory.

Let's hurry along to Redwood Road. There is a much larger home here where many widows reside. Most are seated in the well-lighted living room. But in her bedroom, alone, is one on whom I must call. She hasn't spoken a word since a devastating stroke some years ago. But then, who knows what she hears?—so I speak of good times together. There isn't a flicker of recognition, not a word spoken. In fact, an attendant asks if I am aware that this patient hasn't uttered a word for years. It made no difference. Not only had I enjoyed my one-sided conversation with her—I had communed with God.

"Reconsidered and approved"

When our beloved President Spencer W. Kimball met recently with those from a country where want is present, he asked not regarding statistics, but rather inquired: "Do our people have enough to eat? Are the widows cared for?" He was concerned.

During the administration of President George Albert Smith, there lived in our ward an impoverished widow who cared for her three mature daughters, each of whom was an invalid. They were large in size and almost totally helpless. To this dear woman fell the task to bathe, to feed, to dress, and to care for her girls. Means were limited. Outside help was nonexistent. Then came the blow

that the house she rented was to be sold. What was she to do? Where would she go? The bishop came to the Church Office Building to inquire if there were some way the house could be purchased. It was so small, the price so reasonable. The request was considered, then denied.

A heartsick bishop was leaving the front door of the building when he met President George Albert Smith. After the exchange of greetings, President Smith inquired, "What brings you to the headquarters building?" He listened carefully as the bishop explained, but said nothing. He then excused himself for a few minutes. He returned wearing a smile and directed, "Go upstairs to the fourth floor. A check is waiting there for you. Buy the house!"

"But the request was denied."

Again he smiled and said, "It has just been reconsidered and approved." The home was purchased. That dear widow lived there and cared for her daughters until each of them had passed away. Then she, too, went home to God and to her heavenly reward.

Mindful of the widowed and lonely

The leadership of this Church is mindful of the widow, the widower, the lonely. Can we be less concerned? Emerson counseled that rings and jewels are not gifts, but sub-

stitutes for gifts. The only real gift is a portion of oneself. (See "Gifts," by Ralph Waldo Emerson.)

We remember that during the meridian of time a bright, particular star shone in the heavens. Wise men followed it and found the Christ child. Today wise men still look heavenward and again see a bright, particular star. It will guide you and me to our opportunities. The burden of the downtrodden will be lifted, the cry of the hungry stilled, the lonely heart comforted. And souls will be saved—yours, theirs, and mine.

If we truly listen, we may hear that voice from far away say to us, as it spoke to another, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." (Matt. 25:21.)

May we see that special star, may we hear that same salutation, is my humble prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "Home's Bright Love" without announcement.

President Kimball

We have heard from Elder Thomas S. Monson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "Home's Bright Love."

We shall now be pleased to hear from President N. Eldon Tanner, First Counselor in the First Presidency.

President N. Eldon Tanner

I am so glad to be here with you today and to hear this wonderful music and these sermons that have been taught. I am so thankful to you people who have thought of me in your prayers that I would regain my health, and I am thankful that I am able to participate with you today.

Belief in God and his Son

I have been thinking lately of the first and third articles of faith: "We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost," and "We believe that through the Atonement

of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel."

As I think of that first article of faith, do we really believe in God and in his Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost? And to what extent do they influence our lives? We believe that through the atonement of Christ all mankind may be saved. As I think about that, I want you to know how God, the Father, and his Son, Jesus Christ, have helped me through my life.

I am sure that my mother, being the kind of woman she was, thanked God when I was born for the blessing of being a co-partner with God in bringing this spirit child into the mortal world. I am sure she expressed her thanks to God through his Son, Jesus Christ.

In my home, prayers were offered on many different occasions. When I was taught to pray, I learned that I was actually talking to God, in the name of Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Ghost. When I was eight years old, I was taken by my father to be baptized. I had been told that I was a son of God, a child of God, and that he was interested in me, that he knew me and knew best what was right for me. We were taught to pray at meals; we were taught to pray in the morning; we were taught to pray at night. And we were taught that our Father in Heaven was the one to whom we were talking.

I wonder how many of us know that we are spirit children of God; and when we are praying, whether it's over a meal, beginning or closing of a meeting, or at a baptism or confirmation, or the blessing of the bread and water in the sacrament, that we are actually talking to God. He is there, he hears our prayers, and he blesses us.

The Father and the Son appeared to Joseph Smith

But the one prayer which impressed me was when Joseph Smith went into the woods to pray. He had read, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, . . . and it shall be given." If *any of you* lack wisdom, ask of God and you will receive your answer. Pray with faith, not wavering. "For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed." (James 1:6.)

God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to Joseph—actually appeared to him—and told him they had a work for him to do. He had talked to God; God heard his prayers; his prayers were answered. And I bear testimony to you this morning that these things which I have expressed to you are true. This is the Church of Jesus Christ, under the direction of Christ himself through a prophet of God whom I love, admire, and appreciate.

Be an example

I love you people out there and humbly pray we may always realize that when we pray to God we are talking to him, and that he is interested in our welfare. The prayer that I pray at this time is that we will all realize who we are and act accordingly and be an example to people in the world. This is the Church of Jesus Christ; and he will hear all who ask, to help them understand who they are and why they are here. This is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "But the Lord Is Mindful of His Own" without announcement.

President Kimball

We have just heard from President N. Eldon Tanner, First Counselor in the First Presidency. We are very grateful to have President Tanner back with us.

The Tabernacle Choir just sang "But the Lord Is Mindful of His Own."

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Franklin D. Richards, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Franklin D. Richards

President Kimball, I express the feelings of the people of this worldwide Church in saying that we love you, President Tanner, President Romney, and are grateful that the Lord has performed miracles in your lives so that you can continue to carry on the great work of building the kingdom of God.

Eternal progression

We are living in a remarkable age—the dispensation of the fulness of times—but we are living in a troubled world. The powers of evil are visible in false doctrines, corrupt morals, strife, contention, and persecution. Fears abound in the hearts of many.

A universal question in the hearts and minds of men and women in all parts of the world is, "What is the purpose of life?"

The restored gospel of Jesus Christ answers this question. In modern revelation the Lord has told us, "If you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God." (D&C 14:7.)

Therefore, in essence the purpose of life is to prepare us for the greatest gift of God, eternal life.

The restored gospel explains that we existed as spirit entities before being born into this sphere of activity—yes, spirit children of our Father in Heaven. We came to this earth for our spirits to receive bodies of flesh

and bones and to receive experiences wherein we are proved and tested to see, as the scripture states, if we "will do all things whatsoever the Lord . . . shall command." (Abr. 3:25.)

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches the value of eternal progression. We progressed in the premortal existence, and we have the opportunity to progress in this estate and throughout all eternity. Each of us is endowed with gifts and talents, and through study, prayer, proper work habits, and the use of our gifts and talents, we can accomplish our eternal objectives.

"Seek learning"

Study, particularly of the scriptures, is an important factor. We are counseled to "seek learning, even by study and also by faith." (D&C 88:118.) Eternal progress involves continual study. The Lord has told us that "the glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth." (D&C 93:36.)

Also, "Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection.

"And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come." (D&C 130:18-19.)

President Spencer W. Kimball has counseled us in this manner:

"Let us . . . seek to read and understand and apply the principles and inspired counsel found within the [scriptures]. If we do so, we shall discover that our personal *acts* of righteousness will also bring *personal revelation or inspiration* when needed into our own lives." (EN-SIGN, Sept. 1975, p. 4.)

An abundance of modern revelation is to be found in latter-day scriptures. These scriptures explain in detail how to meet today's challenges. Knowledge received from studying the scriptures assists us in making correct decisions in all areas of life's activities and helps us to know God and understand his purposes.

Prayer

Now, with reference to the part that prayer plays in accomplishing our eternal objectives, the Savior instructed his disciples to "pray always" (Luke 21:36), saying: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Luke 11:9).

The Prophet Joseph Smith observed that "it is the first principle of the gospel to know for a certainty the character of God, and to know that we may converse with Him as one man converses with another." (*History of the Church*, 6:305.)

Brigham Young, in his realistic manner, stated, "You know that it is one peculiarity of our faith and religion never to ask the Lord to do a thing without being willing to help him all that we are able; and then the Lord will do the rest." (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, comp. John A. Widtsoe, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1941, p. 43.)

"Please, Lord, help me to help myself." I am convinced that this prayer for increased personal power is one that God answers. We can learn to solve our problems with God's help.

A convert told me: "I used to pray, not often, but I did pray before we became members. I prayed that someday my husband and I would grow closer together. I never thought it would come to be, but the Church was my answer. We found the power of prayer. I am so thankful for the Church."

Yes, prayer does play an important part in our eternal progress.

Philosophy of work

Let us now consider the great eternal principle of work. During his earthly ministry, the Savior gave a beautiful parable dealing with the requirement that we work.

The parable of the entrusted talents told of a man who was about to leave on a long trip and he, therefore, called his servants together and gave them his goods. To one he gave five talents, to another he gave two, and to another he gave one. To each man he gave according to his ability.

While the master was away, the one who received five talents put them to use and made five more talents. The man who received two talents put them to use and made two more, but the man who received one talent hid it in the ground.

The master returned and asked for an accounting.

To the servants who had multiplied their talents, the master said: "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." (Matt. 25:23.)

The master called the servant who had hidden his talent and did not multiply it a slothful servant and said he would take the one talent from him and give it to the servant who had ten talents.

What a marvelous philosophy—the gospel of work!

At the time the present welfare program of the Church was established, the First Presidency explained

that the primary purpose was to "set up . . . a system under which the curse of idleness would be done away with, the evils of a dole abolished, and independence, industry, thrift and self respect be once more established amongst our people. The aim of the Church is to help the people to help themselves. Work is to be re-enthroned as the ruling principle of the lives of our Church membership." (In Conference Report, October 1936, p. 3.)

These are eternal principles and are as applicable to us today as they were when they were given.

Ever since its organization, the Church has encouraged its members to be thrifty and to establish and maintain their economic independence.

Whether our work is mainly mental or physical, or a combination of both, we should learn to do it well. The philosophy of work is a sound philosophy. It is a vital part of the gospel of Jesus Christ that will lead us to eternal life.

Develop talents

The Savior constantly emphasized the doctrine of loving your neighbor, of unselfishness and sacrifice. Let me suggest, therefore, the advisability of engaging in some work that involves service to our fellowman and some sacrifice of our time, talents, and means.

Remember the words of King Benjamin: "When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God." (Mosiah 2:17.)

We should also appreciate that talents are developed by use, and they will not grow and multiply unless they are used. This principle was clearly taught in the Savior's parable.

Talents may be developed in many areas, such as teaching, missionary work, the arts, compassionate service, and many other fields.

Another convert had this to say: "An aspect of the Church I love is its constant learning, developing, and growing power. I'm grateful for the opportunity to work in the Church because this constant contact is helping us to grow and develop in the gospel and in all other areas of our lives."

I encourage you to accept every opportunity presented to develop your talents and to share them with enthusiasm, not as a burden, but as a great blessing, and the Lord will make you equal to the task that you are called upon to perform.

Have faith and endure to the end

The story of men and women who achieve is generally the story of persons overcoming handicaps. It appears that there are lessons that can only be learned through the overcoming of obstacles.

One of the darkest periods in the history of the Church was the winter of 1838-39. The Saints had been persecuted, robbed, and murdered. The Prophet Joseph Smith and his associates had been betrayed and were imprisoned in Liberty Jail.

But emerging from this dark period were the men who led the Church throughout trying experiences as well as amazing growth and development. It was during those dark days that the Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith, while in the Liberty Jail, a great revelation. Out of the midst of his tribulations, the Prophet Joseph Smith called upon God for comfort.

The answer came as God replied, "My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment;

"And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high." (D&C 121:7-8.)

The Liberty Jail experience truly constituted a refiner's fire for those who participated in it, and it gives us

a better understanding and appreciation of the greatness of the Prophet Joseph Smith and the early leaders of the Church.

What can we learn from the Liberty Jail experience that will be helpful to us? Certainly two impressive truths are apparent:

First, the importance of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and loyalty to our leaders and to the Church.

Second, the need for enduring to the end, regardless of how many difficulties we have to surmount.

As we endure to the end, we may need to ask the Lord for comfort, and we, like the Prophet Joseph Smith, may hear, "My son, peace be unto thy soul." (D&C 121:7.)

Purpose in life

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is called the Prince of Peace, and his message is a message of peace to the individual and to the world. It is the peace that makes us appreciate mortal life and enables us to bear tribulations. One of the objectives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is to establish this peace in the hearts and homes of the people.

Yes, the restored gospel clearly answers the question, "What is the purpose of life?" giving us an understanding of where we came from, why we are here, and where we go after death.

One can see the significance and the purpose of life with the perspective the restored gospel plan gives.

A convert living in Arizona had this to say: "The thing that has changed my life the most is that I have found a purpose in life and a certain peace of mind that I have never felt before."

A convert from Seattle was asked, "What has the Church done for you?" He replied, "Everything.

My life now has purpose and meaning. Now what can I do for the Lord? I owe him all."

Personally, I feel the same as the Seattle convert—I owe the Lord all.

Testimony

I bear you my testimony that I know that God lives and that Jesus is the Christ, our Redeemer and Savior.

And I know that Joseph Smith was the instrument in the hands of the Lord in restoring the gospel in its fulness, in restoring the power to act in the name of God, and in reestablishing the Church of Jesus Christ upon the earth.

I also bear witness that President Spencer W. Kimball is a prophet of God, acting under divine guidance in administering the affairs of the kingdom of God on the earth today. May the Lord bless and sustain him.

I sincerely pray that we will understand the purpose of life, conform our life-style to eternal gospel principles, enjoy peace, happiness, and growth, and receive eternal life, the greatest gift of God, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "My Shepherd Will Supply My Need" without announcement.

President Kimball

We have just listened to Elder Franklin D. Richards, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, followed by the Choir singing "My Shepherd Will Supply My Need."

The Choir and congregation will now join in singing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

The Choir and congregation sang
 "We Thank Thee, O God, for a
 Prophet."

President Kimball

We shall now hear from Elder
 James M. Paramore, a member of the
 First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder James M. Paramore

"Love one another"

My beloved brothers and sisters and friends, sometimes when I hear the wonderful local choirs, I tell the members that I sing with the Tabernacle Choir at conference. Oh, to be sure, I don't sit in the choir seats because I don't sing well enough, but I do sit here below and silently sing along with them because their music is so beautiful. A line from one of their numbers that we all love is, "As I have loved you, love one another." May I talk about this for a few minutes today—the love of God and loving one another.

A little story given by one of your missionary sons in Italy a few weeks ago brought this clearly into focus for me.

He recounted that one morning a poor little crippled boy in ragged clothes and badly worn shoes came to a busy street corner and went from person to person, begging for a few lira without success. A man observing the boy from a distance finally went over and picked up this little lad, held him tightly and loved him, and then went forth and cared for him with his means without any judgment.

This sight would have touched any heart and helps us see the power of love that our Father in Heaven would have us understand in our lives. Jesus, the beloved Son of God, reemphasized this new dimension to bless the world when He said, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another." (John 13:34.)

God's love shown through his commandments

As we step back and try to understand this love of God, we are astounded by its profound impact. At its center is the reality of a literal Father in Heaven whose love for His children knows no bounds. All truths, wisdom, power, goodness, and love He desires to share with His children, whom He created and sent to earth. He would have us reach up and know Him as a Father, as one who forgives, as a helper, as friend, as a lawgiver—as one anxious to grant to every man the full opportunity of His love and potential and ultimately the blessing to one day become like Him. This love from Father in Heaven and its effects upon one of His children or the whole world is miraculous and contagious. He is constantly and everlastingly watching over us to lovingly and gently nudge us along.

He reaches down, through His Son; through prayer, His spirit, His prophets; and through His commandments to express His love and concern and provide His guidance and discipline to everyone who will listen. As the Psalmist said, "The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord." (Ps. 33:5.)

He loves us so much that He gave us His most sacred eternal truths—His commandments—eternal standards to live by. To help us understand their importance, He revealed and surrounded them in sacred and holy settings. Who does not remember how the Ten Command-

ments were given? Men have constantly changed these commandments, but we testify to the world, they have been restored on this earth through a prophet of God because they are essential, eternal truths and if altered by man, lose their power. We testify to the world that these laws — commandments — standards — are one of the highest manifestations of the love God has for His children. Yes, they are commandments — absolutes — to plant the seeds of God's love, His ways, and His divinity in us. They are the fountainhead of all real security, and the inner man recognizes this instinctively and rejoices.

This same loving God also "so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16) to perform a myriad of blessings for all mankind, including the offering of His own life to atone for man. He lived His life to demonstrate that the love of our Father in Heaven and His plan, His commandments, could in fact bring inner peace and lift mankind here and hereafter.

"Abide in my love"

My assignments these past few months have taken me to many lands, and with all my heart this morning I want to bear witness to the fact that when God's love is known and felt and His commandments followed, the results are always the same. There is a newness of life — a spiritual awakening — that comes to man, its own witness that it is true. It is never forced or brought about by fear, but rather by a bond of love that develops between our Father in Heaven and His children. It is no wonder that we are counseled to look to God and live. This love reaches deep into the inner man, removes barriers, and causes an open spirit to emerge to be receptive to truth, goodness, and change. As it develops in man, he is turned outward toward

others — gradually overcoming himself. When we humbly seek our Father in Heaven by prayer, and by learning and keeping His commandments, He transfers to us His love and many of His powers. Thousands bear witness that His words "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love" (John 15:10) are true. We then, as the Savior said, begin to attach ourselves as branches to the "true vine" and receive the same strength and power and can expect the same fruit. (See John 15:1-6.)

Then the miracle really happens. Men thus touched and changed by this love of God begin to look upon their neighbors with profound respect and awe for who they are, what their potential really is as children of an eternal father.

I had a very special experience a few years ago on an assignment to Oregon. After a stake conference I was asked to bless a little child. A couple was ushered into a room, and I learned that day what the love of God really was. They had adopted six or seven abandoned, physically handicapped little children who would need their love and care the rest of their lives. I felt humble in their presence, and the love of God filled that room that day. They were no more strangers to God.

As man perceives this love, he begins to overlook the flaws that make up every mortal being and to "esteem his brother as himself." (D&C 38:24.) He lifts and desires to help him whenever and wherever he can. Man's spirit reaches out to everyone, for now there is no enmity, no envy, no restricting philosophies, pride, or vanity — even language does not separate men — there is only an openness and oneness with the Spirit and will of God. The scriptures are beautiful and clear:

"There [will be] no contention in the land," "because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts." (4 Ne. 1:15, Rom. 5:5.)

Does this mean that those who embrace these things will be perfect? No, for they will forever be overcoming and growing. But it does mean that they will be striving toward perfection. The great prophet Moroni counseled us with a profound insight on this point when he said, "Condemn me not because of mine imperfection, neither my father . . . but rather give thanks unto God that he hath made manifest unto you our imperfections, that ye may learn to be more wise than we have been." (Morm. 9:31.)

It is by achieving this gift, this love of God, that we are able to crowd out contention, discord, and judgments. It recognizes the power and goodness innate in man and how totally inconsistent it would be for one having these feelings—this love from God in their lives—to find himself judging others, not sustaining His leaders, for these things are absolutely foreign to the love of God. Our Father in Heaven said that "no one can assist in this work except he shall be humble and full of love." (D&C 12:8.)

As in the case of the man who picked up the little crippled boy, there are no reproachments or judgments—just love and help.

Love of God manifest

How is this love of God manifest today upon the earth and in His church and among its members?

By a Father in Heaven who sent His beloved Son to help man to see His example and follow.

By a Father in Heaven who has established His kingdom, His church, His love and commandments here upon this earth wherein all His blessings may be had and His love felt.

By a loving Father in Heaven who has provided a prophet today and Apostles to receive His word and guide His children.

By families who are filled with

this love and gratitude to God, reaching out everyday to teach their children love, these highest standards, and the peaceable things of God.

By fathers and mothers and children, who, touched by the love of God, unashamedly take each other in their arms often and openly express their love and never give up on those within their circle who especially need their love.

By over thirty thousand missionaries, who, at their own expense, go forth in love to the people everywhere on this earth and take these powers to all who will listen.

And by wonderful leaders and teachers who, though imperfect, reach out to our children and youth in countless ways to help them build bridges to God—His love and goodness.

Blessings in his Church

A few Sundays ago as I sat in a sacrament meeting in Germany, tears of gratitude filled my eyes and my heart was full. I saw eighty-two little children sing songs of love to their Heavenly Father. I was so grateful for the Church which has been reestablished upon the earth, and that I too had one day been a Primary child, and my children also, and had learned those songs and the love they express. I've sung those songs thousands of times since my youth and am grateful for the love and the message they bring. On this very same day in that sacrament meeting was a new convert who is awaiting the arrival of her first child. She was so touched by the children, the Church, the Primary, and the love of our Heavenly Father that was there. She later excitedly said, "Oh, I can hardly wait to have my child so she can go to Primary."

My beloved friends, this is only one of the many great programs and blessings that our Father in Heaven has provided in His church, The

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Yes, there is a place of beauty—a refuge upon the earth—where the unchanging standards revealed by a loving Father in Heaven are found.

Now all of this is really what the Lord had in mind, isn't it, when he said, "As I have loved you, . . . love one another." (John 13:34.) That will forever be the ultimate invitation of the Lord to everyone everywhere. We invite all men with all our love to come and partake of this spirit, this peace, this love of God that is in His kingdom here upon the earth today.

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Jack H. Goaslind, Jr.

Offspring of God

My sincere desire this morning is to share with you some of my feelings about the gospel of Jesus Christ and the effect it should have in our relationships with each other. As I have reread the account of the Savior's resurrection, I have been impressed that the Savior's first words as a resurrected being provide the foundation for our relationships with others.

You will recall that early in the morning of the first day of the week, Mary had gone to the sepulchre where they had placed the Lord's body. Finding the stone that sealed the tomb removed, she ran and told Peter and John that the Lord's body had been taken. Peter and John hurried to the tomb to confirm this report. When they saw the empty tomb, they returned to their homes.

But Mary Magdalene "stood without at the sepulchre weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre." There she saw two angels in white, who asked her, "Why weepest thou?" And she replied, "Because

President Kimball

To those of the television and radio audience who have just joined us, we are convened in the historic Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, in this fourth session of the 151st Annual General Conference of the Church.

We have just heard from Elder James M. Paramore, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. It will now be our pleasure to hear from Elder Jack H. Goaslind, Jr., a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."

Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus, but she did not recognize him. The Savior also asked why she was weeping. Mary said, thinking she was talking to the gardener, "Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." (John 20:11-15.)

The Savior then called her by name, as he also could each of us, and she immediately recognized him. Because of her great love for him and her witness that he lives, she extended her arms to embrace him.

With love, concern, and assurance, he spoke these eternally significant words: "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." (John 20:17.)

"To my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God." How important this message was then, and how vital it is for us today! The Apostle Paul clearly taught the

same doctrine when he said:

"For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

"Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device." (Acts 17:28-29.)

Through prayer, study, and living the gospel, I have come to appreciate the fact that we are all our Father's children—part of one large family. We are sons and daughters of God. Our Heavenly Father is in a very real sense the actual Father of our spirits, which gives literal significance to the phrase "Our Heavenly Father." It follows that we are all brothers and sisters regardless of race, creed, or nationality. There is a spark of divinity in each of us.

Reach out to others

How should this truth affect our relationships with others? If all of God's children truly realized and felt the impact of this great truth, there would be far more understanding, compassion, and love shown to one another. Wars, crime, and all forms of cruelty would cease.

I am convinced that true brotherly love is essential to our happiness and to world peace. We must love one another and unselfishly share our gifts, talents, and resources. It is little wonder that, when asked by the Pharisee, a lawyer by profession, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" the Savior answered: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

"This is the first and great commandment.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

"On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matt. 22:36-40.)

And again, in the closing moments of his life he made this glorious pronouncement:

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John 13:34-35.)

William Shakespeare once said, "They do not love that do not show their love." (*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, act 1, sc. 2, line 31.) We need to show our love, beginning in the home and then widening our circle of love to encompass our ward members, our less active and non-member neighbors, and also those who have passed beyond the veil.

To leaders in the Church, to every member, may I ask you to reach out as never before and extend the hand of fellowship to our brothers and sisters who need the light of the gospel. I am persuaded that much of our love is confined to mere lip service and dreams of good deeds accomplished, but true love must be expressed in unselfish acts of kindness that bring others closer to our Heavenly Father.

More than lip service

How often I think of the great example of Peter and John as they approached the temple at the hour of prayer. A certain man, lame from his birth, was laid at the gate called Beautiful to ask alms of those who entered. When he saw Peter and John approaching, he extended his hand for their contribution. Peter said to him, "Look on us." He immediately gave heed, expecting to receive something of them. "Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the

name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk."

I believe this is as far as we have gone, in most cases, in helping our fellowmen in today's world. However, Peter did not stop with mere words. The scripture records that he then "took him by the right hand, and lifted him up," and immediately the man's feet and ankles received strength and he stood, walked, leaped, and entered the temple praising God. (See Acts 3:1-9.)

It isn't silver and gold the world needs today but the extended hand and the lifting influence of the Spirit of the Lord.

A good friend shared this story about how she learned the deeper meaning of love. Their family has always been active in the Church, trying their best to live the commandments. They were shocked and disappointed, however, when their daughter became engaged to a nonmember. The next day the mother was telling a good friend about her feelings. She knew her daughter's fiance was a fine young man, but she felt angry, hurt, betrayed, and numb and did not want to give her daughter a wedding or even see her. She said that the Lord must have guided her to talk to her friend because she received this reply:

"What kind of a mother are you that you only love her when she does what you want her to do? That is selfish, self-centered, qualified love. It's easy to love our children when they are good; but when they make mistakes, they need our love even more. We should love and care for them no matter what they do. It doesn't mean we condone or approve of the errors, but we help, not condemn; love, not hate; forgive, not judge. We build them up rather than tear them down; we lead them, not desert them. We love when they are the most unlovable, and if you can't or won't do that, you are a poor mother."

With tears streaming down her face, the mother asked her friend how she could ever thank her. The friend answered, "Do it for someone else when the need arises. Someone did it for me, and I will be eternally grateful."

This story concerns a mother's love for her daughter. But this is only the beginning. We must show such genuine love for all our Father's children. When we learn to do this, we will be truly godlike. As John wrote, "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God.

"He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." (1 John 4:7-8.)

Reach out in love

Jesus Christ, our perfect exemplar, consistently demonstrated his love through acts of compassion, and he understood the most appropriate ways to express love.

At Jacob's well, he took the time to teach a woman of Samaria some glorious eternal truths. She accepted his testimony that he was the Messiah and returned to the city to testify, "Is not this the Christ?" (John 4:29.)

He gave of himself to the outcasts of society. A despised leper worshiped the Lord and said, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." The scripture records—note it well—that "Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed." (Matt. 8:2-3.)

In one of his most dramatic miracles, Jesus still paid attention to individuals. As he prepared to raise Lazarus from the dead, he saw Mary weeping, and, the record states, "he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled." And then, "Jesus wept." (John 11:33-35.) He used this occa-

sion to express a divine testimony of his mission: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." (John 11:25.)

In his visit to the Nephites, the Savior gave this important admonition: "Therefore, what manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am." (3 Ne. 27:27.)

It is my witness that we can be even as he is. We can demonstrate our love in ways that have eternal benefits both for ourselves and for those we serve.

Let us accept the challenge issued by our prophet two years ago:

"It seems clear to me, indeed, this impression weighs upon me—that the Church is at a point in its growth and maturity when we are at last ready to move forward in a major way. . . . But the basic decisions needed for us to move forward, as a people, must be made by the individual members of the Church. The major strides which must be made by the Church will follow upon the major strides to be made by us as individuals.

"We have paused on some plateaus long enough. Let us resume

our journey forward and upward. Let us quietly put an end to our reluctance to reach out to others—whether in our own families, wards, or neighborhoods." (Spencer W. Kimball, in Conference Report, Apr. 1979, p. 114.)

Let us decide today that we will reach out in love to our families, our less active or nonmember neighbors, our departed kindred, or anyone who has need of love. I testify that great blessings will come to us as individuals, as a Church, and as a brotherhood of mankind when we learn to live outside ourselves in love, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me" without announcement.

President Kimball

We have just listened to Elder Jack H. Goasling, Jr., a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, followed by the Choir singing "Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me."

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Mark E. Petersen, a member of the Council of the Twelve.

Elder Mark E. Petersen

My wife was the daughter of a sea captain who lost a ship at sea. As the survivors drifted in lifeboats hour after hour before they were picked up, they all sang, "Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me." (*Hymns*, no. 121.)

Together with this choir and with my Brethren, I testify of the Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of Almighty God, the Savior of the world, our Redeemer. I am grateful for the testimony that we bear, and as we approach the Easter time, I testify with my Brethren that He lives. He is the living Christ.

Our great mission as Latter-day Saints is to bear testimony of Him. Through all the trials and tribulations of this world, if we will but pray as the choir has just sung—"Jesus, Savior, pilot me"—we shall go through life successfully, not free from troubles and trials, but always accompanied by the Holy Spirit, who will see us safely through.

Moral and spiritual crisis

It is no news to anyone that we are in a world crisis. But the basic

problem is not what most people think it is. It is not fundamentally economic, and it is not basically due to any oil shortage.

Our basic problem is moral and spiritual. We must return to God.

Since all human beings are His children, His commandments apply to everyone. They pertain to every phase of our lives. If we expect to really enjoy peace and happiness in this world, we must have faith enough to keep those commandments. If we ignore them or violate them, we bring evil consequences down upon our own selves.

There is no escaping these two alternatives. One or the other will control our lives, so it is only sensible to be realistic and face up to these hard facts.

Inasmuch as God has given us our free agency to do as we please, He expects us to use our intelligence and ingenuity to improve our circumstances both spiritually and temporally. He wants us to be successful in life and desires to help us. Man really is that he might have joy. (See 2 Ne. 2:25.)

Then we should plan well for our future and not live entirely for the present nor suppose that the status quo will continue on indefinitely.

We must be industrious, we must be frugal, we must seek a proper balance between our needs and our desires, and especially we must reestablish our lives upon a spiritual foundation.

Are we not the children of God? Are we not to seek first His way of doing things? If we serve Him properly, will that not place us on a spiritual foundation?

Life confronts us with many serious problems. Some are moral; others are economic. But all can cause us difficulty.

Fight with all our power

Truly we are living in a troubled world. We are surrounded by it and

are subject to all its perils, plagues, inducements, persuasions, and temptations. But nevertheless, regardless of all that, *we are not to be of the world*. That is where spirituality comes in. Then shouldn't we sing with the choir, "Jesus, Savior, pilot me"?

What makes this a *moral and a spiritual crisis* is that so many people reject or ignore the standards of life that God has set up for us, and many even attempt to brush Him aside. They prefer darkness to light because their deeds are evil.

For example, there are many kinds of immorality which make a deadly assault upon purity of life. What shall we do about them? Surrender? By no means! We must fight them with all our power!

We shall be virtuous and clean ourselves and teach our children to be pure. Don't we hear the voice of Almighty God crying out to each of us: "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord"? (D&C 38:42.)

We have the ever-increasing encroachment of liquor, wine, tobacco, and various narcotics. What shall we do about them?

We shall be loyal enough to the Lord to obey the Word of Wisdom. That law is more vital and pertinent now than ever before in our history. No one can survive the present onslaught of addiction without obeying the Word of Wisdom.

The world tempts us to lie and cheat and steal; to be shoplifters or worse; to tarnish another person's good name; or to steal someone else's wife or husband, which is one of the worst kinds of thievery. What shall we do about that?

We shall keep the Ten Commandments, avoiding dishonesty in all its forms and rejecting every temptation to covet anything or anybody that is our neighbor's.

We shall obey our thirteenth article of faith, which says, "We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, [and] virtuous."

Is there any other answer?

Can any liar, can any thief, can any unchaste person invade the kingdom of God? Not in their sins! They can enter only after the most sincere and complete repentance, nothing less!

Avoid debt; prepare for future

But the world affects us in other areas, too, especially in economic ways. These include strong persuasions to overspend our financial resources, to buy beyond our means, to overextend our credit and thus sink deeply into debt. Oh, the inducements of sales pressures, of persuasive advertising, of easy credit, and the unwise use of credit cards!

What shall we do about all that?

First and foremost, we shall determine to live within our means, to carefully budget our affairs, and to stay within the budget.

We shall determine before God that we will be honest and pay our just obligations and not try to escape them. Most assuredly we shall avoid any further debt exceeding our ability to pay.

If temporarily we must limit our customary life-style, shall we not be willing to do so as a means toward financial survival? Shall we not be willing to sacrifice our ordinary desires when necessary and cut our cloth to fit the pattern of revised circumstances forced upon us by this recession?

There are many very good people who keep most of the Lord's commandments with respect to the virtuous side of life, but who overlook His commandments in temporal things. They do not heed His warning to prepare for a possible future emergency, apparently feeling that in the midst of all this trouble "it won't happen to us." It is not always the other fellow's problem. It is our problem also whenever there is economic trouble afloat.

To prepare for the future is part of God's eternal plan, both spiritually and temporally. To protect ourselves against reversals and hardships is only good sense.

A lesson in self-reliance

On the street in front of my house is a row of chestnut trees. In the spring they are beautiful, all covered with gorgeous blossoms.

As the summer moves on, I see nuts begin to form in their little green pods. In the autumn the nuts drop to the ground. As they do, squirrels seem to appear from nowhere. They sit on the sidewalk, bite off the pods, and then run quickly away with each nut to store it for their winter's supply.

They are wise little animals, and they are industrious. They are quite fearless, too, for no one on our street ever disturbs them. It is intensely interesting just to watch them work for their living the way they do.

They do not allow the chestnuts to go to waste, not one of them. They know their lives must depend on them during the cold and unproductive winter months when nuts do not grow on trees.

They don't depend on anyone else to gather those nuts for them, either. They rely entirely upon themselves. The Lord gives them the harvest, but they must gather it in.

They teach us a great lesson in self-reliance. It is a lesson that is applicable to human beings as well as to the creatures of nature.

Then will God also help us in our times of stress? Of course He will! Did He not say, "Consider the lilies of the field" (Matt. 6:28) and "behold the fowls of the air: . . . Are ye not much better than they?" (Matt. 6:26.)

Of course He will help us. But there is an important *if* involved—if we keep His commandments.

He teaches us to be self-reliant

and industrious, to plan ahead, to provide for possible hard times, to avoid obligations unless we are sure we can handle them, and then to *serve him* with such devotion that He will be pleased to augment all of our own earnest efforts.

But He also expects us to be wise enough to *limit our financial obligations to a reasonable expectation of paying out*.

Become self-sustaining

In our planning, why not write a priority system for our family to cover our particular financial circumstances and make sure that first things really do come first? We can avoid financial bondage if we follow such a plan.

Let us wisely ask ourselves whether our desires—or our actual needs—determine what we buy.

The Lord has given us a welfare program. It is inspired. It applies to all Church members. A most important part of that plan is that we ourselves—each one of us—shall learn to become self-sustaining, that we accept the principle that we must look ahead, save a little, build up some reserves, live within our income, and make every effort to sustain ourselves in good times and bad.

Is not that the heart of our welfare plan?

That great program teaches us to put away one year's supply of our necessities—not the frills and the superfluities. We can get along without the frosting on the cake, can't we, or the whipped cream on the apple pie?

And if necessary we can get along just fine without either the cake or the pie, can't we, and just be glad for the staples of life?

Our welfare storehouses help many worthy people in emergencies. That is what they are for. Any one of us might suffer a tragedy which would make it necessary for us to receive such assistance. And that

help is always available to worthy people and is cheerfully given.

But the most important storehouses in the entire welfare plan are those that are within the walls of our own homes. We must provide our own storehouses for our own families in our own homes as far as possible to meet any rainy days that may come our way.

The bishops' storehouses are wonderful, and they do help thousands of deserving and faithful Saints, just as they should. But they are not intended to supply the four-and-a-half million total membership of the Church. They are emergency outlets only.

Keep His commandments

But with all our efforts, let us never forget that our greatest resource is *the Lord our God*.

Anciently He told Israel that He would prevent droughts and provide good harvests *if* they would serve Him and keep His commandments. He makes the same promise to us.

He also said He would open the windows of heaven and pour out such great blessings upon us that we could hardly contain them *if* we would pay an honest tithing. So you see that the principle of tithe paying is introduced as part of the Lord's plan for our own welfare and self-preservation.

He said in our day that the Saints "shall pay one-tenth of all their interest annually; and this shall be a standing law unto them forever." (D&C 119:4.)

So again we see that tithe paying is part of the divine plan to protect us against hard times. I repeat, tithing is to protect us against hard times! Why do we not recognize it as such? Why do some say they cannot afford to pay tithing when just the reverse is true?

And when great tribulations come, what did He say? "He that is

tithed shall not be burned.” (D&C 64:23.)

And what else did He say? “If my people observe not this law, to keep it holy, and by this law sanctify the land of Zion unto me, that my statutes and my judgments may be kept thereon, . . . verily I say unto you, *it shall not be a land of Zion unto you.*” (D&C 119:6; italics added.)

Do you see then how obedience to the law of tithing is a safeguard for us?

And what else did He say? This is “a day for the tithing of my people”—now—today—for “now it is called today until the coming of the Son of Man.” (D&C 64:23.)

Then where is our faith? Where is our obedience?

And He said further, “I will not spare any that remain in Babylon” (D&C 64:24), meaning, of course, those who reject His word and continue to indulge in worldly practices.

So again He emphasizes the moral aspect of our present crisis and the spiritual side of the same crisis.

He then added, “Labor while it is called today” (D&C 64:25)—obey Him, serve Him, walk in righteousness before Him, and “be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord” (D&C 38:42). That’s the law!

Avoid bondage to sin, addiction, or debt

Let us remember that it is against the will of God that any one of us should be in bondage—in any way—neither to sin nor to addiction nor to debt.

“Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (Jn. 8:32), He declared—free from sin, free from addiction of all kinds, and free from the slavery of debt. His truth, which is His gospel, will make us free—if we obey Him!

Shall we trust Him? His burden is so much easier than that of the world.

“Come unto me,” He says “. . . and I will give you rest.” (Matt. 11:28.)

He loves us. He will watch over us, and—even in hard times He will prosper us—if we are not of little faith. He may try us, but He will not forsake us.

Don’t we in great sincerity sing:

*How firm a foundation, ye Saints of
the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in his excellent
word! . . .*

*The soul that on Jesus hath leaned
for repose,
I will not, I cannot, desert to his
foes;
That soul, though all hell should
endeavor to shake,
I’ll never, no never, no never
forsake?
(Hymns, no. 66.)*

That is His promise, and His word is true, I testify in His sacred name, the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang “The Lord’s Prayer” without announcement.

President Kimball

Elder Mark E. Petersen, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing “The Lord’s Prayer.”

We appreciate the courtesies shown by the owners and operators of the many radio and television stations who offered their facilities as a public service to make the proceedings of this conference available to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

We shall conclude this fourth session of the conference with the Tabernacle Choir singing “Come Unto Jesus,” after which the benedic-

tion will be pronounced by Elder F. Enzo Busche, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. This conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The Choir sang "Come Unto Jesus."

Elder F. Enzo Busche gave the benediction.

SECOND DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

FIFTH SESSION

The fifth and final session of the 151st Annual General Conference commenced at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, April 5, 1981.

President Spencer W. Kimball presided at and President Marion G. Romney conducted this session.

Music was provided by the Tabernacle Choir directed by Jerold Ottley with Robert Cundick at the organ.

President Romney made the following remarks at the outset of the meeting:

President Marion G. Romney

President Spencer W. Kimball, who presides at this and all other sessions of this conference, has asked me to conduct this session.

We extend a sincere welcome to all assembled this afternoon in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, in the fifth and concluding session of the 151st Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We also welcome those seated in the Salt Palace where Elders Gene R. Cook and G. Homer Durham preside.

We send our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere participating in these proceedings by radio and television.

The Tabernacle Choir with Jerold Ottley directing and Robert Cundick at the organ is providing the music for this session. The Choir will begin this service by singing "For Our Devotions, Father." The invocation will be offered by Elder Paul H. Dunn, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Choir sang "For Our Devotions, Father."

Elder Paul H. Dunn offered the invocation.

President Romney

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "O Divine Redeemer." Following the singing, we shall hear from Elder Howard W. Hunter, a member of the Council of the Twelve.

The Tabernacle Choir sang "O Divine Redeemer."

President Romney

Elder Howard W. Hunter, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Royden G. Derrick, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Howard W. Hunter

Question about Bible and Book of Mormon

Recently a young friend in the mission field wrote a letter to me regarding a question that had been asked of him concerning the concluding verses of the Bible and how they apply to the Book of Mormon. We remember that at the end of the book of Revelation, the last book of the Bible, the author, John, issues a warning and a curse upon any man who adds to or takes away from the book. Specifically, these are the words he wrote:

"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

"And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." (Rev. 22:18-19.)

These verses of scripture have been cited repeatedly by those attempting to discredit the Book of Mormon, claiming that God's revelation to man is closed. Nothing more is to be added and nothing is to be taken away. They assert that the Book of Mormon is an attempt to add to the words of the Bible. These claims were made when the Book of Mormon was first published and have continued to be made, and are made today. Is there any validity to such assertions?

Warning applies only to book of Revelation

The answer to this query is really very simple. A careful reading of the words makes it clear that the warning against adding to or taking

away does not refer to the whole Bible or even to the New Testament, but to use John's words, only to the words of "the book of this prophecy." That is, the prophecy contained in the book of Revelation. This is substantiated by the fact that some of the books of the New Testament had not yet been written when John wrote the book of Revelation, and even those that had been written and were in existence at that time had not yet been gathered into one compilation.

The collection of writings consisting of the sixty-six books we know as the Bible were brought together and compiled into one volume long after John wrote the prophetic book that has been placed at the end of the collection. It is clear, therefore, that the terrible judgments pronounced upon those who add to the book could not possibly apply to the whole of the Bible or even to the New Testament, but only to the book of Revelation.

John wrote other scriptures

Secondly, the warning uses the words "the prophecy of this book" and also "the words of the book of this prophecy." The word *book* in both instances is singular and could only refer to the book of prophecy written by John which is titled, in the King James Version, "The Revelation of St. John the Divine" and is often referred to as the Apocalypse—a Greek word which means revealed. Of necessity the word *book* would have been in the singular because when written it was not associated with any other book or books, and it was after many years and many ecclesiastical debates that it was added to the collection that became known as the new canon of scripture or the New Testament.

It is also interesting to note that John himself added to scripture after

writing the book of Revelation, which is generally conceded to have been written while he was on the Isle of Patmos. It was long after John left Patmos that he wrote his first epistle. This fact standing alone would be sufficient to defeat the claim that revelation was closed and that man was enjoined from adding to scripture. This adds cumulative evidence that John had reference to the book of Revelation only.

Admonition in Deuteronomy

In the Old Testament also are found similar vigorous denunciations and commands that there shall not be taken away or added to the words that were written. The first is found in Deuteronomy, written at the time Moses was exhorting Israel to live the law of the Lord. The Torah was oral law and had not been reduced to writing prior to the time of the codification of the law in Deuteronomy. Now that it had been reduced to writing by Moses prior to his death and assumed to be complete, Moses wrote:

"Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." (Deut. 4:2.)

Later in this same book of the law, Moses repeated the admonition in similar words. He said,

"What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it." (Deut. 12:32.)

In the minds of some, these admonitions in the Old Testament raise the same question as to the Book of Mormon being an attempted addition to scripture as does the injunction and warning at the end of the book of Revelation. In effect, these passages contain the same injunction as the one at the close of the Apocalypse; and if the same interpretation

and argument was applied to them as is applied to the closing verses of the book of Revelation, there would be no scripture after the writings of Moses. Such an absurdity would result in discarding the greater part of the Old Testament and all of the books of the New Testament.

Revelation guides prophets and Church

A careful reading of each of these admonitions makes it clear that *man* is not to make changes in the revelations of the Lord: *man* is not to add to or take from the words of God. There is no indication or intimation that God could not, or would not, add to or take from; nor would any reasonable person with a belief in the divine powers of God consciously believe that God would be so restricted. Without question he would have the right and power to give additional revelation for the guidance of his children in any age and to add additional scripture.

A study of the revelations of the Lord in holy writ confirms the fact that it is continuous revelation that guides prophets and the Church in any age. Were it not for continuous revelation, Noah would not have been prepared for the deluge that encompassed the earth. Abraham would not have been guided from Haran to Hebron, the Land of Promise. Continuous revelation led the children of Israel from bondage back to their promised land. Revelation through prophets guided missionary efforts, directed the rebuilding of Solomon's temple, and denounced the infiltration of pagan practices among the Israelites.

Before the ascension of Christ, he promised the remaining eleven apostles, "lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28:20.) Following his ascension, he guided the Church by revelation until the death of the Apostles

and subsequent apostasy of the Church of Jesus Christ.

A distinctive sign of the last days that will precede the eventual second coming of the Lord was seen in vision by that same Apostle who recorded the book of Revelation. He said:

"I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." (Rev. 14:6.)

The fact that John saw a messenger from God reveal anew a lost gospel negates the argument that further revelation could not be added to the Bible.

Testimony of divine guidance

We testify to all the world that heavenly ministers have already appeared in our age, bringing authority from heaven and restoring truths lost through corrupted teachings and practices. God has spoken anew and continues to provide guidance for all his children through a living prophet today. We declare that he, as promised, is with his servants always and directs the affairs of his Church throughout the world. As in times past, revelation directs missionary labors, the building of temples, the calling of priesthood officers, and warns against the evils of society that

may deny salvation to our Father's children.

In a revelation to a modern oracle, Joseph Smith, the Lord said:

"For I am no respecter of persons, and will that all men shall know that the day speedily cometh; the hour is not yet, but is nigh at hand, when peace shall be taken from the earth, and the devil shall have power over his own dominion.

"And also the Lord shall have power over his saints, and shall reign in their midst." (D&C 1:35-36.)

The Savior is reigning in the midst of the Saints today through continuous revelation. I testify that he is with his servants in this day and will be until the end of the earth.

May our vision not be so narrow that we would relegate revelation to only the ancients. God is merciful and loves his children in all ages and has revealed himself to this time in history. Of this I solemnly testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

Elder Howard W. Hunter, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder Royden G. Derrick, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He will be followed by Elder Teddy E. Brewerton, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Royden G. Derrick

Mandates from God never change

The history of the people of ancient America, recorded in the Book of Mormon, teaches that civilizations are built on moral foundations; that when people are morally strong, they do well; that when they are morally weak, they suffer. It teaches us that freedom cannot outlive morality and

that freedom is not free—it must be earned.

It teaches that people change again and again, but that mandates from God never change. They remain the same because the fundamental principles of good behavior are everlasting and never change. The Lord has given us direction through the scriptures as to how we should be-

have to enrich our lives, to bring peace to our souls, to strengthen our families, and to uplift the dignity of men.

The Lord said, "Wherefore, hear my voice and follow me, and you shall be a free people." (D&C 38:22.)

During his ministry he said, "Know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32.)

The Psalmist wrote, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord." (Ps. 33:12.)

From Ecclesiastes, "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." (Eccl. 12:13.)

The Savior said, "For whatsoever ye sow, that shall ye also reap." (D&C 6:33.)

And from latter-day scripture we learn, "There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—

"And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated." (D&C 130:20-21.)

Home and family

The basic unit of society is the family. Our moral values are established in our family relations. The responsibility for teaching moral principles rests with the home. But not every home offers the love and guidance necessary to responsible parenthood. In an ideal society, the home should accept the responsibility for teaching moral values.

The Lord said, "But I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth." (D&C 93:40.)

And again, "And they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord." (D&C 68:28.)

The teachers in church and in school should be allies of the parents

in teaching children appropriate values that will guide them throughout their lives. The home should be a laboratory of learning, where these values, and more sensitive ones too, are inculcated into the lives of family members through daily experiences. Then the three work in harmony to fulfill parental responsibility.

Unfortunately, today many societies in the world do not place sufficient importance upon the home and the family. In a recent edition of *U.S. News and World Report*, an article was published quoting statistics that show an alarming decay among the families of America. Problems that cause such serious erosion are centered around moral issues and selfishness. Strong families result when family members serve one another. When we concentrate on our own comfort and on satisfying our own appetites, the family and the society are adversely affected.

Key to eternal family

We spend our time doing many things, some of which have influence on this life only, and others, on both here and beyond. Building a family is an eternal objective. The benefits of family unity can extend beyond our mortal existence.

Several weeks ago, while en route to Monterrey, Mexico, I sat next to an attractive Mexican of Lamanite extraction. During our conversation I learned that he had eight children. He was obviously proud to be their father. I encouraged him to talk about them. Then I asked, "How long do you plan to be with them?"

"As long as I live."

"And then what?"

"I'll lie down and turn to dust."

From the Bible, we read the words of the Savior to his Apostles just prior to his crucifixion: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if

it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:2-3.)

I asked him what Jesus meant by that. He pondered the question, and then he was ready to listen. I explained about the spirit world and the Resurrection and asked, "Do you *really* love your children?" He was emphatic.

"How would you like to be with your wife and children in the next life?"

"There is nothing I would rather have."

I explained that he could have them. We talked about the Book of Mormon—that it was a history of his progenitors, that it contained the narration of the visit of Jesus Christ to America, and that it was a key to having an eternal family. I had him write his name and address on a card and promised to have a Book of Mormon in Spanish delivered to his home.

When I arrived in Monterrey, I gave the referral to the missionaries. Last week I received a letter reporting on their visit to the family. They wrote: "The following Sunday, after the conference, we went to Roberto's home. His wife came to the fence, and supposing we were preachers of religion she told us it would not be possible to see her husband, that he was very busy. But after talking and showing the card you gave us, he quickly came out with open arms to greet us. We entered his home and knelt down with the family in prayer. He has eight beautiful children. The Spirit of the Lord was present.

"He gratefully accepted our offer to return to teach them the plan of salvation. He received the Book of Mormon and promised to read the words of the book from cover to cover."

How could any thinking person who loves his family not want such a precious gift—to be with his wife and his family in this life and the next, and then to include parents and other progenitors (going back) and grandchildren and their continuing posterity (going forward) in an eternal family relationship.

The scriptures say, "All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations, that are not made and entered into and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, . . . by revelation and commandment through the medium of mine anointed, whom I have appointed on the earth to hold this power . . . are of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end have an end when men are dead." (D&C 132:7.)

Missionary work to dead

I testify that the authority from God to seal by the Holy Spirit of Promise for time and all eternity is vested in our prophet, Spencer W. Kimball. He has properly delegated that authority today so that this sacred work of sealing families for time and all eternity goes forward daily in the holy temples of God.

How I wish that my friends who are not in the Church would listen to this important message—that you can be with your families forever. All you have to do to qualify is to keep the commandments of the Lord.

The scriptures tell us, "And the spirit and the body are the soul of man." (D&C 88:15.) When a man dies, his body goes to the grave and his spirit goes to a place of waiting. We call that place paradise.

President Joseph F. Smith was privileged to look into the spirit world back to the time of the advent of the Savior into that great world of

the spirits of the dead about the time of the Crucifixion: "And I saw the hosts of the dead, both small and great," he wrote.

"And there were gathered together in one place an innumerable company of the spirits of the just, who had been faithful in the testimony of Jesus while they lived in mortality. . . .

"All these had departed the mortal life, firm in the hope of a glorious resurrection, through the grace of God the Father and his Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ. . . .

"While this vast multitude waited and conversed, rejoicing in the hour of their deliverance from the chains of death, the Son of God appeared, declaring liberty to the captives who had been faithful. . . .

"But unto the wicked he did not go, and among the ungodly and the unrepentant who had defiled themselves while in the flesh, his voice was not raised. . . .

"But behold, from among the righteous, he organized his forces and appointed messengers, clothed with power and authority, and commissioned them to go forth and carry the light of the gospel to them that were in darkness, even to all the spirits of men; and thus was the gospel preached to the dead.

"And the chosen messengers went forth to declare the acceptable day of the Lord and proclaim liberty to the captives who were bound, even unto all who would repent of their sins and receive the gospel.

"Thus was the gospel preached to those who had died in their sins, without a knowledge of the truth, or in transgression, having rejected the prophets." (D&C 138:11-12, 14, 18, 20, 30-32.)

Today, too, there are spirits awaiting their day of deliverance and resurrection. "Faithful elders of this dispensation, when they depart from mortal life, continue their labors in

the preaching of the gospel of repentance and redemption, through the sacrifice of the Only Begotten Son of God, among those who are in darkness and under the bondage of sin in the great world of the spirits of the dead.

"The dead who repent will be redeemed, through obedience to the ordinances of the house of God,

"And after they have paid the penalty of their transgressions, and are washed clean, shall receive a reward according to their works, for they are heirs of salvation." (D&C 138:57-59.)

Moral rewards in this life and life to come

One of the major missions of the Church is to uniquely identify these individuals who have died and perform the necessary saving ordinances in their behalf, for they cannot do it for themselves. Once these ordinances are performed, if the individual accepts the gospel in the great world of spirits, then this work will be effective.

One of the ordinances performed in the temples of the Lord is the sealing of wives to husbands and the sealing of children to parents for the living and by proxy for the dead, thus uniting families for the eternities according to their willingness to conform to gospel principles.

And so, when members of a society serve the Lord according to the commandments he has given them, and uphold proper moral values, they receive very special rewards both in this life and in the life to come. This is not man's program; it is the Lord's program of salvation, which exalts and brings freedom, in every sense of the word, to those who will hear his voice and follow him, to which I testify in the name of him who gave his life that these things might be, even the Lord, Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

Elder Royden G. Derrick, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Teddy E. Brewerton, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Teddy E. Brewerton

Obedience

When President Tanner returned from presiding over the European missions, he was asked what, in his opinion, was the most important attribute of a successful individual or missionary. After a short pause, pondering the implication of such a question, he spoke one word: "obedience." If we do not obey, the power to obey is lessened. Our capability to recognize good is weakened.

As the Lord says in section 93: "And that wicked one cometh and taketh away light and truth, through disobedience." (D&C 93:39.)

Aristotle said that wicked men obey because of fear and that good men obey because of love. (See *Useful Quotations*, ed. Tyron Edwards, New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1933, p. 428.)

Henry Ward Beecher said that "laws are not masters, but servants, and he rules them who obeys them." (*Proverbs from Plymouth Pulpit*, ed. Wm. Drysdale, New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1887, p. 65.)

Why obey? Because there *is* a living God who loves us and desires to bless us.

True nature of God

Elder Mark E. Petersen stated, "Our whole religion is based upon the fact of immortality. Men have come back from the dead to accomplish the restoration of the gospel. Even God himself came.

"First came the Father, and Jesus Christ, his beloved Son. They visited Joseph Smith in the sacred

grove near Palmyra, New York. They talked with him face-to-face and answered his questions.

"Moroni also came, repeatedly, visiting with and instructing the young prophet. Then came John the Baptist of New Testament times. Peter, James, and John were next. Moses came also to the Kirtland Temple. And then came Elijah. . . .

"Each one was himself physical evidence of the fact of immortality, but each one brought more than the proof of life after death. Each one came with a great purpose—far beyond the proof of immortality. The Father and Son opened this dispensation and provided the knowledge of the true nature of God—that he is a person and that man was made in his image."

The Father introduced Christ to Joseph as his Only Begotten Son. They restored the knowledge of the true nature of God.

"Moroni revealed the location of the Book of Mormon. John the Baptist brought the Aaronic Priesthood. Peter, James, and John brought the Melchizedek Priesthood. Moses brought the keys of the gathering of the Jews to Palestine and the gathering of Ephraim and Manasseh." And Elijah . . . what did he bring? The sealing power. ("The Mission of Elijah," unpublished address to the Genealogical Department, n.d.)

Example of obedience

What is the sealing power for? It is to enable the family to be together after this life. Who wants the

family unit to end at death? Our happiness and joy is in our families. But how do we get this major blessing? Obedience—obedience to the requirements of the restored church of Jesus Christ.

In the Brazil São Paulo South Mission there was an Elder Malheiros who entered into the field not being able to read or write very proficiently. He was even a little fearful of giving a prayer in public. But this young man, according to his mission president, Wilford Cardon, became one of the very greatest missionaries imaginable. The president asked him toward the end of his mission how he had turned into such a dynamic, very successful missionary. (He had baptized more than two hundred people and had baptized every week for fifty-two consecutive weeks.) In a very humble manner Elder Malheiros answered, "Well, president, I never doubted you. You said one could baptize every week, so I knew I could baptize every week. I never doubted. It was not always easy, *but I tried to obey.*"

Why was Brother Saraiva, the president of the Guaratingatá Branch, successful as a missionary? He heard Elder Gordon B. Hinckley at a stake conference in Brazil, in which Elder Hinckley challenged the people to bring one hundred people into the Church that year. And so Brother Saraiva said, "Why not? If a member of the Twelve says it can be done, *I will obey.*" The last time I spoke with Brother Saraiva, he had baptized more than two hundred fifty people.

Why is Floriano Oliveira, a member of the high council in a stake in Brazil, so successful as a missionary? Because he *obeyed* the Lord's counsel to open his mouth and share the gospel. One day as he was driving through the congested traffic of São Paulo he took his eyes off the road for but a second and crashed into the car in front of him.

He jumped out of the vehicle, hurried up to the car he had hit, opened the door and said, "I am so sorry I hit you. It was all my fault. I accept the full blame and will pay the total costs. I had no intention to do this, so please forgive me. Yet if I hadn't hit you, you wouldn't have received this message I have for you, the message that you have waited for all your life." He then explained the restoration of the gospel to this man, who was a medical doctor, and the man joined the Church two weeks later. Why has Brother Oliveira had so much success in baptizing more than two hundred people? Obedience—*obedience to the request of the Lord.*

In Alma 57 we read about the 2,060 sons of Helaman who fought valiantly in many wars, administering death to all who opposed them and the Church. Yet not one lost his life because they knew "that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them." (Alma 56:47.)

In Alma 57:21 we read: "Yea, and they did *obey and observe to perform every word of command with exactness.*" (Italics added.) *They were totally obedient.* Hence, they had unbelievable protection and success.

Disobedience

Let us for a moment look at some examples of disobedience, even men who had righteous intent but nevertheless disobeyed. One example would be Uzza in 1 Chronicles 13:7-10. The people had been warned not to touch the ark, the symbol of the covenant. But when the oxen stumbled and the ark appeared to be falling, Uzza stretched forth his hand to steady it and was immediately killed by the Lord. Uzza seemed justified and today we think his punishment was very severe, but as President David O. McKay stated, this incident conveys a lesson of life: obedience—full obedience.

May I give an example of one great man, chosen of God, who showed some disobedience and lost everything of importance: King Saul.

The Lord gave Saul a particular assignment: Destroy the people of Amalek! "Now go and smite Amalek and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." (1 Sam. 15:3.) It was a mighty army that Saul took to destroy the Amalekites—210,000 men.

"But Saul and the people spared [King] Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them." (1 Sam. 15:9.)

Saul failed. Angered by this disobedience, the Lord sent Samuel again to upbraid the king.

"Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?

"And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, *to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God*; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.

"And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, *to obey is better than sacrifice*. . . .

"Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king." (1 Sam. 15:14-15, 22-23; italics added.)

Why obey?

Today President Kimball is the Lord's mouthpiece on the earth, and when he says we should do certain things, even small things, what is our answer? For example, if he says clean up your yard—do it. If he says paint your fence—do it. If he says one more endowment per person per

year—do it. If he says at least one more couple per ward in the mission field—do it. If he says to avoid commercial purchases whenever possible on Sunday—do it. What blessings we must impede through lack of full obedience!

Now, *why obey?* In Deuteronomy it states, "Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day." Now, why: "*that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, for ever.*" (Deut. 4:40.)

And again in the Doctrine and Covenants, section 98: "And again I say unto you, if ye observe to do whatsoever I command you, I, the Lord, *will turn away all wrath and indignation from you, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against you.*" (D&C 98:22.)

Let's just cite one more example where the Lord watched over and protected his Saints in the Church. This is found in the *History of the Church*: There were threats of a mob on June 19, 1834. As the Mormons were making camp, five men rode up and told them that they would "see hell before morning." They stated that an armed force from Richmond, Ray, and Clay counties was to join a Jackson County force at the Fishing River ford, bent on the utter destruction of the camp.

While these five men were in the camp, cursing and swearing vengeance, signs of an approaching storm were seen. No sooner had these men left the camp than the storm burst forth in all its fury. Hailstones struck, so large that they cut limbs from the trees, and the limbs fell all around the camp while the trees were twisted from their roots by the force of the wind. The earth trembled and quaked, and the streams became raging torrents, and the mobbers dispersed, seeking shel-

ter that could not be found. One mobber was killed by lightning and another had his hand torn off by a fractious horse, and in fear they dispersed, saying that if that was the way God fought for the "Mormons" they would go about their business.

On the morning of June 21 (just two days later) Colonel Sconce, with two companions, visited the camp to learn what the intentions of the members were. He said: "I see there is an almighty power that protects this people, for I started from Richmond, Ray County, with a company of armed men, having a fixed determination to destroy you, but was kept back by the storm."

The Prophet then related to these men the sufferings of the Saints, and they left the camp offering to use their influence. (See *History of the Church*, 2:103-6.)

During all this storm the members of the camp were protected from its fury. Why were they protected? Because of their collective *obedience* to the Lord.

Let this be our decision: "Speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee; *and we will hear it, and do it.*" (Deut. 5:27.)

My true feelings about the Church are that I know in a definite, decisive, indelible manner that Jesus

is our Redeemer. He lives, as does the Father, and President Kimball is the living servant of the living God. Let us watch the prophet, listen to him, follow him, and we will never go astray. This is the only true church of Jesus Christ upon the face of the earth, to which I testify in the name of our Redeemer, amen.

President Romney

Elder Teddy E. Brewerton, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us.

The Choir and congregation will now join in singing "I Need Thee Every Hour." After the singing, Elder F. Burton Howard, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will speak to us.

The Choir and congregation sang "I Need Thee Every Hour."

President Romney

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder F. Burton Howard, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. We shall then hear from Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder F. Burton Howard

Concern for others

For many months I have been away from the headquarters of the Church. I have learned much and have come to understand better many things I had known before. I have observed firsthand the challenges which confront Church members as they endeavor to build the kingdom. I have seen the time and financial burdens borne by adults. I have sensed the preoccupation of parents for their children.

I have come to know that in this age of anxiety, and sometimes selfishness, there are not many of us willing to forego comforts or hard-earned security in order to concern ourselves with the welfare of others outside of our immediate circle of acquaintance. But *some* are—and *some do*. Everywhere I have been, I have met *some* faithful Saints who love, pray for, and watch over their fellowmen, both in and out of the Church. By means of a parable (I

believe I can call it that), I would like to speak to that comparative handful of God's children who have learned to *live* for others—and more particularly to those who have not.

Parable of the travelers

In a desert region one day, a number of travelers set out on a trip. It was hot and the journey was long. They had little in common except their shared desire to arrive at a distant city. Each carried provisions and water expecting to replenish their supplies along the way. Not long after leaving their homes, a great storm arose. Dust clouds darkened the sun, and the wind brought swirling sands which quickly filled the low places in the road. What at first had seemed a pleasant outing suddenly became a hazardous undertaking. The travelers soon realized that the question was not merely when they would arrive at the city, but whether they would arrive at all.

Confusion and doubt affected the company. Some sought shelter, while others attempted to turn back. A few moved onward through the storm. The end of the first day found them scattered, with inadequate provisions, wanting water, and lost in the desert. A new day brought hunger, thirst, and despair. The storm still raged. Hope was in short supply. Familiar landmarks were gone. The road, which had been narrow and hard to find, at best, was hidden by silt and debris. No one knew where to go to find it. Many claimed to know the way, but as they could not agree, each traveler wandered in his own way in search of water or the shelter of a settlement.

At the end of yet another day, two of the group, half-blinded by dust and with their strength nearly gone, came unexpectedly, with something more than good fortune, upon an inn and way station. There

in the sanctuary of walls and roof, they refreshed themselves and counted their blessings. There they replenished their stores and contemplated the remaining portion of their journey. The weather remained unsettled. The wind continued to blow. The poorly marked road wound ahead through hills where the sand piled deep and where it was said that robbers sometimes preyed upon unsuspecting travelers.

One of the two was anxious to reach his destination. He had important business in the city. He gathered his supplies and water and paid his account. Early in the morning he set out in haste in an attempt to cross the hill country by nightfall. But the windblown sand had blocked the road. He was forced to dig and detour. When night came, he was far from the city, exhausted and alone. When he fell asleep, thieves found him, took his supplies, and left him without strength and without water to face almost certain death.

The second traveler was also desirous of reaching his destination. But he remembered the others in the desert behind him. They were lost and would soon perish without water and without hope. He alone knew where they were. He alone knew their condition and their need. He likewise arose early and paid his account. He glanced at the hills with their promise of the city beyond, and then turned back down the road whence he had come. The sky was a little lighter now. He recognized some of the landmarks. He knew about where he had left his traveling companions. He called out to them by name, for he knew them. After hours of patient searching, he found many of them. He shared with them life-giving water from his own containers. He told them he knew the way. He spoke as if he had authority, so they followed him, and he brought them to the way station with him. There they rested and regained

their strength. They were given directions regarding how to reach the city. They renewed their provisions, filled their water containers, and went out again to face the storm.

The journey was still difficult. The wind still blew and clouds obscured the sun. The road still wound through the sometimes deep sand, and thieves were still in the hills. But this time the traveler was not alone. The group was large. When sand blocked the way, work parties were organized to remove it. When some faltered, the strong shouldered the burdens of the weak. When night came, there were watchmen to man the watch. After many days, the second man and his friends arrived safely at their destination.

When they arrived there, those who had been rescued and given water gathered around the second traveler and said, "We could not have come to this place without you. We shall ever be grateful to you for searching for us, for finding us, for sharing your water and your bread. We know that you put aside your own journey and submitted to the hardships of the desert in order to help us when we were lost. What can we do to repay you?"

And the second man replied, "Thank me not, for by no power of my own did I find the way station. The water there would have been bitter had I not shared it with you. I know that I could not have arrived at the city without you. Your strength and encouragement enabled me to continue on. Your presence prevented robbers from attacking. I have come to realize that in order to save my own life, I had to save yours as well. I know now that it is not so much the haste of one's journey but rather what he does along the way which determines whether he will arrive at his destination. Thank me not," he said. "In truth, I have not brought you to this place, we have brought one another."

We owe others

And so it is. None of us could have arrived at the point where we listen to and enjoy this great conference without others. Our testimonies, our greatest blessings, our membership and activity in Christ's church—all of these we owe to the often unremembered and always unnumbered hundreds who gave of their time and their patience and their love to us when we were trying to find our way in the desert. They brought living water to us, or to our parents, or to our parents' parents. Whether we know it or not, whether we like it or not, whether we are grateful or not, we are where we are because of others. We cannot say, indeed we must never say, "It was a difficult journey, but I have arrived. Let others get here as best they can. I don't have time now to take water to those who are lost. I have no obligation to those in the desert."

Save others and ourselves

The Lord is the director of the work in which we are engaged. He established the conditions upon which each man and woman will be privileged to return home.

He knows that sometimes clouds block the sun and that the road is hard to find. He must know how difficult it is just to get there. Can He reasonably expect us to try to bring others who are lost with us as well?

The answer is clear. To what else did He refer when He said, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them?" (Matt. 7:12.) Surely He had in mind our obligations to others when He spoke of lost sheep and living water. If the parable of the good Samaritan has application anywhere, it must apply to one who, having the gospel, encounters another in need without it. But lest there be any doubt, the Lord has directed

plain language to the Latter-day Saints. His words in the Doctrine and Covenants are pointed: "The gospel is unto all who have not received it. But, verily I say unto all those to whom the kingdom *has* been given—from *you* it *must* be preached unto *them*." (D&C 84:75-76; italics added.)

What directions has He given to help us arrive at our destination? Once again, He has clearly spoken through a modern prophet: "And now, behold, I say unto you, that the thing which will be of the *most* worth unto you will be to declare repentance unto this people, that *you* may bring souls unto me, that *you* may rest with *them* in the kingdom of my Father." (D&C 15:6; italics added.) For, as he spoke to the dis-

ciples of old, "As I have loved you, . . . love one another." (John 13:34.)

My brothers and sisters, may we better understand the duties associated with our discipleship, I pray humbly in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

Elder F. Burton Howard, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He will be followed by Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Hartman Rector, Jr.

I consider it a great honor and a privilege to greet you this afternoon. I am sure the Lord is much concerned about the families of the earth today.

Family is under attack

The family is the basic unit of society, and more importantly it is the basic unit of exaltation. It seems that nothing is more important to the Lord than a family. He has designed the greatest blessings for His children to be received through families, and the temple, of course, is the means of creating these eternal, exalted families.

I believe that families are under a more serious attack today than at any time since the beginning of the world, with the possible exception of the days of Noah. It must have been bad then too. Maybe we today are not quite as bad as they were. Moses recorded in the Book of Genesis: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and

that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (Gen. 6:5.) I don't believe I have ever known anyone quite that bad, whose "every thought was evil continually."

The Lord further indicated that all flesh was corrupt in those days, and so he brought forth the flood and destroyed all flesh except Noah and his family. Therefore, we are all descendants of righteous Noah. But the family concept is under very serious attack today all over the world.

The Lord said from Mt. Sinai, "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." (Ex. 20:12.)

We seem to have conditions today similar to those Noah faced; and the Lord speaks of smiting the earth with a curse, as happened at the time of the flood, and this will happen if there is not a turning of "the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers." (Mal. 4:6.)

There are those who feel that this turning of the hearts is strictly Elijah's job, but in Doctrine and Covenants 98:16 the Lord seems to give us that assignment. He said, "Seek diligently to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers, and the hearts of the fathers to the children."

Elijah came and delivered the keys, but the Lord looks to us to do the work. In a little plainer translation of the Malachi scripture, the Lord said:

"Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

"And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers.

"If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming." (D&C 2:1-3; see also JS-H 1:38-39.)

Follow living prophet

We, then, are in the very serious business of attempting to save the earth or to keep it from being "wasted" when the Lord comes. This earth was created so God the Father would have a place to send His children to receive bodies of flesh and bones and prove themselves. If we will no longer permit the Lord to send his children to this earth, then the earth is wasted, and as in the days of the flood He will surely destroy it.

So what must we do? We must follow the living prophet, for herein is our only safety. He says, among other things:

1. Complete four-generation family records and as far beyond as you can go.

2. Write a personal and family history.

3. Perform a reasonable number of temple ordinances by attending the temple as often as is practical.

Personal and family histories

I personally believe that the writing of personal and family histories will do more to turn the hearts of the children to the fathers and the fathers to children than almost anything we can do. I am sure you will never turn your own children's hearts more to you than you will by keeping a journal and writing your personal history. They will ultimately love to find out about your successes and your failures and your peculiarities. It will tell them a lot about themselves, too. They will get a great desire to raise a family of their own when they see what a great blessing they were to you.

Also, I seriously doubt that you will ever turn your own heart more to your own fathers than by writing your family history. You must know a lot about them before you can write it. This will lead you to much in-depth research. I promise you will love them when you become acquainted with them. They were noble people, and they sacrificed much to give you the heritage you have today. They deserve the best you can give them, which of course is membership in the Church and the kingdom of God and the sealing of their loved ones to them.

I am convinced that these records we are commanded to write are absolutely vital, not only to the salvation of our ancestors but also to ours, for are we not to be judged out of the books which John saw were to be opened, as recorded in Revelation 20:12?

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."

After quoting this verse from Revelation, the Prophet Joseph Smith

said, as recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 128:7-8:

"You will discover in this quotation that the *books* were opened; and another book was opened, which was the book of life; but the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the *books*, according to their works; consequently, the *books* spoken of must be the books which contained the record of their works, and refer to the records which are kept on the earth. . . .

"Now, the nature of this ordinance consists in the power of the priesthood, by the revelation of Jesus Christ, wherein it is granted that whatsoever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Or, in other words, taking a different view of the translation, whatsoever you record on earth shall be recorded in heaven, and whatsoever you do not record on earth shall not be recorded in heaven; for out of the *books* shall your dead be judged." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1977, p. 356; italics added.)

Sometimes we feel we just don't have time to write in our journals. I wonder. President Kimball stood before the World Conference on Records last August and said: "By now, in my own personal history, I have managed to fill seventy-eight large volumes, which are my personal journal. There have been times when I have been so tired at the end of a day that the effort could hardly be managed, but I am so grateful that I have not let slip away from me and my posterity those things which needed to be recorded." (*ENSIGN*, Oct. 1980, p. 72.)

Savior on Mount Zion

"The greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us is to seek after our dead. Those saints who neglect it in behalf of their deceased relatives, do it at the peril of their own salvation." (*Teachings of the Prophet*, p. 193.)

To become a savior on Mount Zion, then, goes far beyond the performance of the temple ordinance. It encompasses the personal and family history as well as the four-generation-and-beyond research—plus participation in the extraction program.

Of course, none of this would mean very much if we did not have a holy house in which to perform this work. In this sense, temple building then becomes the most important work of this dispensation. How glorious to live upon the earth at this time and have part in the grand work of rearing the Lord's house in nations around the world so the saving ordinances of the gospel and the ties that bind eternal families may be made available to all the children of the earth! Surely we are the most blessed people who have ever lived, to which I bear witness in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our next speaker. He will be followed by President Spencer W. Kimball, President of the Church, who will be our concluding speaker.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie

A Friend's counsel

I have a Friend of blessed memory whose name I hold in awe and from whom I have learned more than from any other person. If I may be guided by the Spirit, I shall tell you some of the great truths he has taught me.

He delivered what is probably the greatest sermon ever to fall from mortal lips. It was on a mountain near Capernaum, his own city, many years ago.

His wondrous words, then spoken to thousands of his Jewish friends, illuminated their souls with the light of heaven and ignited their whole beings with the fires of testimony. Never man spake as he did. And even now as we read and ponder the words of his mouth, our hearts burn within us.

As the climax of his Sermon on the Mount, he gave this counsel: "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

"And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it." (Matt. 7:24-27.)

Every person born in this world builds a house of some sort and puts it on a foundation of his own choosing. And every house built in this mortal sphere is subject to the storms and strifes of life. Our mortal probation is one in which the divine purpose calls for rain and wind and floods.

We live in the midst of a swirling storm of sin. The rains of evil and the winds of false doctrine and the floods of carnality beat upon every house.

It is within our power to build a house of faith, a house of righteousness, a house of salvation.

We can, if we will, even build a house of God, a holy sanctuary, a temple of the living God. Indeed, every Latter-day Saint who is true and faithful has built for himself a "temple of God" in which "the Spirit of God dwelleth." And as Paul says: "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." (1 Cor. 3:16-17.)

If our house is built upon a rock with the brick and mortar of good works, it will withstand the storms and perils of life and preserve us for an eternal inheritance hereafter. If it is built upon the sands of evil with the rusty nails and rotting timber of carnal things, it will be destroyed when the rains and the winds and the floods beat upon it.

What think ye?

Let us then learn from our ancient Friend where and how he would have us build the house that shall be ours in the days of our flesh.

Let us look in upon a sweet and tender scene that took place near Caesarea Philippi up north of the Sea of Galilee and near Mount Hermon. Multitudes who but recently sought to crown him king and whose clamoring for earthly bread brought forth the rebuff in the Sermon on the Bread of Life—these multitudes have turned away.

The remaining little group of true and valiant believers upon whom our gaze falls are in need of spiritual refreshment. First they have prayers. Then Jesus testifies of his own divine

Sonship as he so often did during the days of his flesh.

He asks his disciples who men say that he, the Son of Man, is. (See Matt. 16:13.) The very question is itself a witness of his Godhood, for he knows and they know that his Father's name is Man of Holiness and that the name of his Only Begotten is the Son of Man of Holiness.

Their answers set forth the fantasies and delusions of an apostate people. Some, they say, accept the expressed views of evil Antipas who had slain the blessed Baptist whom he now thought had risen from the dead.

Others, they say, think he is Elias who should restore all things; or Elijah who should come before the great and dreadful day; or Jeremiah who, according to their foolish traditions, had hidden the ark of the covenant in a cave on Mount Nebo and would prepare the way for the Messiah by restoring it and the Urim and Thummim to the Holy of Holies.

Then comes the question to which every living soul must give proper answer if he is to gain salvation: "But whom say ye that I am?" (Matt. 16:15.) Ye Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, ye Saints of the Most High, ye devout souls who seek salvation: What think ye? Is salvation in Christ or look we for another? Let every man speak for himself!

On this occasion, first Simon Peter, then all the rest acclaim: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matt 16:16.) Thou art the Promised Messiah; thou art the Only Begotten in the flesh; God is thy Father!

What a wondrous, awesome thing this is. As Paul said, "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." (1 Tim. 3:16.)

And now near the foot of that

mountain in which he will soon be transfigured, the Son of Man, whose Father is divine, accepts and approves the solemn testimonies of his friends.

To Peter, Jesus says, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona." (Matt. 16:17.) How carefully and aptly Jesus preserves the distinction between him and all men. He is the Son of God; Peter is the son of Jonah. The Father of Jesus is the Immortal Man of Holiness; Peter's sire is a mortal man.

But why is Peter so blessed? It is because he knows by the power of the Holy Ghost that Jesus is the Lord; the Holy Spirit has spoken to the spirit housed in Simon's body, telling the chief Apostle of the divine Sonship of this Jesus of Nazareth of Galilee.

"Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona," Jesus says, "for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 16:17.)

"Upon this rock"

Then again Jesus alludes to the difference in paternal ancestry between him and Peter and continues his words of blessing and doctrine by saying: "And upon this rock"—the rock of revelation—"I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt. 16:18.)

And how could it be otherwise? There is no other foundation upon which the Lord could build his Church and kingdom. The things of God are known only by the power of his Spirit. God stands revealed or he remains forever unknown. No man can know that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost.

Revelation: Pure, perfect, personal revelation—this is the rock!

Revelation that Jesus is the Christ: the plain, wondrous word that comes from God in heaven to man on earth, the word that affirms the

divine Sonship of our Lord—this is the rock!

The divine sonship of our Lord: the sure, heaven-sent word that God is his Father and that he has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel—this is the rock!

The testimony of our Lord: the testimony of Jesus, which is the spirit of prophecy—this is the rock!

All this is the rock, and yet there is more. *Christ is the Rock:* the Rock of Ages, the Stone of Israel, the Sure Foundation—the Lord is our Rock!

Again we hear Paul's voice: "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 3:11.) And also: Ye "are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." (Eph. 2:20.)

Rock of personal revelation

As we ponder all these things, and as their full meaning dawns upon us, we hear anew the exhortation of our ancient Apostolic friend which says, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves." (2 Cor. 13:5.) And so we ask ourselves: Shall the gates of hell prevail against us?

If we build our house of salvation on the rock of personal revelation, if we build it on the revealed reality that Jesus is the Lord, if we build it on him who is the Eternal Rock—it will stand forever.

If we are guided by the spirit of inspiration while here in mortality, we will be able to withstand all of the floods and storms that beat upon us.

If we are founded upon a rock, we worship the Father in the name of the Son by the power of the Holy Ghost.

If we are founded upon a rock, we know that salvation comes by the grace of God to those who believe

the gospel and keep the commandments.

If we are founded upon a rock, we forsake the world, flee from carnal things, and live upright and godly lives.

If we are founded upon a rock, the gates of hell shall not prevail against us. As long as we remain in our house of faith, we shall be preserved when the rains of evil fall, when the winds of false doctrine blow, and when the floods of carnality beat upon us.

Thanks be to God that we, as Latter-day Saints, are founded upon a rock. And so it is that the faithful among us hear a calm voice of quiet certainty saying: "If ye shall build up my church, upon the foundation of my gospel and my rock, the gates of hell shall not prevail against you. . . .

"Behold, you have my gospel before you, and my rock, and my salvation." (D&C 18:5, 17.)

And so we testify with Peter and with the ancients that we know, as they knew, those things which flesh and blood can never reveal to man. We know by the power of the Holy Ghost that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God and that he was crucified for the sins of the world.

God grant that we may be true to Him by whose name alone salvation comes. He is our Friend, our Lord, our King, our God, and our Rock.

Testimony of holy apostleship

And may I add, speaking as an Apostle of the Lord, Jesus Christ, that mingled and intertwined with this testimony which we bear and which was borne by the ancients—and I speak for myself and for my Brethren of the Twelve—that we know that God has in these last days restored again the fulness of his everlasting gospel for the salvation of all men on earth who will believe and

obey; and that he has called Joseph Smith, Jr., to be his latter-day prophet, to be the first and chief Apostle in the dispensation of the fulness of times, and has given him every key and priesthood and power that Peter and the Apostles and the ancient prophets held in the days of their ministry; and that these keys and this holy Apostleship have descended in this manner: Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow, Joseph F. Smith, Heber J. Grant, George Albert Smith, David O. McKay, Joseph Fielding Smith, Harold B. Lee, and Spencer W. Kimball; and that this holy Apostleship and these keys will continue to descend from one Apostle to another until the Lord Jesus Christ comes in the clouds of heaven to reign personally upon the earth. And this I say not of myself, but in the name of the Lord, standing as his representative and saying what he would say if he personally were here. His is the only name given under heaven whereby salvation comes, and we are his ministers. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

President Spencer W. Kimball

My beloved brothers and sisters, this has been a glorious conference. We are grateful to all who have taken part in any way. My heart has been touched, and I have rejoiced and been inspired as I listened to the beautiful music and the timely messages of the Brethren.

We are happy to welcome Elder Angel Abrea as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. For the

Before hearing President Kimball's concluding remarks, we should like to express, on behalf of all who have listened to the singing during these sessions of this general conference, appreciation and our sincere gratitude to all the choirs that have performed and to their conductors and accompanists.

We appreciate the attention given by local and national press representatives and by representatives of radio and television in reporting the sessions of this conference.

We thank our city officials for the cooperation given this conference, the Relief Society and Church Health Unit nurses who have been on hand to render service throughout the conference, and the ushers and the interpreters.

We again express appreciation to the owners and managers of the many radio and television stations who have given public service time to carry sessions of this conference in many countries.

Our beloved prophet, President Spencer W. Kimball, will be our concluding speaker of the conference, after which the Tabernacle Choir will sing "God So Loved the World."

The benediction will be offered by Elder Ronald E. Poelman, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

This conference will then stand adjourned for six months.

present, he will return to Rosario, Argentina, to continue his present assignment as president of that mission. He will add great strength and depth to the leadership of the Church as our newest General Authority.

Counsel to members

As Sister Kimball and I have traveled to many places of the world

these past six months, I have been heartened and gratified with the vitality and growth of the Church and the devotion and unselfish service of the members in the stakes, wards, and missions.

In this conference we have been counseled to conserve our resources and ease the financial burdens on our people. Again we urge the planting of home gardens and the maintenance of a year's supply of food and clothing against a time of need.

We urge all Latter-day Saints to be good neighbors and to be good citizens, loyal to their flag and country. "We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law." (Twelfth article of faith.) All Americans, and indeed people throughout the civilized world, were shocked and saddened last week when an attempt was made to assassinate the president of the United States, at which time he and three others near him were seriously wounded. I am confident all of you join with me in a fervent prayer that President Reagan and his associates will speedily return to full health and strength. We deplore such acts of violence wherever they may occur in the world.

During this conference we have focused on the basic mission of the Church. We have been counseled to manage the growth of the Church "in wisdom and order." (Mosiah 4:27.) We have been urged to qualify ourselves to receive all the ordinances and blessings of the gospel by keeping the commandments, doing our duty, and paying a true tithe and generous fast offerings.

Temples throughout the world

As we have met in this historic Tabernacle and have contemplated things of eternity, it has seemed as though time has stood still even though outside world events are moving at a rapid pace.

I rejoice with you in the announcement of plans to build nine new temples in the United States, Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Europe. When these new temples are completed and dedicated in approximately two years, the total number of temples worldwide will increase to thirty-seven. We are pleased to be able to provide more convenient access to the temples for the Saints because many now have to travel long distances at great expense in time and money to get to the nearest temple.

But these temples are only the beginning. As the work progresses, there will be scores of temples throughout the world.

The other day, we were pleased to visit with a number of brethren attending conference from Korea. And as we met together, they told us of their great joy on hearing of our plans for a temple in Korea. They had previously presented to us Korean clan genealogies containing names of approximately fifteen million people.

This is His work

We are all very much aware, my brothers and sisters, that the world is in turmoil. We are continually being tried and tested as individuals and as a church. There are more trials yet to come, but be not discouraged nor dismayed. Always remember that if this were not the Lord's work, the adversary would not pay any attention to us. If this Church were merely a church of men and women, teaching only the doctrines of men, we would encounter little or no criticism or resistance—but because this is the Church of Him whose name it bears, we must not be surprised when criticisms or difficulties arise. With faith and good works, the truth will prevail. This is His work. There is none other like it. Let us, therefore, press for-

ward, lengthening our stride and rejoicing in our blessings and opportunities.

As we come to the close of this great conference, I wish to say to you, my brothers and sisters, that we love you with all our hearts. We appreciate all that you do, but of course, as always, there is even more to do. The field is white, all ready to harvest, but the time is so short and the laborers are so few as we seek to share the gospel with our Father's other children in all parts of the world.

We ask our Heavenly Father to give you power to extend your knowledge to the people in your neighborhood who need it and to take the gospel to areas in the world that need those great blessings now more than ever.

Testimony

My brethren and sisters, I testify to you that this is the Lord's work and that it is true. We are on the Lord's errand. This is His church and He is its head and the chief cornerstone. God lives, and Jesus is the Christ. He is the Only Begotten Son, the Savior and Redeemer of this world. I leave you with this testimony and with my blessings and my love and affection, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "God So Loved the World."

Elder Ronald E. Poelman offered the benediction.

GENERAL WELFARE SESSION SATURDAY MORNING

A general welfare services session was held in connection with general conference on Saturday, April 4, 1981, beginning at 7:00 A.M. Invited to attend this session were General Authorities, Regional Representatives, stake presidencies, high councilors involved in welfare work, bishoprics, stake and ward Relief Society presidencies, and others responsible for operating welfare production projects.

President Spencer W. Kimball presided at and conducted this session.

President Kimball opened the meeting with the following remarks:

President Spencer W. Kimball

Beloved brothers and sisters, we welcome you to this general welfare services meeting.

Under the direction of Jerold Ottley with Roy Darley at the organ, we shall begin this meeting by singing hymn no. 195, "Redeemer of Israel." The invocation will be offered by Elder Robert D. Hales, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The congregation sang "Redeemer of Israel."

The invocation was given by Elder Robert D. Hales.

President Spencer W. Kimball

Pioneer character molded in crucible

My beloved brothers and sisters: As I have pondered the social and economic conditions which confront us today, my thoughts have taken me back to our pioneer heritage. Our people have always been challenged by many and varied hardships which have tried our faith. It has been so from the beginning.

During the winter of 1846-47, when the Saints were at Winter Quarters preparing for their long and difficult trek across the plains, my grandfather, Heber C. Kimball, for twenty-one years a counselor to Brigham Young, was one of them. During that winter the Lord declared in a revelation to President Young, "My people must be *tried* in all things, that they may be prepared to receive the glory that I have for them, even the glory of Zion; and he that will not bear chastisement is not worthy of my kingdom." (D&C 136:31; italics added.)

Few miracles in our history exceed that of establishing our settlements in a desolate land no one else wanted and then making the desert blossom as a rose. Our people not only survived but flourished because of their *faith* and their *family solidarity*. Our pioneer character was molded in the crucible of hard work, sacrifice, pulling together, and depending upon the Lord.

How well I remember my boyhood years in Arizona. Our living came from the soil. There was little money and seldom enough to go around. Going without and making do was our way of life. We learned to share; we shared the work; we shared joys and sorrows; we shared our food and our means. We had genuine concern for one another. Our daily prayers reminded us how dependent we are upon the Lord. We

prayed and worked continually for our daily bread.

Need for pioneer discipline

Out of those pioneer experiences were formed strong family ties. Now, once again, our resources are being severely strained. But once again our pioneer discipline can and will see us through.

Though we have held these welfare sessions over the years, we have never held one at a time more important than right now. As we concern ourselves with the basic economic needs of our people, we must go back to basic principles. I am grateful for the lessons of our pioneer past in which our people were rich, spiritually, even though they had to do without much of this world's goods.

Those of us in the Lord's work must recognize that work is a spiritual necessity as well as an economic necessity. Our pioneer forebears understood this.

Just as the pioneers shared what they had with the poor among them, we must do likewise by the giving of more generous fast offerings—not merely the cost of two meals.

Our pioneer ancestors did not look to government to care for their families. They knew that their families were their treasure and their own responsibility.

Follow the fundamentals

Brethren and sisters, plan and work in a way that will permit you to be happy even as you do without certain things that in times of affluence may have been available to you. Live within your means and not beyond them. Where you have a plot of land, however small, plant a garden. Staying close to the soil is good

for the soul. Purchase your essentials wisely and carefully. Strive to save a portion of that which you earn. Do not mistake many wants for basic needs.

Teach your children these basic principles in your family councils. Our pioneer forebears used to sing those lyrics about how "sacrifice brings forth the blessings of heaven." (*Hymns*, no. 147.) It still does, my brothers and sisters! Let us not forget the uses of adversity.

Let us be serene and filled with peace and love as we live in a world that is unfortunately filled with increasing crime and violence. Let us remember and keep the Lord's great commandment to love our neighbors. Where there are differences or misunderstandings, let us resolve or diminish them through kindly, brotherly service and genuine concern and regard.

We speak not by way of alarm

but by way of gentle counsel. Let us go back to the basics and follow the fundamentals. Thus we will experience a spiritual resurgence in our lives which will help us through these tempestuous times.

I am grateful for the welfare instructions we receive in this session of our conference. They are timely and worthy of both our attention and our action. May the Lord bless us to heed them and then to lead our people in the path that has been marked for us by our leaders and by the Lord, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Kimball

We shall now be pleased to hear from Bishop H. Burke Peterson, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric. He will be followed by Sister Barbara B. Smith, General President of the Relief Society.

Bishop H. Burke Peterson

This morning I've been asked to speak about the responsibilities families have to care for their own. This counsel will apply to the immediate as well as to the extended family. The scriptural admonition outlining this charge is clear.

Do things of eternal worth

However, before going into the subject, I wish to build a threshold from which to enter these hallowed halls of family responsibility. As we walk through life, each of us becomes involved in a variety of interests and activities. Ofttimes, our judgment of their relative importance is subject to question. I fear that some of what we do is of little worth from an eternal perspective. In fact, some of our interests may even detract from what good we may otherwise accomplish. There are some ba-

sic, fundamental activities of life that are far more productive as preparatory steps for exaltation than many others with which we may busy ourselves. Some of our number have been known to be busily engaged in the "thick of thin things." The Master undoubtedly was speaking of this group as he taught us with the parable of the ten virgins.

Here were ten believing members of the Church. They believed enough that they were going, as a body, to meet the Bridegroom. It appears that they were not wicked, as we think of that descriptive term. I assume they had spent their lives, to that point, in "church activity"; however, as in the parable, five of them had been doing things of more import than had the other five. Half of them had been involved during their lives in doing things of consequence—in doing things that mat-

tered most—in preparing oil for their lamps.

In speaking of the foolish, the parable states, "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut." (Matt. 25:10.)

Serve one another

With this as a warning and the word of the Lord instructing us to be about more important things, I'd like to remind us of the teachings of one of the great Book of Mormon prophets and missionaries, Alma.

In one of the most important declarations of what it means to be a true disciple of the Master, Alma describes in clarity and simplicity the covenant and responsibility of one who would enter the waters of baptism. We have all entered the water. We have made the covenant. In the eighteenth chapter of Mosiah, Alma describes the conduct of a true follower of the Savior, a true disciple. For he said, "And now, as ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light;

"Yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things." (Mosiah 18:8-9.)

He has stated simply: If we are to be the Savior's disciples, if we are to become like him, then we must serve one another, then we must assume responsibility to help with one another's needs, then we must assist each other through the thorny pathways of life.

We have been taught in other scripture that no matter how great and significant our mortal accomplishments, no matter how much was accomplished under our hand—as a bishop, a clerk, a president, a

teacher, or a parent—unless we learn to exhibit charity, we are nothing. (See 1 Cor. 13:1-3.) All our good deeds will not weigh in our favor if charity is lacking.

Charity is measured in several ways. Perhaps a supreme form of charity may be exhibited by one who withholds judgment of another's acts or conduct, remembering that there is only one who can look into the heart and know the intent—and know the honest desires found therein. There is only one whose right it is to judge the success of another's journey through life. Uncalled-for judgments or prejudiced feelings keep many from displaying a truly charitable attitude or a willingness to help those in need, even those in our own family circle. A warning comes to us from King Benjamin, who said:

"And also, ye yourselves will succor those that stand in need of your succor; ye will administer of your substance unto him that standeth in need; and ye will not suffer that the beggar putteth up his petition to you in vain, and turn him out to perish.

"Perhaps thou shalt say: The man has brought upon himself his misery; therefore I will stay my hand, and will not give unto him of my food, nor impart unto him of my substance that he may not suffer, for his punishments are just—

"But I say unto you, O man, whosoever doeth this the same hath great cause to repent; and except he repenteth of that which he hath done he perisheth forever, and hath no interest in the kingdom of God." (Mosiah 4:16-18.)

Care for our own

Are not our own family members entitled to every consideration as contained in this counsel? Too often, charity is extended to another when his actions or conduct are acceptable to us. The exhibition of charity to

another must not be dependent on his performance. It should be given because of who we are—not because of how we behave.

Now, with these thoughts in mind, let's remember again Alma's words as they describe the acts of a true disciple. He is one who is:

- willing to bear another's burdens,

- willing to mourn with those that mourn,

- willing to comfort.

Brothers and sisters, of all the places where our charitable acts should shine forth, where our discipleship must rise above the weaknesses of self, the family is the most important place. There is no other setting that comes close in comparison. Yet many—far too many—are more charitable to others than to their own.

From the content of this message, I'm sure you can tell we have great concern about the manner in which we, as families, are caring for the needs of each other. Much has been said from this pulpit about the responsibility we have to look after our own. The words are clear. We fear the understanding and application of these principles are not being followed as the Lord has prescribed.

In his day, President Brigham Young said the following: "Ever since I have been in this Church I have never suffered a relative to be maintained by the Church. But some men and women cast their children and other relatives upon the Church. If one has an aged sister who cannot maintain herself, he passes her over to the Church; or if an aged father or mother, why, 'let the Church . . . take care of them and provide for them.' It is a disgrace to every man and woman that has sense enough to live, not to take care of their own relatives, their own poor, and plan for them." (*Journal of Discourses*, 8:145.)

Fearing that we may have strayed from some of the basic moorings, I would like to quote from the welfare handbook some of us used as bishops over twenty years ago:

"Aid from Relatives:

"Obviously no person should become a charge upon the public [or the Church] when his relatives are able to care for him. Every consideration of kinship, of justice and fairness, of the common good, and even of humanity itself, requires this." Then listen to these words: "Where Church relatives, financially competent to take care of their kin, refuse to do so, the matter should be reported to the bishop of the ward in which such relatives reside." (*Welfare Plan of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, Handbook of Instructions, 1969, p. 4.)

And then the handbook repeats the instruction of the Apostle Paul to Timothy: "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." (1 Tim. 5:8.)

Family needs are both physical and spiritual

Perhaps we should clarify what it means to provide for our own. How do we do it? Does it mean money and other physical things only? Are there unmet needs that money cannot buy?

As we talk of family support, often our thoughts center mostly on physical comforts. Food, clothing, and shelter seem uppermost in our minds. Well it is that many parents assist newly married children in their first years of learning to manage limited funds. Often brothers and sisters likewise assist each other. Many sons and daughters are offering much of a temporal nature to their aging parents and grandparents. And so it should be, and blessed will be those who so provide for their own.

Family needs, however, are not always physical. Often faith, forgiveness, encouragement, comfort, counsel, listening, teaching, moral support, examples of loving and caring, and a host of other experiences will see loved ones through a crisis—and their crisis needs may last a lifetime. Time with a family member may pay the greatest dividends of all.

The story is told of a family who had a grandmother who had to live in a home for the elderly. Once each year they would visit her. On that occasion, they would take her a new blanket. As they were returning home from one such visit, one of the father's young sons asked, "Daddy, why do we visit grandmother every year?"

The father answered, "So she will know that we love her."

Another question: "Daddy, why do we bring her a new blanket every time?"

The father answered, "So she will remember that we've been here and that we have not forgotten her."

Then a pause. "Daddy, what color blanket would you like when I come to visit you?"

There is no righteous way to avoid the commandment "Honour thy father and thy mother." (Ex. 20:12.) No family that hopes to endure eternally can exclude grandmother and grandfather, brothers and sisters, or other relatives. Heaven forbid that any family member—regardless of age—should be considered a burden. Wouldn't it be wonderful if family members would counsel together as they make plans to assist those in need?

Families can cause miracles to happen

Because of some personal experiences, I am a true believer that families who will fast and pray together can cause miracles to happen. They can literally pray righteous things to take place. Ofttimes it may take longer than we feel is necessary before it happens, however.

To those who are not members of a "typical" LDS family—and there are many—may we offer a reminder that we are all literally brothers and sisters. We are members of that heavenly family. These principles apply to all. The faithful will be blessed for obedience.

In an earlier day, when families refused to obey the charge of family responsibility—when they found ways to justify their acts of non-compliance with the law—the Master said:

"Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,

"This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.

"But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Matt. 15:7-9.)

This morning we have given you what the Lord has said. We may use our agency as to whether we shall obey or disobey; but, if we disobey, we must abide the penalty.

I testify of the truth of these teachings and of the reality of the one who is the author, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Sister Barbara B. Smith

Need to be resourceful

President Kimball, President Tanner, President Romney, my be-

loved Brethren, and my dear brothers and sisters: Few people are untouched today by economic stress. We're not only confronted with it in the media,

but we experience it with virtually every purchase we make.

Most Saturday afternoons my husband and I make a trip to the grocery store for our weekly supplies and food storage items. Recently, after filling our shopping cart and while waiting to be checked out, we watched the cashier totaling the purchases of customers ahead of us. Nearly all were in sizable double-digit figures. We discussed the high cost of food for large families with limited incomes, elderly people with small pensions, and single parents often with uncertain means. We concluded that in most households resources must be managed very carefully in order to meet current demands.

The economic situation today is sobering. It requires us as women to be very resourceful if we are to meet this challenge successfully and at the same time find satisfaction in doing it well.

Reach for the stars

A young bride went to be with her husband at an army camp on the edge of a desert. Housing was scarce and costly. All they could afford was a small cabin near an Indian village. The 115-degree heat was unbearable in the daytime. The wind blew constantly, spreading dust and sand over everything. The days were long and lonely. When her husband was ordered into the desert for two weeks of maneuvers, she just couldn't bear the living conditions any longer, and she wrote to her mother that she was coming home. An almost immediate reply included these lines:

*Two men look out from prison bars;
One saw the mud, the other saw the
stars.*

She read the lines over and over. All right, she would look for the stars.

She determined to make friends with her neighbors, the Indians. She admired their artful weaving and pottery work and asked them to teach her. As soon as they sensed her interest was genuine, they were most willing. She became fascinated with their culture, their history—everything about them. The desert changed from a desolate, forbidding place to a world of wondrous beauty.

What had changed? Not the desert, not her environment; her own attitude transformed a miserable experience into a highly rewarding one. (From *Bits and Pieces*, Vol. C no. 5, pp. 21-23.)

How might Relief Society enable a woman to look to the stars—stars to steer by? How might Relief Society enable a woman to create an environment of optimism and adventure, while at the same time helping her stretch her dollars and resources by implementing sound economic principles in the home?

Home and money management

Let me point out a few mini-courses each Relief Society unit might hold to help women meet this challenge:

First, home and money management. Wise home and money management instruction should help each sister learn how to bring all expenditures within the family income. It has been thoughtfully said that we should set our scale of living one degree below our means. No longer can we ignore the imperative of this principle.

The first hard rule of fixing our scale of living below our means is to budget, planning first for basic needs and then for other desired items.

We should help all women enjoy the peace of mind that comes from making and following a plan for spending. Their lives will begin to have an aura of serenity when their expenses stay within their income.

Women must learn to budget and to help their children learn to budget also. Women and children should know that, no matter how important or how worthwhile an item might seem to be, if they cannot afford it, it is an unwise expenditure. Such expenditures lead to debt; and unwise debt leads to economic insecurity, which most often causes stress in the family. You can make it easier for your children if you do as Elder Marvin J. Ashton suggests: " 'Save your money' is a hollow pronouncement from a parent to a child. 'Save your money for a mission, a bicycle, a doll house, a trousseau, or a car' makes understandable sense." (ENSIGN, July 1975, p. 73.)

Living on a budget is not a chore. It need not even be a deprivation. Budgeting should be a great learning experience.

A recently married daughter of a friend wrote her mother, describing how she and her husband were managing to save money on their meager income. She excitedly explained: "I've discovered that often prepared foods are too costly for our budget, so I make most things from 'scratch.' The other night at Relief Society I even learned how to make milk, buttermilk, condensed milk, cottage cheese, yogurt, and creamed cheese from the powdered milk we had stored. It's fun to see how much I can save by doing things myself."

We can teach women to be realistic in money management and still maintain a spirit of resourcefulness and optimism.

Resource management

Next, a resource management minicourse might be planned. It could enable the sisters to share ways to save energy. For example, car pool or walk whenever possible, wear sweaters, turn down the thermostat a degree or two, open shades

when the sun shines and close them at night, turn off the heat or air conditioner when not at home, turn off the lights, and run the dishwasher only with a full load.

Resource management includes wise stewardship of possessions and an appreciation of the value that still remains in some used goods. One stake Relief Society president reported a homemaking meeting where their best seamstress was available to help each woman draft patterns for reusable fabric. This helped the sisters save many dollars and at the same time enjoy lovely additional clothing items.

Other miniclasses on resource management might focus on ways to take better care of clothes—how best to repair, clean, and alter them for longer wear. A minicourse on laundering tips could also add to a woman's understanding of how to add life to fabric. Classes could teach the art of clothing coordination, how to add variety and versatility to everyone's wardrobe so there is less need to purchase complete outfits. In these and other ways Relief Society could teach women to care better for their belongings, thus extending life and serviceability while at the same time bringing satisfaction and pleasure.

If we "make do" creatively, we don't have to do without. We can enrich the lives of our family members at very little cost.

Healthful living

A third minicourse might be on healthful living. Plan ways to help the sisters save money by attaining the best health of which they are capable. Relief Society should provide training to promote physical well-being as the least expensive medical treatment. It doesn't even cost you the price of aspirin. The illness you avoid costs nothing. Good health habits save money. To promote good

health, women need to plan nutritious meals. Most of us could have smaller portions of food and still be healthy, but all of us should eat regular, well-balanced meals each day. Relief Society instruction should be designed to help sisters understand and practice the fundamentals of good nutrition. We should learn to prepare economical food that will be both nourishing and appealing. And in keeping with the all-Church effort to reduce cost, we would like to suggest that, although the homemaking meeting continue to be held monthly, the homemaking luncheon be served only six times per year, unless the circumstances of the sisters indicate a special need. We ask each Relief Society president to realize that this is not a time for cookies and punch, but for a social experience that will promote provident living, and that the emphasis be on an economical, nourishing food graciously served that can be easily duplicated in the homes of the sisters.

Emergency preparation

One basic concept of the welfare system of the Church is to prepare for a time of emergency by careful planning. Relief Society has the capability of helping sisters further this effort by making their homes models of provident living that can meet present need and possible emergencies.

I have thought about the emergency preparation necessary when Noah's ark was made ready. Noah must have achieved the most effective welfare planning in the history of mankind when he very carefully followed the Lord's counsel and built the ark. His wife and their sons un-

doubtedly worked and planned with him so that the blessings of the Lord might be theirs. Just think of preparing a year's supply for those multitudes of animals which were brought into the ark. Noah and his family must have been able to plan and provide in such a way that they could find pleasure in their efforts (selecting just the right two of each animal), adventure in their voyage (surely there were new little furry creatures almost weekly), and joy as the splendor of the very first rainbow filled the sky, and the Lord's promise was fulfilled.

Could we be as diligent today? Can we as women be accountable and help meet the great challenge of economic stress by our wise stewardship over that with which the Lord has blessed us?

May we look for the stars and find satisfaction, even joy, in living according to the directions of these prophets and Apostles, whom the Lord has chosen to lead us in our day, is my humble prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Kimball

Brother Ottley will now lead us in singing hymn no. 118, "Now Let Us Rejoice," following which we shall hear from Elder M. Russell Ballard, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy. Elder Ballard will be followed by Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve.

The congregation sang "Now Let Us Rejoice."

Elder M. Russell Ballard

How to improve our family finances

My brothers and sisters, I have been asked to talk about family finances with you today.

In times of easy credit and increased inflation, many people find that they have too many expenses and too little income. One expert estimates that one-third of all American families are overextended. Last year tens of thousands of families filed for personal bankruptcy.

A recent survey conducted by the Welfare Services Department provided the following information: Fewer than one-half of the members surveyed have a year's supply of financial resources, and 89 percent feel the burden of increased taxes and inflation. Thirty-four percent of the Latter-day Saint women surveyed are employed outside the home. Fifty-seven percent of them are working to earn the money they need to meet basic family requirements. Thirty-one percent of the families are doing without many things, and 39 percent are not earning enough money to meet their basic needs.

These results demonstrate that today we as leaders need to teach our people that they must become efficient managers of their time and resources.

At the outset, as I address this subject, I emphasize that the most important principle we must live by today is the principle the prophet Alma taught his son Helaman: "But behold, my son, this is not all; for ye ought to know as I do know, that inasmuch as ye shall keep the commandments of God ye shall prosper in the land; and ye ought to know also, that inasmuch as ye will not keep the commandments of God ye shall be cut off from his presence." (Alma 36:30.)

My experience in the business community taught me that some

people can get locked into a daily routine that can stifle their initiative, courage, and vision.

From the Bible, the greatest teacher of all gave us the secret time and time again. He said, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." (Mark 9:23.)

Brothers and sisters, what can we do to improve our family finances? May I suggest three important keys that will help us. They are *attitude*, *planning*, and *self-discipline*.

Attitude

The first key is to have a positive attitude toward ourselves.

Attitude is an important part of the foundation upon which we build a productive life. In appraising our present attitude, we might ask: "Am I working to become my best self? Do I set worthy and attainable goals? Do I look toward the positive in life? Am I alert to ways that I can render more and better service? Am I doing more than is required of me?"

Remember, a good attitude produces good results, a fair attitude fair results, a poor attitude poor results. We each shape our own life, and the shape of it is determined largely by our attitude. George Bernard Shaw wrote: "People are always blaming their circumstances for what they are. I don't believe in circumstances. The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and, if they can't find them, make them." (*Mrs. Warren's Profession*, in *Plays by George Bernard Shaw*, New York: New American Library, 1960, p. 82.)

Too many people in our country today are developing the attitude that government is obligated to care and provide for them. In many ways, government has fostered this attitude,

but the members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints know better.

Some people who lived through the Great Depression and the period following, when the government bestowed gratuities upon the people, developed a feeling that the world owed them a living. In that climate, the First Presidency said in 1936: "The aim of the Church is to help the people to help themselves. Work is to be re-enthroned as the ruling principle of the lives of our Church membership." (In Conference Report, Oct. 1936, p. 3.)

The love of work is an attitude that members of the Church must develop. In some ways, we have gone through a period of great prosperity which may, when history is written, prove to be as devastating as the Great Depression in its effect upon the attitudes of the people. President Harold B. Lee said, "Today we are being tested and tried by another kind of test that I might call the 'test of gold'—the test of plenty, affluence, ease—more than perhaps the youth of any generation have passed through, at least in this Church." (*Sweet Are the Uses of Adversity . . .*, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year, Provo, 7 Feb. 1962, p. 3.)

The love for work needs to be reenthroned in our lives. Every family should have a plan for work that touches the lives of each family member so that this eternal principle will be ingrained in their lives.

Let me share an example from my own life that demonstrates the importance of attitude. When I returned from my first mission, I went to work for my father as a salesman. I was attending the University of Utah and working part time. I had a bad two-week period in which I earned less than ten dollars. My father handed my paycheck to me at a sales meeting in the presence of all the salesmen.

At the time, I thought he was being very hard on me. But later, I could see that this was his way to help me take a second look at myself. I was having a good time and not paying attention to my sales work. I determined that never again would I be the lowest paid person. My income increased from that day.

Now, what happened? I was selling the same merchandise from the same store in the same season of the year. What had changed? My new attitude made the entire difference. William James said that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind. (See *Vital Quotations*, comp. Emerson Roy West, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1968, p. 19.)

Planning

Brothers and sisters, let us discuss the second key, *planning*, which means to think out beforehand how we intend to reach our goals in life. Do we all have a plan to increase our value where we are employed? Have we taken the time to write down specific goals, and have we designed a plan of action to become more effective and productive?

I learned recently that 75 percent of the hotel and restaurant managers in the Marriott Corporation started with the company as room clerks, busboys, bellhops, or cashiers. By improving themselves and their skills, they were prepared when opportunities opened to become managers. To increase our income, we may need to consider additional education. We may need to find a way, through careful planning, to attend night school or trade school or to take a correspondence course. Additional education often will improve our skills and increase the value of our services.

Parents need to teach children very early that a solid financial base is a very important element in a hap-

py home. We can do much with our young people to help them find satisfying, rewarding employment. We should encourage them to do well in their schoolwork and to learn to take advantage of opportunities that will help build a solid base for their future security.

Children need to explore many employment opportunities when they begin high school. Then when they marry and establish a home, they will be well on their way to a vocation or a trade that will return an income that will be sufficient to meet their basic needs.

We might feel that we have gone as far as we can go in our present job. If so, we should outline a plan of action, fast and pray for confirmation, and then move forward and make the change in employment.

A business of our own might increase our income. We must be wise, however, and analyze all factors and seek sound counsel from an attorney, accountant, banker, and most importantly, from a businessman who is successfully managing his own company. After developing a plan, we should pray for guidance; and when we receive an inward assurance that we should begin our own business, then we should do it. Remember the counsel of the Lord: "For which of you, intending to build a tower [and I add, or business], sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?" (Luke 14:28.)

Self-discipline

The third key is to practice *self-discipline* both at our work and as we attempt to reduce our expenses in our homes. Regarding the latter, Church leaders should set the example by seeing that stake and ward financial requests are kept to a minimum. Members should—

1. Avoid debt-pooling where exorbitant fees are charged. We may

want to consolidate debts using a bank or credit union loan that can be repaid at a sensible interest rate over a reasonable length of time. We may need to stop using our credit cards.

2. Exercise self-discipline by telling ourselves "We can't afford it" and refusing to take on further credit obligations.

An argument was overheard one day. One spouse said, while scolding the other for extravagant spending, "How many times do I have to tell you that spending money before you get it is economically unsound?"

"Oh," said the other spouse, "I don't know about that. This way, if you don't get the money, at least you have something to show for it."

Please be patient and carefully control your purchases so that you will not become enslaved to your creditors.

3. Make a budget and stick to it.

4. Cut expenses by distinguishing between wants and needs. Economize by controlling the use of goods, services, and energy.

5. Increase homemaking skills and have family members complete home and car repairs, when feasible.

6. Invest wisely. Avoid speculations and get-rich-quick schemes.

Attitude of success

Brothers and sisters, every one of us has the potential to improve and increase his earning capacity. We are far better off if we can improve and become more valuable on our full-time jobs than if we attempt to hold two jobs or to have mothers leave home to join the work force.

When we learn to expect more success than failure in life, we soon will develop an attitude of success.

"Nothing succeeds like success."

Remember—a positive attitude, a well-thought-out plan, and consistent self-discipline can help us im-

prove our circumstances. Applying these keys in our daily work will help produce more income, and practicing them in our homes will help reduce expenses. When we combine these principles with keeping the commandments of God, we can learn

to become better managers of our time and resources and become financially secure.

May the Lord bless all of us to this end, I pray humbly, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder L. Tom Perry

A lesson on preparedness was taught by the Lord in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew. It tells about ten virgins awaiting a marriage celebration. Five were wise and prepared. Five were foolish and not prepared. The five wise virgins were welcomed into the marriage feast upon the arrival of the bridegroom. The five foolish virgins were off to the store buying supplies, and upon their return found the door closed. The cry to the Lord to open the door was met with the response, "I know you not."

Teach personal and family preparedness

My assignment today is as basic to welfare services as priesthood is to the Church. I've been given the assignment to bring an increased awareness to the priesthood and Relief Society leadership of the need to teach and to give basic training in personal and family preparedness on a regular, continuing schedule.

Let us, for a minute, examine our leadership report card to see how well we have fulfilled our assignment to teach the principles of personal and family preparedness.

Our rate of annual increase for the period from 1970 to 1978 in total fast-offering assistance was 15 percent. Then we had a little upset in our economy, and the rate last year jumped to 32.5 percent.

We look even worse when we examine total commodity assistance. For the period 1970-78, the annual

rate of increase in commodity assistance was 11.3 percent. Last year, the rate was a disastrous 53.5 percent. A little dip in the economy found the membership without oil for their lamps. Immediately it was necessary for those not adequately prepared to turn to the Church for assistance.

The results indicate that training of families in basic principles of self-reliance and independence over the past years has not been as effective as it should have been.

With such alarming results we must remind ourselves that the Church welfare system was never designed or intended to care for the healthy member who, as a result of his poor management or lack of preparation, has found himself in difficulty. It was designed to assist the membership in case of a large, physical disaster, such as an earthquake or a flood. It was designed to assist the ill, the injured, the incapacitated, and to rehabilitate them to a productive life. In far too many cases, members who should be making use of their own preparedness provisions are finding that there is nothing there and that they have to turn to the Church.

It is time to ask ourselves, What has created the problem of placing such a heavy burden on the Church to supply our welfare needs? My analysis of this problem would lead me to believe that, as leaders, we have spent far too much time in *administering* relief and far too little in *prevention* by having our families

prepared to administer to their own needs. It is time to teach the basics—again. It is time to make the number one priority of our welfare efforts personal and family preparedness. We must prepare now so that in time of need more of our members will be able to draw upon their own preparedness and not have to seek assistance from the Church.

I like the story of the old man in nineteenth-century New Hampshire who treasured his independence and self-reliance above all else in his life. He accounted it true Christianity that he cared for his own and helped others, and fiercely resisted the notion that he ought to accept help from any other mortal. When his aged wife died, he buried her himself, then dug his own grave and laid in it his open, homemade coffin. "When my time is coming," he said, "I'll climb in the box and fold my arms over my chest. Won't be no bother to no one. They can just nail down the lid and push in the dirt."

Train the family

President Marion G. Romney has said so often: "No self-respecting Church member will voluntarily shift the responsibility for his own maintenance to another. Furthermore, a man not only has the responsibility to care for himself; he also has the responsibility to care for his family." (*The Basics of Church Welfare*, address to the Priesthood Board, 6 Mar. 1974, p. 2.)

The home must be the heart of the welfare program. We must focus our training of personal and family preparedness to reach the family organization. We must teach that every family should be headed by an executive committee comprised of a husband and wife who will set aside sufficient time to plan for their family needs. If it is a single-parent family or an individual living alone, there is still need to organize time

and thought to establish goals for meeting needs.

It must start here. Every family has different needs. I notice the difference in my own family now that my children are married. Father and mother are now alone. Their needs have changed. A daughter with her own home and family, a son renting in a student housing project with his family, and a newlywed daughter and her husband, still students at a university—each has different needs, and these needs are changing each year.

Personal and family preparedness planning must begin with the family executive committee. Planning must be tailored to fit the circumstances of each family. Consideration must be given to their unique requirements in career development, financial and resource management, education, physical health, home production and storage, and social, emotional, and spiritual strength.

Each family organization should include a family council comprised of all members of the family unit. Here the basic responsibilities of the family organization can be taught to the children. They can learn how to make decisions and act upon those decisions. Too many are growing to marriageable age unprepared for this responsibility. Work ethics and self-preparedness can be taught in a most effective way in a family council. President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., has paraphrased an old statement. "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," he would say. "But all play and no work makes Jack a useless boy." (As quoted by Harold B. Lee, "Administering True Charity," address delivered at the welfare agricultural meeting, 5 Oct. 1968.)

How grateful I am for a father who had the patience to teach me the art of gardening. How frustrating it must have been in this teaching process to find a neat row of weeds still in the ground and a pile of dead

carrots on the ground after I'd completed one of my assignments. Our family was taught not only the art of stacking and rotating cans and bottles on shelves, but also how to grow and replace the fruits and vegetables necessary to fill the empty cans and bottles again.

Priesthood and Relief Society support family

The first-line support to the families in the Church organization is priesthood home teaching and Relief Society visiting teaching. These functions provide two important services. They keep the bishop, the quorum leader, and the Relief Society president adequately informed of the physical, emotional, temporal, and spiritual condition of the membership. They also have teaching opportunities and serve as a resource to provide some of the training to the families as they prepare for self-sufficiency.

The Melchizedek Priesthood quorum leader can help the head of the household by teaching the principles of welfare—how to love, to give service, to recognize what his stewardship is, to work honestly and diligently for his family and for others, and to consecrate his time and talents to the building up of the kingdom of God. He can train the home teachers on how they can get to know the families and be sensitive to their needs. When a member has special needs, the president can work with the bishop and other quorum members to see that those needs are met in a confidential and loving manner.

The quorum meeting begins to fill its purpose when it meets the needs of the members. It is there they can be taught how to develop the skills in all areas of personal and family preparedness.

The Relief Society president gives the same kind of strength and

support to the women of the ward as she trains the visiting teachers in the skills of compassionate service, as visits are made to the sisters and their needs are met confidentially with love and sensitivity.

The sisters are usually more effective in teaching gospel principles. They teach and practice skills of sewing, canning, drying, and other food storage methods. They teach nutrition and physical fitness. They emphasize reading and cultural arts skills. Overall there is a permeating spirit of love and giving, of industry, and serious attention to the skills of homemaking and gospel living.

So, priesthood and Relief Society, working together, bring the family to a realization that personal and family preparedness is living the gospel.

You may have read the story in the *ENSIGN* about the Hibbert family. (See *ENSIGN*, June 1980, pp. 41-42.) The husband and father of a large family was diagnosed as having terminal cancer. After the shock and fear were faced, the husband and wife counseled together and decided that the best thing they could do for their joy and peace of mind was to prepare themselves and their family for what was to come.

They chose to create family memories through shared experiences, to complete family histories, to have a year's supply of food and other necessities to meet the financial emergencies that would come. A will was prepared and all insurance and legal papers were put in order. The children were taught to care for one another and to take responsibility in the home.

Just weeks before the death of Brother Hibbert, their home was destroyed in a fire. With it went much of the food storage, but there was still the togetherness of a family that had learned to work together, to plan and prepare, and to face a difficulty head on. With the death of Brother

Hibbert, there was sorrow—but not grief. The family had developed the skills it takes to remain close and loving. They were prepared.

Need to place proper priorities

As you can see from the heavy responsibilities given to the quorums and the Relief Society, careful practical training must be given to those officers. This must be supplied by the ward organization, presided over by a bishop.

As chairman of the ward welfare services committee, the bishop directs all welfare services in the ward. He seeks out the needy and distressed. He coordinates the teaching of gospel principles and programs fundamental to welfare services, coordinates efforts to teach the law of the fast. He sees that members with special needs are assisted with the dignity and love so important to them. He coordinates confidential assistance to those in need. When necessary, he calls qualified resource specialists. (See *Welfare Services Resource Handbook*, 1980, p. 9.)

Supporting the bishop is a stake organization. The bishop can request assistance from the stake president in the training and qualifying of his leadership. The stake president has a high council and a stake Relief Society organization to furnish the training support required.

Look at the impact the Lord's organization can have on assisting the membership in their personal and family preparations as the work load is distributed down to a workable

level of effectiveness. At the stake level the ratio is one stake president to about 1,180 families. At the ward level the ratio is one bishop to about 108 families. At the quorum level the ratio is one quorum leader to about 60 families. The home teacher's ratio is one home teacher to 3 families.

The foundation of the Church welfare program is personal and family preparedness. The organizational support is in place to train and prepare the membership in this basic responsibility. What is needed is for each priesthood and Relief Society leader to place the proper priority on this important work.

Now, it may be that the old man in New Hampshire carried personal and family preparedness too far, with digging his own grave and all. But I would love to see all of our people moved by that same spirit of self-reliance and preparedness.

God grant us to see what must be done in our own wards and stakes, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Kimball

It will now be our pleasure to listen to President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, who will be our concluding speaker.

Following President Romney's talk, we will sing the closing hymn no. 23, "Come, Ye Children of the Lord," following which the benediction will be offered by Elder Hugh W. Pinnock of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

President Marion G. Romney

Security: fruit of righteous living

Brothers and sisters: I have listened with interest this morning to what has been said. For forty years

now I have been coming to this building twice a year to receive instruction regarding what we today refer to as Church welfare services. Originally, this program was known as the

Church security plan; that is the name it was given when it was started. What was then meant by that title needs to be understood today; namely, that security, *true security*; comes only by living the principles of the gospel. *Security is the fruit of righteous living.*

The Book of Mormon contains the history of a people who over the course of a thousand years demonstrated the fruits of righteousness and of wickedness. Whenever they kept the Lord's commandments, they prospered in the land; when they were disobedient, they fell into wickedness, war, famine, and enslavement. Time and time again we read of families, tribes, and whole nations keeping the Lord's commandments and making covenants with him and being blessed by his Spirit. Because of righteousness, they prospered both spiritually and temporally. When they did not keep his commandments, they deteriorated both temporally and spiritually.

The Book of Mormon contains principles which, if we would follow them, could bring us true security in a world wracked by wickedness, fear, and a host of economic problems. I believe our people want to achieve true security, but many of us are not following the course which leads to it. Today, individuals and governments seem to think that they can achieve economic prosperity in spite of a spendthrift mentality. They spend and spend, mortgage and mortgage, pile up debts and obligations and thereby lose stability, lose security, and lose independence.

Welfare plan based on Christian principles

May I emphasize here that the point so easily forgotten is that *the Lord is interested in everything we do in our lives*: our families, our work, and our personal development. He has given eternal truths to guide

us in these matters. Further, he gives us his Spirit to help us apply these principles. But only as we follow him can we have security.

Recently, I reread some of the talks given by the Brethren at the time of the original announcement of the Church's so-called security plan. I was thrilled with the power and solemnity of the thoughts expressed by the Brethren. Here is a quote from President J. Reuben Clark, Jr.'s, statement made at the October 1936 conference, the day that President Heber J. Grant read a letter by the First Presidency establishing the Church security plan. Notice how President Clark emphasizes that this security plan is simply a true expression of the basic Christian tenets contained in the gospel. He said:

"We have proclaimed to the world, and we have proclaimed what we knew, that we have the Gospel plan, and that the Gospel plan not only takes care of our spiritual needs, but our temporal needs as well. . . . It teaches us how to live in a group under an organization and principles which enable us to live together as brothers and sisters, equal in all things insofar as we live for that equality.

"That places upon us a responsibility because this plan which has been given to us is a plan by which Christian rule can come and will come to the nations of the earth." (J. Reuben Clark, Jr., in Conference Report, Oct. 1936, pp. 113-14.)

Basics of Church welfare

On April 4, 1943, at this pulpit, we stated that the Church's security, or welfare, plan consists of three basic elements:

"First, every individual should value his or her independence and labor with all his might to maintain it by being self-sustaining. This the Lord enjoined upon us when from the Garden of Eden He sent forth our

first parents under the stern command, 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground' (Gen. 3:19).

"Second, next to himself, the responsibility for sustaining an individual rests upon his family—parents for their children, children for their parents. It is an ungrateful child who, having the ability, is unwilling to assist his parents to remain independent of relief.

"Finally, the individual having done all he can to maintain himself, and the members of his family having done what they can to assist him, then the Church, through the Welfare plan, stands ready to see that its members, *who will accept the plan and work in it to the extent of their ability*, shall each be cared for 'according to his family, according to his circumstances and his wants and needs' (D&C 51:3)." (Marion G. Romney, in Conference Report, Apr. 1943, pp. 27-28.)

Self-reliance

I'm sure that many of you old-timers have heard this doctrine repeated many times by the Brethren, but I wonder if perhaps some of our younger people, our young bishops and stake presidents, have taken the time to really grasp its meaning. More importantly, I wonder if we as a people, as a nation, and as a world community really understand the basic premise on which all of this rests—namely, *self-reliance*.

The principle of self-reliance grows out of a fundamental doctrine of the Church, that of agency. Elohim, in creating man and placing him on this earth, gave him his agency to act for himself.

"For," said he, "it is expedient that I, the Lord, should make every man accountable, as a steward over earthly blessings, which I have made and prepared for my creatures. . . .

"For the earth is full, and there

is enough and to spare; yea, I prepared all things, and have given unto the children of men to be *agents* unto themselves." (D&C 104:13, 17; italics added.)

Just as each individual is accountable for his choices and actions in spiritual matters, so also is he accountable in temporal matters. It is through our *own* efforts and decisions that we *earn* our way in this life. While the Lord will magnify us in both subtle and dramatic ways, he can only guide our footsteps when we move our feet. Ultimately, our own actions determine our blessings or lack of them. It is a direct consequence of both agency and accountability.

Family reliance

The principle of self-reliance is also given expression in a larger context, that of the basic unit of the Church—the family.

In the Church the concept of providing for one's family and of relying on one's family for growth, mutual care, and help (or *family reliance*) is equally fundamental to self-reliance. The family is the basic organizational unit of the Church. No agency or institution can or should replace the family. By sacred covenant and eternal priesthood government, the eternal family unit is established. The same covenant that obligates parents to care for their children obligates children to care for their parents when they need it. The commandment to "honour thy father and thy mother" (Ex. 20:12) extends to modern Israel and is required for all who are faithful members of the Church.

As a consequence of the principle of family reliance, we should realize that, generally, one has no claim on Church resources to resolve personal temporal problems and needs until the family has done all it can to help. This is the doctrine the

Lord established when he said:

"And after *that*, they have claim upon the church, or in other words upon the Lord's storehouse, if their parents have not wherewith to give them." (D&C 83:5; italics added.)

Church reliance

Finally, I suppose we could think of *Church reliance*; that is, when all has been done at the individual and family level, then the Lord has given instructions how we should provide for one another as a Church family. The extent of this care and the basis on which it is given, however, again must be bound to fundamental principles. May I share a very insightful thought on charity given by President Joseph F. Smith in the general conference of April 1898: (That, of course, was before the welfare program as we understand it.)

"Men and women ought not to be willing to receive charity unless they are compelled to do so to keep them from suffering. Every man and woman ought to possess the spirit of independence, a self-sustaining spirit, that would prompt him or her to say, when they are in need, 'I am willing to give my labor in exchange for that which you give me.' No man ought to be satisfied to receive, and to do nothing for it." (In Conference Report, Apr. 1898, p. 48.)

If every able person who seeks out his bishop for help followed this rule of charity, then true blessings would accrue to both giver and receiver. Everyone would feel good about contributing to the Church welfare plan when the needy come in this spirit. Motivated in this way, people in need desire to quickly become self-sustaining again; they also desire to contribute all they can to the program when they are back on their feet.

Gospel in action

It has been my desire today, brothers and sisters, to refocus our attention on the basic, fundamental principles of welfare services. I reiterate that welfare services is not just a program; it is the gospel in action. Its principles are the principles of the gospel. It is the Christian rule in temporal affairs. It is my desire that we learn from the scriptures and from the counsel of the living prophets and do our part to sustain ourselves, to care for our families, and with generosity and humility to contribute our share to maintaining those less fortunate than we.

May I close by quoting from King Benjamin (you've heard him quoted already today—King Benjamin, the great leader of the Nephites), who at the close of his ministry had this sage advice for the members of the Church who had lived under his kind and inspired leadership for many years:

"And behold, I say unto you that if ye do this ye shall always rejoice, and be filled with the love of God, and always retain a remission of your sins; . . .

"And now, for the sake of these things which I have spoken unto you—that is, for the sake of retaining a remission of your sins from day to day, that ye may walk guiltless before God—I would that ye should impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally, according to their wants.

"And see that all these things are done in wisdom and order." (Mosiah 4:12, 26-27.)

That we may have the wisdom and the discipline and live to implement these great principles is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, amen.

The congregation sang "Come, Ye Children of the Lord."

The benediction was given by Elder Hugh W. Pinnock of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

SALT LAKE TABERNACLE CHOIR AND ORGAN BROADCAST

The following broadcast, announced by J. Spencer Kinard, and originating with KSL Radio and Television, Salt Lake City, Utah, was presented from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 5, 1981, through the courtesy of the Columbia Broadcasting System's network throughout the United States, parts of Canada, and through other facilities to several points overseas:

Announcer: Once more we welcome you within these walls with Music and the Spoken Word from the crossroads of the West.

CBS and its affiliated stations bring you at this hour the Mormon Tabernacle Choir from Temple Square in Salt Lake City, with Jerold Ottley conducting the Choir, John Longhurst, Tabernacle organist, and the Spoken Word given by Spencer Kinard.

(Choir without announcement: "Come, Come, Ye Saints"—arr. Cornwall)

Announcer: The Tabernacle Choir has opened today's broadcast of Music and the Spoken Word with an early Mormon pioneer hymn by William Clayton in a setting by former Tabernacle Choir director, J. Spencer Cornwall, "Come, Come, Ye Saints." The ladies chorus next sings the words of Stopford Brooke and the music of Robert Leaf, "Let the Whole Creation Cry, Glory to the Lord on High."

(Ladies chorus: "Let the Whole Creation Cry"—Leaf)

Announcer: We next hear the men's chorus of the Tabernacle Choir sing

"Thou Art Repose" by Franz Schubert.

(Men's chorus: "Thou Art Repose"—Schubert/arr. Riva)

Announcer: Not long ago a man in the southern part of the United States saw a nurse's hand holding an eyedropper. For most of us the sight would have been barely worth a glance. For him it was spectacular because it was the first thing he had ever seen. After fifty-one years of life an operation had given him sight.

And what amazing things he saw. "I never would have dreamed," he said, "that yellow was so . . . so yellow." Blades of grass and the hair on his arm intrigued him. A jet plane streaking across the sky or a sunset leave him speechless. "I can't wait to get up each day," he says, "to see what I can see." (*Deseret News*, Salt Lake City, 6 Mar. 1981, p. A-3.)

He has discovered a beautiful and fascinating world. Unfortunately many of us have grown partially blind to the things we see.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning once wrote:

"Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire
with God;

But only he who sees, takes off
his shoes—

The rest sit round it and pluck
blackberries."

("Aurora Leigh," *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, p. 97.)

The press of daily duties in this busy world can create cataracts on the eyes of our inner spirits and take the freshness and sparkle out of what we see. The pace of life today demands quickness of step and firmness of pur-

pose if we are to do what needs to be done. But if our eyes get so focused on the goal ahead that we cannot observe the scenery we pass along our way, we may miss one of the main purposes of our excursion through life.

Some of the most significant things we'll accomplish on this planet will have more to do with stopping to smell the roses than with keeping on the schedule.

Fresh, bubbling streams and blossoming flowers, mountains and moonlight—surely these were meant for more than just our subsistence, are worth more than just a casual glance.

To watch the wonder of God's creations is a form of worship whether one is in a wilderness or at a window box. There truly are, as Shakespeare said, "Tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in every thing." (Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, act 2, scene 1.)

(Choir without announcement: "Our Mountain Home So Dear"—Stephens)

Announcer: The Tabernacle Choir has sung the music of Evan Stephens set to the words of Emmeline Wells, "Our Mountain Home So Dear."

At the console of the Tabernacle organ, John Longhurst next plays

"Prelude in G Major" by Johann Sebastian Bach.

(Organ: "Prelude in G Major"—Bach)

Announcer: Today's broadcast is concluded with words and music from Handel's *Messiah* "Worthy Is the Lamb" and the "Amen Chorus."

(Choir: "Worthy Is the Lamb" and "Amen Chorus"—Handel)

Announcer: Again we leave you from within the shadows of the everlasting hills. May peace be with you this day . . . and always.

Announcer (on radio): This concludes the two-thousand six-hundred ninety-fourth performance, continuing the fifty-second year of this traditional broadcast from the Mormon Tabernacle on Temple Square, brought to you by CBS and its affiliated stations, originating with Station KSL in Salt Lake City.

Jerold Ottley conducted the Choir, John Longhurst was at the organ, the Spoken Word given by Spencer Kinard.

In another seven days at this same hour, Music and the Spoken Word will be heard again from the crossroads of the West.

This is the CBS radio network.

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE MUSIC

The Tabernacle Choir furnished the choral numbers for the Saturday morning, Sunday morning, and Sunday afternoon sessions of the conference with Jerold Ottley and Donald H. Ripplinger conducting.

The music for the Saturday afternoon session was provided by the combined institute choir from Salt Lake, Weber, and Logan institutes of religion directed by Paul A. Hanks.

At the general priesthood meeting, a combined men's choir from the

Tabernacle Choir and the Mormon Youth Chorus furnished the music, directed by Robert C. Bowden.

Prelude, postlude, and interlude music and accompaniments on the Tabernacle organ throughout the conference sessions were played by Robert Cundick, John Longhurst, and Roy M. Darley, Tabernacle organists.

Francis M. Gibbons

Clerk of the Conference

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THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY
SAINTS

Official Report of the
One Hundred Fifty-first
Semiannual General

CONFERENCE

of The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints

held in the Tabernacle
Salt Lake City, Utah

October 3 and 4, 1981

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THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-FIRST SEMIANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The 151st Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah on Saturday, October 3, 1981, at 10:00 A.M.

The general sessions of the conference were held at 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday, October 3 and 4, 1981. The general welfare session was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, October 3, 1981, at 7:00 A.M. The general priesthood meeting was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, October 3, 1981, at 7:00 P.M.

President Spencer W. Kimball watched the conference by closed-circuit television from his room at LDS Hospital where he was recuperating from recent surgery. President N. Eldon Tanner, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday morning session. President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the welfare, Saturday afternoon, and Sunday morning sessions of the conference. President Gordon B. Hinckley, Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the priesthood and Sunday afternoon sessions.

At the Saturday morning session, Elder Gordon B. Hinckley was sustained as a Counselor in the First Presidency, Elder Neal A. Maxwell was sustained as a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, and Elder G. Homer Durham was sustained as a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Television and radio stations carried portions or all of some of the conference sessions to large audiences throughout the world. The general priesthood session was carried by closed-circuit transmission to approx-

imately 2,339 locations in many different countries.

General Authorities present

The following General Authorities of the Church attended one or more of the general sessions:

*The First Presidency:*¹ N. Eldon Tanner, Marion G. Romney, and Gordon B. Hinckley.

The Quorum of the Twelve: Ezra Taft Benson, Mark E. Petersen, LeGrand Richards, Howard W. Hunter, Thomas S. Monson, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, Bruce R. McConkie, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, and Neal A. Maxwell.

The First Quorum of the Seventy:
Presidents: Franklin D. Richards, J. Thomas Fyans, Carlos E. Asay, M. Russell Ballard, Dean L. Larsen, and Royden G. Derrick!
Additional Members: Marion D. Hanks, A. Theodore Tuttle,¹ Paul H. Dunn, Hartman Rector, Jr., Loren C. Dunn, Robert L. Simpson, Rex D. Pinegar, W. Grant Bangerter, Robert D. Hales, Adney Y. Komatsu, Joseph B. Wirthlin, Gene R. Cook, Charles Didier, William R. Bradford, George P. Lee, John H. Groberg, Jacob de Jager, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Robert E. Wells, James M. Paramore, Richard G. Scott, Hugh W. Pincock, F. Enzo Busche, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Ronald E. Poelman, Derek A. Cuthbert, Robert L. Backman, Rex C. Reeve, Sr.,² Ted

¹President Spencer W. Kimball, Elder G. Homer Durham, and Elder Theodore M. Burton were in the hospital recuperating from surgery.

²Elder F. Burton Howard was away on assignment.

E. Brewerton, Jack H. Goaslind, Jr., and Angel Abrea.

The Presiding Bishopric: Victor L. Brown, H. Burke Peterson, and J. Richard Clarke.

Emeritus General Authorities: Eldred G. Smith, Sterling W. Sill, Henry D. Taylor, James A. Cullimore, Joseph Anderson, John H. Vandenberg, Bernard P. Brockbank, and O. Leslie Stone.

Other authorities present

Other authorities of the Church in attendance included Regional Representatives, presidents of stakes and their counselors, presidents of temples, bishoprics of wards, and presidencies and members of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood quorums.

Many general, stake, and ward auxiliary officers also attended.

FIRST DAY MORNING MEETING

FIRST SESSION

The first general session of the conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah on Saturday, October 3, 1981, at 10:00 A.M. President N. Eldon Tanner, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The music of the opening session was provided by the Tabernacle Choir with Jerold Ottley conducting and John Longhurst at the organ.

Before the commencement of the meeting, the Tabernacle Choir sang "All Creatures of Our God and King" without announcement.

President Tanner then made the following remarks:

President N. Eldon Tanner

Our beloved President and prophet will not be attending the conference, but he sends his love and his blessings to all of you. He has asked me to conduct this session.

We welcome to the 151st Semi-annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints all those assembled here in this historic Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah.

We also extend a cordial welcome to government, education, and civic leaders who are present.

Elders Franklin D. Richards and Loren C. Dunn are presiding in the Salt Palace.

The Tabernacle Choir, directed by Jerold Ottley with John Longhurst at the organ, have just sung "All Creatures of Our God and King." They will now sing "Father in Heaven." The invocation will be offered by Elder Rex D. Pinegar.

The Choir sang "Father in Heaven."

Elder Rex D. Pinegar offered the invocation.

The Choir sang "Now We Sing Thy Praise" without announcement.

President Tanner

The Tabernacle Choir has just sung "Now We Sing Thy Praise."

President Gordon B. Hinckley, the new Counselor in the First Presidency, will present the General Authorities and be our first speaker.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

It is proposed that we sustain Elder Gordon B. Hinckley as a Counselor in the First Presidency. All in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed may so manifest it.

It is also proposed that we sustain Elder Neal A. Maxwell as a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. All in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed may so manifest it.

It is also proposed that we sustain Elder G. Homer Durham as one of the Presidents of the First Quorum of the

Seventy. Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed may so manifest it.

With the exception of these Brethren whom we have just sustained, there have been no other changes in the General Authorities since the last conference. It is proposed, therefore, that we sustain all of the General Authorities and general officers of the Church as at present constituted.

Those in favor, please manifest it. Those opposed by the same sign.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

I suppose there has never been a more generous outpouring of love than that expressed in behalf of President Kimball, our prophet. Unitedly as a people with one heart and one voice we give thanks to the Lord for his blessings and pray for his continued recovery.

We pray also for Elders G. Homer Durham and Theodore M. Burton, who likewise are in the hospital and acknowledge the absence of Elder Burton Howard, who is presiding over the mission in Uruguay.

My brethren and sisters, thank you for your faithful service in behalf of our Father's children wherever you live. Thank you for the efforts you have made in coming here. I pray that when we separate on the morrow, we all will feel that we have been fed the bread of life. I express the same prayer in behalf of those who will receive the conference in their homes.

I should like to voice in your behalf a word of appreciation to those who make widely available the facilities of radio, television, and cable. It is a service greatly appreciated by hundreds of thousands.

Gifts of science

And now we are expanding the miracle of satellite transmission in behalf of the membership of the Church throughout the United States. With completion of a new uplink facility, tucked away in the hills a few miles to the north of us, the sounds and the sights of this conference are beamed to a transponder 22,300 miles above the equator. There they are amplified and then reflected back to receiving antennas installed in stake centers in various parts of the nation. These centers are now few, but during the next eighteen months these pioneer installations will be expanded to four or five hundred, making it possible for most of the membership of the Church in the United States, either in their homes through conventional radio, television, or cable, or through gatherings in stake centers, to participate in these general conferences.

With the growth of the Church, we likely could never build a hall large enough to accommodate all who would wish to assemble in one place. Nor would accelerating travel costs

make possible their coming. The gifts of science have provided a more convenient way. We are confident that as the work of the Lord expands, he will inspire men to develop the means whereby the membership of the Church, wherever they may be, can be counseled in an intimate and personal way by his chosen prophet. Communication is the sinew that binds the Church as one great family. Between those facilities which are now available and those which are on the horizon, we shall be able to converse one with another according to the needs and circumstances of the time.

Eventful years in the Church

Now, I hope you will pardon my speaking in a personal vein for three or four minutes. It was twenty years ago, at the October conference, that I was sustained a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. Previously, for two and a half years, I had served as an Assistant to the Twelve. These have been eventful years, during which four great and inspired men have presided over the Church—David O. McKay, Joseph Fielding Smith, Harold B. Lee, and Spencer W. Kimball. They have been years in which the Church has moved out across the world in a remarkable way. They have been years in which millions of members have been added. They have also been years in which strong voices have been raised against us. We have been criticized, but this criticism has in no way deterred the progress of the work. In fact, it has brought many to our defense and our support, and in some instances it has added to our numbers.

For me personally, these have been challenging years, filled with worrisome responsibility and satisfying experience. Mine has been the opportunity to meet with the Saints over the world. I have been in your homes in many parts of the earth, and I wish to thank you for your kindness and hospitality. I have been in your

meetings and listened to your declarations of faith and your expressions of testimony. I have wept with some in your sorrow and rejoiced with many in your accomplishments. My faith has grown, my knowledge has broadened, my love for our Father's children has strengthened wherever I have gone.

In recent months I have had the opportunity of traveling in the People's Republic of China and in the nations of eastern Europe, including Russia. My heart has been touched by the warmth of good people wherever I have gone. All are children of our Father in Heaven. True, there are vast chasms of political and ideological differences. But innately people are the same. They are all sons and daughters of God. They have within their hearts basically the same longings. Husbands love their wives, and wives their husbands. Parents love their children, and children their parents. Their minds respond to the same truths if they are given opportunity to hear them. Speaking of the people generally, they desire peace and not war. They desire brotherhood and not conflict. They desire truth and not propaganda. Ours is a great and compelling responsibility, to teach the everlasting gospel to the peoples of the earth. Many gates are now closed against us. But I am convinced that the Lord in his own time will open them, provided we constantly seek and pray for such openings and are prepared to take advantage of them. I do not know specifically the time frame of the Lord's work, but I do know that we must be anxiously engaged.

During the twenty years and more that I have served as a General Authority, I have seen in a very personal and intimate way a miraculous opening and strengthening of the work in some of the great nations of Asia. We now have well over a hundred thousand members with strong wards and stakes in lands where only twenty-five years ago we scarcely dreamed of entering. The Lord, moving in his mysterious

way, has unlocked those doors and touched the hearts of the people. That process is at work today in other lands. I am convinced of this, although the progress may appear almost imperceptible.

Looking back over these twenty years, I am grateful for the great development of the work of the Lord.

"Strengthen your brethren"

And now a new assignment has come. I appreciate the confidence of President Kimball, of Presidents Tanner and Romney, as well as that of my Brethren of the Twelve, the Seventy, and the Presiding Bishopric. My only desire is to serve with loyalty wherever I am called. I thank the many of you who have been gracious and generous in your expressions. This sacred calling has made me aware of my weaknesses. If I have offended at any time, I apologize and hope you will forgive me. Whether this assignment be lengthy or brief, I pledge my best effort, given with love and faith.

I plead for understanding among our people, for a spirit of tolerance toward one another, and for forgiveness. All of us have far too much to do to waste our time and energies in criticism, faultfinding, or the abuse of others. The Lord has commanded this people, saying: "Strengthen your brethren in all your conversation, in all your prayers, in all your exhortations, and in all your doings." This is the commandment, stated unequivocally; and then follows this marvelous promise: "And behold, and lo, I am with you to bless you and deliver you forever." (D&C 108: 7-8.)

"Faith is essence of true religion"

Now, if I may be guided by the Spirit, I should like to talk about another matter. There recently spoke in this city a prominent journalist from the East. I did not hear him, but I read the newspaper reports of his remarks.

He is quoted as having said, "Certitude is the enemy of religion." The words attributed to him have stirred within me much reflection. Certitude, which I define as complete and total assurance, is not the enemy of religion. It is of its very essence.

Certitude is certainty. It is conviction. It is the power of faith that approaches knowledge—yes, that even becomes knowledge. It evokes enthusiasm, and there is no asset comparable to enthusiasm in overcoming opposition, prejudice, and indifference.

Great buildings were never constructed on uncertain foundations. Great causes were never brought to success by vacillating leaders. The gospel was never expounded to the convincing of others without certainty. Faith, which is of the very essence of personal conviction, has always been, and always must be, at the root of religious practice and endeavor.

Certitude in former times

There was no uncertainty in Peter's mind when the Lord asked him, "Whom say ye that I am?"

"And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matt. 16: 15-16.)

Nor was there any doubt on the part of Peter when the Lord taught the multitude in Capernaum, declaring himself to be the bread of life. Many of his disciples, who would not accept his teaching, "went back, and walked no more with him."

"Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?"

"Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

"And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." (John 6: 66-69.)

Following the death of the Savior, would his Apostles have carried on, teaching his doctrine, even giving their lives in the most painful of cir-

cumstances, if there were any uncertainty concerning him whom they represented and whose doctrine they taught? There was no lack of certitude on the part of Paul after he had seen a light and heard a voice while en route to Damascus to persecute the Christians. For more than three decades after that, he devoted his time, his strength, his life to the spreading of the gospel of the resurrected Lord. Without regard for personal comfort or safety, he traveled over the known world of his time, declaring that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

"Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 8:38-39.)

Executed in Rome, Paul sealed with his death his final testimony of his conviction of the divine sonship of Jesus Christ.

So it was with the early Christians, thousands upon thousands of them, who suffered imprisonment, torture, and death rather than recant their stated beliefs in the life and resurrection of the Son of God.

Would there ever have been a Reformation without the certitude that drove with boldness such giants as Luther, Huss, Zwingli, and others of their kind?

Certitude in modern times

As it was anciently, so has it been in modern times. Without certitude on the parts of believers, a religious cause becomes soft, without muscle, without the driving force that would broaden its influence and capture the hearts and affections of men and women. Theology may be argued over, but personal testimony, coupled with performance, cannot be refuted. This gospel dispensation, of which we are the beneficiaries, opened with a glorious vision in which the Father and the Son ap-

peared to the boy Joseph Smith. Having had that experience, the boy recounted it to one of the preachers of the community. He treated the account "with great contempt, saying it was all of the devil, that there were no such things as visions or revelations in these days." (JS—H 1:21.)

Others took up the cry against him. He became the object of severe persecution. But, he said, and note these words: "I had actually seen a light, and in the midst of that light I saw two Personages, and they did in reality speak to me; and though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true; and while they were persecuting me, reviling me, and speaking all manner of evil against me falsely for so saying, I was led to say in my heart: Why persecute me for telling the truth? I have actually seen a vision; and who am I that I can withstand God, or why does the world think to make me deny what I have actually seen? For I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it." (JS—H 1:25.)

There is no lack of certitude in that statement. For Joseph Smith that experience was as real as the warmth of the sun at noonday. He never flagged nor wavered in his conviction. Listen to his later testimony of the risen Lord:

"And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

"For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—

"That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God." (D&C 76:22-24.)

So certain was he of the cause he led, so sure of his divinely-given calling, that he placed them above the

value of his own life. With prescient knowledge of his forthcoming death, he surrendered himself to those who would deliver him defenseless into the hands of a mob. He sealed his testimony with his life's blood.

It was so with his followers. One will find no evidence, not a scintilla of it, that certitude was the enemy of religion in their lives and actions. Time after time they left their comfortable homes, first in New York, then in Ohio and Missouri, later in Illinois; and even after reaching this valley many left again to plant colonies over a vast area of the West. Why? Because of their faith in the cause of which they were a part.

Many died in those long and difficult journeys, the victims of disease, exposure to the elements, and the brutal attacks of their enemies. Some six thousand lie buried somewhere between the Missouri River and this valley. Their love for the truth meant more to them than did life itself.

It has been thus ever since. I wrote these beautiful words as President David O. McKay spoke them to a small group some years ago. Said he:

"As absolute as the certainty that you have in your hearts that tonight will be followed by dawn tomorrow morning, so is my assurance that Jesus Christ is the Savior of mankind, the light that will dispel the darkness of the world, through the gospel restored by direct revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith."

Our beloved President Spencer W. Kimball has said: "I know that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God and that he was crucified for the sins of the world.

"He is my friend, my Savior, my Lord, my God." (ENSIGN, Nov. 1978, p. 73.)

Certitude of truth of this work

It is that kind of certitude that has moved this Church forward in the face of persecution, ridicule, sacrifice of

fortune, the leaving of loved ones to travel to distant lands to carry the gospel message. That conviction motivates today as it has done from the beginning of this work. Faith in the hearts of millions that this cause is true, that God is our Eternal Father, and that Jesus is the Christ, must ever be the great motivating force in our lives.

We have today some thirty thousand missionaries in the field at a cost of millions to their families. Why do they do it? Because of their conviction of the truth of this work. The membership of the Church is now approaching five million. What is the reason for this phenomenal growth? It is because certainty comes into the hearts of hundreds of thousands of converts each year, converts who are touched by the power of the Holy Ghost. We have a great functioning and effective welfare program. Those who view it marvel at it. It works only because of the faith of those who participate in it.

With the growth of the Church we must build new houses of worship, many hundreds of them. They are costly. But the people give of their means, not only for this purpose, but in the regular and faithful payment of their tithes, because of the certitude of the truth of this work.

By the Spirit, results are certain and testimony sure

The marvelous and wonderful thing is that any individual who desires to know the truth may receive that conviction. The Lord himself gave the formula when he said, "He that doeth the will of the Father shall know of the doctrine, whether I speak of God or whether I speak of myself." (See John 7:17.)

It will take study of the word of God. It will take prayer and anxious seeking of the source of all truth. It will take living the gospel, an experiment, if you please, in following the

teachings. I do not hesitate to promise, because I know from personal experience, that out of all of this will come, by the power of the Holy Ghost, a conviction, a testimony, a certain knowledge.

People of the world seem unable to believe it, so many of them. What they do not realize is that the things of God are understood only by the Spirit of God. There must be effort. There must be humility. There must be prayer. But the results are certain and the testimony is sure.

If our people, as individuals, ever lose that certitude, the Church will dwindle as so many others have. I have no fear of that. I am confident that an ever-enlarging membership will seek for and find that personal conviction which we call testimony, which comes by the power of the Holy Ghost, and which can weather the storms of adversity.

To those who vacillate, who equivocate, who qualify their assertions with uncertainty when speaking of the things of God, these words from the book of Revelation are appropriate:

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I

will spue thee out of my mouth." (Rev. 3:15-16.)

My brethren and sisters, as we begin this great conference, I not only invoke the blessings of the Lord upon you but with certitude give you my witness of the truth. I know that God our Eternal Father lives. I know that. I know that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior and Redeemer of mankind, the author of our salvation. I know that this work of which we are a part is the work of God; that this is the Church of Jesus Christ. Great is our opportunity for service therein and strong and certain is our faith concerning it. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "The Lord Is My Shepherd" without announcement.

President Tanner

President Gordon B. Hinckley has just spoken to us, and the Choir has sung "The Lord Is My Shepherd."

We will now be pleased to hear from Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a new member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

My brothers and sisters: I publicly express my deep gratitude to the Lord, to our remarkable and beloved President Kimball, and to his counselors for my call to the Twelve—among whom I shall be the least, long after being the last so ordained.

I express deep love and appreciation to my wife, who is splendid in every way; to my goodly and gracious parents and sisters; to my

children, who are committed to the kingdom and who have been wise enough to have married committed eternal partners.

Divine Redeemer, incomparable

I realize that my life, of course, must constitute my real acceptance of the apostolic charge. Even so, this poor tongue now seeks to speak in

praise and testimony of our Divine Redeemer.

Whether descriptively designated as Creator, Only Begotten Son, Prince of Peace, Advocate, Mediator, Son of God, Savior, Messiah, Author and Finisher of Salvation, King of Kings—I witness that Jesus Christ is the only name under heaven whereby one can be saved! (See D&C 18:23.)

I testify that He is utterly incomparable in what He *is*, what He *knows*, what He has *accomplished*, and what He has *experienced*. Yet, movingly, He calls us His friends. (See John 15:15.)

We can trust, worship, and even adore Him without any reservation! As the only Perfect Person to sojourn on this planet, there is none like Him! (See Isa. 46:9.)

In *intelligence and performance*, He far surpasses the individual and the composite *capacities and achievements* of all who have lived, live now, and will yet live! (See Abr. 3:19.)

He rejoices in our genuine goodness and achievement, but any assessment of where we stand in relation to Him tells us that we do not stand at all! We kneel!

Can we, even in the depths of disease, tell Him anything at all about suffering? In ways we cannot comprehend, our sicknesses and infirmities were borne by Him even before these were borne by us. (See Alma 7:11-12; Matt. 8:17.) The very weight of our combined sins caused Him to descend below all. (See D&C 122:8.) We have never been, nor will we be, in depths such as He has known. Thus His atonement made His empathy and His capacity to succor us perfect, for which we can be everlastingly grateful as He tutors us in our trials. There was no ram in the thicket at Calvary to spare Him, this Friend of Abraham and Isaac.

Can those who yearn for hearth or home instruct Him as to what it is like to be homeless or on the move? Did He not say in a disclosing moment that

“the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head”? (Matt. 8:20.)

Can we really counsel Him about being misrepresented, misunderstood, or betrayed? Or what it is like when even friends falter or “go a fishing”? (See John 21:3.)

Can we educate Him regarding injustice or compare failures of judicial systems with the Giver of the Law, who, in divine dignity, endured its substantive and procedural perversion?

And when we feel so alone, can we presume to teach Him who trod “the wine-press alone” anything at all about feeling forsaken? (D&C 76:107; see also Matt. 27:46.)

Cannot the childless who crave children count on His empathy? For He loved children and said, “Of such is the kingdom of heaven”; and “one by one, [He] blessed them,” and “he wept . . . and prayed unto the Father for them. And when he had done this he wept again.” (Matt. 19:14; 3 Ne. 17:21-22.)

Can we instruct or enlighten the Atoner?

Do we presume to instruct Him in either compassion or mercy? Even at the apogee of His agony upon the cross, He, nevertheless, consoled a thief beside Him, saying, “To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” (Luke 23:43.)

Can we excuse our compromises because of the powerful temptations of status seeking? It was He who displayed incredible integrity as the adversary made Him an offer which could not be refused—“all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.” (Matt. 4:8.) But He refused!

Can we teach Him about enduring irony? His remaining possession, a cloak, was gambled for even as He died. (See Matt. 27:35.) Yet the very earth was His footstool! Jesus gave

mankind living water so that we shall never thirst again, yet on the cross He was given vinegar! (See John 4:10-19; Matt 27:48.)

Can we lecture Him on liberty, He who sets us free from our last enemies—sin and death?

Can those who revere human freedom yet complain about human suffering ever achieve real reconciliation except through His gospel?

Can those concerned with nourishing the poor advise Him concerning feeding the multitudes?

Can those who are concerned with medicine instruct Him about healing the sick?

Or can we inform the Atoner about feeling the sting of ingratitude when one's service goes unappreciated or unnoticed? Only one leper in ten thanked Jesus, who asked searchingly, "But where are the nine?" (Luke 17:17.)

Should those concerned with lengthening the lifespan offer to enlighten the Resurrector of all mankind?

Can scientists, whose discipline brings the discovery of the interweavings in the tapestry of truth, instruct the Tapestry Maker?

Should we seek to counsel Him in courage? Should we rush forth eagerly to show Him our mortal medals—our scratches and bruises—He who bears His five special wounds?

His "word of power"

Does not His "word of power" actually bring entire new worlds into being and cause others to pass away? (See Moses 1:35-38.) Yet in the midst of such galactic governance, He interviewed His Twelve unhurriedly "one by one" (3 Ne. 28:1) and later called a farm boy in rural New York.

Has He not invited us to observe His cosmic craftsmanship in the heavens that we might see "God moving in His majesty and power"? (D&C 88:47.) But do we not also see Him

"moving in His majesty and power" as each prodigal finally completes his homeward orbit?

Though His creations are so vast as to be numberless even to computerized man, has Jesus not told us that the very hairs of our head are numbered? (See Matt. 10:30; Moses 1:35-38.)

Did not the resurrected Jesus stand by an imprisoned Paul, telling him to be of good cheer and calling him on his mission to Rome? (See Acts 23:11.) Likewise, Jesus stands by the righteous in all their individual ordeals.

Did not this good and true Shepherd forego repose after the glorious but awful Atonement in order to establish His work among the lost sheep, disobedient in the days of Noah? (See 1 Pet. 3:18-20.) Did He not then visit still other lost sheep in the Americas? (See John 10:16; 3 Ne. 15:17, 21.) Then still other lost sheep? (See 3 Ne. 16:1-3.) What can we tell Him about conscientiousness?

Fulness of His ministry

Indeed, we cannot teach Him anything! But we can listen to Him. We can love Him, we can honor Him, we can worship Him! We can keep His commandments, and we can feast upon His scriptures! Yes, we who are so forgetful and even rebellious are never forgotten by Him! We are His "work" and His "glory," and He is never distracted! (See Moses 1:39.)

Therefore, in addition to my boundless admiration of His achievements and my adoration of Jesus for what He is—knowing that my superlatives are too shallow to do more than echo his excellence—as one of His Special Witnesses in the fulness of times, I attest to the fulness of His ministry!

How dare some treat His ministry as if it were all beatitudes and no declaratives! How myopic it is to view His ministry as all crucifixion and no

resurrection! How provincial to perceive it as all Calvary and no Palmyra! All rejection at a village called Capernaum and no acceptance in the City of Enoch! All relapse and regression in ancient Israel and no Bountiful with its ensuing decades of righteousness!

Jesus Christ is the Jehovah of the Red Sea and of Sinai, the Resurrected Lord, the Spokesman for the Father in the theophany at Palmyra—a Palmyra pageant with a precious audience of one!

He lives today, mercifully granting unto all nations as much light as they can bear and messengers of their own to teach them. (See Alma 29:8.) And who better than the Light of the World can decide the degree of divine disclosure—whether it is to be flashlights or floodlights?

True story of mankind

Soon, however, all flesh shall see Him together. All knees shall bow in His presence, and all tongues confess His name. (See D&C 76:110-11; Philip. 2:10-11.) Knees which never before have assumed *that* posture for *that* purpose will do so then—and promptly. Tongues which have never before spoken His name except in gross profanity will do so then—and worshipfully.

Soon, He who was once mockingly dressed in purple will come again, attired in red apparel, reminding us whose blood redeemed us. (See D&C 133:48-49.)

All will then acknowledge the completeness of His justice and His mercy (see Alma 12:15) and will see how human indifference to God—not God's indifference to humanity—accounts for so much suffering.

Then we will see the true story of mankind—and not through glass darkly. (See 1 Cor. 13:12.) The great military battles will appear as mere bonfires which blazed briefly, and the mortal accounts of the human experi-

ence will be but graffiti on the walls of time.

Before that reckoning moment, however, both your ministry and mine will unfold in the grim but also glorious circumstances of the last days.

Circle of certitude

Yes, there will be wrenching polarization on this planet, but also the remarkable reunion with our colleagues in Christ from the City of Enoch. Yes, nation after nation will become a house divided, but more and more unifying Houses of the Lord will grace this planet. Yes, Armageddon lies ahead. But so does Adam-ondi-Ahman!

Meanwhile, did not Jesus tell us what to expect by way of heat in the final summer? Did He not also say that He would prove our faith and patience by trial?

Did He not provide needed proportion when He spoke of the comparative few who will find the narrow way leading to the strait gate? (See Matt. 7:13-14.) Did He not also say that His Saints, scattered upon all the face of the earth, would, in the midst of wickedness, commotion, and persecution, be "armed with righteousness and with the power of God," for He is determined to have "a pure people"? (1 Ne. 14:12-14; D&C 100:16.)

His work proceeds forward almost as if in the comparative calmness of the eye of a storm. First, He reigns in the midst of His saints; soon, in all the world! (See D&C 1:36; 133:2-3.)

So as the shutters of human history begin to close as if before a gathering storm, and as events scurry across the human scene like so many leaves before a wild wind—those who stand before the warm glow of the gospel fire can be permitted a shiver of the soul. Yet in our circle of certitude, we know, even in the midst of all these

things, that there will be no final frustration of God's purposes. God has known "all things from the beginning; wherefore, he prepareth a way to accomplish all his works among the children of men." (1 Ne. 9:6.)

Humbly, therefore, I promise to go whithersoever I am sent, striving to speak the words He would have me say and acknowledging in the tremblings of my soul that I cannot fully be His Special Witness unless my life is fully special. I close with pleadings from the hymn "O, Divine Redeemer!" which pleadings are my pleadings:

*Ah! turn me not away,
Receive me, tho' unworthy, . . .
Hear Thou my cry, . . .
Behold, Lord, my distress! . . .
Thy pity show in my deep
anguish! . . .
Shield me in danger,
O regard me! . . .
O, divine Redeemer! . . .
Grant me pardon, and remember not,
remember not, O Lord, my sins! . . .
Help me, my Savior!
(Charles Gounod, New York: G.
Schirmer.)*

In the holy name of Jesus Christ,
amen.

Elder Richard G. Scott

The Lord's plan

Our son has a small toy robot. It can walk and perform other simple functions. Should it fall, it can, with some difficulty, right itself. It performs its programmed functions mechanically, without feeling. Yet, it has no capacity to grow or to alter its destined course. It responds immediately to any external force that satisfies its needs, and ceases to function when its internal spring is spent. Satan would have all of the children of Father in Heaven behave like robots.

The Choir sang "Faith of Our Fathers" without announcement.

President Tanner

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us, and the Choir has sung "Faith of Our Fathers."

The congregation will please sing "Come, Ye Children of the Lord."

The congregation joined the Tabernacle Choir in singing "Come, Ye Children of the Lord."

President Tanner

Elder Richard G. Scott of the First Quorum of the Seventy will speak to us, and he will be followed by Elder Howard W. Hunter of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

How different is the plan of the Lord. Consider the birth of an infant—an independent spirit created by God (see Moses 6:36) and matured in the premortal existence, tabernacled in a body of flesh and bones. A mother and father participate with God in this sacred experience. These parents love, guide, and inspire the growing child. With proper understanding of and obedience to the teachings of the Savior, the child learns "precept upon precept" (see D&C 98:12), and by practice of truth, is converted into a self-reliant, loving, serving son or daughter

of God, whose potential for growth and accomplishment is limitless; whose destiny, if he is fully obedient, is to return to the presence of God to partake of his glory and to share in his exalted work. Such an individual can have great happiness in this life as well.

Life—a period of proving and growth

Mortal life is a proving ground. God said, "We will make an earth wherein these may dwell;

"And we will prove them here-with, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them." (see Abr. 3:24-26.)

Our proving grounds vary. Some of us are born with physical limitations; others are lonely or do not enjoy good health. Some are challenged by economic conditions, the lack of good parental example, or a myriad of other things that test our mettle. While much of the pain and sorrow we endure is the result of our own stubborn acts of disobedience, many of the things that appear to be obstacles in our path are used by a loving Creator for our own personal growth.

Life never was intended to be easy. Rather, it is a period of proving and growth. It is interwoven with difficulties, challenges, and burdens. We are immersed in a sea of persistent, worldly pressures that could destroy our happiness. Yet these very forces, if squarely faced, provide opportunity for tremendous personal growth and development. The conquering of adversity produces strength of character, forges self-confidence, engenders self-respect, and assures success in righteous endeavor.

One who exercises free agency by faith grows from challenges, is purified by sorrow, and lives at peace. In contrast, one who frantically seeks to satisfy appetite and worldly desire is driven in a downward spiral to tragic depths. Temptation is the motivating

influence in his exercise of free agency.

A loving, patient, understanding Father

Some of us at one time or another let the pressures of life or the false teachings of men cloud our vision, but when we see with clarity, the difference between the plan of God and that of Satan is unmistakable. Satan would convert divinely independent spirits into creatures bound by habit, restricted by appetite, and enslaved by transgression. He has never deviated from his intent to enslave and destroy. He would persuade us to improperly use the divine gift of free agency. Through subtle, tempting influence, he encourages us to gratify desire for personal power and influence or to succumb to appetite. He progressively binds those that follow carnal desire. Unless they repent, they are effectively converted into robots who no longer exercise control over their eternal destiny.

He cleverly confuses some until they depict God as an exacting, harsh judge, or as a distant deity, devoted to meticulous scorekeeping. God is neither. He is a loving, patient, understanding Father deeply interested in our personal welfare, anxious for our happiness, and totally committed to our eternal progression.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." (John 3:16-17.)

A righteous character and true humility

Our happiness on earth, as well as our eternal salvation, requires many correct decisions, no one of which is difficult to make. Together they forge

a character resistant to the eroding influences that surround us. Noble character is like a treasured porcelain made of select raw materials, formed with faith, carefully crafted by consistent righteous acts, and fired in the furnace of uplifting experience. It is an object of great beauty and priceless worth. Yet it can be broken in a moment through transgression. When protected by self-control, righteous character will endure for eternity.

We must cultivate true humility, not the ability to appear humble, but the sacred gift of true humility.

Humility is the precious, fertile soil of righteous character. It germinates the seeds of personal growth. When cultivated through the exercise of faith, pruned by repentance, and fortified by obedience and good works, such seeds produce the cherished fruit of spirituality. (See Alma 26:22.) Divine inspiration and power then result. Inspiration is to know the will of the Lord. Power is the capability to accomplish that inspired will. (See D&C 43:15-16.) Such power comes from God after we have done "all we can do." (2 Ne. 25:23.)

The plan of happiness

May I share these introspective thoughts of an individual that found the path to happiness: "I am truly, deeply loved of the Lord. He will do all that I permit him to do for my happiness. The key to unlock that power is myself. While others will

counsel, suggest, exhort, and urge, the Lord has given me the responsibility and the agency to make the basic decisions for my happiness and eternal progress. As I read and ponder the scriptures and with deep faith earnestly seek my Father in prayer, peace envelops my being. With sincere repentance and obedience to the commandments of God, coupled with genuine concern for and service to others, fear is purged from my heart. I am conditioned to receive and to interpret divine aid given to mark my path with clarity. No friend, bishop, stake president, or General Authority can do this for me. It is my divine right to do it for myself. I have learned to be at peace and to be happy. I know I will have a rewarding, productive, meaningful life."

This individual is not a robot enslaved by adversity, nor need we be as we wisely use our free agency to follow the teachings of the Savior.

With all the love of my heart, I extend an invitation to all to obtain a fulness of an understanding of the plan of happiness and exaltation provided by the Savior. I testify that this fulness is found in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I love you and ask you to seek that fulness, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Tanner

Elder Richard G. Scott has just spoken to us.

Elder Howard W. Hunter of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now address us.

Elder Howard W. Hunter

Conference time, spiritual revival

From around the world this season of the year come thousands of people who gather at what has become known as the "Crossroads of the West" for a conference of the mem-

bers of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Many years have passed since settlers came in covered wagons into this valley in the tops of the Rockies. Conference was an important occasion in their day, and it continues to be a significant occasion

in ours as people of faith and devotion come together to renew and strengthen that faith.

Conference time is a season of spiritual revival when knowledge and testimony are increased and solidified that God lives and blesses those who are faithful. It is a time when an understanding that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, is burned into the hearts of those who have the determination to serve him and keep his commandments. Conference is the time when our leaders give us inspired direction in the conduct of our lives—a time when souls are stirred and resolutions are made to be better husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, more obedient sons and daughters, better friends and neighbors.

Commitment to fellowmen

As we enter into the spirit of conference, another feeling comes to us—one of deep gratitude that we have been blessed by an understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ as it has been restored to earth in this dispensation of time. We mix with others from around the world who have that same feeling, and we wish that men and women everywhere could understand and find the joy and peace that come from the knowledge that all people are children of God and therefore brothers and sisters—literally, actually, and in fact, regardless of race, color, language, or religious belief. Turning to the scriptures, we read:

“And he inviteth them all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God.” (2 Ne. 26:33.)

We are reminded as we participate in conference of the deep commitment we have to our fellowmen, our brothers and sisters throughout the world. It is a commitment to share

with them a gift that has come to us and the greatest gift we could give to them—an understanding of the fulness of the gospel. We are committed to declare to all the world that Jesus of Nazareth is the Savior of mankind, that he has paid for our sins by his atoning sacrifice, that he has risen from the dead, and that he lives today. Our responsibility is to help the people of the world understand the true nature of our Father in Heaven: that he is a personal God, a loving father, and one to whom each of us may go with our problems and concerns.

A living prophet

We who are met here today claim a special, unique knowledge of the Savior's gospel. Most striking of all, to those who first become acquainted with us, is our declaration to the world that we are guided by a living prophet of God—one who communicates with, is inspired by, and receives revelation from the Lord.

How do we know such things are true? We know because God has spoken in our time—in our day. The heavens have opened; God has communicated his word to man; eternal truths have been given to the world from the Father of us all. God the Father and Jesus Christ, his Son, have appeared to and have talked with men in this dispensation. In fact, the Lord has appeared on numerous occasions.

We know that our Father in Heaven loves us and is concerned about our spiritual and temporal welfare. We know that his Son, Jesus Christ, our Elder Brother, has provided a way for us to return to the presence of God; that there is a divine purpose for our being here on earth; that we have a work to do which is an important part of his plan. In addition, we know many details of that plan and have received specific direction about our responsibilities.

For those who hear our message and wonder how we can claim to know

of things that may appear to some to be beyond logic or proof, we answer with a statement written by Paul to the church in Corinth:

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

"But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

"For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, except he has the Spirit of God.

"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

"Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." (JST, 1 Cor. 2:9-13.)

Approach Father through Holy Spirit

The learning and wisdom of the earth and all that is temporal comes to us through our physical senses in earthly, temporal ways. We touch, we see, we hear and taste and smell and learn. However, spiritual knowledge, as Paul has said, comes to us in a spiritual way from its spiritual source. Paul continues:

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. 2:14.)

We have found, and know, that the only way to gain spiritual knowledge is to approach our Father in Heaven through the Holy Spirit in the name of Jesus Christ. When we do this, and if we are spiritually prepared, we see things our eyes have not previously seen, and we hear things we

may not have previously heard—"the things which God hath prepared," using Paul's words. (1 Cor. 2:9.) These things we receive through the Spirit.

"Weigh the words of this conference"

We believe, and testify to the world, that communication with our Father in Heaven and direction from the Lord are available today. We testify that God speaks to man as he did in the days of the Savior and in Old Testament times. We would say to the world: "Listen to and weigh the words of this conference; consider the direction and counsel that come from those who speak. Then, after prayerful pondering, that sweet warm conviction that comes from the Holy Spirit will testify to you of its truthfulness."

Let me read to you the words of the Lord spoken through one of his prophets:

"God is merciful unto all who believe on his name; therefore he desireth, in the first place, that ye should believe, yea, even on his word. . . .

"If ye will awake and arouse your faculties, even to an experiment upon my words, and exercise a particle of faith, yea, even if ye can no more than desire to believe, let this desire work in you, even until ye believe in a manner that ye can give place for a portion of my words.

"Now, we will compare the word unto a seed. Now, if ye give place, that a seed may be planted in your heart, behold, if it be a true seed, or a good seed, if ye do not cast it out by your unbelief, that ye will resist the Spirit of the Lord, behold, it will begin to swell within your breasts; and when you feel these swelling motions, ye will begin to say within yourselves—It must needs be that this is a good seed, or that the word is good, for it beginneth to enlarge my soul; yea, it beginneth to enlighten my understanding,

yea, it beginneth to be delicious to me." (Alma 32:22, 27-28.)

"Seek earnestly to understand the truth"

To you who are seeking or questioning the great purposes of life—to you who are wondering why we are here on earth and what the Lord would have us accomplish while we are here—we would say, as a modern-day prophet has said: "Let no man treat these things lightly or doubtingly; but let every man seek earnestly to understand the truth and teach his children to become familiar with those truths of heaven that have been restored to the earth in the latter day." (Joseph F. Smith, in Conference Report, Apr. 1902, p. 85.)

It is an honor to be in the service of the Lord, to be commissioned by him to declare to the world that his kingdom is here on the earth, available to all who will listen to his message, accept his gospel, and follow his commandments. We know that this work will continue to roll forth, as the Prophet Joseph Smith has said, "till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes

of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done." (*History of the Church*, 4:540.)

Of these things I testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Following Elder Hunter's address, the Choir sang "Seek Him That Maketh the Seven Stars" without announcement.

President Tanner

Elder Howard W. Hunter has just addressed us, and the Choir has sung "Seek Him That Maketh the Seven Stars."

The concluding speaker will be President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency. The Choir will then sing "The Lord Bless You and Keep You." The benediction will be offered by Elder Robert E. Wells, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The conference will stand adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

President Marion G. Romney

"Know . . . the only true God and Jesus Christ"

In the seventeenth chapter of John, it is recorded that as Jesus prayed to the Father in behalf of his disciples, he said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John 17:3.)

In his prayer Jesus made it perfectly clear that the eleven disciples knew him to be the Son of God. He had taught them who he was and that

he had been sent from his Father. That they had received a witness in their hearts and souls to the truth of his teachings is made clear in the following statement by John:

"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

"As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

"I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

"Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

"For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me." (John 17:1-2, 6-8.)

By receiving the Savior's message and accepting him for what he was and is, the Apostles obtained eternal life.

This knowledge of "the only true God, and Jesus Christ" (John 17:3) is the most important knowledge in the universe; it is the knowledge without which the Prophet Joseph Smith said no man could be saved. The lack of it is the ignorance referred to in the revelation wherein it is written: "It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance." (D&C 131:6.)

More than one source of knowledge

We should keep in mind that there is more than one source of knowledge. There is the knowledge obtainable through man's normal sensory organs. Such knowledge should be sought after. The Lord has commanded us to get all such knowledge we can in this manner.

There is also knowledge of divine things which comes through direct revelation—religious knowledge, it is sometimes called. And there are two aspects to religious knowledge. One of them concerns the great store of religious knowledge which we have in the scriptures. Ever since the beginning, from Father Adam's time until now, the Lord has given through his prophets, by revelation, religious knowledge. Such knowledge concerns the verities of life. It deals with God and his Beloved Son, the great gospel

plan, and the mission of Jesus as Savior and Redeemer. The other aspect to religious knowledge is the personal witness available through inspiration, a form of revelation that comes to each individual.

The whole world has access to the revealed word of God as it is recorded in the Bible. And the whole world *could have* access to the revealed religious knowledge recorded in the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price.

Millions of people who read and study the Bible do not understand it. Millions do not understand what Jesus said in the prayer recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John from which our theme is taken. The reason they do not understand it is that their understanding has not been enlightened by the power of the Holy Ghost. They have not received a personal witness.

"Except a man be born again"

To know God our Eternal Father and Jesus Christ, whom he sent, one must, as did the Apostles of old, learn of them through the process of divine revelation. One must be born again. Let me give you an illustration from the recorded teachings of the Savior as to what I mean.

In the third chapter of John, it is written that Nicodemus, a very wise man, in fact a member of the Sanhedrin, came to see Jesus by night—he did not yet have enough courage to come to see him during the daytime. But he came to Jesus by night, and said:

"Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." (John 3:2.)

In this statement Nicodemus unwittingly but clearly revealed the fact that he did not know who Jesus was. All he could see in the Son of God was a great teacher. This was all he could be expected to see, however,

because he based his knowledge of who Jesus was upon what he had seen and heard of the Master's miracles. Perceiving this, Jesus informed him that the knowledge of divine things could not be had through man's normal senses.

"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," said Jesus. (John 3:3.)

Although Nicodemus was wise in the things of the world, he could not understand this simple statement of truth. As a matter of fact, his answer revealed amazement:

"How can a man be born when he is old?" he said. "Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" (John 3:4.)

Jesus, still persisting in his efforts to get him to understand, continued: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5.) Here we have the Savior saying that the kingdom of God can neither be seen nor entered except one be born again.

But Nicodemus still could not understand. Jesus then stated the great law: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." That is, that which we learn through our normal senses has to do with this earth. "And that which is born of the Spirit," he said, "is spirit." (John 3:6.) The things that we learn through the process of inspiration are of God, of the Spirit.

Seek knowledge by the Spirit

Everyone who would know God the Eternal Father and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent, must receive such knowledge by the Spirit. Church members have, of course, been through the process. They have been baptized and confirmed members of the Church and have had hands laid upon their heads for the gift of the Holy Ghost. Through these ordinances the door is unlocked. Submission to this is absolutely essential to rebirth. But to obtain life eternal one must so humble and purify

himself that he in fact receives through the power of the Holy Ghost a personal witness that God is his Eternal Father and that Jesus Christ is God's Son and our personal Savior as well as the Redeemer of the world.

Let me give you an illustration. It is personal to my family, but it makes the point, so I hope you will pardon my use of it. My wife was reared in a home where they had prayer night and morning; where, almost daily, they discussed gospel principles around the family hearth. She loved education and wanted to go to college. Her father, however, thought college was for boys. In her struggle for an education, she developed an attitude of awe toward people who had been through college. As a member of a stake Sunday School board in Idaho Falls, she taught a class. There came to the class a nonmember of the Church, the wife of one of the brethren on the board. This woman had received a college degree from the University of Idaho. My wife, having not yet received her degree, was a little timid in the presence of this woman.

One of the lessons in the course dealt with the First Vision of the Prophet Joseph Smith. As she made her preparation for the lesson, there came into her mind the realization that this nonmember would be present in the class. This realization was followed by the question, "What will she think of me, an ignorant girl, saying that the Father and the Son actually came down from heaven and appeared before a fourteen-year-old boy?" The thought terrified her, and she concluded that she couldn't do it. She went to her mother, crying, and said, "Mother, I can't teach this lesson. I don't know that Joseph Smith saw the Father and the Son. I know I have been taught it all through my life by you and Father. I have believed you, but personally I don't know it. This woman will ridicule me. I just can't stand up before the class with this woman present and teach this lesson."

Now, her mother had not been to school very much. She was not an educated person by the world's standards, but she had faith in God the Eternal Father and in Jesus Christ, his Son, and she said to her daughter, "What did Joseph Smith do to get that vision?"

"Well," she answered, "he prayed."

"Why don't you do that?" she said to her daughter.

This young girl returned to her room and there, for the first time in her life in fact, she went to the Almighty with a sincere desire to know whether he lived and whether he and the Savior actually appeared to the Prophet Joseph. Coming out of that room, she went to her Sunday School class and taught that lesson with joy, with knowledge, with conviction. She had been born of the Spirit. She knew.

Now, my beloved brethren and sisters, everyone has to have a spiritual experience to gain eternal life, to know God the Eternal Father, and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent. I plead with you to seek this knowledge if you

don't already have that knowledge. You know the way now. It is not a mass experience. It must come to each individually. It must come to you. It must come to those whom you teach. We must teach by the Spirit, "and if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach," said the Savior. "The Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith." (D&C 42:14.)

You who have been baptized have the right to it. Desire it. Pray for it. Work for it, and God will give it to you.

That you may each receive that knowledge of God the Eternal Father and Jesus Christ whom he has sent, to know which is eternal life, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "The Lord Bless You and Keep You."

The benediction was pronounced by Elder Robert E. Wells.

FIRST DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

SECOND SESSION

The second general session of the 151st Semiannual General Conference began at 2:00 P.M. on Saturday, October 3, 1981.

President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

Music for this session was provided by a Primary children's choir from the Ogden Cliffview, Mt. Lewis, and Ben Lomond regions under the direction of Vanja Y. Watkins with Roy M. Darley at the organ.

Prior to the commencement of this session, the Primary choir sang "I

Know My Father Lives" and "I Am a Child of God" without announcement.

At the beginning of the meeting, President Romney made the following remarks:

President Marion G. Romney

President Spencer W. Kimball is watching the proceedings of this session on television and has asked that I conduct it.

As was reported this morning, President Kimball continues to gain in strength as he convalesces from recent surgery. Our love and best wishes go out to this great leader whose example

of faith and perseverance is an inspiration to all.

We welcome all assembled in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on Temple Square in this, the second session, of the 151st Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We also welcome the many members and friends of the Church tuned to these proceedings by radio, television, and direct wire. There is an overflow congregation in the Salt Palace, where Elders J. Thomas Fyans and W. Grant Bangerter preside.

We are pleased to acknowledge especially our guests who are present this afternoon, along with general and local Church leaders and members from many parts of the world.

We express our appreciation to the owners and operators of many radio and television stations for their cooperation in making these proceedings available to members and friends of the Church in many countries.

The music for this afternoon will be provided by a Primary children's choir from the Ogden Cliffview, Mt. Lewis, and Ben Lomond regions. This choir is under the direction of Vanja Y. Watkins with Roy Darley at the organ. To begin this session, the choir sang "I Know My Father Lives" and "I Am a Child of God."

The choir will now sing "I Think When I Read That Sweet Story" and "I Feel My Savior's Love."

The invocation will be offered by Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Primary choir sang "I Think When I Read That Sweet Story" and "I Feel my Savior's Love."

The invocation was given by Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin.

President Romney

The choir will now sing "A Young Man Prepared," "I Can Follow God's Plan for Me," and "I Can Be Valiant."

The Primary choir sang "A Young Man Prepared," "I Can Follow God's Plan for Me," and "I Can Be Valiant."

President Romney

Elder Thomas S. Monson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our first speaker. He will be followed by Elder Robert D. Hales, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Thomas S. Monson

Not long ago a visitor asked, "What is there to see while I am in Salt Lake City?" Instinctively I suggested a tour of Temple Square, a drive to the nearby canyons, a visit to the Bingham copper mine, and perhaps a swim in the Great Salt Lake. A fear of being misunderstood kept me

from expressing the thought, "Have you considered spending an hour or two at one of our cemeteries?" I never did reveal to him that wherever I travel I try to pay a visit to the town cemetery. It is a time of contemplation, of reflection on the meaning of life and the inevitability of death.

Cemeteries: small, large, and a battlefield

In the small cemetery in the equally small town of Santa Clara, Utah, I remember the preponderance of Swiss names which adorn the weathered tombstones. Many of those persons left home and family in verdant Switzerland and, in response to the call, "Come to Zion," settled the communities where they now "rest in peace." They endured spring floods, summer droughts, scant harvests, and back-breaking labors. They left a legacy of sacrifice.

The largest cemeteries, and in many respects those which evoke the most tender emotions, are honored as the resting places of men who died in the caldron of conflict known as war while wearing the uniform of their country. One reflects on shattered dreams, unfulfilled hopes, grief-filled hearts, and lives cut short by the sharp scythe of war.

Acres of neat, white crosses in the cities of France and Belgium accentuate the terrible toll of World War I. Verdun, France, is—in reality—a gigantic cemetery. Each spring, as farmers till the earth, they uncover a helmet here, a gun barrel there—grim reminders of the millions of men who literally soaked the soil with the blood of their lives.

A tour of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and other battlefields of the American Civil War marks that conflict, where brother fought against brother. Some families lost farms, others possessions. One family lost all. Let me share with you that memorable letter which President Abraham Lincoln wrote to Mrs. Lydia Bixby:

"Dear Madam:

"I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which

should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the republic they died to save. I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours, to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

"Yours very sincerely and respectfully, Abraham Lincoln." (21 Nov. 1864; quoted in *Selections from the Letters, Speeches, and State Papers of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Ida M. Tarbell, Boston: Ginn and Company, 1911, p. 109.)

Sullivan brothers: "greater love hath no man"

A walk through Punchbowl Cemetery in Honolulu or the Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific at Manila reminds one that not all who died in World War II are buried in quiet fields of green. Many slipped beneath the waves of the oceans on which they sailed and on which they died.

Among the thousands of servicemen killed in the attack on Pearl Harbor was a sailor by the name of William Ball, from Fredericksburg, Iowa. What distinguished him from so many others who died on that day in 1941 was not any special act of heroism, but the tragic chain of events his death set in motion at home.

When William's boyhood buddies, the five Sullivan brothers from the nearby town of Waterloo, received word of his death, they marched out together to enlist in the navy. The Sullivans, who wished to avenge their friend, insisted that they remain together, and the navy granted their wish. On November 14, 1942, the cruiser on which the brothers served, the U.S.S. *Juneau*, was hit and sunk in a battle off Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands.

Almost two months went by before Mrs. Thomas Sullivan received the news, which arrived not by the usual telegram, but by special envoy: all five of her sons were reported missing in action in the South Pacific and presumed dead. Their bodies were never recovered.

One sentence only, spoken by one person only, provides a fitting epitaph: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13.)

Life and teachings of devoted teacher not buried in grave

Frequently the profound influence one life has on the lives of others is never spoken and, occasionally, little known. Such was the experience of a teacher of girls, even twelve-year-olds in the Beehive class of Mutual. She had no children of her own, though she and her husband dearly longed for children. Her love was expressed through the devotion to her special girls as she taught them eternal truths and lessons of life. Then came illness, followed by death. She was but twenty-seven.

Each year, on Memorial Day, her girls made a pilgrimage of prayer to the graveside of their teacher. First there were seven, then four, then two, and eventually just one, who continued the annual visit, always placing on the grave a bouquet of irises—a symbol of heartfelt gratitude. This year marked her twenty-fifth visit to the resting place of her teacher. Today she herself is a teacher of girls. Little wonder she is so successful. She mirrors the reflection of the teacher from whom came her inspiration. The life that teacher lived, the lessons that teacher taught, are not buried beneath the headstone which marks her grave, but live on in the personalities she helped to shape and the lives she so selflessly enriched. One is reminded of another master teacher, even the Lord. Once, with His finger, He wrote in the

sand a message. (See John 8:6.) The winds of time erased forever the words He wrote, but not the life He lived.

"All that we can know about those we have loved and lost," wrote Thornton Wilder, "is that they would wish us to remember them with a more intensified realization of their reality. . . . The highest tribute to the dead is not grief but gratitude."

Keller boys taught eternal truths

Two years ago, in beautiful Heber Valley just east of Salt Lake City, a loving mother and devoted father returned to that personal haven called home to discover that their three eldest sons lay dead. The night was bitter cold, and the fierce wind swept the falling snow, which covered the chimney, releasing deadly carbon monoxide fumes throughout the house.

The joint funeral service for the Keller boys was one of the most touching experiences of my life. The residents of the community had placed aside their daily tasks, children were excused from school, and all thronged to the chapel to express their deep feelings of condolence. So long as time and memory endure, I shall remember the scene of three shiny caskets, followed by grief-stricken parents and grandparents making their way to the front of the building.

The first speaker was the wrestling coach of the local high school. He paid tribute to Louis, the oldest boy. With an emotion-filled voice, and choking back the tears, he told how Louis was not necessarily the most gifted wrestler on the team, but added, "No one tried harder. What he lacked in athletic skill he made up with a determined heart."

Then a youth leader spoke of Travis. He told how Travis had excelled in Scouting, in Aaronic Priesthood work, and was such a sterling example to his friends.

Finally, a distinguished appearing

and obviously competent elementary school teacher told of Jason, the youngest of the three. She described him as quiet, even shy. Then, without embarrassment, she told how Jason had, in the scrawled penmanship of a boy, sent to her the sweetest and most welcome letter she had ever received. Its message was brief—just three words: “I love you.” She could barely complete her talk, so deep-felt were her emotions.

Through the tears and the sorrow of that special day, I observed eternal lessons that had been taught by those boys whose lives were honored and whose mortal missions concluded.

A coach expressed the determination to look beyond athletic prowess and into the heart of each boy. A youth leader made a solemn vow that every boy and girl would have the benefit which the program of the Church provided. An elementary school teacher looked at the small children, classmates of Jason. She said nothing, but her eyes revealed the determination of her soul. The message was unmistakably clear: “I will love each child. Each boy, each girl will be guided in the search for truth, in the development of talent, and be introduced to the wonderful world of service.”

And the audience, including Elders Marvin J. Ashton and Thomas S. Monson, will never again be the same. All will strive toward that perfection spoken of by the Master. Our inspiration? The lives of the boys who now rest from care and sorrow, and the fortitude of parents who trust in the Lord with all their hearts, who lean not to their own understanding, and who in all their ways acknowledge Him, knowing that He will direct their paths. (See Prov. 3:5-6.)

Let me share with you a portion of a letter sent to me by the noble mother of these three sons. It was written soon after their passing.

“We do have days and nights that right now seem so overwhelming. The

change in our home life has been so drastic. With almost half our family gone now, the cooking, washing, and even shopping are different. We miss the noise and clutter, the teasing and playing together. Such are gone. Sunday is so quiet. We miss seeing the sacrament blessed and passed by our sons. Sunday was truly our family together day. We ponder the thought: no missions, no weddings, no grandchildren. We would not ask for their return, but we could not say we would ever have willingly given them up. We have returned to our Church duties and our family responsibilities. Our desire is to so live that the Keller family will be a forever family.”

What happens to the spirit when we die?

To the Kellers, the Sullivans, and indeed to all who have loved and lost, let me share with you the conviction of my soul, the testimony of my heart, and the actual experiences of my life.

We know each one lived in the spirit world with Heavenly Father. We understand we have come to earth to learn, to live, to progress in our eternal journey toward perfection. Some remain on earth but for a moment, while others live long upon the land. The measure is not how long we live, but rather how well we live. Then come death and the beginning of a new chapter of life. Where does that chapter lead?

Many years ago I stood by the bedside of a young man, the father of two children, as he hovered between life and the great beyond. He took my hand in his, looked into my eyes and pleadingly asked, “Bishop, I know I am about to die. Tell me what happens to my spirit when I die.”

I prayed for heavenly guidance before attempting to respond. My attention was directed to the Book of Mormon, which rested on the table beside his bed. I held the book in my hand, and, as I stand before you here

today, that book opened to the fortieth chapter of Alma. I began to read aloud:

"Now my son, here is somewhat more I would say unto thee; for I perceive that thy mind is worried concerning the resurrection of the dead. . . .

"Now, concerning the state of the soul between death and the resurrection—Behold, it has been made known unto me by an angel, that the spirits of all men, as soon as they are departed from this mortal body . . . are taken home to that God who gave them life.

"And then shall it come to pass, that the spirits of those who are righteous are received into a state of happiness, which is called paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care, and sorrow." (Alma 40:1, 11-12.)

My young friend closed his eyes, expressed a sincere thank-you, and silently slipped away to that paradise about which we had spoken.

Resurrection: peace that surpasses understanding

Then comes that glorious day of resurrection, when spirit and body will be reunited, never again to be separated. "I am the resurrection, and the life," said the Christ to the grieving Martha. "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

"And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." (John 11:25-26.)

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (John 14:27.)

"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you . . . that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:2-3.)

This transcendent promise became a reality when Mary and the other Mary approached the garden tomb—that cemetery which had but one occupant. Let Luke, the physician, describe their experience:

"Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre. . . .

"And they found the stone rolled away. . . .

"... they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

"... as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:

"And . . . said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?" (Luke 24:1-5.)

"He is not here: for he is risen." (Matt. 28:6.)

This is the clarion call of Christendom. The reality of the resurrection provides to one and all the peace that surpasses understanding. (See Philip. 4:7.) It comforts those whose loved ones lie in Flanders fields, who perished in the depths of the sea or rest in tiny Santa Clara or peaceful Heber Valley. It is a universal truth.

As the least of His disciples, I declare my personal witness that death has been conquered, victory over the tomb has been won. May the words made sacred by Him who fulfilled them become actual knowledge to all. Remember them. Cherish them. Honor them. *He is risen*. Such is my fervent prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

Elder Thomas S. Monson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder Robert D. Hales, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and he will be followed by Elder Adney Y. Komatsu, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Robert D. Hales

Many of the examples used in the teachings of our Savior, Jesus Christ, were from everyday events which happened around him. In much the same way, modern-day prophets teach us by their daily example. The simple but powerful message is "Come, follow me."

May I share with you some of the teaching moments and lessons I have learned from a modern-day prophet.

"Sinned not, nor charged God foolishly"

We can learn much from the courage shown by President Kimball as he has endured his many illnesses. He is a living testimony that, by overcoming pain and adversity, we can cleanse our souls and strengthen our faith and testimony in Jesus Christ. Indeed, in terms of the trials he has had to face, he is in many ways a modern-day Job.

The story of Job in the Old Testament relates three of the great tests we all should be prepared to face at some period in our lives. First, temporal setbacks. Job lost all he owned. Second, physical illness that will test our faith and testimony. And third, depression. Job said, "Why died I not from the womb?" (Job 3:11.) "My soul is weary of my life." (Job 10:1.) But the great lesson of Job is that, "in all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." (Job 1:22.) Too often when adversity strikes, we use it as a justification to commit sin and turn away from the teachings of Jesus Christ, the prophets who lead us, and our family and friends. Job maintained his testimony and was blessed for his unwavering faith that God lived and that he would dwell in God's presence.

President Kimball, being a righteous man like Job, has endured many trials—cancer of the throat, heart surgery, boils, cranial surgery, and nu-

merous other afflictions. President Kimball's experiences serve as an example of how we should meet similar adversity and suffering in our lives.

President Kimball has not sinned or charged God foolishly. He has kept his integrity and his testimony, and sung the praises of his Lord throughout his many physical trials. We have never heard him complain about his trials. On the contrary, his challenge has been, "Give me this mountain" to climb. (See Josh. 14:12.)

The Kimballs' tests, love, and devotion

The courage and faith of President Kimball to overcome adversity are an example to all of us, to testify that we, too, can meet the challenges of life. Our aches and pains are but little hurts in comparison to his. After his throat operation, President Kimball had no voice. During a testimony meeting in the temple, President David O. McKay asked him to bear his testimony. He could not speak a word. He could only utter inaudible, breathy sounds. He wrote a note to President McKay afterwards and asked, "Why would you do that to me?" The President answered, "Spencer, you must get your voice back, for you still have a great mission to perform." (What a moving example of the love of one prophet for another.) President Kimball was obedient. He learned how to control air in his throat and to use the scar tissue that developed in his larynx and his remaining vocal cord. He regained his voice and carried on his great work. The accomplishment of President Kimball's prophetic mission will stand equal to any in this or any other dispensation.

President Kimball's wife, Camilla, has devotedly and lovingly followed her husband every step of the way. I remember one night in Samoa

when both President and Sister Kimball had temperatures of 104 degrees. Early the next morning they were the first ones on the bus. He conducted the meetings, and they fulfilled all their busy schedule throughout the day, not just enduring, but being gracious and considerate and thinking of the needs of everyone else around them.

When President Kimball was called to the Council of the Twelve, he accepted his call with humble tears. He wondered if he was worthy of such a great calling. After he hung up the telephone, it was Camilla who assured him, "You can do it, Spencer. You can do it." Camilla is a perfect example of being one with her companion. When asked about her health, her reply was "When he is well, I'm well."

Reaches out for the "one"

President Kimball taught me a lesson during my call to become a General Authority. He asked if I would come to Salt Lake City to serve as a General Authority for the rest of my life. I was overcome with emotion. My reply: "President Kimball, I just don't know what to say." Then he said, "I only want you to say yes." The lesson was clear; there is no need for an eloquent speech to express our commitment or our love and devotion when accepting a call from the prophet. He already knows these things.

President Kimball always reaches out with love to touch the "one."

We were preparing for an area conference briefing, and as I entered President Kimball's office, he was seated at a typewriter, his back toward the door. He finished typing and spun around in his chair to greet me. In one hand was a thirty-two-page letter from a young man who had read his book *The Miracle of Forgiveness* and, in the other, his personally typed reply to answer the special needs of a young

man who wanted and needed his help to repent. The message was a clear one to me: No matter how busy you are, never forget those who need your help.

Bears fearless testimony

He bears his missionary testimony as a special witness without the fear of man. I have observed it. At the Copenhagen Denmark Area Conference held August 3-5, 1976, President Kimball went to see Thorvaldsen's beautiful sculpture *The Christus*, the resurrected Christ, which has been reproduced, as you know, for the visitors' centers in Salt Lake City, Los Angeles, and New Zealand. After a few spiritual moments admiring *The Christus*, President Kimball bore his testimony to the caretaker who stood nearby. As he turned to the statue of Peter and pointed to the large set of keys in Peter's right hand, he proclaimed: "The keys of priesthood authority which Peter held as President of the Church I now hold as President of the Church in this dispensation." Then he stated to the caretaker, "You work every day with Apostles in stone, but today you are in the presence of living Apostles." He then introduced President N. Eldon Tanner, Elder Thomas S. Monson, and Elder Boyd K. Packer. He presented the caretaker with a Book of Mormon in Danish, and bore his testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith. The caretaker was moved to tears in acknowledgment of the Spirit he felt in the presence of a prophet and Apostles. He acknowledged to me as we left the church, "Today I have been in the presence of servants of God."

Loving diligence

President Kimball works with loving diligence with all of his heart, might, mind, and strength. He does not demand or expect those around him to work at his pace, but at their pace. He is a man of action,

demonstrated by the simple sign on his desk that says, "Do It."

For those who work with him, his example eliminates phrases such as "I'll try" or "I'll do my best." His example and love motivate those who follow his example to achieve higher goals and lengthen their stride toward perfection. He has that rare ability to encourage each of us to do better than our best and to keep striving until we exceed our goals.

During the planning and preparation for the Mexico, Central and South America area conferences in February 1977, we were scheduled to hold meetings in La Paz, Bolivia, which is twelve thousand feet above sea level. Dr. Ernest L. Wilkinson and Dr. Russell M. Nelson advised us that President Kimball should have four to six hours' rest to acclimate his heart and blood pressure to the high altitude. President Kimball is very tightly scheduled during area conferences, and this allows little time for rest. (In reality, the doctors accompanied the General Authorities so that we could keep up with President Kimball.)

I talked with President Tanner and President Romney to seek their assistance in getting President Kimball to rest in La Paz before the start of the area conference. They only smiled and said, "You can try."

Detailed plans were presented to the First Presidency for area conferences in Mexico, Central and South America. I saw President Kimball make two small red check marks next to La Paz, Bolivia, where there were two meetings that he was not scheduled to attend. "What are these meetings? Why am I not attending?" he asked. There was a pause; then I replied, "That's a rest period, President Kimball." And he remarked, "Are you tired, Elder Hales?"

We arrived in La Paz, and the first meeting was a cultural event. He would not rest. My head ached; it felt as though it would explode in adjusting to the altitude, and we breathed

oxygen to attempt to speed up our being acclimated to the twelve-thousand-foot altitude; but President Kimball took no oxygen. He greeted, embraced, and shook hands with two thousand Saints.

After the last meeting, he invited one thousand more of his beloved Lamanites, who had come down from the Altiplano, to come shake his hand. They came and embraced him and shook his hand vigorously. He wanted to show his love for the Lamanites.

Dr. Wilkinson was concerned with the President's vigorous activity at twelve thousand feet and approached him. He asked President Kimball if it would be possible for him to stop soon. President Kimball said, "If you knew what I knew, you wouldn't ask me that question." President Kimball is driven by the knowledge that we are preparing for the second coming of Jesus Christ. He knows that it is his responsibility, along with those who are chosen to work with him, to take the message to all nations in their own tongue and language.

"I want to be exalted"

President Kimball told the General Authorities, "I am not afraid of death. What I am afraid of is that I will meet the Savior and he will say, 'You could have done better.'"

Can you feel the dedication and urgency of a prophet's voice to move the kingdom forward? "Are you tired, Elder Hales?" has a way of ringing in my ears when I rest for a moment. If we knew what President Kimball knows, then we, too, would work with all our heart, might, mind, and strength.

When we tried to save his strength, he'd say, "I know you are trying to save me. But I don't want to be saved; I want to be exalted." He then would tell us that the Lord would sustain him as the prophet, and we should not slow the Church down because of him.

The Prophet Joseph Smith was counseled:

"My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment;

"And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes.

"Thy friends do stand by thee, and they shall hail thee again with warm hearts and friendly hands." (D&C 121:7-9.)

In testimony, I ask the Lord's blessing upon us that we might feel the urgency of this great work, to understand what drives our prophet. He is a missionary because he knows that all mankind must be taught by the Spirit and be baptized. Then, if we live worthily, we will attain eternal life, be exalted, and return to the presence of

God the Father and Jesus Christ to dwell with them throughout eternity.

I bear you my testimony that a prophet leads this Church today by revelation. One time, in closing a general conference, President Kimball said, "My people say 'Lord, Lord,' and do not what I say." It is my prayer that we will say, "Lord, Lord," and do as our prophet and those who lead this Church today say, and follow their example, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

We have just listened to Elder Robert D. Hales, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Adney Y. Komatsu, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now address us.

Elder Adney Y. Komatsu

Some years ago an assignment took me to one of the islands of the South Seas to dedicate a newly completed chapel. That evening, as I approached the building with some of the local leaders, we were surprised to notice that the building was completely dark.

A test, a special blessing, light

As we entered the building and saw all the members sitting in the chapel, we inquired about the absence of lighting. The bishop informed us that earlier in the afternoon the building supervisor had inspected the building to make sure all was in readiness for the dedication. But now, as the time approached to begin the services, for some reason there were no lights, even though lights were aglow in nearby homes. All possibilities for correcting the problem were checked without success, and so the local lead-

ers and I decided to proceed with the dedicatory services.

As the program proceeded, illuminated only by a kerosene lantern in front of the chapel, I felt sure that this would be the first dedication performed in darkness in the history of the Church!

I'm sure all those good brothers and sisters in the congregation joined me with a silent prayer in their hearts to ask the Lord to bless us with light so that the chapel could be dedicated.

One by one the speakers spoke—in the dark. The choir sang beautiful anthems—in the dark. As the concluding speaker, I, too, gave my talk in the dark. Then, as I asked the congregation to unite with me for the dedicatory prayer, the lights in the chapel suddenly flickered on. How grateful we were to the Lord for this special blessing! I was overcome with emotion and felt meek and humble that we had been so blessed, but the

illumination of the chapel could not compare with the light of love in our hearts for this great blessing in answer to our prayers.

It brought to mind the words of the prophet Moroni:

"And now, I, Moroni, would speak somewhat concerning these things; I would show unto the world that faith is things which are hoped for and not seen; wherefore, dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith. . . .

"For if there be no faith among the children of men God can do no miracle among them; wherefore, he showed not himself until after their faith." (Ether 12:6, 12.)

Yes, the Lord blessed us, even as our faith was tested and as we prayed with hope.

Pure love of Christ changes lives

There are others among us who search for light in their lives. One such young man had broken many of the laws of the land and had been punished by a prison sentence. He even escaped from prison, only to be caught and reincarcerated a short time later. His was truly a life of darkness and misery, but through the constant efforts of a caring bishop, this young man decided to change his ways and return to Christ. With a meek and lowly heart he began to repent, and the Spirit of the Holy Ghost touched his heart.

As he prepared to leave prison after serving his term, there to greet him at the gate were his bishop, who had worked with him all those years, and he brought with him his father, mother, brothers, and sisters, who received him with open arms and great rejoicing. What a deep appreciation this young man had for his bishop and his family, who had stood by him even though he had caused them much embarrassment and many sleepless nights with his wayward activities. But their faith never wavered, and indeed a

miracle was wrought. Today, this young man serves as the elders quorum president of his ward.

What great force changed the life of this young man from one of spiritual darkness to one of truth and light? It was the pure love of Christ, which the bishop portrayed as he worked with him. And this pure love of Christ is charity. (See Moro. 7:47.)

The prophet Nephi said: "Wherefore, the Lord God hath given a commandment that all men should have charity, which charity is love. And except they should have charity they were nothing. Wherefore, if they should have charity they would not suffer the laborer in Zion to perish." (2 Ne. 26:30.)

Miracles by faith and charity

We must also remember the faith and courage of this young man's family as they endured many trials and heartaches and then greeted him with open arms at the end of the ordeal. The prophet Moroni reminds us:

"Behold, it was the faith of Nephi and Lehi that wrought the change upon the Lamanites, that they were baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost.

"Behold, it was the faith of Ammon and his brethren which wrought so great a miracle among the Lamanites.

"Yea, and even all they who wrought miracles wrought them by faith, even those who were before Christ and also those who were after. . . .

"And neither at any time hath any wrought miracles until after their faith; wherefore they first believed in the Son of God." (Ether 12:14-16, 18.)

The prophet Mormon also preached that "it is by faith that miracles are wrought. . . .

"For no man can be saved, according to the words of Christ, save they shall have faith in his name. . . .

"Wherefore, if a man have faith

he must needs have hope; for without faith there cannot be any hope.

"And again, behold I say unto you that he cannot have faith and hope, save he shall be meek, and lowly of heart.

"... and if a man be meek and lowly in heart, and confesses by the power of the Holy Ghost that Jesus is the Christ, he must needs have charity." (Moro. 7:37-38, 42-44.)

We are reminded today of the importance of charity through the Apostle Paul's epistle to the Corinthians:

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

"And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

"And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

"Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

"Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

"Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

"Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

"Charity never faileth." (1 Cor. 13:1-8.)

Circle of charity

In the Church we have many opportunities to perform charitable acts. Some of the greatest acts of charity begin with an outstretched hand of friendship. One great example was related by an elderly brother in a ward conference meeting.

This good brother was the Sunday School president and was called upon to bear his testimony. During twelve years of his life of inactivity he had been tossed to and fro with life's problems and had become filled with deep despair. When life seemed its blackest, hands of fellowship and friendship were extended, first by home teachers, then by the bishop, then by members of the ward. As he returned to activity in the Church and felt the warm spirit of the members extended to him without judgment or reservation, he knew that the gospel of Jesus Christ was true and that there is always room for a repentant soul. The Lord forgives; his true followers also forgive. The hand of friendship is outstretched; the sinner repents; the circle of charity is complete.

The prophet Mormon also taught:

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, if ye have not charity, ye are nothing, for charity never faileth. Wherefore, cleave unto charity, which is the greatest of all, for all things must fail—

"But charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him." (Moro. 7:46-47.)

"Our actions speak the feelings of our heart"

As we faithfully render our stewardships in the Church, as we remember that our actions speak the feelings of our hearts, and as we extend our love to our Savior who waits to receive us into his kingdom, may we do so with hope and with love and with charity. His invitation to the generations of mankind rings forth in this hymn, "Come unto Jesus":

*Come unto Jesus; Ye heavy laden,
Careworn and fainting, by sin
oppressed;*

*He'll safely guide you unto that haven
Where all who trust him may rest.*

*Come unto Jesus; He'll ever heed you,
Though in the darkness you've gone
astray;*

*His love will find you, and gently lead
you*

From darkest night into day.

*Come unto Jesus; He'll surely hear
you*

*If you in meekness plead for his love;
Oh, know you not that angels are near
you*

From the bright mansions above.

*Come unto Jesus from ev'ry nation,
From ev'ry land and isle of the sea;
Unto the high and lowly in station,
Ever he calls, "Come to me."
(Hymns, no. 22.)*

My dear brothers and sisters, I bear humble testimony that I know that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world, and if we heed his beckoning to

come unto him, surely we will be blessed with all the blessings he has in store for the faithful and the righteous. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

Elder Adney Y. Komatsu, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet," following which Elder Angel Abrea, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will speak to us.

The choir and congregation joined in singing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

Elder Angel Abrea

Butterflies master horsepower

One extremely hot afternoon I was crossing the green agricultural lands of the Pampas in Argentina. The sun was scorching the highway to the point that the heat waves became visible. Nevertheless, I was confident and comfortable because I had just purchased a brand-new car, fresh from the factory, with a big motor and plenty of power to conquer the elements and allow me to travel briskly in air-conditioned comfort.

Suddenly, I noticed that the temperature in my new car had begun to climb and the big motor began to show signs of strain. When the temperature gauge got to the danger point, I pulled the car over to the side of the road in the hope that with my very limited knowledge of mechanics I could discover what was wrong with the car. I

must admit I was rather disgusted to think that something could stop my big new car. It wasn't long after I had lifted the hood that I discovered, to my amazement, that a myriad of colorful little butterflies had collected on the radiator, choked off the cooling process, and stopped the car. I was then struck with the realization of how a few hundred little butterflies, in their collective strength, could master the immense horsepower of the motor. No, it wasn't an eagle, a hawk, or anything else more or less justifiable, but just a couple hundred little butterflies.

Potential for eternal life

This incident made me think about what often happens in our own lives. I thought about the tremendous potential that exists in each one of us,

potential that can direct us to eternal life.

The Prophet Joseph Smith said:

"Here, then, is eternal life—to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done before you, namely, by going from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one; from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation, until you attain to the resurrection of the dead, and are able to dwell in everlasting burnings, and to sit in glory, as do those who sit enthroned in everlasting power. . . .

"... [You] shall be heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. What is it? To inherit the same power, the same glory and the same exaltation, until you arrive at the station of a God, and ascend the throne of eternal power, the same as those who have gone before." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938, pp. 346-47.)

How many times do we allow little "butterflies" to reduce, restrain, or restrict our immense potential from guiding us to exaltation?

Proportionately they are relatively few, those who are detained in their journey by the so-called grave or serious sins, like those we might find in the newspaper headlines. Generally, it is not the mighty eagle that defeats us, but the tiny little "butterflies."

To better illustrate this concept, I would like to mention some of those "road hazards" that become obstacles in our marvelous journey to the celestial kingdom.

Sabbath day

Have we thought about the tremendous spiritual deterioration that results from not keeping the Sabbath day holy? This commandment involves much more than just resting from our labors. Keeping the Sabbath

day holy inherently builds spiritual character and prepares us for what is to come. By observing this commandment, we will have power over evil; we will be more capable of keeping the commandments of the Lord and maintaining ourselves unspotted from the sins of the world. (See D&C 59:9.)

More specifically, speaking about the Sabbath day, have we thought about the spiritual malnourishment that results from not attending our sacrament meetings, or attending them with a wrong attitude? The sacred covenant made by the members of the Church at baptism should be the prevailing thought and feeling in our hearts and minds as we partake of the sacrament. If we can achieve this, we will always have the Spirit of the Lord with us.

No member of the Church can ignore or simply put aside the weekly renewal of this covenant and pretend to maintain the Spirit. If we really understand the purpose of our sacrament meetings, we will attend them not just to hear someone speak, which is of course important, but to renew the sacred covenants made with our Father in Heaven in the name of his son, Jesus Christ. Those who make a habit of not attending this weekly service, and fail to repent, put in great danger their spiritual stability and welfare.

Prayer

Have we ever stopped to think what it means to our salvation when we neglect prayer, or don't develop daily from our prayers repeatedly gratifying experiences? We are continually referring to the "power of prayer," but are we always willing to pay the price so that the promise we find in 3 Nephi 18:18-20 may be fulfilled?

"Behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, ye must watch and pray always lest ye enter into temptation; for Satan desireth to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.

"Therefore ye must always pray unto the Father in my name;

"And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you."

Sustain leaders

Another example: do we realize that every time that we sustain the leaders of the Church we are duty bound to support them? The raised hand becomes a symbol of the covenant we make to support them. Each time we criticize or condemn them, we become literally covenant breakers. President Joseph F. Smith made the following comment about this problem:

"The moment a man says he will not submit to the legally constituted authority of the Church, whether it be the teachers, the bishopric, the high council, his quorum, or the First Presidency, and in his heart confirms it and carries it out, that moment he cuts himself off from the privileges and blessings of the Priesthood and Church, and severs himself from the people of God, for he ignores the authority that the Lord has instituted in his Church." (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939, p. 45.)

Tithing

I have had innumerable experiences listening to the reasons people have for not paying their tithing, most of which are just cases of a simple lack of faith.

I remember once in 1957, while I was acting as a new president of a branch in Argentina, I decided to interview the members with respect to the importance of paying tithing. I found myself talking with one good brother of the branch whose name was Jose, who had difficulty paying his tithing. I asked him bluntly, "Brother Jose, why don't you pay your tithing?" I'm

sure Jose didn't expect me to be so direct.

After a moment of silence he responded: "As you know, President, I have two children. The wage of a laborer is very low. This month I have to buy my children shoes to go to school; and, mathematically, I just don't have enough money."

In an instant response, I said, "Jose, I promise you that if you pay your tithing faithfully, your children will have their shoes to go to school, and you will be able to pay for all the needs of your home. I don't know how he will do it, but the Lord always keeps his promises. Besides that," I added, "If you still find that you don't have enough money, I will give you back what you paid in tithing from my own pocket."

On the way home, I wondered if what I had done was the right thing. Here I was, recently married, just getting started in my career, and faced with my own economic problems. I began to worry about my own shoes, let alone those of Jose's family! Even though when I got home my dear wife wholeheartedly supported me and reassured me that everything would be all right, I must say that that night nobody prayed harder for Brother Jose's economic welfare than I did.

One month later, I once again sat down with Jose. Though the tears in his eyes almost made it impossible for him to speak, he said: "President, it is incredible. I paid my tithing; I was able to meet all of my obligations, and I even purchased the new shoes for my children, all without an increase in my wage. I know that the Lord keeps his promises!"

Jose remains to this day a faithful tithing payer.

"Butterflies" affect spiritual development

Up until now, I have mentioned only a few of the problems arising from the little "butterflies" that we

find in our eternal pathway. Of course, there are many more. We could mention, for example, the lack of self-control that leads many people to break the Word of Wisdom; the various excuses for not complying with the program of personal and family preparedness; the lack of encouragement and the apathy with regard to our genealogical responsibilities; the failure to return often to the temples of the Lord to do the necessary work for our kindred dead; in some cases the lack of interest, in other cases the fear, that precludes many from participating in missionary work. These are only examples of a list that goes on and on.

It is highly probable that we will never lose our status as members of the Church simply for not adhering to one or more of the aforementioned commandments. Nevertheless, whether individually or collectively, these little "butterflies" affect our spiritual development and, fundamentally, the real capability of each individual.

"For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch as men do

good they shall in nowise lose their reward." (D&C 58:28.)

The Lord hasn't sent us to the world to fail. We have been invested with all of the talents and abilities necessary for the journey to arrive, to be once again in His presence. Our greatest challenge is to use faithfully and decidedly all that He has given us to reach our exaltation. If such is our accomplishment—if we "live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God" (D&C 84:44)—at the end of our journey we will once again be part of a glorious experience such as we had at the start, when "all the sons of God shouted for joy." (Job 38:7.)

I know that the Lord has made this possible and that he blesses us and will continue to bless us as we progress to our glorious destination. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

We shall now hear from Elder Dean L. Larsen, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Dean L. Larsen

"Kingdom of God is within you"

On one occasion a group of Pharisees confronted the Savior and demanded to know when the kingdom of God would come upon the earth. (See Luke 17:20.) Their tradition had taught them that God's kingdom would be impressive in its demonstration of power and in its earthly dominion. Their question, therefore, was a challenge to the Lord's assertion that when the kingdom of God was established on the earth, it would not be as other earthly kingdoms. (See John 18:36.)

The Master's response on this occasion teaches a significant lesson regarding the real source of power and

influence within his kingdom. He answered, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:

"Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:20-21.)

The Savior attempted to impress his questioners with the fact that the real power in the kingdom of God is not represented in outwardly observable things. Its strength is in the quality of the lives of its members. It is in the depth of their purity, their charity, their faith, their integrity, and their devotion to truth. This great lesson escaped the perception of the Pharisees. It has significance for us today.

Today our chapels and congregations dot almost every land in the free world. Our temples will soon be within easy traveling distance of almost every member. The percentage of members who attend meetings and activities is at an all-time high. These are encouraging signs. We hope that they are indicators of inward strength. We rejoice in the growth that has marked the development of the Church in this century, and particularly in the last decade or two. We take encouragement from our missionary successes, as rightly we should, but in all of this outward manifestation of increasing strength, we cannot forget the Savior's injunction to those who looked for the kingdom of God to manifest itself in ways that would be impressive by earthly standards. "Behold," he said, "the kingdom of God is within you."

Assessing spiritual vital signs

Several months ago I attended a conference in a stake that had compiled an impressive statistical record. By all observable standards, this was a stake composed of devoted, faithful Latter-day Saints. As I met with the stake president in our first interview, I was not surprised that he was anxious to review with me the excellent statistical record that his people were making. The reports had been arranged on his desk to facilitate this review. Before looking at them, I asked the president, "Tell me, how do you feel about your people? Generally speaking, in their spiritual qualities, are they standing on higher ground this year than they were a year ago?" I wanted to assess the president's personal discernment regarding the spiritual strength of his members. He immediately seized this opportunity to direct my attention to the reports. Sensing that he had misunderstood the intent of my question, I explained, "I will be pleased to review the reports with you, but before we do, would you

tell me how you *feel* about your people?"

My insistence on his making this kind of assessment apart from the information in the reports was both frustrating and perplexing to the president. I was sensitive to his frustration, and without further discussion we went through the statistical information. It indicated considerable progress in many areas that are amenable to a quantitative evaluation. I believe the reports were significant indicators of the spiritual quality of the people. However, I had failed to draw from the president the kind of discerning evaluation I had solicited. At the same time, I sensed that he was a little perplexed and somewhat pensive at the conclusion of our interview. His pensiveness continued throughout the meetings of the afternoon and evening and caused me some concern.

On the following day, as the president delivered his address in the general session of the conference, he surprised me by telling the members about his experience with me the previous day. He acknowledged his frustration over my apparent reluctance to go into an immediate review of his correlated reports, and this frustration had remained with him into the night. As he was pondering these things, there came into his mind an experience he had had during the week prior to the conference.

He had visited a member of the stake who was in a hospital recuperating from surgery. During this visit a nurse had entered the room, making her regular calls on the patients. She had gone to some charts that were hanging at the foot of the patient's bed, carefully perused the notations, and then added some of her own. She had then stepped to the side of the patient, felt her pulse, placed a hand on her forehead, asked some questions, and received some responses. The president said, "It occurred to me that the nurse was attempting to assess some of the patient's vital signs—

some that were not reflected in the notations on the charts."

The president said that it was then in his reflections that the purpose of my questioning the day before had registered with him. "I realized," he said, "that Elder Larsen was asking me to assess your spiritual vital signs in ways that the reports may not have revealed."

He then continued, "Today I am going to talk with you about those spiritual vital signs—those that go beyond the information on the charts." He proceeded to give one of the finest talks I have heard a stake president give. Interestingly, he made no reference in his remarks to the statistical reports.

What of the kingdom within?

We have good reason to feel encouraged and optimistic today as we observe the rapid growth of the Church throughout the world. We are pleased with the level of participation of the members, even though we acknowledge it can be improved. The willingness of the people to serve and to sacrifice for the sake of the Lord's work is commendable.

But what of the kingdom that is within our own souls? There are evidences that we are not completely free from weaknesses within. Family problems multiply. Divorce becomes more common. Signs of preoccupation with worldly, material concerns are apparent on every side. Questionable compliance with principles of trust and integrity in business dealings is too frequent. Courtesy and kindness are too often replaced by abruptness and rudeness in human relations. Growing evidences of promiscuity and infidelity to marriage covenants beset us.

While acknowledging that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is "the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth, . . . speaking unto the church collectively and not individually," the

Lord expressed a reservation about the individual members and explained, "For I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance." (D&C 1:30-31.)

At another time he warned those of his church:

"Behold," he said, "vengeance cometh speedily upon the inhabitants of the earth. . . .

"And upon my house shall it begin, and from my house shall it go forth, saith the Lord;

"First among those among you, saith the Lord, who have professed to know my name and have not known me, and have blasphemed against me in the midst of my house, saith the Lord." (D&C 112:24-26.)

Personal blight diminishes power and influence

In this time of impressive Church growth, it is well for us to look within our own souls to assess our individual spiritual vital signs. Too frequently Latter-day Saints of all ages yield to the temptation to explore and sample forbidden things of the world. Often this is not done with the intent to embrace these things permanently, but with the knowing decision to indulge in them momentarily, as though they hold a value of some kind too important or too exciting to pass by. While some recover from these excursions, an increasingly large number of tragedies occur that bring a blight and a despair into many lives.

The cumulative effect of this is devastating. The reverberations will affect the lives of those who indulge, as well as the lives of those who have loved and trusted them, in unfortunate and unforeseen ways for indefinite periods of time. As a consequence of these things, humanity slips inexorably to a lower level, the real power and influence in the Church and kingdom of God are diminished, and all mankind will inevitably feel the loss. Furthermore, as a collective

church, we jeopardize our capacity to merit and claim the preserving and protecting blessings from the Lord.

Enduring strength in Christian service and obedience

For those who keep the trust placed in them and who do not yield to the pattern of the times, and for those who have made or are making their way back from dark paths, I have the most profound admiration and gratitude. You are our shining hope. You are our real strength. You will make a significant difference in the final outcome of things. You are the last great counterforce against the evil that is engulfing the earth. God bless you for this!

As I view the days that lie ahead, I am hopeful because of the Lord's promise, and I know his kingdom will prevail, but I tremble as I read his declaration to us:

"For this is a day of warning, and not a day of many words. For I, the Lord, am not to be mocked in the last days." (D&C 63:58.)

The enduring strength of the kingdom is not to be found in the number of its members, the rate of its growth, or the beauty of its buildings. In God's kingdom, power is not equated with body count nor with outward routine compliance with prescribed performances. It is found in those quiet uncharted acts of love, obedience, and Christian service which may never come to the attention of official leadership, but which emulate the ministry of the Lord himself.

It is a time for us to assess our own spiritual vital signs in those essential areas that take us beyond the information on the charts. "For, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

Elder Dean L. Larsen, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us.

Elder LeGrand Richards, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our concluding speaker.

Elder LeGrand Richards

Brothers and sisters, in the many times that I have spoken from this pulpit in a general conference of the Church, being a missionary, I have usually spoken to the nonmembers of the Church to try to convince them that we have the only true church upon the face of the earth today—not built upon the wisdom of men, but committed directly from heaven by heavenly messengers.

"Many don't know what this Church stands for"

Today, as I have thought of what I would like to say, I thought I would like to speak to the inactive members

of this Church, those who ought to be active because many of them come from good Latter-day Saint families; and then to those of you who have inactive family members in the Church.

The Lord, speaking through Moses, said, "This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." (Moses 1:39.) This being so, the Lord should provide a way for us, his spirit children, to know what his program is, in order that we may be able to obtain immortality and eternal life—and he has: that is the mission of this great Church.

I think that many of our people don't really know just what this Church stands for. Jesus said, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me." (John 5:39.)

And then, speaking of those who would be judged of him at the time of his return to the earth, he said: "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?"

"And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matt. 7:22-23.)

When John the Revelator was banished to the Isle of Patmos, a voice from heaven said, "Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter." (Rev. 4:1.) The angel of the Lord showed John many wonderful things. He showed him the coming of a new heaven and a new earth when there would be no more sickness and no more pain, no more sorrow and no more death; when we would no more need the sun by day nor the moon by night, for the glory of God would be upon the earth; when no man would say, "know ye the Lord," for every man would walk in the light of the Lord his God. (See Rev. 21:1, 4, 23-24.)

When John saw all of that, he wanted to kneel down and worship the angel who showed it to him. And the angel said, "See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets." (Rev. 22:8-9.)

Long hereafter versus brief present

Earlier, the angel had showed him the dead, small and great, standing before God, and the books were opened and every man was judged according to the things written in the books, according to their works. Death and hell delivered up the dead that

were in them. (See Rev. 20:12-13.) Then the angel said, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God . . . and shall reign with him a thousand years." (Rev. 20:6.) Wouldn't that be a wonderful thing, to be worthy to come forth in the morning of the first resurrection?

But the angel didn't leave it there. He said, "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." (Rev. 20:5.) Is there any clear thinking man who would want to gamble on being left in his grave a thousand years when the Son of Man shall come in the clouds of heaven with all the holy angels, and those who have died in him shall be brought forth from the grave, and those who are living in him shall be caught up in the air and changed in the twinkling of an eye? I like the statement of the philosopher Cicero. He said he was much more interested in the long hereafter than he was in the brief present.

Today in our natural, routine patterns of life, our children go to school as we did for twelve to twenty years, to learn how to have a richer life here in mortality, to earn a better living and enjoy the cultural and refined things of life. If it is worth spending twelve to twenty years to prepare for a life of seventy-five to a hundred years, what is it worth to prepare for a life that never ends?

The Prophet Alma in the Book of Mormon said that this life is the time to prepare to meet the Lord. (See Alma 34:32.) And I think we ought to be more interested in the long hereafter than we are in just the brief present. I wonder if we ever stop to figure how long that long hereafter really is.

You have probably heard me tell this before, but when my wife and I had been married thirty-five years, I said, "Mommy, what do you think we will be doing in thirty-five million years from today?"

She said, "Where did you get that crazy idea? It makes me tired to think of it!"

I said, "Well, you believe in eternal life, don't you?" I said, "We are told that time is measured only to man, that with God there isn't such a thing as time. It is one eternal round." (The Prophet Joseph illustrated this by taking a ring. He said, "When you cut it, there is a beginning and there is an end, but as long as you don't cut it, there is no beginning and there is no end.") Then I said, "Now, Mother, if you believe that, you and I ought to be pretty well acquainted with each other in thirty-five million years from today."

Isn't that what Cicero meant when he said he was much more interested in the long hereafter than he was in the brief present?

Parable of the talents

During the ministry of the Savior, He gave us many parables and statements to prepare us for his second coming when he would come with power to reign upon the earth. I would like to give you a few of his statements.

I give you first his parable of the talents. You remember the parable about the man who went on a far journey and gave to his servants his talents. To one he gave five; and to another two; and to another one. And after a time he returned to hold an accounting with those servants. And the one who had been given five talents said, "Lord, thou deliverest unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more." And he gave him the ten talents. And the Master said: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou has been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." (Wouldn't that be wonderful, to be made a ruler over many things?) "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." (Matt. 25:20-21.)

The one who had received two talents (and we don't all get the same) won another two talents, and he got the same plaudit for faithfulness over his two talents. But the one who had received the one talent hid it in the earth. He said, "I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:

"And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine." (Matt. 25:24-25.)

And what did the Master say? "Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.

"For unto every one that hath shall be given. . . but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

"And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. 25:28-30.)

Would anybody like to look forward to that time that never ends, that long hereafter, and be assigned where there would be weeping and gnashing of teeth?

Parable of the ten virgins

Now I give you another of the Savior's parables about preparing for his coming, and that is the parable of the ten virgins. You remember that five of them took oil in their lamps, and five of them had no oil. When the call came, "The bridegroom cometh," the five with oil went to meet him; the others wanted to borrow, but there was not enough to share, so they went to purchase oil. The ones with oil went into the wedding feast; and the others, when they returned, found the doors were already closed. (See Matt. 25:1-13.) Why do you think Jesus gave us a parable like this if he didn't feel that those who were inactive need to come into activity in his Church?

Rich man and Lazarus

The next parable I give to you is the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. You remember how Lazarus ate the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, and how the dogs licked his sores. Then the rich man and Lazarus both died. Lazarus went to the bosom of Abraham—that is, he was received with honor. And the rich man went to a condition of torment. The rich man looked up and saw Lazarus in Abraham's bosom and he cried out, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame."

But Abraham said, "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot." (Luke 16:24-26.)

Then the rich man's thoughts turned to earth where he had five brothers, and he said, "I pray thee therefore, father [Abraham], that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:

"For I have five brethren; . . . lest they also come into this place of torment.

"Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. . . .

"And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." (Luke 16:27-31.)

"Whosoever heareth . . . and doeth"

Jesus also said, referring to the time of his coming: "Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

"Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left." (Matt. 24:40-41.)

How would one feel to see his associate taken, and to be left for a thousand years?

Now Jesus didn't give us all of those beautiful parables for nothing. He said: "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

". . . And the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

"And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

". . . And the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it." (Matt. 7:24-27.)

Who would want to build their house upon the sand, so that it would not withstand the storms of adversity?

Prepare for Christ's coming

That is my plea here today, that we prepare ourselves for his coming.

You remember the words of the prophet Jeremiah. He said the day would come when it should no longer be said, "The Lord liveth, that brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, the Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel . . . from all the lands whither he had driven them" (Jer. 16:14-15) and that he would send for many fishers and they would fish them, and for many hunters and they would hunt them from the hills and from the mountains and from the holes in the rocks (see Jer. 16:16). That's the thirty thousand missionaries scattered throughout the world gathering in scattered Israel.

Jeremiah said, "Turn, O back-sliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you." (Jer. 3:14.) What a covenant! Isn't it wonderful to think that if we will heed the promptings of the Holy Spirit, it will be like a relationship of being married unto Him?

Then Jeremiah adds, "And I will

take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:

"And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." (Jer. 3:14-15.)

Search your histories of the world. You can't find anywhere else where people have been gathered one of a city and two of a family like they have to these valleys of the mountains and where they have been given by God the Eternal Father pastors after his own heart such as you have listened to here in this conference today, and as you will on the morrow.

Now, that is my testimony to you, and I pray God to keep you and your families with the harness on, using your gifts and talents for the building of our Father's kingdom, and I leave you my love and blessing in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

Elder LeGrand Richards, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has been our concluding speaker.

We remind the brethren of the general priesthood meeting which will

convene here in the Tabernacle this evening at 7:00 P.M.

The nationwide CBS Radio Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those desiring to attend this broadcast must be in their seats no later than 9:15 A.M.

The singing for this session has been furnished by the Primary children's choir. We are grateful for the presence of you children and for the beautiful spirit your music has added to this meeting.

The choir will now sing in closing "Families Can Be Together Forever" and "I Love to See the Temple." Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder Robert L. Backman, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "I Love to See the Temple" and "Families Can Be Together Forever."

The benediction was offered by Elder Robert L. Backman.

GENERAL PRIESTHOOD MEETING

THIRD SESSION

The general priesthood meeting convened in the Tabernacle at 7:00 P.M. on Saturday, October 3, 1981.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for this session was provided by a combined men's choir from the Tabernacle Choir and the Mormon Youth Chorus directed by Jerold Ottley and Robert C. Bowden with Roy M. Darley at the organ.

President Hinckley opened this session with the following remarks:

President Hinckley

Brethren, President Spencer W. Kimball has been enjoying the proceedings of this conference through television in his hospital room, and has asked that I conduct this session.

For the information of the brethren in the outlying areas who are participating in this meeting by closed-circuit transmission or direct wire, President Kimball is gaining in strength from his recent surgery. He asked that we extend his love and best wishes to all of the brethren participating in this session.

These services are being relayed by closed-circuit transmission and will reach members of the priesthood gathered in the Salt Palace, in the Marriott Center on the BYU campus, and in approximately 2,339 locations in many countries around the world.

We extend our greetings and blessings to all the priesthood brethren wherever they may be.

Elders M. Russell Ballard and F. Enzo Busche are seated on the stand in the Salt Palace, and Elders Royden G. Derrick and Ronald E. Poelman preside at the BYU Marriott Center.

The singing for this session will be furnished by the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth combined men's choir under the direction of Jerold Ottley and Robert C. Bowden with Roy Darley at the organ.

We shall begin this service by the choir singing "See, the Mighty Angel Flying!"

Following the singing, Elder Gene R. Cook, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "See, the Mighty Angel Flying!"

Elder Gene R. Cook offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

The choir will now favor us with "Abide Ye in the Liberty."

The choir sang "Abide Ye in the Liberty."

President Hinckley

Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our first speaker this evening. He will be followed by Bishop H. Burke Peterson, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric of the Church.

Elder Boyd K. Packer

Unseen power of Aaronic Priesthood

I always come to the Tabernacle early for priesthood meeting in order to shake hands with the deacons, teachers, and priests. I have to sift through a lot of elders, seventies, and high priests to find them, but it's well worth it to meet the Aaronic Priesthood. We who hold the higher priesthood salute you, our brethren of the Aaronic Priesthood.

I want to tell you about the unseen power of the Aaronic Priesthood. A boy of twelve is old enough to learn about it. As you mature you should become very familiar with this guiding, protecting power.

Some think that unless a power is visible it cannot be real. I think I can

convince you otherwise. Do you remember when you foolishly put your finger in that light socket? While you did not see exactly what happened, surely you felt it!

No one has ever seen electricity, not even a scientist with the finest instruments. However, like you they have felt it. And we can see the results of it. We can measure it, control it, and produce light, and heat, and power. No one questions that it is real simply because he cannot see it.

A guiding and protecting power

Although you cannot see the power of the priesthood, you can *feel* it, and you can see the results of it. The priesthood can be a guiding and

protecting power in your life. Let me give you an example.

After President Wilford Woodruff joined the Church he desired to serve a mission.

"I was but a Teacher," he wrote, "and it is not a Teacher's office to go abroad and preach. I dared not tell any of the authorities of the Church that I wanted to preach, lest they might think I was seeking for an office." (*Leaves from My Journal*, Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1882, p. 8.)

He prayed to the Lord, and without disclosing his desire to any others, he was ordained a priest and sent on a mission. They went to the Arkansas Territory.

He and his companion struggled through a hundred miles of alligator-infested swamps, wet, muddy, and tired. Brother Woodruff developed a sharp pain in his knee and could go no further. His companion left him sitting on a log and went home. Brother Woodruff knelt down in the mud and prayed for help. He was healed and continued his mission alone.

Three days later he arrived in Memphis, Tennessee, weary, hungry, and very muddy. He went to the largest inn and asked for something to eat and for a place to sleep, although he had no money to pay for either.

When the innkeeper found he was a preacher, he laughed and decided to have some fun with him. He offered Brother Woodruff a meal if he would preach to his friends.

A large audience of the rich and fashionable people of Memphis gathered and were quite amused by this mud-stained missionary.

None would sing or pray, so Brother Woodruff did both. He knelt before them and begged the Lord to give him His Spirit and to show him the hearts of the people. And the Spirit came! Brother Woodruff preached with great power. He was able to reveal the secret deeds of those who came to ridicule him.

When he was finished, no one

laughed at this humble holder of the Aaronic Priesthood. Thereafter he was treated with kindness. (See *Leaves from My Journal*, pp. 16-18.)

He was under the guiding, protecting power of his Aaronic Priesthood. The same power can be with you as well.

Let me teach you some very basic things about the Aaronic Priesthood.

It "is called the Priesthood of Aaron, because it was conferred upon Aaron and his seed, throughout all their generations." (D&C 107:13.)

The Aaronic Priesthood goes by other names as well. Let me list them and tell you what they mean.

Lesser priesthood

First, the Aaronic Priesthood is sometimes called the lesser priesthood.

"Why it is called the lesser priesthood is because it is an appendage to the greater, or the Melchizedek Priesthood, and has power in administering outward ordinances." (D&C 107:14.)

This means that the higher priesthood, the Melchizedek Priesthood, *always* presides over the Aaronic, or the lesser, Priesthood. Aaron was the high priest, or the presiding priest, of the Aaronic Priesthood. But Moses presided over Aaron because Moses held the Melchizedek Priesthood.

The fact that it is called the lesser priesthood does not diminish at all the importance of the Aaronic Priesthood. The Lord said it is necessary to the Melchizedek Priesthood. (See D&C 84:29.) Any holder of the higher priesthood should feel greatly honored to perform the ordinances of the Aaronic Priesthood, for they have great spiritual importance.

I have, as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, passed the sacrament. I assure you I have felt honored and humbled beyond expression to do what some might consider a routine task.

Levitical Priesthood

The Aaronic Priesthood is also called the Levitical Priesthood. The word *Levitical* comes from the name Levi, one of the twelve sons of Israel. Moses and Aaron, who were brothers, were Levites.

When the Aaronic Priesthood was given to Israel, Aaron and his sons received the *presiding* and administrative responsibility. The male members of all other Levite families were put in charge of the ceremonies of the tabernacle, including the Mosaic law of sacrifice.

The law of sacrifice had been observed since the days of Adam. It was symbolic of the redemption that would come with the sacrifice and the atonement of the Messiah. The Mosaic law of sacrifice was fulfilled with the crucifixion of Christ.

Anciently they looked forward to the atonement of Christ through the ceremony of the sacrifice. We look back to that same event through the ordinance of the sacrament.

Both sacrifice before, and the sacrament afterward, are centered in Christ, the shedding of His blood, and the atonement He made for our sins. Both then and now the authority to perform these ordinances belongs to the Aaronic Priesthood.

This is indeed a sacred responsibility and includes you in a brotherhood with those ancient servants of the Lord. It is no wonder that we feel so humble when we participate in the ordinances assigned to the Aaronic Priesthood.

Can you see that it is correct to call it the Aaronic or the Levitical Priesthood? It is a matter of designating duties; it is all one priesthood.

Preparatory priesthood

Finally, the Aaronic Priesthood is referred to as the preparatory priesthood. This, too, is a proper title because the Aaronic Priesthood prepares

young men to hold the higher priesthood, for missions, and for temple marriage.

I have thought it very symbolic that John the Baptist, a priest in the Aaronic Priesthood, prepared the way for the coming of the Lord in ancient times. He came also to restore the Aaronic Priesthood to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery to prepare for the coming of the higher priesthood. The Lord Himself said that there "hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." (Matt. 11:11.)

You would do well to watch your fathers and your leaders, to study how the Melchizedek Priesthood works. You are preparing to join the elders, seventies, high priests, and patriarchs and to serve as missionaries, quorum leaders, bishoprics, stake leaders, and as fathers of families.

A few of you who now sit there as deacons, teachers, and priests will one day sit here as Apostles and prophets and will preside over the Church. *You must be prepared.*

It is indeed correct to call the Aaronic Priesthood the preparatory priesthood.

Authority to perform and possess priesthood power

Let me teach you some important principles of the priesthood. When you receive the Aaronic Priesthood, you receive all of it. There are three kinds of authority relating to your priesthood. You should understand them.

First, there is the priesthood itself. The ordination you received carries with it the overall authority to perform the ordinances and to possess the power of the Aaronic Priesthood.

Offices within the priesthood

Next, there are offices within the priesthood. Each has different privileges. Three of them—deacon, teacher, and priest—may be conferred upon you when you are in your teen-

age years. The fourth office, that of bishop, may come to you when you are mature and worthy to become a high priest as well.

The deacon is to watch over the church as a standing minister. (See D&C 84:111; 20:57-59.) The quorum consists of twelve deacons. (See D&C 107:85.)

The teacher is to "watch over the church always, and be with and strengthen them." (D&C 20:53.) The teachers quorum numbers twenty-four. (See D&C 107:86.)

The priest is to "preach, teach, expound, exhort, and baptize, and administer the sacrament, and visit the house of each member." (D&C 20:46-47.) The priests quorum numbers forty-eight. The bishop is the president of the priests quorum. (See D&C 107:87-88.)

You always hold one of these offices. When you receive the next higher office, you still retain the authority of the first. For instance, when you become a priest, you still have authority to do all that you did as a deacon and teacher. Even when you receive the higher priesthood, you keep all of the authority of, and, with proper authorization, can act in the offices of, the lesser priesthood.

Elder LeGrand Richards, who was Presiding Bishop for fourteen years, has often said, "I'm just a grown-up deacon."

There is no rigid form of wording for your ordination. It includes the conferring of the priesthood, the giving of an office, and also a special blessing.

I once attended a meeting with President Joseph Fielding Smith. Someone asked President Smith about a letter that was then being circulated by an apostate who claimed that the Church had lost the priesthood because certain words had not been used when it was conferred. President Smith said, "Before we talk about his claim, let me tell you a little about the man himself." He then described the char-

acter of the man and concluded, "And so you see, that man is a liar pure and simple—well, maybe not so pure."

The offices are a part of the priesthood, but the priesthood is greater than any of the offices within it.

The priesthood is yours forever unless you disqualify yourself through transgression.

When we are active and faithful, we begin to understand the power of the priesthood.

Quorum president

There is one other kind of authority that comes to you if you are set apart as a quorum president. You then are given the keys of authority for that presidency.

You receive the priesthood, and the office you hold within the priesthood (deacon, teacher, and priest), by ordination. You receive the keys of presidency by setting apart.

When you become a deacon, your father may, and generally should, ordain you; or another who holds the proper priesthood could do it.

If you are called as president of your quorum, your bishopric would set you apart. You can receive the keys of presidency only from those who have received them.

Unless your father is also your bishop, he would not have those keys.

These keys of presidency are temporary. The priesthood, and the offices within it, are permanent.

Only by proper ordination

One more thing: You can receive the priesthood only from one who has the authority and "it is known to the church that he has authority." (D&C 42:11.)

The priesthood cannot be conferred like a diploma. It cannot be handed to you as a certificate. It cannot be delivered to you as a message or sent to you in a letter. It comes only by proper ordination. An authorized hold-

er of the priesthood has to be there. He must place his hands upon your head and ordain you.

That is one reason why the General Authorities travel so much—to convey the keys of priesthood authority. Every stake president everywhere in the world has received his authority under the hands of one of the presiding brethren of the Church. There has never been one exception.

Remember these things. The priesthood is very, very precious to the Lord. He is very careful about how it is conferred, and by whom. It is never done in secret.

Power through obedience and worthiness

I have told you how the *authority* is given to you. The *power* you receive will depend on what you do with this sacred, unseen gift.

Your authority comes through your ordination; your power comes through obedience and worthiness.

Let me tell you how one of our sons learned obedience. When he was about deacon-age, we went to his grandfather's ranch in Wyoming. He wanted to start breaking a horse he had been given. It had been running wild in the hills.

It took nearly all day to get the herd to the corral and to tie his horse up with a heavy halter and a rope.

I told him that his horse must stay tied there until it settled down; he could talk to it, carefully touch it, but he must not, under any circumstance, untie it.

We finally went in for our supper. He quickly ate and rushed back out to see his horse. Presently I heard him cry out. I knew what had happened. He had untied his horse. He was going to train it to lead. As the horse pulled away from him he instinctively did something I had told him never, never to do. He looped the rope around his wrist to get a better grip.

As I ran from the house, I saw the

horse go by. Our boy could not release the rope; he was being pulled with great leaping steps. And then he went down! If the horse had turned to the right, he would have been dragged out the gate and into the hills and would certainly have lost his life. It turned to the left, and for a moment was hung up in a fence corner—just long enough for me to loop the rope around a post and to free my son.

Then came a father-to-son chat! "Son, if you are ever going to control that horse, you will have to use something besides your muscles. The horse is bigger than you are, it is stronger than you are, and it always will be. Someday you may ride your horse if you train it to be obedient, a lesson that you must learn yourself first." He had learned a very valuable lesson.

Two summers later we went again to the ranch to look for his horse. It had been running all winter with the wild herd. We found them in a meadow down by the river. I watched from a hillside as he and his sister moved carefully to the edge of the meadow. The horses moved nervously away. Then he whistled. His horse hesitated, then left the herd and trotted up to them.

He had learned that there is great power in things that are not seen, such unseen things as obedience.

Just as obedience to principle gave him power to train his horse, obedience to the priesthood has taught him to control himself.

Strength and support of a quorum

Throughout your life you will belong to a quorum of the priesthood; your brethren will be a strength and a support to you.

More than that—you will have the privilege of being a support to them.

Much of what I have told you about the Aaronic Priesthood applies to the Melchizedek Priesthood as well. The names of the offices change, more

authority is given, but the principles remain the same.

Power in the priesthood comes from doing your duty in ordinary things: attending meetings, accepting assignments, reading the scriptures, keeping the Word of Wisdom.

President Woodruff said: "I traveled thousands of miles and preached the Gospel as a Priest, and, as I have said to congregations before, the Lord sustained me and made manifest His power in the defense of my life as much while I held that office as He has done while I have held the office of an Apostle. The Lord sustains any man that holds a portion of the Priesthood, whether he is a Priest, an Elder, a Seventy, or an Apostle, if he magnifies his calling and does his duty." (*Millennial Star*, 28 Sept. 1905, p. 610.)

John the Baptist restored the Aaronic Priesthood with these words:

"Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and

of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins." (D&C 13.)

You—our deacons, teachers, and priests—have been given sacred authority. May the angels minister unto you. May the power of the priesthood be upon you, our beloved young brethren, and upon your sons throughout the generations ahead. I bear witness that the gospel is true, that the priesthood holds great power, a guiding, protecting power for those who hold the Aaronic Priesthood. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just addressed us.

Bishop H. Burke Peterson, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, will be our next speaker. He will be followed by Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Bishop H. Burke Peterson

My brethren of the priesthood, tonight is a special time for me. As some of you may know, my wife and I have five daughters. They are beautiful, talented, and faithful. They are the apple of my eye. But we have no sons. As a boy, I always went to priesthood meeting on Sundays with my father and brothers. As a father, I have always gone alone. As a priesthood leader, I have interviewed and taught hundreds of boys concerning the Aaronic Priesthood. This has been a great experience, but I have never taught one of my own sons. I've gone on countless fathers and sons' outings, but never with one of my own.

Tonight, in one of the stake centers in Arizona, my oldest grandson, who is twelve, is attending his first general priesthood meeting of the Church as a deacon in the Aaronic Priesthood. When he was born, I'd been waiting for over twenty years to buy a pair of cowboy boots for a boy. On his first Christmas, I gave him a pair.

Special authority

Tonight I would like to talk to him and tell him some things he may not know about the priesthood he holds. I'd also like to visit with his

friends—the members of his deacons quorum—and, in fact, with all of the young men—the deacons, teachers, and priests—throughout the Church. I'd like to visit with you about this very special Aaronic Priesthood authority you now have.

I recognize that to some of you this special authority may not mean so much right now. Others of you may really be excited about it, but you may not know why you feel as you do. And some few of you may not yet have qualified yourselves to receive it.

Now, to my grandson for a moment: Darren, I remember a few weeks ago when we visited your ward sacrament meeting in Arizona. I was seated on the stand and you were assigned to pass the sacrament to those seated there. You passed the bread and the water to me *in remembrance of the Savior*. In your office as an Aaronic Priesthood bearer, you actually helped me rededicate my life to keeping the commandments of God. Even though I am your grandfather and a Melchizedek Priesthood holder, you used *your* authority to help me renew my covenants. I was thrilled with that experience we shared together. As I saw the reserved smile on your face I sort of thought you had figured it to be pretty neat too. Did you know that I've passed the sacrament during sacred times to the Presidency of the Church, as well as to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and the other General Authorities? Isn't it terrific that you and I use this *same priesthood authority* to help each other make these covenants with the Lord?

The Lord shares his authority

Sacrament time is a very special time, and you are now an important part of it. You are different now than you used to be. The Lord has said he is going to share with you some of his power and authority to help others through life. He is going to let you do some sacred things now that you

couldn't do before. Let me tell you some more of them.

If you live worthy of it, as a teacher you will be able to go into the homes of some of the members of your ward with the responsibility to help them understand some of the gospel teachings. You don't need to be afraid; you'll be surprised and thrilled when you feel the inspiration to say certain things to your families. One of our home teachers is an Aaronic Priesthood bearer. He comes every month. Three weeks ago he prayed with us and left a blessing on our home. We all felt good.

You'll get a chance, because you are a priesthood holder, to help take care of the poor and the needy as you assist your bishop in receiving fast offerings from members of your ward. There is no more satisfying assignment than helping those in need. Gathering fast offerings is a blessing to you when you look at it as helping the bishop and the poor. Someday you may get to see the smile on a widow's face and the tears in her eyes when the bishop takes her some groceries or pays her rent with the fast offerings you have gathered for him.

Now, many more priesthood responsibilities will be given to you as you grow older. When you are a priest, as many in this meeting are, you will be able to administer the sacrament. You will be able to baptize others. Think of it! You, like these older boys here tonight, will have the same authority to baptize that John the Baptist had when he baptized the Savior. Did you know it was his Aaronic Priesthood that authorized him to perform that baptism?

If you live worthily

Remember, brethren, all this—and much more—will come to you *if you live worthily*. Keeping yourselves worthy of the priesthood is going to be hard to do sometimes. I'm mindful that it is not easy to be a teenager in

today's world. There comes a time in every boy's life when he would like to be—and needs to be—accepted by his peers, by the kids he pals around with. Sometimes this seems to be almost as important as being liked by mom and dad. When you're under this sort of pressure at school, it isn't easy to say no when no is the right thing to say—or to say yes when yes is the right thing to say. It takes *real courage* to be a faithful Aaronic Priesthood holder.

I've found out that *power* in the priesthood comes to those who keep a few simple rules. Power doesn't automatically come from the priesthood *unless* we live for it. Unfortunately, we have some boys who have become sort of careless in their habits. Some have made mistakes in their lives and have not repented of them. For the time being, even if they still hold the priesthood, they may have lost some of its power. Do you know what I mean?

Like the right to be inspired after you've studied for a talk at church or a test at school.

Or like the courage to say no when you are asked to do something that isn't right.

Or like the power you need when you are praying for a sick mother or dad or a sister or brother.

To develop power

If I wanted to develop power in the priesthood—if I wanted to be inspired in the things I did every day—here are some of the things I would do:

1. I believe I would try to read the scriptures every day for ten or fifteen minutes. I would probably start with the Book of Mormon. I wouldn't worry if I didn't understand everything I read the first time—or the second time—or the third. But I'd read often.

2. I would kneel and say my prayers every night and morning. When I was a boy, I couldn't always remember to say my prayers at night. I wanted to, but sometimes I would

forget because I'd be too sleepy. When I got older, I had a great idea.

If I were you, I would go out in the field and find a rock about the size of your fist. I'd wash it clean and put it under my pillow. Then, when I would get in bed at night and drop my head on my pillow—crack! I would remember to get out of bed and kneel down by it. I would then put the rock on the floor by my bed and go to sleep. Then, in the morning, I would jump out of bed, and as my foot would come down on the rock—"Ouch!" And I would remember to kneel down and say my morning prayers. Sometimes we need reminders to form good habits.

3. I would decide tonight that I am going to pray for a desire to go on a mission. I would pray every day until it happened! And I would start now with a missionary savings fund. I would go home tonight and get a can or a jar with a lid on it, clean it out, and put it in my room. Then, after I had paid my tithing I would start putting something aside for a mission.

Those who have made mistakes

Now, maybe we ought to say one more thing to our friends who have made some very serious mistakes and because of this have either lost or have not yet received this special power we've been talking about. The Lord has made a great promise to all of us, for he said: "Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more." (D&C 58:42.)

Think of it! He'll forget what we did wrong, if we do the following: "By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will *confess* them and *forsake* them." (D&C 58:43; italics added.)

The first step in getting your life right when these very serious mistakes have been made is to visit with one of your parents. If not your parent, then go see your bishop—tomorrow! You

will be surprised how easy it is to pray after you have talked with your bishop or your parent. I promise you that you will feel good after seeing him.

An instrument in the Lord's hands

Now, every boy listening really can be an instrument in the hands of the Lord to perform all sorts of sacred priesthood responsibilities—even miracles, if necessary. I have a great love for all of you. I hope you will try harder to live as we've taught you tonight. Let me close my visit by sharing an experience:

Some years ago, when I was serving as a bishop in a ward in Arizona, we had an unusual group of teenagers. Most of them had the courage to do what was right. They stayed close to each other and helped each other when things got tough. Most of them went to a high school close by. In numbers, they were really only a handful of the total student body. They met a girl at the school who was not a member of the Church. Her circumstances were unusual, for she was deaf. She also had a defective heart. The only way she could know what you were saying was to watch your lips and read them. She sat in the front of each class so she could *see* the teachers speak. She was a good student, but when you can't hear and can't be active, it's hard for you to be a part of what is going on. You're sort of a spectator rather than a participant. She was a spectator watching from the sidelines.

The young people from the ward were friendly to her and invited her into their circle. She responded to their kindness. One step led to another, and with her parents' permission she was finally invited to receive the missionary lessons in one of the homes. She was taught by two nineteen-year-old elders not much older than she. She liked what she heard; she believed what she heard; she felt good inside. The day was set for her baptism. We were all invited to go. Dressed in

white, she and one of the missionaries entered the water, and she was baptized as he said, calling her by name, "Having been commissioned of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (D&C 20:73.)

The next step was for her to be confirmed. Some of us stood in the circle as priesthood hands were placed on her head. I was aware that she couldn't see the lips of the one confirming her. And she wouldn't be able to hear the blessing he might give. I listened carefully because I wanted to invite her into my office later, where she could *see* me talk, and tell her what had been said.

A nineteen-year-old elder was the voice as she was confirmed a member of the Church. He then continued with a blessing. As he spoke, he began to make her promises that I thought were unusual. In fact, I became a little uneasy at his words. He continued the blessing, and I began to feel a calm spirit of peace as he spoke. Later, I sat in front of her and said, "I want to tell you of the blessing the elder gave you. It was tremendous."

She paused, and with moistened eyes said, "Bishop, I *heard* the blessing."

She had been healed. She could now hear, and her heart was beating normally. She could now participate more fully in the gospel and in the blessings of life.

There are many lessons to learn from this story. The one I would like you Aaronic Priesthood bearers to remember is this: Here was a nineteen-year-old missionary, an elder holding the holy Melchizedek Priesthood. He had *prepared* himself for a mission. He had *made himself worthy* to be an instrument in the hands of the Lord to perform a miracle. So, as he stood with his hands on her head, he felt an impression—a heavenly message, if you please—telling him there was a special blessing for this young woman and he had been chosen to deliver it.

He listened. He obeyed. And through the authority and power of the priesthood, a young life was made whole.

May the Lord bless all of you young men as you develop *your* personal relationship with the Savior. I testify that he lives! I testify that he knows your name! He knows you intimately! He loves you! May his power and blessing be with you in your

Aaronic Priesthood ministry. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Bishop H. Burke Peterson, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, has just addressed us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder L. Tom Perry

Traveling to the four corners of the world we encounter all too often a spirit of gloom among the people. Their concerns range from wars, rumors of wars, famine, and inflation to drug addiction, climate changes, pollution, bigness of government, etc. I can understand why those who are without faith in our Lord and Savior would become prophets of gloom. Times can be difficult. However, a look at the causes of the difficulties proves that they are man-made and that solutions are within man's ability to accomplish.

System and order established by the Lord

The Lord has given us the comforting assurance that "if ye are prepared ye shall not fear." (D&C 38:30.) The gospel of Jesus Christ teaches hope and opportunity. To find the happiness we are seeking and rid ourselves of fear, we must be prepared to follow the system and order the Lord has established for His children here on earth.

The leadership of the Church since the very beginning has taught and trained us in the way we should be organized. During what I consider to be the most difficult periods in the history of the Church, when the Prophet Joseph Smith was unjustly

imprisoned in the Liberty Jail, the Lord selected this time to give him the revelation on the priesthood. To the Prophet's cry for relief, the Lord replied:

"How long can rolling waters remain impure? What power shall stay the heavens? As well might man stretch forth his puny arm to stop the Missouri river in its decreed course, or to turn it up stream, as to hinder the Almighty from pouring down knowledge from heaven upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints.

"Behold, there are many called, but few are chosen. And why are they not chosen?

"Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men, that they do not learn this one lesson—

"That the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness." (D&C 121:33-36.)

Organize ourselves

If man is limited in his growth and perfection by his ability to use his priesthood, then surely we must continually strive to use its power and to organize ourselves more perfectly.

As I have traveled to the stakes of

the Church, I have found priesthood organizations functioning quite effectively at the stake and ward levels. Generally, the greatest weaknesses exist in the organization and operations in both the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood quorums. Let me direct a few words of instruction to you who have the responsibility for this important link in the priesthood chain.

President Stephen L. Richards at one time gave us a threefold definition of a priesthood quorum. He said a priesthood quorum is three things: "first, a class; second, a fraternity; and third, a service unit." (In Conference Report, Oct. 1938, p. 118.) Let us look at his definition as it relates to our priesthood quorums.

A class: for teaching the Lord's law

First, a class. In the Doctrine and Covenants we read,

"And as all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith." (D&C 88:118.)

The quorum meetings have been designed for the purpose of teaching us the law of the Lord. Fundamental in this teaching is instruction in our duties as bearers of the priesthood. It is not a time for speculation regarding the mysteries of the world. It is a time of basic, practical, how-to instruction, for which we can find application in our lives. The lessons should teach us how we can become better husbands, fathers, and members of quorums and should teach us our responsibilities to our fellowmen.

This summer I had the opportunity of attending a high priest group meeting in a small community in southern Wyoming. The lesson that week was on justification and sanctification. It was evident as the lesson was beginning that the teacher was well prepared to instruct his brethren. Then a question prompted a response

which changed the whole course of the lesson. In response to the question, the comment of one of the brethren was, "I have listened with great interest to the lesson material. The thought has crossed my mind that the information presented will soon be lost if we do not find application to put the material presented into practice in our daily lives."

Then he went on to propose a course of action for the quorum. The night before, a citizen of the community had passed away. His wife was a member of the Church, but he had not been. This high priest had visited the widow and offered his sympathy. Leaving the home after the visit, his eyes wandered over the beautiful farm of the deceased brother. He had put so much of his life and labor into building it up. The alfalfa was ready to cut; the grain would soon be ready to harvest. How would this poor sister cope with the sudden problems now falling on her? She would need time to get herself organized for her new responsibilities.

Then he proposed to the group that they make an application of the principle that was being taught—by working with the widow to keep her farm operational until such time as a more permanent solution could be found by the widow and her family. The balance of the meeting was spent in organizing the project to assist her. The principles of the lesson found immediate application.

As we left the classroom, there was a good feeling among the brethren. I heard one of them remark as he passed through the doorway, "This project is just what we needed to get this quorum working together again." A lesson had been taught, a brotherhood had been strengthened, a service project had been organized to assist someone in need.

Brethren, let us make of our quorums a class where we will receive the best instruction possible to guide us in

our responsibilities and obligations as bearers of His holy priesthood.

A fraternity: achievement of the total quorum

Second, the quorum as a fraternity. Many years ago I was called to be the adviser to a priests quorum. It was during a time when the Church had instituted a standard quorum award program. The program was designed to encourage the full quorum to have an interest in each member. An award was given for the achievement of the total quorum, not for individual accomplishment.

This was a quorum of high-spirited, devoted young men. They fulfilled their quorum responsibilities almost 100 percent, with the exception of one member. Bill had lost his father the previous year, and he was having a hard time adjusting to this great loss in his life. His mother was doing all she could to help Bill find himself again, but he started missing his meetings and developing some other bad habits.

After Bill had missed one meeting, a quorum member was assigned to contact him and encourage him to attend his quorum meeting. The quorum member was only able to reach his mother, who explained that Bill stayed out so late on Saturday night she could not get him up on Sunday morning. The second week came and still no Bill in quorum meeting. Again a contact was tried, with the same result.

As we assembled for quorum meeting the third week without Bill, I could see there was great concern on the part of the quorum for their absent member. They expressed the fact they were not a whole quorum without him, and they could not hold another meeting without Bill. I asked for suggestions. Quick was the response that we go over to his home and hold the meeting.

We drove to Bill's house. His mother was most cooperative and invited us to go back into Bill's bed-

room. There was Bill, comfortably sleeping in his bed. We started the meeting with a spirited opening hymn. On the first note Bill came up out of those sheets like he had been shot out of a gun. He wondered what was happening to him.

What followed was one of the sweet experiences of my life. Each quorum member expressed his love for Bill. This was followed by a kneeling prayer around Bill's bed. Bill got to his feet after the prayer with tears rolling down his face. We shook hands and left, a whole quorum once again. Bill knew of the love his quorum members had for him, and he wanted to be a part of it.

Elder Rudger Clawson of the Council of the Twelve once said: "The Priesthood of God on earth has been organized into quorums for the mutual good of the members, and for the advancement of the Church. A quorum which meets merely to study lessons, only partially accomplishes its purposes. . . . The spirit of brotherhood should be the directing force in all the plans and operations of the quorum. If this spirit be cultivated, wisely and persistently, no other organization will become more attractive to the man who holds the Priesthood." Let us build a bond of brotherhood for each member of our quorum.

A service unit: serving with love and understanding

Third, the quorum is a service unit. "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" was the counsel of the Savior to Peter. (Luke 22:32.) The obligation of membership in our Father in Heaven's kingdom is to be of service to His children.

President Joseph F. Smith once told of an instance he remembered from his boyhood. He said that when he was very young he was attending a party in the Mansion House given by his uncle, the Prophet Joseph Smith. A large company was present, engaging

in the festivities of the occasion. Suddenly the door opened and a man entered, dressed in ragged, shabby clothes. He was dirty, and his hair and beard were long and unkempt. He looked like a tramp. The Prophet at the time was on the other side of the room, opposite the door through which the man had come. President Smith said that Joseph, athletic man that he was, fairly sprang across the room, grabbed the shabby man in his arms, and hugged him as if he were a near and dear relative. This man was a brother in the priesthood. He had undergone a harrowing experience and made a tremendous sacrifice for his brother, the Prophet of God. (See Stephen L. Richards, "The Priesthood Quorum: A Three-fold Definition," *Improvement Era*, May 1939, p. 294.) The history of the Church is filled with accounts of quorum brother serving quorum brother with great love and understanding.

President Stephen L. Richards has said:

"The Priesthood is usually simply defined as 'the power of God delegated to man.' This definition, I think, is accurate. But for practical purposes I like to define the Priesthood in terms of service and I frequently call it 'the perfect plan of service.' I do so because it seems to me that it is only through the utilization of the divine power conferred on men that they may ever hope to realize the full import and vitality of this endowment. It is an instrument of service. Its uses and purposes are all defined in terms of service and the man who fails to use it is apt to lose it, for we are plainly told by revelation that he who neglects it 'shall not be counted worthy to stand.' [D&C 107:100.]"

Elder Richards continues:

"The Priesthood is not static and a man's ordination to it is not a static investiture. There may be some men, however, who so regard it, for they seem to be so smug and content with their ordinations.

"I can well imagine such a man going into the presence of the great Eternal Judge and saying in substance, 'While I was on earth I was a High Priest. I come now to claim the reward of a High Priest.' I think it is not difficult to suppose what may be his answer. He will likely be met with such questions as these, 'What did you do when you were a High Priest? How did you use this great power which you held? Whom did you bless with it?' Upon his reply to such interrogatories as these will his reward be predicated." (In Conference Report, Apr. 1937, pp. 46-47.)

Brethren, let us teach our quorums how to serve.

Understand and apply principles of priesthood organization

I am of the persuasion that the greatest preparation we can make to relieve ourselves from fear of the future will not be the year's supply we accumulate in our basements, the savings accounts we build, or the stocks and bonds we store in our safety deposit boxes. As important as these are for the protection of our family, our real security, I believe, will be found in our understanding of the priesthood organization and in sound application of priesthood principles. At the very foundation of the priesthood structure is the properly organized, trained, and functioning quorum of the priesthood.

Let us return to our wards and stakes and evaluate again how well we are prepared in our priesthood quorum organizations. Are they functioning as a class to train the brothers in their priesthood responsibilities? Are they functioning as a brotherhood to bless the lives of each member? Are they functioning to render service to their families, to the Church, and to the communities in which they are organized?

May we be quickened in our hearts this night with a firm resolve

that high on the priority list during the months ahead will be the strengthening of our priesthood quorums, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Redeemer of Israel."

The choir and congregation sang "Redeemer of Israel."

President Hinckley spoke without announcement.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

The Brethren have asked that I now speak to you. This has been a wonderful meeting. I hope that we long remember what we have heard.

Follow teachings of the gospel

As I consider some of the problems people cause themselves by failing to look ahead, I think of a letter I clipped a long time ago from a newspaper. It was first published in England. I hope you will pardon a bit of humor. I use it only to set the stage for what I wish to say.

It appears that an English company owned a property in the West Indies. A violent storm damaged one of the buildings, and a man was sent to make repairs. Of his experience, he wrote the manager as follows:

"Respected Sir,

"When I got to the building, I found that the hurricane had knocked some bricks off the top. So I rigged up a beam with a pulley at the top of the building and hoisted up a couple of barrels full of bricks. When I had fixed the building, there was a lot of bricks left over.

"I hoisted the barrel back up again and secured the line at the bottom, and then went up and filled the barrel with extra bricks. Then I went to the bottom and cast off the line.

"Unfortunately, the barrel of bricks was heavier than I was, and

before I knew what was happening the barrel started down, jerking me off the ground. I decided to hang on, and halfway up I met the barrel coming down and received a severe blow on the shoulder.

"I then continued to the top, banging my head against the beam and getting my finger jammed in the pulley. When the barrel hit the ground, it bursted its bottom, allowing all the bricks to spill out.

"I was now heavier than the barrel and so started down again at high speed. Halfway down, I met the barrel coming up and received severe injuries to my shins. When I hit the ground, I landed on the bricks, getting several painful cuts from the sharp edges.

"At this point I must have lost my presence of mind, because I let go of the line. The barrel then came down, giving me another heavy blow on the head and putting me in the hospital.

"I respectfully request sick leave."

After hearing that, you wonder how anyone could be so thoughtless and shortsighted. And yet every day we see people whose lives become entangled and who are bumped and bruised because they fail to plan, to think, to consult with others, to follow the teachings of the gospel. I appreciate what has been said tonight

to the boys of the Aaronic Priesthood. And since they constitute a very substantial part of this vast congregation, boys whose lives are largely ahead of them, I should like to speak to them, to help save them from some of the bumps and bruises of life.

I should like to offer what I have chosen to call "Four Bs for Boys." They are: (1) Be Smart, (2) Be Fair, (3) Be Clean, and (4) Be True.

Train minds and hands for the future

1. Be smart.

By this I do not mean be smart-alecky or anything of that nature. I mean be wise. Be smart about training your minds and hands for the future. Each of you is a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Each of you is a son of God. You have an obligation to make the most of your life. Plan now for all the education you can get, and then work to bring to pass a fulfillment of that plan.

You live in a complex age. The world needs men and women of ability and training. Do not short-circuit your education.

I am not suggesting that all of you should become professional men. What I am suggesting is this: whatever you choose to do, train for it. Qualify yourselves. Take advantage of the experience and learning of those who have gone before you in whatever field you choose. Education is a shortcut to proficiency. It makes it possible to leapfrog over the mistakes of the past. Regardless of the vocation you choose, you can speed your journey in getting there through education.

The Lord himself has said to all of us: "Seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith." (D&C 88:118.)

Over the years the Church has put vast sums of money into education, secular as well as religious. From the

beginning of this work, our leaders have taught us the importance of training.

Be smart. Do not forfeit the schooling that will enhance your future in order to satisfy your desire for immediate, fleeting pleasure. Cultivate the long view of your life. Most of you are going to be around for a good while.

Be smart—in your appearance, in your deportment, in your manners. I am not suggesting that you go about dressed as a fashion plate. I am suggesting that you be clean and neat in your appearance, that you be gentle in your speech, that you be courteous and respectful in your manner. Each of you is a Mormon boy. Whether you think it or not, you will reflect good or ill on the Church by reason of your behavior.

Be smart. Do not be so short-sighted as to indulge in the use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs. It simply is not smart to do so. It is stupid, if you will pardon that harsh word, to use cocaine, marijuana, or any of the other drugs that rob you of control of your mind. After every drug-induced "high," there is a reactionary "low." Why spend money on that which can only harm you? Why become enslaved to a habit that can only hinder and short-circuit your future?

Beer and other forms of alcohol will do you no good. Their use will be expensive, will dull your conscience, and could lead to the disease called alcoholism, which is humiliating, dangerous, and even deadly. Tobacco will shorten your life. Studies show that it will enslave you, weaken your lungs, and statistically that it will shorten your life seven minutes for each cigarette smoked.

Be smart. Take the Lord at his word. His is the wonderful promise that those Saints who follow his counsel in these matters "shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures;

"And shall run and not be weary,

and shall walk and not faint." (D&C 89:19-20.)

Young men, do you wish to run and not be weary and to walk and not faint and to grow in knowledge and understanding? Then be smart in shunning those things which inevitably will shackle you, adversely affect your health, cloud your minds, and shorten your lives.

Reach out with appreciation and kindness

2. Be fair.

We hear complaints that in high schools where Latter-day Saints are in the majority, those not of our faith feel discriminated against. Most of you will go on missions, we hope all of you. You will learn the importance of friendship and fellowship. Now is the time to practice these principles, to reach out with appreciation and kindness to others. Many a young man has come into this Church because of the friendship of a high school associate. I earnestly hope that no boy within the sound of my voice will ever do anything to prejudice an associate against the Church or its people.

I should like to add that I feel that there is no real basis for such charges of discrimination. But, be they true or not, I want to suggest that we develop an outreaching attitude to help those who are not of us, to encourage them, to lead them in a gracious and kindly way toward those associations which could expose them to the wonderful programs of the Church.

I think of Edwin Markham's poem:

*He drew a circle that shut me out—
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But Love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in!
("Outwitted," in *The Best Loved Poems of the American People*, sel. Hazel Felleman, New York: Doubleday, 1936, p. 67.)*

Now, in saying this I am not suggesting that LDS boys date non-LDS girls, or vice versa. Your chances for a happy and lasting marriage will be far greater if you will date those who are active and faithful in the Church. Such dating is most likely to lead to marriage in the House of the Lord.

What I am speaking against is any attitude whatever that demeans, that downgrades, that leads to evil speaking of another.

In athletic contests there is no occasion for booing and catcalls. Of course mistakes are made by umpires and referees. Of course players do things outside the rules. But the score will not be changed by all the booing in the world.

Be fair. As you move onward in your lives, in your university studies and beyond, avoid shady and unfair practices. Clean competition is wholesome; but immoral, dishonest, or unfair practices are reprehensible, and particularly on the part of a Latter-day Saint.

Be fair. The best rule ever given concerning standards of fairness was spoken by the Lord when he said, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." (Matt. 7:12.)

No substitute for personal virtue

3. Be clean.

The Lord himself said, "Be ye clean." (D&C 38:42.) I speak particularly of moral cleanliness. There is no substitute under the heavens for personal virtue.

We live in a time when the world considers virtue lightly. You young men of the Church cannot consider it lightly. For a Latter-day Saint, loss of virtue inevitably means loss of self-respect, loss of respect for her with whom he transgresses, loss of discipline in managing one's mind and body, and loss of integrity as a holder of the priesthood. Of course there is

repentance, and of course there is forgiveness. But there will also be heartache and regret and disappointment. There may likewise be cast a cloud upon your opportunity for future service in the Church.

I am not asking you to be prudish. I am asking you to be virtuous, and I think there is a vast difference between the two.

Be clean. Watch what you read. No good and much harm can come of reading pornographic magazines and other such literature. They will only stimulate within you thoughts that will weaken your discipline of yourself. No good will come of going to movies that are designed to take from you your money and give you in exchange only weakened wills and base desires.

Be faithful and true

4. Finally, *be true.*

You are youth of the noble birthright. You may not at this time know what that means. It means that behind you are great men and women who did wonderful and brave things. They made decisions that were not easy to make, and in many cases they paid a terrible price for those decisions, some of them even giving their lives rather than forsake the truth they had embraced.

In 1897, when President Wilford Woodruff was ninety years of age, a great gathering of children and youth assembled in this Tabernacle. This elderly man, who had known so much of sorrow and trouble, as well as love for the Lord and His great work, stood before that congregation and said in measured words:

"I cannot expect to tarry a great while longer with you, but I want to give you a few words of counsel. You occupy a position in the Church and Kingdom of God and have received the power of the holy priesthood. The God of heaven has appointed you and called you forth in this day and generation. I want you to look at this. Young

men, listen to the counsel of your brethren. Live near to God; pray while young; learn to pray; learn to cultivate the Holy Spirit of God; link it to you and it will become a spirit of revelation unto you, inasmuch as you nourish it." (*Wilford Woodruff: History of His Life and Labors*, sel. Matthias F. Cowley, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1964, pp. 602-3.)

I should like to tell you of three eighteen-year-old boys. In 1856 more than a thousand of our people, some of them perhaps your forebears, found themselves in serious trouble while crossing the plains to this valley. Because of a series of unfortunate circumstances, they were late in getting started. They ran into snow and bitter cold in the highlands of Wyoming. Their situation was desperate, with deaths occurring every day.

President Young learned of their condition as the October general conference was about to begin. He immediately called for teams, wagons, drivers, and supplies to leave to rescue the bereft Saints. When the first rescue team reached the Martin Company, there were too few wagons to carry the suffering people. The rescuers had to insist that the carts keep moving.

When they reached the Sweetwater River on November 3, chunks of ice were floating in the freezing water. After all these people had been through, and in their weakened condition, that river seemed impossible to cross. It looked like stepping into death itself to move into the freezing stream. Men who once had been strong sat on the frozen ground and wept, as did the women and children. Many simply could not face that ordeal.

And now I quote from the record: "Three eighteen-year-old boys belonging to the relief party came to the rescue, and to the astonishment of all who saw, carried nearly every member of the illfated handcart company across the snowbound stream. The strain was so terrible, and the exposure

so great, that in later years all the boys died from the effects of it. When President Brigham Young heard of this heroic act, he wept like a child, and later declared publicly, 'that act alone will ensure C. Allen Huntington, George W. Grant, and David P. Kimball an everlasting salvation in the Celestial Kingdom of God, worlds without end.' " (Solomon F. Kimball, *Improvement Era*, Feb. 1914, p. 288.)

Mark you, these boys were eighteen years of age at the time. And, because of the program then in effect, they likely were holders of the Aaronic Priesthood. Great was their heroism, sacred the sacrifice they made of health and eventually of life itself to save the lives of those they helped.

They are part of the heritage that lies behind you of the Aaronic Priesthood. Be true, my young brethren, be true to that great inheritance.

True to the faith that our parents have cherished,

True to the truth for which martyrs have perished,

To God's command, Soul, heart, and hand,

Faithful and true we will ever stand.

("Shall the Youth of Zion Falter?" *Hymns*, no. 157.)

And so, there are my "Four Bs for Boys": Be Smart, Be Fair, Be Clean, Be True. God has given you his

holy priesthood. May you walk as young men so endowed, I humbly pray, in the name Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

It will now be our pleasure to hear from President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, who will be our concluding speaker.

Before President Romney speaks, we note that the nationwide CBS Radio Tabernacle Choir broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 tomorrow morning. Those desiring to attend must be in their seats before 9:15.

As you leave this priesthood meeting tonight, we remind you to obey traffic rules, to use caution, and to be courteous in driving—to be fair, if you please.

The beautiful music for this priesthood session has been furnished by the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth combined men's choir. We are grateful for those who have given us such inspiring messages tonight and for the music which has made this such a wonderful meeting.

Following President Romney's address, the choir will close this meeting with "O Say, What Is Truth?" following which Elder Rex C. Reeve, Sr., a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the benediction.

President Marion G. Romney

I have titled these remarks "The Perfect Law of Liberty."

Meaning of liberty

As a youth, I was stirred by Patrick Henry's famous battle cry, "Give me liberty or give me death!"

The meaning of the word *liberty* is difficult to circumscribe. Abraham

Lincoln was of the opinion that "the world has never had a good definition of [the term]. We all declare for liberty," he said; "but in using the same word we do not mean the same thing. With some, the word liberty may mean for each man to do as he pleases with himself and the product of his labor; while with others [liberty] may mean for some men to do as they please with

other men and the product of other men's labor."

Again he said, "The shepherd drives the wolf from the sheep's throat, for which the sheep thanks the shepherd as his liberator, while the wolf denounces him for the same act." (Address, 18 Apr. 1864; quoted in John Bartlett, *Familiar Quotations*, 15th ed., Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1980, p. 523.)

Sweets of liberty

The issues have changed since the time of Lincoln, but the multipurpose use of the word *liberty* and its synonym *freedom* has not changed. The sweets of liberty about which we usually speak may be classified as (1) political independence, (2) economic freedom, and (3) free agency.

I would have us strive for that liberty which comprehends all three of these freedoms, and more. I would have us strive for a freedom of the soul to which they all contribute. I would have us attain that blessed state foreshadowed by the Prophet Joseph Smith when he said, "Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God." (D&C 121:45.) One who enjoys such liberty is, in the words of Jesus, "free indeed." (John 8:36.) He is possessed of perfect liberty.

I invite your attention to a few illustrations in support of the thesis that, while political independence, economic freedom, and free agency may contribute to liberty of the soul, they do not guarantee it.

Political independence

First, as to political independence and power:

In this field, perhaps the exploits of Alexander the Great are among the most widely known. With high physical courage, impulsive energy, and fervid imagination, he, at the unripe age of thirty-two years, became to all

intents and purposes master of the then-known world. But he was far from enjoying liberty, for of himself he was not master. In his thirty-third year he died, a victim of his own excesses, a total stranger to freedom of the soul.

Cardinal Wolsey learned, to his sorrow, how little political independence and even political power can contribute to true liberty. You may recall that he gave a long life in the service of two English sovereigns, enjoying all the while great freedom and political power. Finally, however, he was shorn of all his greatness by an impatient king. As he stood, disillusioned, among the ruins of his life, he lamented to his friend,

O Cromwell, Cromwell!

Had I but served my God with half the zeal

I served my king, he would not in mine age

Have left me naked to mine enemies.

(William Shakespeare, *Henry VIII*, act 3, sc. 2.)

Economic independence

Several years ago an article appeared in a magazine concerning some of the financial wizards of this century. It recorded how some of these men had died broke and in disgrace; others had committed suicide, and some had spent time in prison. All of the men had obtained, temporarily at least, economic freedom, but to none of them did their economic abundance bring freedom of the soul.

Free agency

While perhaps it is seldom, if ever, contended that either political independence or economic freedom alone brings perfect liberty, it is not, however, uncommon for free agency to be considered as synonymous with freedom of the soul. And it is true that the God-given right to choose one's

course of action is an indispensable prerequisite to such freedom. Without it we can scarcely enjoy any type of liberty—political, economic, or personal. It is one of our greatest heritages. For it we are deeply indebted to our Father in Heaven, to the Founding Fathers, and to the pioneers. God gave it to man in the Garden of Eden. (See Moses 7:32.) The Founding Fathers, under the Lord's inspiration, wrote a guarantee of it into the fundamental law of the land. And the pioneers, led by the inspiration of heaven, gave their all to perpetuate it. Surely we ought always to be alert in its defense and willing, if necessary, to give our lives for its preservation.

Misuse of agency

Free agency, however, precious as it is, is not of itself the perfect liberty we seek, nor does it necessarily lead thereto. As a matter of fact, through the exercise of their agency more people have come to political, economic, and personal bondage than to liberty.

The Nephites, for example, at one time, by the exercise of their agency, brought themselves to such a state of affairs that their only course led to political bondage. This they did while living under a government providing for the freest exercise of agency. "Their laws and their governments," says the record, "were established by the voice of the people, and they who chose evil were more numerous than they who chose good." Therefore, "they could not be governed by the law nor justice, save it were to their destruction." (Hel. 5:2-3.) Under these circumstances, they chose as rulers wicked men, who would certainly destroy their political liberties, to replace righteous men who had in the past protected and preserved those liberties and would have continued to do so in the future.

The freewill choosing of a king by the Jaredites led directly to their captivity. (See Ether 6:21-7:5.)

This sequence was repeated in the days of Israel. The people—rejecting government by judges, which God had established—clamored for Samuel to give them a king. Notwithstanding Samuel's warning that a king would make servants of their children, lay heavy taxes and services upon their backs, and send them to war, "the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel, [saying,] Nay; but we will have a king over us;

"That we also may be like all the nations." (1 Sam. 8:19-20.)

Samuel therefore anointed Saul to be their king. In due time, just as Samuel had predicted, heavy burdens were laid upon them, their sons and daughters were made servants of the king, and war came. The nation was divided into two kingdoms, Israel and Judah, both of which were, in their turn, carried away into captivity. Not only did they lose their political freedom, but their very political existence as nations was terminated.

We have a classic example of the loss of economic freedom by the misuse of free agency in the book of Genesis. The Egyptians, instead of exercising their agency to provide for themselves against a day of need, depended upon the government. As a result, when the famine came they were forced to purchase food from the government. First they used their money. When that was gone, they gave their livestock, then their lands; and finally they were compelled to sell themselves into slavery, that they might eat. (See Genesis 41:54-56; 47:13-26.)

Agency—an eternal principle

We ourselves have gone a long way down this road during the last century. My counsel is that we beware of the doctrine which encourages us to seek government-supported security rather than to put faith in our own industry. Remember Pope's peasant who, having been served the rich

man's feast and finding the consequences, complained:

*"An't please Your Honour," quoth
the peasant,*

*"This same dessert is not so pleasant:
Give me again my hollow tree,
A crust of bread and Liberty."*

(Alexander Pope, "The Sixth Satire of the Second Book of Horace," lines 218-21.)

With respect to the loss of personal liberty through the misuse of free agency, our daily lives are filled with tragic evidence. We see the alcoholic with his craving for drink, the dope fiend in his frenzy, and worse, the pervert with his irreticible loss of manhood. Who will say that such persons enjoy liberty?

Notwithstanding the fact that through its misuse, political, economic, and personal liberty are lost, free agency will always endure because it is an eternal principle. However, the free agency possessed by any one person is increased or diminished by the use to which he puts it. Every wrong decision one makes restricts the area in which he can thereafter exercise his agency. The further one goes in the making of wrong decisions in the exercise of free agency, the more difficult it is for him to recover the lost ground. One can, by persisting long enough, reach the point of no return. He then becomes an abject slave. By the exercise of his free agency, he has decreased the area in which he can act, almost to the vanishing point.

Samuel, the Lamanite prophet, speaking to those who so persisted, said: "In the days of your poverty ye shall cry unto the Lord; and in vain shall ye cry, for your desolation is already come upon you, and your destruction is made sure; and then shall ye weep and howl in that day . . . and say: . . .

"O that we had repented in the day that the word of the Lord came unto us. . . .

"Behold, we are surrounded by demons, yea, we are encircled about by the angels of him who hath sought to destroy our souls. . . . O Lord, canst thou not turn away thine anger from us? And this shall be your language in those days.

"But behold, your days of probation are past; ye have procrastinated the day of your salvation until it is everlastingly too late, and your destruction is made sure." (Hel. 13:32, 36-38.)

These poor souls have placed themselves in the power of Lucifer and his followers, who, as you remember, became Perdition. (See D&C 76:26.) Their final fate is to be cast out into outer darkness, such punishment being the natural consequence of the alternatives they elected in the exercise of their agency. The fact that they were originally endowed by their Creator with free agency does not save them from the most awful bondage, the bondage of sin.

Freedom of the soul

Just as following wrong alternatives restricts free agency and leads to slavery, so pursuing correct alternatives widens the scope of one's agency and leads to perfect liberty. As a matter of fact, one may, by this process, obtain freedom of the soul while at the same time being denied political, economic, and personal liberty.

For example, consider the Prophet Joseph Smith. Here was a man enjoying freedom of the soul while suffering the deprivation of almost every other liberty. The experiences of his life were in some respects comparable to those of the Apostle Paul, who in his labors suffered stripes often, imprisonment frequently, and repeatedly faced death. Reviewing some of his experiences for the Corinthians, he said:

"Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.

"Thrice was I beaten with rods,

once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

"In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

"In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." (2 Cor. 11:24-27.)

Notwithstanding all this, he could write to his beloved Timothy from his prison cell in Rome shortly before his death: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (2 Tim. 4:6-8.)

Surely Paul, in his soul, enjoyed perfect freedom.

Way to perfect liberty

The Apostle's conclusion that the reward won by him is to be available to others suggests that there must be a pattern of living by which each of us may attain it, and I believe there is.

Many years ago, while riding through Cleveland, Ohio, on a train, I saw on a building the inscription "Obedience to Law is Liberty." With

the proper interpretation of the word *law*, we have in this inscription a statement of ultimate truth. By inserting three words, it is made to read, "Obedience to the law of Christ is liberty." (See D&C 88:21.) This is not only a statement of the perfect law of liberty, but also a statement of the way to perfect liberty.

In the eighth chapter of John is recorded a controversy between Jesus and the rulers of the Jews. They, of course, rejected him. But some who heard believed, and to them he said, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:31-32.)

Freedom thus obtained—that is, by obedience to the law of Christ—is freedom of the soul, the highest form of liberty. And the most glorious thing about it is that it is within the reach of every one of us, regardless of what people about us, or even nations, do. All we have to do is learn the law of Christ and obey it. To learn it and obey it is the primary purpose of every soul's mortal life.

That God may attend and prosper each of us on our way to perfect liberty, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The combined men's choir sang "O Say, What Is Truth?"

The benediction was offered by Elder Rex C. Reeve, Sr.

SECOND DAY MORNING MEETING

FOURTH SESSION

The fourth general session of the conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, October 4, 1981. President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music for this session with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger directing and Robert Cundick at the organ.

Prior to the beginning of the session, the Choir sang "Come, We That Love the Lord" without announcement.

President Romney then made the following remarks:

President Marion G. Romney

We welcome all who are present this morning in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on Temple Square in this fourth session of the 151st Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We also acknowledge those tuned to this conference by radio and television and those who are seated in the overflow congregation in the Salt Palace where Elders Paul H. Dunn and John H. Groberg preside.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, educa-

tion, and civic leaders, and officers and members of the Church from many lands who have assembled to worship and to counsel together in this conference.

The Tabernacle Choir under the direction of Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger with Robert Cundick at the organ is providing the music for this session. The Choir opened these services by singing "Come, We That Love the Lord" and will now sing "The Morning Breaks," following which Elder George P. Lee, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The Choir sang "The Morning Breaks."

Elder George P. Lee offered the invocation.

The Choir rendered "Truth Eternal" without announcement.

President Romney

The Tabernacle Choir has sung "Truth Eternal." It will now be our privilege to hear from Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie

Will you join with me in considering these questions:

"We are the servants of the Lord"

If you had lived in Jerusalem in the days of Jesus, would you have accepted him as the Son of God as did

Peter and the Apostles? Or would you have said he had a devil and wrought miracles by the power of Beelzebub, as Annas and Caiaphas claimed?

If you had lived in Nazareth or Cana or Capernaum, would you have believed the new religion preached by a few simple fishermen? Or would you

have followed the traditions of your fathers in which there was no salvation?

If you had lived in Corinth or Ephesus or Rome, would you have believed the strange new gospel preached by Paul? Or would you have put your trust in the vagaries and traditions and forms of worship that then prevailed?

If you now live in New York or London or Paris, if you live in Chicago, Los Angeles, or Salt Lake—will you accept the new yet old religion, the new yet old gospel, the new yet old way of life that God has revealed anew for our day? Or will you sustain and support churches that no longer have any real resemblance to the one set up among the primitive Saints?

If you hear a prophetic voice, if an apostolic witness is borne in your presence, if the servants of the Lord give you a message from their Master—what is your reaction? Do you believe or disbelieve?

If you are told in words of soberness that Joseph Smith was called of God, that through him the fulness of the everlasting gospel has been restored, and that the Lord has established his church once again among men—do you believe the heaven-sent word? Or, like Annas and Caiaphas, do you stay with the status quo and trust your eternal salvation to the varying forms of man-made worship that abound on every hand?

With these questions before us, may I be so bold as to make this solemn declaration: We are the servants of the Lord, and he has given us a message to deliver to all men everywhere.

We are weak and simple and unlearned. Of ourselves we can do nothing, but in the strength of the Lord we cannot fail. It is his power that sustains and guides us.

We know what the future holds and of the wars and plagues and

desolations that will soon sweep the earth as a devouring fire.

This is a gloomy day of sorrow and sadness. The heavens gather blackness; men's hearts are failing them for fear (see Luke 21:26); nations are perplexed and know not where to turn to find peace and security.

This is a day in which mad men in high places can, in an instant, suddenly, unleash such fearful weapons that millions can be slain between the rising and the setting of the sun.

There has never been such a dire day as this. Iniquity abounds; all the perversions and evils of Sodom have their devotees. And the revealed word assures us that conditions will get worse, not better, until the coming of the Son of Man.

Message of the Restoration

It is because of the evils and ills which cover the earth, because men have strayed from the Lord's ordinances and broken his everlasting covenant, because many walk in the ways of the world and are carnal, sensual, and devilish that the Lord has given us a message to deliver to our fellowmen.

"Wherefore, I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth," he said, "called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments." (D&C 1:17.)

What then is our message for all men? It is the message of the Restoration. It is the glad tidings that a gracious God had restored the fulness of his everlasting gospel. It is the hallowed word that all men may be saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel.

Divine Sonship of Christ

The message of the Restoration includes three great truths, truths which must be accepted by all mankind if they are to save

themselves. These are, first, the divine Sonship of Christ; second, the divine mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith; and third, the truth and divinity of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

And so it is that the Lord has commanded us to declare glad tidings, to preach his gospel, to raise the warning voice, to say what he would say if he personally were ministering among men as he once did.

Our position and status and divine commission is no different than that of the prophets and Apostles of old. We also are the agents of the Lord, his ambassadors; we are, as were they, legal administrators who have power to bind on earth and have it sealed everlastingly in the heavens.

It is fashionable in some quarters to assert that Mormons are not Christians and to question our belief in and our allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ.

If being a Christian means believing in Christ and accepting him as the Son of God in the full and complete sense; if it means having the true gospel in its everlasting fulness; if it means believing what Peter and Paul believed and finding fellowship in the same Church to which they belonged; if it means feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked, and loving our fellowmen, and keeping ourselves unspotted from the world (see D&C 59:9)—where else shall we find true Christians except among the Latter-day Saints?

Let me say as soberly, as plainly, and as clearly as the English tongue permits that we believe in Christ and strive with all our power to keep his commandments. He is our Lord, our God, and our King. It is his gospel we have received.

We talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy in his name, and we know that his is the only name given under heaven whereby man can be saved. (See Acts 4:12.)

We teach and testify that he is the Firstborn of the Father, that he is the one like unto God, that he himself is the Lord Omnipotent, the great Jehovah, the Creator of this earth and of all forms of life.

We know that he is the God of Israel, the promised Messiah, the Only Begotten of the Father.

We know that the Lord Jesus made flesh his tabernacle, that Mary was his mother and God was his Father, and that he inherited from his mother the power of mortality and from his Father the power of immortality.

It was this dual nature, this mortal yet divine Sonship, that enabled him to work out the infinite and eternal Atonement and to ransom men from the temporal and spiritual deaths brought into the world by the fall of Adam.

Divine mission of Joseph Smith

It is also fashionable in some quarters to contend that we Mormons esteem the Prophet Joseph Smith so highly that even the Lord Jesus takes a secondary position.

It is true that Joseph Smith is one of a dozen or a score of those prophets who stand preeminent above all men in greatness and spiritual stature. It is true that his place in the heavenly hierarchy makes him a prophet of prophets and a seer of seers. He ranks with Enoch and Abraham and Moses. But salvation is in Christ, not in Abraham, not in Moses, not in Joseph Smith.

All of the prophets are servants of the Lord. Their ministry is to teach his word and do his will. They preach his gospel and perform his ordinances. Their mission is to bring souls unto Christ.

And so it is with Joseph Smith. He saw God; angels ministered unto him; the visions of eternity were open to his view. He is the one through

whom the gospel was restored, and to him the Lord gave the keys of the kingdom.

Truth and divinity of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

For this day, this age, this dispensation, Joseph Smith is the revealer of Christ and the knowledge of salvation. At the direction of the Lord, he organized the only true and living church on earth. (See D&C 1:30.)

The Church is an organized body of true believers; it is the congregation of those who have accepted the holy gospel; and the gospel is the plan of salvation. The higher priesthood administers the gospel; the Church is the vehicle through which the Lord's affairs on earth are regulated and through which salvation is made available to all who believe and obey.

And so it is that we, as the servants of the Lord, obedient to his command, carry his message to the world. We bear witness of Christ as he has been revealed anew by Joseph Smith, and we invite all men everywhere to believe his gospel and join his Church and become heirs of that kingdom where he and his Father dwell.

True believers rejoice in Christ and his gospel

As it was with the prophets of old in their ministries, so it is with us in ours. We say as they did: Repent and believe the gospel, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. (See Matt. 3:2.) Forsake Babylon; flee to Zion; find refuge in one of her stakes. Stand in holy places, and prepare for the Second Coming of the Son of Man. (See D&C 45:32.)

Salvation comes to those who accept the true gospel and live its laws. It is for those who call upon the Lord in mighty prayer until he pours out his Spirit upon them.

It was Paul who said:

"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

"And how shall they preach, except they be sent?" (Rom. 10:13-14.)

Truly "faith cometh by hearing" the word of God taught by a legal administrator who has been called of God. (Rom. 10:17.) And as it was anciently, so it is today—it pleases "God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." (1 Cor. 1:21.)

Our message is one of joy and rejoicing and glory and honor and triumph. True believers always rejoice in Christ and in his gospel.

We do not say that everyone who accepts the restored gospel will escape the wars and plagues and desolations of the last days. But we do say that all their sorrows and sufferings will be swallowed up in the joy of the gospel.

Some who are true and faithful will perish along with the wicked and ungodly in the days ahead. But what does it matter whether we live or die once we have found Christ and he has sealed us his?

If we lay down our lives in the cause of truth and righteousness or in defense of our religion, our families, and our free institutions, why should we worry?

We are not hanging on to life with greedy hands, fearful of the future. Once we have accepted the gospel and been reconciled to God through the mediation of Christ, what matters it if we are called to the realms of peace, there to await an inheritance in the resurrection of the just?

Having a hope in Christ, we know we shall rise in glorious immortality and find place with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God, to go no more out.

"Who will hear our message?"

Now, as Isaiah expressed it,

"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" (Isa. 53:1.)

Who will believe our words, and who will hear our message? Who will honor the name of Joseph Smith and accept the gospel restored through his instrumentality?

We answer: the same people who would have believed the words of the Lord Jesus and the ancient Apostles and prophets had they lived in their day.

If you believe the words of Joseph Smith, you would have believed what Jesus and the ancients said.

If you reject Joseph Smith and his message, you would have rejected Peter and Paul and their message.

If you accept the prophets whom the Lord sends in your day, you also accept that Lord who sent them.

If you reject the restored gospel and find fault with the plan of salvation taught by those whom God hath sent in these last days, you would have rejected those same teachings as they fell from the lips of the prophets and Apostles of old.

I have spoken plainly of our obligation as the servants of the Lord to proclaim the message of the Restoration to the world. This we are now doing as far as our time and talents and means permit.

Man's obligation to seek the truth

But what of those to whom the message is sent? What of our Father's other children who have not yet accepted Christ and his gospel as they have been revealed by Joseph Smith? Does not every man on earth have personal obligation to seek the truth, to believe the truth, to live the truth?

We invite all men of all sects, parties, and denominations to ponder such questions as these:

Do I hunger and thirst after righteousness as did the Saints of old? (See Matt. 5:6.)

Do I have an open mind and a willingness to prove all things and hold fast to that which is good? (See 1 Thess. 5:21.)

Am I willing to receive new light and truth from heaven, light and truth that comes from a gracious God in whose sight a soul is just as precious now as it ever was?

Do I have the moral courage to learn whether Joseph Smith was called of God, whether he and his successors have the same keys of the kingdom of God that Peter, James, and John had anciently?

Am I willing to pay the price of investigation and gain a personal revelation that tells me what I must do to gain peace in this world and be an inheritor of eternal life in the world to come?

We testify that God has given to us his everlasting gospel, and we invite all men to come and partake of its blessings with us.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "O God, Our Help in Ages Past" without announcement.

President Romney

We have heard from Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder William R. Bradford, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He will be followed by Elder Charles Didier, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder William R. Bradford

I solemnly testify to you that God the Eternal Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, have appeared in this dispensation. These two glorious Personages actually stood before and spoke to the young man Joseph Smith.

True church organized and missionaries sent forth

This occurred in 1820. Since then the heavens have remained open. The fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored by revelation. Angels have been sent as holy messengers. We have been given records of God's dealings with His children. The Holy Spirit has poured out the truths of God's plan for the exaltation of His sons and daughters.

The true church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, has been organized under the direction of Jesus Christ Himself.

Prophets and Apostles have been called. They have been given power from on high. They are special witnesses of Jesus Christ in all the world.

They are sent out, holding the keys, to open the doors for the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. By their work the doors are being opened. The gospel is being proclaimed throughout the world.

Being inspired and directed by the Lord, these prophets, seers, and revelators have called upon the disciples of Jesus Christ and have sent them forth by commandment, which commandment is:

"And the voice of warning shall be unto all people, by the mouths of my disciples; whom I have chosen in these last days.

"And they shall go forth and none shall stay them, for I the Lord have commanded them.

"Wherefore, fear and tremble, O ye people, for what I the Lord have

decreed in them shall be fulfilled." (D&C 1:4-5, 7.)

Presently there are about thirty thousand missionaries serving in 188 missions. They are proclaiming the restored gospel in 82 nations, territories, and possessions in 48 different languages.

Thousands of our Father's children are hearing the gospel, are obtaining testimonies of its truthfulness, and are being baptized into His true church. There are now some five million members.

Purpose of missionary work

We are humbled and greatly pleased with the success that attends the labors. We acknowledge the hand of the Lord and the dedication of His disciples in what has been accomplished up to now. But there is still much left to be done.

We feel a great urgency for the work and wonder if we could cause it to be accelerated.

There is concern as to whether all of those who should and could participate in this work really understand and believe the basic principles and purposes for which God's firm decree, to declare this gospel to all the world, was given.

Although there are thirty thousand missionaries now serving, there should and could be many times that many. If they would prepare themselves and step forward to do that which is their decreed duty, the work could be done at a rate and in dimensions beyond our highest expectations.

I have pondered and prayed about this matter. I have searched for words and pleaded to the heavens for power to say them so as to motivate those who should be faithful in this work.

The words have come into my mind. They are simple words. They

have oft been taught. To say them is to repeat what you have heard over and over again.

They invite us to come unto Christ and be perfected in Him. This is done by serving Him with all of our heart, might, mind, and strength. If we do this, we receive a remission of our sins and become holy and without spot and may return to our Heavenly Father to dwell again with Him, to live the kind of life He lives.

The Savior stands with His hands extended, offering us glorious blessings if we will serve Him. As we study what He means by this service we come to understand that it is fundamentally the service of teaching the truths of His gospel to those who do not know it.

But even with the simplicity of the words and the divine source from which they come, and even with the sure promise of blessings, there are still those who should and could serve who choose not to serve.

It causes me to wonder if they really understand and believe the two-fold nature of the purpose of missionary work: first, to sanctify the missionary himself, and second, to bring converts to a knowledge of the truths of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and to baptism into His Church—which is the sure and natural product of a missionary who is in the process of sanctification.

Some justify themselves in not doing their duty to God

Satan is attempting to block this work. His influence is insidious and persistent. Many who should and could do this work are falling victim to his influence.

Some are being deceived and are slipping away from that which is true to experiment with that which is false and foolish.

May I talk to you young men who are approaching or are now the age to

be called into missionary service.

Some of you say in your minds, "Oh well, you just don't understand my case. My situation is different. I plan to be a great lawyer, or doctor, or athlete, or some other great person. Surely neither you nor the Lord would expect me to leave my studies at such an important time. A mission would interfere with my future plans."

Others are thinking, "Yes, I know about missions, but if you had a girl friend like mine, you'd never leave her. What will happen to her while I'm gone?"

Yet others of you are thinking, "Missions cost so much. I just got this job. I just purchased a car and a stereo. It's just the time of life when I'm starting to get things together for myself. I can't drop all that now. I just can't afford it."

Then there are also those who are thinking, "My situation disqualifies me. I have fallen into transgression and am not participating in the Church. I had always planned on being a missionary, but I slipped and now I don't live the standards required of a missionary."

If I could listen to you separately, each case would unfold with one thing in common. All would justify yourselves in not doing your duty to God.

Many of you are attempting to justify yourselves even against the correct counsel and teachings of your parents. They love you. They would support you in every way to do what's right if you would allow it.

But unfortunately there are also parents who side with you in your justification. They have made plans for your future, and those plans do not include missionary service. They say, "My son is going to be a great lawyer or doctor or star athlete. He can't interrupt his studies to go gallivanting out in the world for two years. Let someone else's sons do that. My son is special."

Earthly fame compared with God's promises

If I could speak separately to each of you young men and your parents who so justify, I would say with all the power of speech I could generate, "Just who do you think you are? What right do you have to match your wisdom with that of God, who through His prophets has issued a firm decree, a solemn mandate, that the restored gospel must be declared to all the world by the voice of His disciples? This means you!"

I would remind you of the Lord's own words as He addressed those who "doeth not anything" and who have doubtful hearts.

"Who am I that made man, saith the Lord, that will hold him guiltless that obeys not my commandments?"

"Who am I, saith the Lord, that have promised and have not fulfilled?"

"I command and men obey not; I revoke and they receive not the blessing."

"Then they say in their hearts: This is not the work of the Lord, for his promises are not fulfilled. But we unto such, for their reward lurketh beneath, and not from above." (D&C 58:29-33.)

Do you really believe that earthly fame and title, tied to earthly positions and occupations, can compare with God's promises to the faithful? He has promised "thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers." He has promised "exaltation and glory in all things." He has promised "a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever." He has promised eternal life. (D&C 132:19.)

I would say to you that you are left without excuse and without justification and that you have placed your eternal salvation in grave danger.

Your education can wait. The Lord will open the doors of education and a proper vocation for you when you return from your missionary service.

And speaking of your girl friends, the Father wants to give you one of His elect daughters, one who is loved and cherished by Him, one who is pure, one who understands eternal values and is striving for exaltation.

Surely you cannot expect this to happen if you are not faithful in doing that which would make you worthy of her as an eternal companion. It is after your missionary service has helped to sanctify you that this can happen.

Lest I be misunderstood, may I say to you young women, this also applies to you. Many of you say, "What will I ever do if he leaves me?" You hold him back. You allow your association with him to go beyond where it should. You often contribute to his decision not to serve. You sometimes even contribute to his unworthiness to serve. By so doing you are also disqualifying yourself from your intended blessings.

Let him go. Don't just let him go, but encourage him! You are perhaps the strongest single influence on him at this time in his life. You can make all the difference. Help keep him clean. Help him to be prepared.

Perhaps you would also like to, and should, serve as a missionary. Many lady missionaries are now serving. The same blessings promised to young men are extended to you. Although your most important role in this life is motherhood, it may be appropriate for you to serve a mission first.

Sanctification

For those of you who feel you cannot serve because you have slipped into transgression, I would say, "Don't despair. There is a way back. The plan of repentance really works. You can take steps to return to full worthiness. You can make acceptable restitution and place yourself in the service of the Lord."

If I could speak separately with each bishop and stake president about

those who should and could be serving as missionaries, I would say, "You have a most important obligation. It is your sacred duty to work with them and their parents until they understand, and do, their duty."

"You cannot leave them hanging as fruit on a tree, maturing, ripening, and then falling to the ground to spoil or be devoured, with no one concerned for conserving the harvest. If you do, you will assuredly be held accountable. The day will come when you will stand before the judgment bar of God to give account for them, name by name, every one."

This is a marvelous plan. It is a process of sanctification. When a missionary is placed in a mission environment of order and discipline where all that is done is in harmony with the Spirit, the missionary experiences a great transformation. The heavens open. Powers are showered out. Mysteries are revealed. Habits are improved. Sanctification begins. Through this process the missionary becomes a vessel of light that can shine forth the gospel of Jesus Christ in a world in darkness.

There is much to do. You are the royal generation that has been "hid from the world with Christ" to come forth in this day to do the work. (See D&C 86:9.)

You must prepare. You must now make yourselves worthy and available. If you do not, the work will go on without you. It will go on at a slower pace, but it will go on. If you are not

part of it, if you do not do your duty, what will happen to you? How will you be sanctified?

If you do not do your duty, those whom you could have taught but did not will eventually have their opportunity to hear the gospel from someone else, but what of you? How will you be sanctified?

Missions are for missionaries. It is a marvelous gift of time, a time given when you can experience glimpses of heavenly life here on earth. It is a time of cleansing and refreshing. It is a special time when the Holy Ghost can seal upon you the knowledge of the great plan for your exaltation. It is one of your best opportunities to become a celestial candidate.

The teaching and conversion of others is the natural product of this process. To sanctify yourself you must serve others. The highest of all service to others is to teach them truth and bring them into the kingdom of God.

Thus the decree: Send forth the elders and preach my gospel to every kindred, tongue, and people. (See D&C 133:8.)

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

Elder William R. Bradford, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us. We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Charles Didier, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Charles Didier

"*'Il faut se battre!'* We must fight!" gurgled the hoarse voice of a man who had lain stiff in the devouring mud ever since our awakening; 'we've got to!' His body turned heavily over. 'We've got to give all we have, our strength and our skins and

our hearts, all our life and what pleasures are left us. The life of prisoners as we are, we've got to take it in both hands. You've got to endure everything, even injustice—and *that's* the king that's reigning now—and the shameful and disgusting sights we see,

so as to come out on top, and win. But if we've got to make such a sacrifice,' adds the shapeless man, turning over again, 'it's because we're fighting for progress, not for a country; against error, not against a country.' " (Henri Barbusse, *Under Fire: The Story of a Squad (Le Feu)*, trans. Fitzwater Wray, New York: E. T. Dutton and Co., 1917, p. 345.)

Duty to country, Church, family, oneself, God

"I don't want to die," screamed a crying voice from a body put against a wall. There were brief orders for the firing squad, "Ready, aim, fire!" Silence followed. The soldiers returned to their quarters. They had just witnessed the execution of a deserter. (A scene from the battlefield, somewhere in France, 1917.)

Somewhere else, yesterday, in the mission field, a dialogue between a missionary and a priesthood leader:

"Elder, you were called by a prophet of the Lord to serve Him. Do you remember when you received your call, signed personally by a prophet of the Lord? He said that you would be expected to devote all of your time and attention to serving the Lord, leaving behind all other personal affairs."

The answer came quickly: "I don't want to serve anymore. I don't like the people; I don't like the country; I don't even like the food!"

"Well, what do you like, then?"

"Oh," he replied slowly, "I like to drive my car. I want to go home."

Somewhere else in the world, many years ago, some children, a father, a mother were sitting in their living room holding a family council. A tragedy was developing. The children were pleading with their father to stay and live with them. After a pause, the father uttered these words: "I cannot stay. I need to live my own life." And he left.

Somewhere else, in San Francisco, two weeks ago, a short

notice in the paper: "Three people decided to surrender to death and jumped from the Bay Bridge."

Somewhere else, some two thousand years ago, in a crowd of five thousand Jews, five thousand followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, there was another dialogue. The crowd: "Rabbi, when camest thou hither?"

"Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

"Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

"Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?"

"Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." (John 6:25-29.)

"And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:40.)

The Jews then murmured. Even some of the disciples murmured. Following a brief silence, two decisions were made.

The first one: "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." (John 6:66.) They followed their own way.

The second one: "Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." (John 6:67-68.) They followed the way, the only true way.

To desert, defect, give up, resign, surrender, renounce, abdicate, yield, apostatize, withdraw, back out, abandon—each of these words has almost the same meaning. We could find one for every situation in our lives where we might vacillate when facing

what is called duty—duty to country, duty to church, duty to family, duty to oneself, duty to God.

Temptation to man: serve himself first

To vacillate is to hesitate in choosing a course, to try to move in two different directions at the same time, or to try simply to serve two masters. One of the greatest temptations that man has faced throughout half of history is the temptation to serve himself and to satisfy his own appetites first. This choice can lead to the spirit of desertion. Whoever we are, rich or poor, powerful or humble, faithful or not—all are subject to this temptation.

Adjusting to life's challenges is not easy, and too often we issue ultimatums to those who represent life: our Heavenly Father, ourselves, a parent, a bishop, a neighbor. Ultimatums vary: "I will stop paying tithing," or "I will leave home," or "Let me be released," or "I will take my life." They vary from silent opposition to murmuring or violence.

Since the premortal existence the Lord has warned against serving ourselves and satisfying our own appetites first.

"They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god, whose image is in the likeness of the world, and whose substance is that of an idol, which waxeth old and shall perish in . . . Babylon the great, which shall fall." (D&C 1:16.)

Endure in obedience and service

The Lord has also helped us avoid this situation:

"Wherefore, I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and spake unto him from heaven, and

gave him commandments;"

"And also those to whom these commandments were given, might have power to lay the foundation of this church, and to bring it forth out of obscurity and out of darkness, the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth, with which I, the Lord, am well pleased, speaking unto the church collectively and not individually." (D&C 1:17, 30.)

All the teachings of the Lord and the prophets carry that persistent message, to persuade the world to know him and his father through a living prophet and his church. Once this vision is given, it will help us make the decision to endure to the end.

The permanent duty to God, to oneself, to one's family, to the Church, and to one's country represents a goal for which we should all strive and which was given by the Lord as he taught the Nephites:

"Therefore I would that ye should be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect." (3 Ne. 12:48.)

Again, these words were not given to discourage or to tempt us to desert, but rather to motivate us to be prepared and not to be afraid. Prepared to do what? The Lord has commanded us again and again to be prepared to "live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God," (D&C 84:44) to serve him with all of our heart, might, mind, and strength (see D&C 59:5).

To endure in obedience and service is contrary to desertion. It is to continue without perishing; to last; to remain firm when under trial; to suffer or bear up patiently; to endure hardship; to withstand pain, sorrow, or destructive force without yielding.

The encouraging factor in recognizing adversity is that we are not alone. The Lord told Joseph Smith, "Be patient in afflictions, for thou shalt have many; but endure them, for, lo, I am with thee, even unto the end of thy days." (D&C 24:8.)

George Q. Cannon wrote in *Gospel Truths*: "So it is with all of us. We have great afflictions from time to time. It seems to be necessary that we should be tried and proved to see whether we are full of integrity or not. In this way we get to know ourselves and our own weaknesses; and the Lord knows us, and our brethren and sisters know us."

"Therefore, it is a precious gift to have the gift of patience, to be good-tempered, to be cheerful, to not be depressed, to not give way to wrong feelings and become impatient and irritable. It is a blessed gift for all to possess." (Jerreld L. Newquist, ed., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1957, 2:198.)

"Stay on the Lord's side"

Yes, there are obstacles and challenges. Men sometimes become cynical. Some despair and lose hope and faith in the future, but the message stands: do not abandon, for the Lord lives. He is our Savior and Redeemer; he is the Prince of Peace. The great assurance of life, the great reason for eternal life, is the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other way.

There is only one way. The teachings of our duty to God determine our duty to ourselves, to our families, to our church, and to our country. No vacillation can be permitted, for "no man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." (3 Ne. 13:24.)

President George Albert Smith's grandfather said: "There is a line of demarcation well defined between the Lord's territory and the devil's territory. If you will remain on the Lord's side of the line, the adversary cannot come there to tempt you. You are perfectly safe as long as you stay on the Lord's side of the line. But . . . if you cross onto the devil's side of the line, you are in his territory, and you

are in his power, and he will work on you to get you just as far from that line as he possibly can, knowing that he can only succeed in destroying you by keeping you away from the place where there is safety." (Quoted by George Albert Smith in Conference Report, Oct. 1945, p. 118.)

Persistence in seeking the influence of the Holy Ghost and living the commandments of God lead to eternal life.

When we consider that we are, as individuals, looking at two powers, the Church and the world, good and evil, truth and error, how can we avoid being torn apart when we know these powers are moving in two opposite directions? We put both feet in the Church and prepare ourselves to be engaged totally and forever.

There is an old fable about a king and a jester. One day the king decided to reward the jester, so he called him in, offered him a beautiful staff, and told him, "You may keep this beautiful staff until you find a bigger fool than you."

Time passed and one day the king became very seriously ill, called the jester, and told him that he would probably go on a long journey and never return. The jester then asked him, "And have you made any provisions for a journey that lasts forever?"

The king answered, "No."

The jester then handed the king the staff and told him, "King, if you have made no provisions for a journey that lasts forever, this staff belongs to you. You are a bigger fool than I."

Have we made our provisions? Are we preparing ourselves to face one of the greatest temptations: to desert the service of the Lord in moments of doubt or trial, which may lead to other desertions?

Shakespeare's Hamlet voiced the question, "To be, or not to be?" when he was at the verge of despair and self-destruction. (*Hamlet*, act 3, sc. 1, line 56.) May I rephrase that:

*To be a soldier or not to be.
 To be a missionary or not to be.
 To be a father or not to be.
 To be oneself or not to be.
 To be a follower of Christ or not to be.*

In The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints we have the answer to that question, a divine answer that we *can* be, that we can live to be a true disciple, that we can live to be a follower of Christ—true to the end because of our testimony.

Our testimony to the world is that Jesus is the Christ, our Savior and our Redeemer, that Joseph Smith is the Prophet who restored truth upon the earth, and that this church is a divine church, of which I also testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

We have just listened to Elder Charles Didier, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. The Choir and congregation will now join in singing “Shall the Youth of Zion Falter?”

The Choir and congregation joined in singing “Shall the Youth of Zion Falter?”

President Romney

To those of the television and radio audience who have just joined us, we are convened in the historic Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah in this fourth session of the 151st Semiannual General Conference of the Church.

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing “I Know That My Redeemer Lives,” after which we shall hear from Elder David B. Haight, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The Tabernacle Choir sang “I Know That My Redeemer Lives.”

Elder David B. Haight

Low batteries, strings out of tune, and the heavy laden

Arturo Toscanini, the late, famous conductor of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, received a brief, crumpled letter from a lonely sheepherder in the remote mountain area of Wyoming:

“Mr. Conductor: I have only two possessions—a radio and an old violin. The batteries in my radio are getting low and will soon die. My violin is so out of tune I can’t use it. Please help me. Next Sunday when you begin your concert, sound a loud ‘A’ so I can tune my ‘A’ string; then I can tune the other strings. When my

radio batteries are dead, I’ll have my violin.”

At the beginning of his next nationwide radio concert from Carnegie Hall, Toscanini announced: “For a dear friend and listener back in the mountains of Wyoming the orchestra will now sound an ‘A.’” The musicians all joined together in a perfect “A.”

The lonely sheepherder only needed one note, just a little help to get back in tune; he could go on from there. He needed someone who cared to assist him with one string; the others would be easy. Then, with all strings in tune—in harmony—the lonely sheepherder would have a source of

companionship and joy and could play uplifting strains.

My expressions and encouragement this morning are to God's children whose batteries may be low or with strings in need of tuning, those whose souls were one time touched by the words and teachings of the Master and His servants but have been attracted away into other interests and activities. Some may have been neglected or not sufficiently involved in a meaningful Church responsibility or may have a feeling of injury or hurt or even unworthiness.

Some have allowed themselves to get out of tune. They may have lost the pitch and drifted from the original score. The Savior of the world gave rules to live by and taught principles of love that encompass concern and encouragement:

"Come unto me, all ye that labour," he said, "and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

"For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matt. 11:28-30.)

He did not limit or say "all who are perfect come unto me" or just the rich, or just the poor, or just the healthy, or those without sin, or those who pray the longest, or just the sick. His invitation is to all: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," comfort, peace; "for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

"Go, and teach all nations"

His plea to all is to love God, love His children, keep His commandments, and believe that Jesus is the Christ, born of God. (See 1 Jn. 5:1-3.)

Some who accepted the teachings of the Savior and were baptized into His Church are now temporarily lost from the fold, some through their own

choosing, but others, many times, by our neglect of them.

Matthew tells of the disciples' last earthly visit with Jesus. They had assembled on the mountain as directed, waiting for their Lord. He was the center of their lives. They worshiped Him. They now know He will soon leave them. Where will they go? What will they do? Eleven against the world. And what will He tell them?

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28:18-20.)

Those final instructions were not only to find and baptize, but to teach. The future of the disciples was now clear—as with the Church and its members today—to bring new souls unto Christ and teach them. Teach them the commandments, teach them the principles of the gospel, teach them the love of God and love for one another, teach by the Spirit, teach with love. Then they can and will obey and live the commandments.

None are to be lost

None are to be lost, but everyone is to feel the love of the Master through His servants. He knew that to carry the message of the gospel to all nations would require active participation by everyone baptized—not just some, but everyone.

There were strong social barriers among the Jews at the time of Christ, yet the Savior mingled freely among the publicans and sinners—far different from the Pharisees, who believed sinners should not be guests in their houses.

Christ rebuked their unkindliness, saying, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." (Matt. 9:12.)

His enemies complained that Jesus mingled and ate with sinners, but Jesus justified His ways and taught more clearly the purpose of God's love toward repentant sinners and the joy there is in heaven over one sinner that repents:

The Savior asked them, "If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?

"And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.

"Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." (Matt. 18:12-14.)

And then He continued, "And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.

"I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." (Luke 15:6-7.)

Love, prayers, and fellowship

Michael Duffy related: "I didn't catch their names or pay much attention to what they were saying, except they were from the Mormon Church. Somehow they had found out I was a Mormon and asked if I wanted home teachers. I hadn't been to Church for sixteen years!

"I don't know exactly why I said yes. It seemed that many events had fallen into place to convince me that there was a missing link in my life. Previously, we had lived next door to a Mormon family. We did not go to

Church, but I was reminded that our two sons had never been blessed and had never attended Church.

"My wife was not a Mormon, not even a Christian. Yet she agreed that something was missing.

"Home teachers soon contacted us and began regular visits. This started a process that would take many months, and change my family forever.

"I began attending priesthood meeting—infrequently at first, then regularly. I was finally able to overcome my Word of Wisdom problem. Our oldest son, now five, started attending Sunday School. We even began paying a little tithing. My wife supported me, but was not interested in the Church.

"Then one day two missionaries knocked at our door. After many months, having just been ordained an elder, I baptized and confirmed my wife a member of the Church. We were later sealed as a family in the Washington Temple."

He continued, "As I look back on the many circumstances that took place, I fondly remember the love, prayers, and fellowship of the bishopric, elders quorum presidency, and others.

"We were truly blessed to be living in a ward that actively worked with less active members, that the elders quorum president (the position I now hold)," he said, "placed special emphasis on reactivation, and even a member of the stake presidency took a personal interest in us."

The Prophet Ezekiel warned: "Ye feed not the flock.

"The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost." (Ezek. 34:3-4.)

A Church of love, not of fear

Driving to the Los Angeles Airport with a busy radio executive, I learned that he and his wife, though born in the Church, had never participated. Their social life of parties and weekends for fun and escape dominated their lives.

After eight years of marriage and three children, they were becoming concerned about their lives but did nothing about it.

Different sets of home teachers came and went. A new home teacher—a true shepherd—came into their lives, and after a time this new home teacher committed this man to go to Church once. Brother Adamson said he would not give up smoking and drinking. He had made a firm resolve *not* to live the Word of Wisdom, and if he was not welcome in Church because of it, that was fine. The home teacher said, “You are welcome, and I will pick you up.”

The first Sunday Brother Adamson attended Church he waited for someone to move away from him because of the strong tobacco odor, but that didn’t happen. “They will ask me to pray or work in the Church,” he thought. That didn’t happen either.

The home teacher did not phone on Sunday mornings to give him a chance to make an excuse and back out but drove to his home and would say, “Are you ready?” This home teacher picked him up every Sunday for over a year.

The Adamsons began reading *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder* and found that the Church consisted of much more than just the Word of Wisdom, which he had heard so much about all his life (and because he didn’t live the Word of Wisdom, felt the Church had nothing to offer him).

This couple soon learned it is a Church of love, not a Church of fear. They learned of the mission of the Savior and of our Heavenly Father and

of repentance. They became so proud of the Church they had been born into that the Word of Wisdom no longer was an important issue. He didn’t go through the pangs of quitting. It just happened. There were so many other principles of the gospel that now were so important in their lives.

He said, “I found myself working on our new chapel and then one day quietly telling the bishop, ‘I’m ready now. You can call on me to pray.’”

The Savior taught Peter, “When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.” (Luke 22:32.)

Souls are committed to the care of the Church—to watch over and keep them in the right way, to remember their names and nourish them. (See Moro. 6:4.)

Someone cared

An older couple living in a little Mormon community in Idaho had been members of the Church all their lives. The husband was eighty-six years old and his wife eighty-four. He was still a priest in the Aaronic Priesthood. New home teachers who had heard about this family’s lack of interest toward the Church asked if they could come to their home.

This older couple was pleased that someone cared about them. The teachers taught the principles of the gospel. The couple responded. This eighty-six-year-old man became an elder and, with his wife, earned the privilege of going to the temple and being married for time and eternity.

If thoughtful home teachers had not visited this family, they would have probably died without having received essential blessings of the gospel. Caring shepherds could have reached this couple years before when their family was growing up. The couple was grateful that home teachers finally had the courage to come.

Waiting for love and fellowship

People who drift away from the true doctrine usually know in their hearts something is missing. The kernel of truth, though small, remains—never to be replaced with fame or money or worldly pleasures.

The Savior placed a little child in the midst of the disciples and taught that they must become as little children in order to enter into the kingdom of heaven. He said, "For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost" (Matt. 18:11), and to call all sinners to repentance.

Michael Weir said:

"My marriage had failed. I was living a life contrary to the principles of the Church. Not only was I inactive but had lost confidence in my ability to go back. I became successful in business, drove the nicest car, and bought expensive clothes. I had everything that the world would want.

"One day, my company hired Ken Wheeler, whom I knew to be a Mormon by the way he acted. We became friends, and he invited me to Church. I wanted to go but didn't feel worthy. He continued to invite me, and I continued to refuse. I wanted to get back, but I didn't have the strength to do it.

"One night, alone in my apartment, I became very depressed and broke into uncontrollable sobs. I prayed to the Lord and begged for His help. The next day Ken asked me how I was doing; he could sense something was wrong. Putting his arms around me, he said, 'He still loves you, and we do, too. Why don't you come back home?' That was the answer to my prayers; that was the help I had begged for the night before.

"I came home! I felt uncomfortable at first, but the feeling that everyone cared made it easier. Today, I don't drive the nicest car or wear the fanciest clothes, but I feel richer than ever."

He continued, "Those who have

fallen away want so badly to come back, but they are afraid to make the move. They don't lose their testimony; they lose confidence in themselves."

Those that stray need a friend—but they need one who knows the Shepherd. Seldom do people cease coming to Church because of doctrine; they are waiting for a show of genuine love and friendly fellowship to heal their hurts or doubts.

Nephi testified "that the Lord God worketh not in darkness.

"He doeth not anything save it be for the benefit of the world; for he loveth the world, even that he layeth down his own life that he may draw all men unto him. . . .

"... he saith: Come unto me all ye ends of the earth. . . .

"Hath he commanded any that they should not partake of his salvation? . . . Nay; but . . . hath given it free for all men; and . . . hath commanded his people that they should persuade all men to repentance." (2 Ne. 26:23-25, 27.)

We are his people. God expects us to find, teach, and recover those whose strings may need tuning. May we be directed by the pure love of Christ to sound for them the perfect note of an "A."

God lives. Jesus is the Christ. This is His work, to which I testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "How Lovely Are the Messengers" without announcement.

President Romney

We have just listened to Elder David B. Haight, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "How Lovely Are the Messengers."

President Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now address us. He will be the concluding speaker.

President Ezra Taft Benson

I would like to discuss with you this morning the calling and mission of a modern prophet to our generation.

Angel appeared to Prophet Joseph Smith

It is generally understood that the faith of members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints rests on the claim that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God, and also that he declared the coming forth of the Book of Mormon was the result of angelic visitations to him between the years 1823 and 1827.

Upon learning of this claim, some people contend that it seems preposterous that angels would visit the earth in this modern era.

The Bible contains testimony that God directed the affairs of His church on earth for over four thousand years by revelation and, when necessary, by heavenly ministrations.

In describing conditions of the last days incident to the second coming of Jesus Christ, John prophesied in the New Testament that before the Savior's return, the world would receive a warning that the hour of God's judgment was near. That warning would come by an angel from heaven declaring an "everlasting gospel." Hear his words:

"I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

"Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." (Rev. 14:6-7.)

If one accepts the testimony of John the Revelator, new revelation and a visitation by a heavenly messenger to earth should be expected.

Our solemn testimony is that this angelic messenger appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith in the early nineteenth century. This announcement that an angel from God appeared to a prophet in our times is entirely consistent with the prophecies of the New Testament and should therefore command the interest of every earnest seeker after truth.

Book of Mormon—additional witness of Christ

In light of the fact that Jesus said there would be both true and false prophets in the last days preceding His second coming, the central question is: "Did Joseph Smith speak for God? Was he a true prophet?"

My intent today is to offer some evidences in support of Joseph Smith's mission as a prophet to this generation.

The most singular evidence in support of Joseph Smith's claim to being a spokesman for Almighty God was the publication of a scriptural record, the Book of Mormon.

The Book of Mormon is a record of the ancient inhabitants of the American continent and records the visit and ministry of Jesus Christ to the people on this continent following His ascension at Jerusalem. The major purpose of the record is to convince a later generation that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. The Book of Mormon, therefore, constitutes an additional witness, along with the Bible, to the divinity of Jesus Christ.

Joseph Smith obtained this ancient record from a heavenly messenger, just as John prophesied. This angel appeared to him and revealed the location of ancient records which were inscribed on metallic plates and buried in a stone vault. In due time, the young prophet was given the plates and the means by which they were translated. The book was then published to the world as canonized scripture.

Also, in harmony with the testimony of John, the book contains "the everlasting gospel." It is now preached by our missionaries to the world.

We invite you to test the validity of our witness about the origin of the Book of Mormon. You can do this by reading it and asking our Heavenly Father if these things are true. I promise you, if you are sincere, you will receive a confirmation of the truthfulness by the Holy Ghost. Millions, with soberness and sincerity, testify they know it is from God.

Message from God

A revealing characteristic of a true prophet is that he declares a message from God. He makes no apology for the message, nor does he fear for any social repercussions which may lead to derision and persecution.

As a young man, Joseph Smith was a seeker after truth. Confusion among existing churches led him to inquire of God which of them was true. In answer to that prayer, he asserted that a pillar of brilliant light appeared. These are his words:

"When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*" (JS—H 1:17.)

Joseph asked the second personage, who was Jesus Christ, which one of the Christian sects was correct. He was told that he must not join any of them, that none were correct.

Some treated his testimony with great contempt and began to incite false stories and persecution against him. The young prophet, like the Apostle Paul of old, would not recant his testimony, but defended his claim in these words:

"I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I

could not deny it, neither dared I do it; at least I knew that by so doing I would offend God, and come under condemnation." (JS—H 1:25.)

A true prophet's words come to pass

The ultimate test of a true prophet is that when he speaks in the name of the Lord his words come to pass. That standard was explained by the Lord to Moses in these words:

"When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously." (Deut. 18:22.)

Many prophecies of Joseph Smith are recorded to which this test might be applied. May I illustrate with two examples.

In 1832, he prophesied that the southern states and northern states would shortly be divided in civil war, that this war would be the beginning of world wars which would eventually involve all nations and result in the death and misery of many souls. Specifically, he said that the great Civil War would begin with a rebellion in South Carolina. (See D&C 87.) This prophecy was published to the world in 1851.

As every schoolboy knows, the Civil War began with the secession of South Carolina from the Union, and other states followed. When Lincoln sent provisions to the Union forces at Fort Sumter, South Carolina, the Confederate forces opened fire on the fort. Since that fateful day in 1861, the world has seen as a result of warfare the death and misery of many souls.

The desire of the Prophet Joseph Smith was to save the Union from that bloody conflict. He recognized the iniquity of slavery and urged Congress to abolish it and to pay the slaveholders from the sale of public lands. The message went unheeded, and nearly one-half million souls died in the Civil War.

In another prophecy, one of the most remarkable pronounced on the head of one man, Joseph Smith said to a young judge named Stephen A. Douglas, in the presence of several others: "Judge, you will aspire to the presidency of the United States; and if ever you turn your hand against me or the Latter-day Saints, you will feel the weight of the hand of Almighty upon you; and you will live to see and know that I have testified the truth to you; for the conversation of this day will stick to you through life." (*History of the Church*, 5:394.)

Stephen A. Douglas did aspire to the presidency of the United States. He did have opportunity to defend the Church. But in a political speech in 1857, he viciously attacked the Church as "a loathsome, disgusting ulcer in the body politic" and recommended that Congress cut it out.

Some have asserted that no one had better prospects for the presidency than did Douglas, but when the results of the election were tallied, he received only twelve electoral votes. The election victory went to an obscure backwoodsman by the name of Abraham Lincoln.

A few months after the election, Mr. Douglas died a broken man in the prime of life.

"By their fruits"

Another test of a true prophet was established by the Savior Himself. True prophets should be distinguished from false prophets by the standard, "By their fruits ye shall know them." (Matt. 7:20.) Consider some of the "fruits" of Joseph Smith's teachings:

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints takes care of its poor and needy by tithes and offerings from Church members. Latter-day Saints take seriously the Savior's statement that "inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Matt. 25:40.)

The Prophet Joseph Smith said the Church was not fully organized until the women had their own organization. So he organized, in 1842, the women's Relief Society, which is today the largest women's organization in the world.

Utah was one of the first states to grant voting rights to women.

This is a missionary church, as you've heard this morning. Jesus said one of the signs of the times before His second coming was that the gospel of the kingdom would be preached to all the world as a witness unto all nations. (See Matt. 24:14.)

Missionary service is expected from all young men and many married couples. Training begins in the home and is augmented by additional training in Church responsibilities. Priesthood training for young men commences at age twelve and continues throughout life. Additionally, the Church sponsors missionary training centers, where missionaries receive instruction and training in preparation for the teaching of the gospel to nations in their own languages.

How effective is the training? It took 117 years for the Church to achieve one million members. The second million was achieved in 16 years; the third million in 9 years; the fourth million in 6 years; and the fifth million in just 3 years.

In less than two decades, three million people have come into the Church.

Today there are about thirty thousand missionaries laboring in seventy-one nations of the world. Most donate their time and service at their own or their family's expense.

Joseph Smith and his successors have stressed education for all Church members. That emphasis has produced some remarkable results. Dr. Clark Kerr, chairman of the Carnegie Council in Policy Studies in Higher Education, noted:

"Utah is the leadership state in education in the nation, and thus in the world. . . .

"Utah stands first in the percentage of total population age 3 to 34 enrolled in school.

"Utah stands first in the percentage of the total population enrolled in school at every age level except ages 16-17. . . .

"Utah stands first in the average years of school completed for all of its citizens age 25 and older. . . .

"Utah, overall, has been . . . a model for educational development, a rich source for leadership." ("New Areas for Leadership," 1974 *University of Utah Commencement Address*, Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 1974, pp. 2-4.)

The Word of Wisdom

If any revelation given to Joseph Smith is susceptible to scientific investigation, it is the dietary health code known as the Word of Wisdom. In that revelation given in 1833, Church members were directed to abstain from coffee, tea, tobacco, and all alcoholic beverages.

Those who obey the commandment are promised "health in their navel and marrow to their bones." (D&C 89:18.)

A number of scientific studies have been made involving members of the LDS church. One study showed that Latter-day Saints in Utah have 65 percent fewer cases of lung cancer than the U.S. general population, and their rate of heart disease is 35 percent below the national average. (See *Church News*, 23 June 1979, pp. 5, 10.)

In another study in California, where Mormons are less than 2 percent of the population, Dr. James Enstrom, a radiation physicist at UCLA, who is not a member of the Church, found even more startling disclosures. Dr. Enstrom found that Mormons had a lung cancer rate 75 percent below the national average and an overall cancer rate 45 percent below the national average. As he concluded his study,

Dr. Enstrom said of the Mormons: "They must be doing *something* right." (Quoted by Bill Davidson, "What Can We Learn About Health from the Mormons?" *Family Circle*, Jan. 1976, p. 82.)

Joseph Smith received the Word of Wisdom in 1833. Today medical science has validated the soundness of that revelation.

Yes, "by their fruits ye shall know them"! (Matt. 7:20.) The fruits of Joseph Smith's teachings have withstood over 150 years of investigation, criticism, and persecution. The message, the Church, and the people stand as a vindication of the truth of his testimony and works.

Joseph Smith "sealed his mission and his works with his own blood"

Just as prophets of the past were without honor in their own countries and were persecuted and killed, Joseph Smith was maligned and martyred in his generation.

Was Joseph Smith sent from God? We answer an emphatic "yes"!

"He lived great, and he died great in the eyes of God and his people; and like most of the Lord's anointed in ancient times, has sealed his mission and his works with his own blood." (D&C 135:3.)

I testify to you that God has again spoken from the heavens; that the visitation of God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ constitutes the greatest event in this world since the resurrection of Jesus Christ. God lives. Jesus is the Christ, the Redeemer of the world—not just a great moral teacher, as much of the Christian world is claiming, but the Savior of mankind, the very Son of God.

I bear testimony that Joseph Smith was a prophet of the living God, one of the greatest prophets that has ever lived on the earth. He was the instrument in God's hand in ushering in the present gospel dispensation, the greatest of all, and the last of all in

preparation for the second coming of the Master.

I bear witness that we have standing at the head of the Church today a prophet of the living God, who holds all the authority necessary to carry forward our Father's program for the blessing of His children.

As God lives, I know these things are true and bear this witness to you, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "An Angel from on High" without announcement.

President Romney

We appreciate the courtesies shown by the owners and operators of the many radio and television stations who have offered their facilities as a

public service to make the proceedings of this conference available to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

We shall conclude this fourth session of the conference with the Tabernacle Choir singing "In My Father's House Are Many Mansions," after which the benediction will be pronounced by Elder Ted E. Brewerton, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

This conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The Choir sang "In My Father's House Are Many Mansions."

The benediction was offered by Elder Ted E. Brewerton.

SECOND DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

FIFTH SESSION

The fifth and final general session of the 151st Semiannual General Conference commenced at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, October 4, 1981.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

Music was provided by the Tabernacle Choir directed by Jerold Ottley with John Longhurst at the organ.

President Hinckley made the following remarks at the outset of the meeting:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

We extend a sincere welcome to

all assembled this afternoon in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah in the fifth and concluding session of the 151st Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We also welcome those seated in the Salt Palace where Elders Hartman Rector, Jr. and Jacob de Jager preside.

We send our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere who are participating in these proceedings by radio, television, and cable.

The Tabernacle Choir with Jerold Ottley directing and John Longhurst at the organ will begin this service by

singing "Arise, My Soul, Arise." The invocation will be offered by Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Choir sang "Arise, My Soul, Arise."

Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes." Following the singing, we shall hear

from Elder Mark E. Petersen, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The Choir sang "I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes."

President Hinckley

Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder Carlos E. Asay of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Mark E. Petersen

As Brother Featherstone mentioned in his prayer, one of the favorite hymns of the Latter-day Saints actually is a prayer for the President of the Church. It is sung by congregations throughout the world with the beautiful theme mentioned by Brother Featherstone, and I'm sure we all join together in this expression:

*We ever pray for thee, our Prophet dear,
That God will give to thee comfort and cheer;
As the advancing years furrow thy brow,
Still may the light within shine bright as now.*

*We ever pray for thee with all our hearts,
That strength be given thee to do thy part,
To guide and counsel us from day to day,
To shed a holy light around our way.
("We Ever Pray for Thee," Hymns, no. 386.)*

First Presidency—the presiding council

Who is more beloved in the Church than President Spencer W. Kimball? And for whom do more prayers ascend from all parts of the world where Latter-day Saints live?

Not only is President Kimball universally loved and revered, but he loves and reveres the Saints and prays for them and labors for them without hesitation and without limit. His kindness is Christlike. He endeavors to do to all as he himself would be done by.

The Lord has given him great and wise men as counselors: President N. Eldon Tanner, President Marion G. Romney, and President Gordon B. Hinckley, who is a new counselor in the First Presidency, a man of God every inch of him, a wise man, an energetic man, courageous in the faith, solid and substantial as Gibraltar.

These brethren are as devoted as is the President himself, constantly giving their all to the work, everlastingly supporting the President, coun-

seling in kindness and with great intelligence in all matters that come before them.

The First Presidency is a quorum of the Church and operates as such in beautiful harmony under the influence of the Holy Spirit, thus giving inspired guidance to the Saints.

The First Presidency is the presiding council of the Church. These Brethren preside over all things. They hold all the keys, powers, gifts, and blessings of this dispensation.

The President is the presiding high priest. His counselors preside with him by delegation from him in carrying on the labors of this highest divinely organized quorum on earth. All four in the presidency are Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ; all are prophets, seers, and revelators.

Council of the Twelve—next in line

The Council of the Twelve comes next in line. These brethren also hold the divine keys, but only the President of the Church may exercise all of these keys in their fulness, for this privilege is given to but one man on earth at a time. The Twelve also work by delegation from the President of the Church. They receive assignments from him, and fulfill them with complete devotion.

It was the Lord himself who installed Apostles and prophets in this modern Church. It is, therefore, no idle gesture by which we sustain the First Presidency and the Twelve as prophets, seers, and revelators, for so they are, divinely chosen, duly ordained and set apart by the laying on of hands by those authorized to do so.

They were called of God as was Aaron (see Heb. 5:4), according to the pattern described by the Apostle Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews. They were appointed by revelation, ordained by other living prophets, and fully commissioned to act in the name of the Lord.

The President holds all keys, gifts, and powers

God speaks through our great leaders and guides his people by their words. Did not the Lord himself say: "Whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, *it is the same*"? (D&C 1:38; italics added.)

The President of the Church, who indeed is the living mouthpiece of God and the presiding high priest on earth, is given sacred endowments even as was the Prophet Joseph Smith, whom he succeeds in this high office.

By ordination he holds all of the keys, gifts, and powers in the priesthood that were bestowed upon the Prophet Joseph Smith by the holy angels as the Church arose again in these last days.

The President of the Church holds them all!

The work of this final dispensation could not be carried on otherwise. What point would there have been in Joseph Smith taking all those powers with him into the grave? The work would have stopped because God operates only authoritatively.

Did not Amos of old say that the Lord will do *nothing* except through his servants the prophets? (See Amos 3:7.) And did God ever send prophets to earth without divine authority, without the right to speak and act in his name?

Were not the prophets and Apostles placed in the early Christian church by the Savior himself? And were they not called and ordained "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ"? (Eph. 4:12.)

And were they not the *foundation* of the true church, as Paul said, the Savior being the chief cornerstone? (See Eph. 2:20.)

And were they not to remain in the Church "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect

man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ"? (Eph. 4:13.)

And were they not to remain also that we "be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine"? (Eph. 4:14.)

Need for modern prophets

The need for such direction is as great today as it was in the time of Peter and Paul when indeed every wind of doctrine *did* assail the Saints, and when false prophets *did* arise, teaching with "cunning craftiness, whereby they" *did* indeed "lie in wait to deceive." (Eph. 4:14.)

The Saints today need instruction from God through his prophets just as did the members of the ancient church. We of this dispensation also must depend upon inspired direction in the work of the ministry and upon constant divine guidance on our way to perfection.

In many ways conditions now are much the same as they were anciently. The attitudes of the people—then and now—are not essentially different, neither are their basic problems, such as immorality.

The Lord has given us modern prophets as part of his modern Church, and their duties are like those of the ancient ones.

We of today must heed them as did the Saints in times past. It is the same Church, the same faith; and the salvation that is offered is identical.

The people anciently were willing to accept the divine callings of their leaders, not regarding them any longer as mere fishermen or tentmakers, for those brethren were placed by the Lord into a new category as his divinely chosen servants. So we of today must look beyond the former occupations and personal activities of our modern leaders and see them as the servants of God that they are now.

They are inspired as were Peter and Paul. They have the same divine callings. They are the leaders whom

God himself has given us. He raised them up specifically for the present day. Then shall we not heed them?

Safety in the Church

We are living in a difficult period of time. The devil is fighting a determined war against the Saints. He seeks to surround us with every conceivable form of temptation, hatred, bigotry, and corruption.

His methods indeed are devious, as we are told so plainly by the prophet Nephi, who said that Satan will "rage in the hearts of the children of men, and stir them up to anger against that which is good.

"And others he will pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well—and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell.

"And . . . others he flattereth away, and telleth them there is no hell; and he saith unto them: I am no devil, for there is none—and thus he whispereth in their ears, until he grasps them with his awful chains, from whence there is no deliverance." (2 Ne. 28:20-22.)

Have you ever known a time in your lives when there was as much temptation as there is right now? Many an adult has said that he is glad he is not growing up in this day when the world is so corrupt.

They express alarm for the rising generation with all that confronts them in drug and sex appeal, in filth on the screen and in the printed media, and in many other forms of seduction.

Where is safety, brothers and sisters? Where but in the Church and under the protective canopy of the gospel of Jesus Christ? Is not today much like Noah's day when the population of the earth was wiped out in the flood and but eight righteous souls were spared?

Some doubt that there was a flood, but by modern revelation we know that it did take place. By modern revelation we know that for more than a century, Noah pleaded with the people to repent, but in their willful stubbornness they would not listen.

Follow the prophets

Don't we need the warning voices of the prophets now as much as they did in the days of Noah? Will we respond to our own seers and revelators any more than did the people of his day? Are we so foolish that we will not learn a lesson from their mistakes?

The scriptures say that many will not listen. But they also say that true believers in the Lord will follow his servants and give ear to their warning voices. God will protect the faithful regardless of all the tribulations that will come upon the wicked.

Did he not save Noah's family from the Flood?

Did he not save Lehi's family from destruction at Jerusalem?

The Lord has given his word that if we will serve him, he in turn will protect and prosper us.

As we live in this wicked world, shall we remain blind to the exigencies of our times? Have we the common sense and the good judgment to stand in holy places?

And how do we accomplish that? By obeying the prophets!

Are we willing—at all costs—to defend the kingdom of God against the vicious attacks of the adversary? And how do we do that? By obeying the prophets! Are we ready to answer affirmatively when we are asked:

Who's on the Lord's side?

Is not today the time to show?

We ask it urgently:

Who's on the Lord's side? Who?

(See Hymns, no. 175.)

If we are on his side, we will follow his prophets.

I testify to you that they are men of God. I testify to you that our great leader, President Spencer W. Kimball personally is a seer and a revelator, a prophet in the same sense as was Moses or Isaiah or Joseph Smith, and that he holds divine powers even as they did.

For our own sake, for the sake of our families, for the sake of this restored church of Jesus Christ to which we give our allegiance, but also to earn the blessing of heaven, let us serve the Lord and keep his commandments.

I have been on the Council of the Twelve now for nearly thirty-eight years. In that time I have labored under six Presidents of the Church. I have sat in their meetings as vital decisions were made. I have listened to their discussions and seen the flow of inspiration as it came to these six Presidents—these six prophets, six revelators, six seers whom I have known and whom I have loved and in whom I have felt an hallowed presence over the years.

I testify to you, by personal experience, that I have seen the power of God work upon them. I know that we live in a day of revelation. I know these brethren are divinely appointed servants of the Lord. I know that they speak for God.

If we follow them, do we not thereby follow Him who called them?

But conversely if we raise our hands or our voices against them, or if we ignore them, do we not in that manner *resist* the divine being who commissioned them as his servants? Can anyone afford to do that?

God lifted prophets to high callings

Is not our attitude toward these prophets an unerring reflection of our innermost feeling toward God? I mean our real, basic allegiance when it is divested of all outward show and stripped of all pretentions.

Can we truly love the Lord and at the same time reject his servants?

If we really do love God, then indeed we must and we will love and revere his anointed ones.

What if we did know them as boys in the neighborhood and saw no halos about them? What if we did mingle with them as they lived routine and ordinary lives in the past, meeting the world as it came, day by day? We must realize that conditions have changed!

God has now lifted them out of those familiar patterns and has given them a new status in life. He has summoned them to high callings in his ministry. A sacred mantle has descended upon them, the mantle of their divine commission, the mantle of prophecy!

They speak with new voices; they are guided by a heavenly light. *They are ordinary no longer!* They are the anointed ones—the chosen ones—chosen by Almighty God!

We have had twelve Presidents of the Church, twelve of God's greatest high priests. Each one gave his life for the work. One was a martyr, struck down by assassins' bullets. The others lived long and labored valiantly for the faith, even to their last breath.

Of his faithful servants the Lord has said: These are they who overcome by faith. Wherefore, all things are theirs and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's. These are they whose names are written in heaven, where God and Christ are the judge of all. These are

they whose glory is that of the sun, even the glory of God, the highest of all. (See D&C 76:53, 59, 68, 70.)

The Lord will honor his prophets throughout eternity, for he will make them heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. (Romans 8:17.) The Lord expects us, his people, to honor them also, to sustain them and to follow them. May we therefore always sing with deep sincerity this wonderful hymn, which in truth is a prayer, but also a covenant:

*We thank thee, O God, for a prophet
To guide us in these latter days.
We thank thee for sending the gospel
To lighten our minds with its rays.
We thank thee for every blessing
Bestowed by thy bounteous hand.
We feel it a pleasure to serve thee,
And love to obey thy command.
(Hymns, no. 196.)*

In the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Mark E. Petersen, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder Carlos E. Asay, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He will be followed by Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Carlos E. Asay

While pondering a theme for this conference assignment, I had occasion to conduct some business over the telephone with a member of the Council of the Twelve. In that conversation I asked, "Would you help me select a suitable subject for my conference assignment?"

He said, "Yes," in a very reassuring voice. And then he said, "Carlos, pray."

Devil wants to put Church out of existence

I therefore share with you the

Sunday, October 4

results of many prayers, and I do so prayerfully and obediently and very humbly.

On November 1, 1857, Elder George A. Smith delivered a memorable discourse, which included this old Chinese fable:

"A man travelling through the country came to a large city, very rich and splendid; he looked at it and said to his guide, 'This must be a very righteous people, for I can only see but one little devil in this great city.'

"The guide replied, 'You do not understand, sir. This city is so perfectly given up to wickedness . . . that it requires but one devil to keep them all in subjection.'

"Travelling on a little farther, he came to a rugged path and saw an old man trying to get up the hill side, surrounded by seven great, big, coarse-looking devils.

" 'Why,' says the traveller, 'this must be a tremendously wicked old man! See how many devils there are around him!'

" 'This,' replied the guide, 'is the only righteous man in the country; and there are seven of the biggest devils trying to turn him out of his path, and they all cannot do it.' "

(*Journal of Discourses*, 5:363-64.)

After relating the fable, Elder Smith added that "the devil has the world so perfectly at his disposal that it requires few devils to keep it in subjection" and that "the whole legion of devils has nothing to do but look after the 'Mormons' and stir up the hearts of the children of men to destroy them—to put them out of existence." (*Journal of Discourses*, 5:364.)

Sometimes works through anti-Christ

The evil one has attempted on many occasions in all dispensations to put out of existence, if you will, many of God's children. Sometimes he, himself, has assumed the deluder's role. Other times he has worked

through those who have stepped to his side of the line. For instance, in the Book of Mormon, we read of three anti-Christ. Each was deceived, each preached against those who believed in Christ, and each sought openly to destroy the church of God. Their patterns of deceit were similar. They taught false doctrines, spread lies, referred to prophecies as foolish traditions, accused Church leaders of perverting the right way of God, and baited the people by referring to their faith as a foolish and vain hope. (See Jacob 7; Alma 1; and Alma 30.)

When we read about the anti-Christ of former days, we marvel at how perverted their thinking became, and we marvel at how successful they were in deceiving men and women. We also wonder why some of the people were so gullible—so easily misled. And with all this marveling and wondering, we tend to niche the anti-Christ in some corner of ancient history and go about our unguarded ways. This is dangerous. It could result in loss of faith; and, in a spiritual sense, it could put us out of existence.

Since the spring of 1820, Lucifer has led a relentless attack against the Latter-day Saints and their leaders. A parade of anti-Christ, anti-Mormons, and apostate groups have appeared on the scene. Many are still among us and have released new floods of lies and false accusations. These faith-killers and testimony-thieves use personal contacts, the printed word, electronic media, and other means of communication to sow doubts and to disturb the peace of true believers.

Two months ago we received a tender letter from a bishop. He informed us that he had been involved in an excommunication of a recent convert. The new convert had fallen under the influence of a very dedicated apostate who was successful in destroying the convert's testimony. It seems that, to discredit Joseph Smith and subsequent prophets, the apostate

cited changes made in Church publications over the years.

The approach used by the apostate is common among those who are more interested in shadows than in light. Their logic, if followed, would have them burning the New Testament because Luke's account of the gospel is not exactly like Matthew's or because the book of Acts reports two differing versions of Paul's vision on the road to Damascus. (See Acts 9:1-9 and 22:4-11.) Belief in modern prophets and continuous revelation is absent in the lives of many apostates. They would pin their hopes for salvation upon things other than those related to living prophets and living faith.

Nine-step protection against anti-Christ

The questions follow: How do we respond to such malicious and evil designs? Do we strike back? Allow me to suggest a course of action—one which is in harmony with the teachings of the Savior, and one which, if followed, will be in harmony with the wise counsel of prophets past and present:

1. *Avoid those who would tear down your faith.* Faith-killers are to be shunned. The seeds which they plant in the minds and hearts of men grow like cancer and eat away the Spirit. True messengers of God are builders—not destroyers. We send our missionaries into the world to teach and to assist people in receiving truth line upon line until the fulness of the gospel is received. (See D&C 98:112.) As one new convert testified: "My previous church provided me the chapter on mortality. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints added two more chapters pertaining to the pre-mortal and postmortal existences."

2. *Keep the commandments.* President Brigham Young promised, "All we have to do is to go onward and upward, and keep the command-

ments of our Father and God; and he will confound our enemies." (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1957, p. 347.) If we obey holy laws, we will take upon ourselves "the whole armour of God" and we will be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. (See Eph. 6:11-18.) Moreover, obedience ensures us of the guidance and protection of the Holy Spirit.

3. *Follow the living prophets, as we have just been admonished.* One Church leader taught: "Always keep your eye on the President of the Church, and if he ever tells you to do anything, and it is wrong, and you do it, the Lord will bless you for it. . . . But you don't need to worry. The Lord will never let his mouthpiece lead the people astray." (Heber J. Grant, quoted by Marion G. Romney in Conference Report, Oct. 1960, p. 78.) We walk in uncharted mine fields and place our souls in jeopardy when we receive the teachings of anyone except he that is ordained of God. (See D&C 43:2-7; 52:9.)

4. *Do not contend or debate over points of doctrine.* The Master warned that "the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil." (3 Ne. 11:29.) We are inconsistent if we resort to Satanic tactics in attempting to achieve righteous ends. Such inconsistency results only in frustration, loss of the Spirit, and ultimate defeat. Remember, "We claim the privilege of worshipping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege." (Eleventh Article of Faith.)

5. *Search the scriptures.* Few of us would go astray or lose our way if we regarded the scriptures as our personal guide or compass. (See Alma 37:44.) The iron rod is the word of God, and if held to, we will not fall.

6. *Do not be swayed or diverted from the mission of the Church.* There are those who would draw you off

course and cause you to waste time and energies. Satan used a diversion ploy when he tempted Christ in the wilderness. The Savior's decisive response, "Get thee hence, Satan" (Matt. 4:10), is a proper example for all of us.

7. *Pray for your enemies.* Christ said to the Nephites, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you." (3 Ne. 12:44; see also Matt. 5:44; 3 Ne. 12:10-12.) While on the cross, the Savior pled, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34.) There are many who are kept from the truth—not because they don't want it, but because they know not where to find it.

8. *Practice "pure religion."* Involve yourself in Christian service. Succor the needs of the sick and poor; visit the fatherless and widows, and be charitable to all whether in the Church or out of the Church. (See James 1:27 and Alma 1:30.)

9. *Remember that there may be many questions for which we have no answers and that some things have to be accepted simply on faith.* An angel of the Lord asked Adam, "Why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord?" He answered, "I know not, save the Lord commanded me." (Moses 5:6.) There may be times when we are called upon to climb Mount Moriahs and to sacrifice our Isaacs without a full and prior explanation. Faith is the first principle of the gospel; it is a principle of progress.

Opposition kicks Mormonism upstairs

I suspect that there are few who know better the reality of Satan and his henchmen than does the full-time missionary, for the missionary is exposed to the fiery darts of the adversary, which come whistling overhead as he or she labors in the front lines in our

war against sin. However, I promise all missionaries—and all members—that if the nine actions just mentioned are followed consistently, victory will be yours and faith and testimony will be preserved.

At the same time—

1. I assure you that opposition to our cause testifies of its divinity. Would satanic powers combine against us if we were not posing a threat to such powers?

2. I assure you that opposition, if met and overcome, has a refining influence upon our lives. A verse in one of our hymns reads:

*When through fiery trials thy
pathway shall lie,
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy
supply.*

*The flame shall not hurt thee; I only
design*

*Thy dress to consume and thy gold to
refine.*

("How Firm a Foundation," *Hymns*, no. 66.)

The Savior learned obedience by the things which he suffered. (See Heb. 5:8.) Joseph Smith's oppositions gave him experience and worked for his good. (See D&C 122:7.)

3. I assure you that the waters in which we are wont to swim are but little puddles when compared with the deep rivers of opposition in which the Prophet Joseph and others swam. (See D&C 127:2.)

4. I assure you that our cause is just and it will succeed, regardless of the opposition exerted against us. Earlier Saints were bolstered by these words: "As well might man stretch forth his puny arm to stop the Missouri river in its decreed course, or to turn it up stream, as to hinder the Almighty from pouring down knowledge from heaven upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints." (D&C 121:33.)

President Brigham Young said: "Every time you kick 'Mormonism' you kick it upstairs; you never kick it

downstairs. The Lord Almighty so orders it." (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1941, p. 351.)

With all my heart I implore those who are walking on the fringes of our faith to seek the safety of the center. This can be done best by counseling with your leaders and remaining within the fellowshiping circle of the Saints, and receiving nourishment from the good word of God. Do not permit faithless people to turn you out of the right way or to put you out of existence. (See Moro. 6.)

And I pray for those who deal in the highest form of larceny—that of stripping people of their precious testimonies. Such action, if continued, will

lead only to the futility and emptiness of the dream of a night vision. (See 2 Ne. 27:3; Acts 5:33-39.)

God help us all in our war against sin. Though our numbers may be few and our dominions small, may we go forward "armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory" (1 Ne. 14:14), is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Carlos E. Asay, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi

I feel very humble and privileged this afternoon to be in your presence, brothers and sisters. I hope and pray that the Spirit of the Lord will be with me so that I might be able to communicate with you.

Testimony that Heavenly Father lives

I know with all my heart and soul that our Heavenly Father lives. He truly lives. I know our Heavenly Father is there, and he is ready to answer our sincere prayers. He has spoken to his children in the past; he has spoken to us in our day, to our people in his last dispensation. Our Father introduced his Son, Jesus Christ, to the people who lived on the American continent.

The Book of Mormon testifies: "They heard a voice as if it came out of heaven; and they cast their eyes round about, for they understood not the voice which they heard; and it was

not a harsh voice, neither was it a loud voice; nevertheless, and notwithstanding it being a small voice it did pierce them that did hear to the center, inasmuch that there was no part of their frame that it did not cause to quake; yea, it did pierce them to the very soul, and did cause their hearts to burn.

"And again the third time they did hear the voice, and did open their ears to hear it; and their eyes were towards the sound thereof; and they did look steadfastly towards heaven, from whence the sound came.

"And behold, the third time they did understand the voice which they heard; and it said unto them;

"Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name—hear ye him." (3 Ne. 11:3, 5-7; italics added.)

I know that the same Father spoke to the Jewish people in the eastern hemisphere. When our Lord Jesus Christ was baptized, the Bible testifies, "And, lo, the heavens were

opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

"And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3:16-17.)

I know that early one morning in the spring of 1820, in the state of New York, the Father and the Son appeared to the boy Joseph Smith. Joseph Smith testified: "I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

"... When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!" (JS—H 1:16-17.)

"Joseph Smith saw God and Jesus Christ"

I know Joseph Smith saw God, the Father, and his Son, Jesus Christ. And I know that Joseph was a true living prophet of God. Like Joseph Smith of our day and like the ancient disciples and Apostles of the western and eastern hemispheres, I know that our Heavenly Father's own testimony is true: Jesus of Nazareth is his Beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased. Hear ye him!

I know that Jesus of Nazareth was born in the land of Judea, that he walked by the Sea of Galilee and the fields and plains of Palestine. It is his own testimony that we should hear, the one he bore to Martha, the sister of his friend Lazarus. Yesterday Elder Monson referred to this scripture:

"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

"And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believeth thou this?" (John 11:25-26.)

Missionary labors in Japan and Korea

Brothers and sisters, I believe this with all my heart and with all my soul. *I know that this same Jesus conferred upon Joseph Smith all the power and authority necessary to reestablish the kingdom of God upon this earth once again, so that every soul might have a chance to hear the Father's Beloved Son.*

I know that our Heavenly Father loves us so much that he has provided us, through his Beloved Son, a way for us to follow in our mortal lives. Through the restoration of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, he has provided the way to find eternal happiness, true happiness.

Brothers and sisters, many of our Father's children in Japan and Korea also believe our Heavenly Father's testimony and listen to his Beloved Son.

Shortly before coming to this conference, I received a beautiful letter from a woman who had lost her husband thirteen years ago. I will read it to you. She said: "I was left alone to raise my two sons. As I was attending the baptismal service of my eldest son, who is attending senior high school, I could not help but feel the beautiful atmosphere that surrounded me. I was so impressed by the sweet spirit of the Saints; how exuberant and humble I felt. I observed my son, dressed in white, going down into the water. The stake president's wife, who was whispering to me, told me that his sins would be washed away. I was so overwhelmed by the beauty of this moment that I felt my tears well up and my heart cried for joy. At that moment I wanted to know about myself. What about me? What about me? Was it possible that I, too, could experience a washing away of my sins? If my sins could be washed away and made clean once more, I too wanted to be baptized."

After four days of studying and

praying with the missionaries, she too came to accept the Savior and was baptized. Shortly thereafter, her youngest son also entered into the waters of baptism. Now Sister Masako Anan and her two boys are preparing to go to the Tokyo Temple to be sealed as a family with their deceased father for time and all eternity. Oh, how glorious is the power of the gospel which can change the hearts of people from sorrow and despair to happiness and joy! Oh, how glorious it is to know that the power conferred upon Joseph Smith can change the hearts of the people!

I know that the gospel has been restored and that the true church of God has been reestablished here upon this earth. I humbly extend my invitation to all my friends everywhere, and I say humbly today, "Come partake of this living water. Believe the testimony of the Father: '[This is] my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, . . . hear ye him.'" (3 Ne. 11:7.)

I know for those who wish to hear the Father's beloved Son, the Book of Mormon like the Bible has a familiar voice. It is the word of God and has the power to change men's souls.

May I give you an example of a Korean brother who heard the Savior's voice? Brother Choi had left his wife, two children, and his mother for nine months. One day our missionaries were tracting in the city of Kwang Ju, Korea. They found his family. The family began to study with the missionaries and were baptized shortly. The missionaries started the family home evening program with this family.

One day the seven-year-old daughter purchased a Book of Mormon from a missionary and sent it with her simple, yet beautiful testimony to her daddy. Two missionaries took that book to her father and bore their strong, firm testimonies of the truthfulness of the gospel and the

importance of the family. Her father wondered why these people were so concerned and kind to him and his family. When evening came, he began to read, and heard a familiar voice of the Lord. He was so inspired and found it to be true. And also he found the testimony written by his daughter. I would like to share it with you, brothers and sisters. She said:

"Aboji, Aboji, Aboji (which interpreted is 'Daddy, Daddy, Daddy'), I want to have family home evening with you! Please come back! We love you! I love you! I need you! I want you to read this book! Heavenly Father loves you!"

Brother Choi was so inspired and magnified by reading the Book of Mormon and touched by it and touched by his daughter's testimony that he asked the missionaries to baptize him. Therefore this family was reunited, and Brother Choi is now the bishop of the Kwang Ju Third Ward. He sits in this hall today, a living example of one who heard the Savior's voice from the Book of Mormon.

Oh, how we need the missionaries of the Lord to carry the Father's testimony of his Beloved Son to every people, kindred, and tongue! There must be many Bishop Chois and there must be many Sister Anans in your own neighborhoods.

"President Kimball: We love you. We need you"

I know Spencer W. Kimball is a prophet of the Lord. He is a living prophet. He instructs us that we should lengthen our stride, quicken our pace with a sense of urgency; do it now! President Kimball, you are a living prophet of the Lord; you are a man scorned and covered with scars like Job of old, and yet you are ready to move forward, to climb another mountain. We love you. We need you.

Brothers and sisters, why don't we pay more humble attention to this servant of the Lord so that we can

lengthen our own stride and share this beautiful gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ with another Bishop Choi and another Sister Anan. I humbly pray in the sacred name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us.

The Choir and congregation will now join in singing "Let Us All Press On." After the singing, Elder Paul H. Dunn, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will speak to us.

The Choir and congregation sang
"Let Us All Press On."

President Hinckley

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Paul H. Dunn, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. We shall then hear from Elder Marion D. Hanks, a member of that same quorum.

Elder Paul H. Dunn

What a special delight it is, brothers and sisters, to stand in your presence once more, to feel of your great spirit. I'm just glad we're friends.

In need of good counsel

You know, conference is a great time for spiritual uplift, for association, and for wise counsel. With all the counsel I've been hearing, I couldn't help but reminisce a little bit about the young athlete who attempted most all sports but had never tried skydiving. And so he took several theoretical courses in how to jump.

When the day came for the solo flight, he became a little fearful, so he approached his instructor and said, "I'm not sure I want to go through with this."

The instructor said, "Don't worry. We'll protect you by putting two added parachutes on you."

The plane took off and arrived at the three thousand foot level. With some fear and trepidation he was pushed out.

On the way down, at about two thousand feet, he remembered that that's when you pull the rip cord. He did so, and the chute didn't open. He pulled the second, and it didn't open. He pulled the third, and it didn't open.

To his amazement, at about that time he met in the air, coming up from the ground, another man. They passed on the way. The young parachutist shouted to his new friend, "Pardon me," he said, "do you know anything about parachutes?"

"No," his friend shouted back, "what do you know about Coleman lanterns?"

"Why should I?"

I suppose it seems all of us are in need of good counsel. Quite often parents and many young people ask the question, "How do you teach the gospel so that it's meaningful and applicable?" Do you know, my brothers and sisters, that learning any concept or principle or changing any behavior pattern requires five important steps?

First, you have to expose a person. *Second* is the law of repetition. *Third* is to give understanding, the why. People of all ages want to know the whys of the gospel, not just the rules. This is the most important aspect of teaching because the *fourth* step, that of conviction, and the *fifth*, application, cannot occur until we understand.

Too often our answers to young people's inquiries are "Well, because the scriptures say so" or "That is what the leaders tell us." Young people want to know why the scriptures say so and why the leaders are so concerned.

Let me just share a little personal experience that happened some years ago at the university.

I'd been in a very special meeting with some young people. We had been talking about temple marriage. As we departed the session, I was walking with three young ladies, one of whom I knew quite well. I had become aware that she had been dating a boy out of the faith, and I just cautiously suggested to her that you tend to marry those you date. I said, "I am planning on the day when I can perform your sealing in the temple."

She looked at me and she said, "Well, I may not get married in the temple."

And I said, "Why not?"

And she looked at me as only young people can, and said, "Why should I?"

All right, mom and dad, teacher. What do you tell them?

Like most teachers, I paused to stall and think. Then, hoping for inspiration, I said, "Well, why shouldn't you?"

She looked at me and she said, "Do you really want to know?"

And I said, "Please."

She said, "How well do you know my father?"

I said, "Reasonably well."

She said, "My dad puts on a pretty good front. Oh, he's a fine man, but he's a little hypocritical." She

said, "You ought to see the way he treats my mom and us at home. And you know, my mom and dad were married in the temple. And I don't want a marriage like that." She said, "How well do you know Brother and Sister So-and-so?"—another acquaintance.

I said, "I know them."

She said, "Did you know I babysit for them. They too are married in the temple, and I wouldn't care for a marriage like that." She said, "How well do you know Mr. and Mrs. So-and-so?" This is a wonderful member of our community, not of our faith. Ten children. She said, "I babysit that family too, and I'd like a marriage like theirs."

"Why not?"

Now what do you say, mom and dad? Teacher? The scriptures say so? Well, that's what the leaders teach. Young people are after whys and wherefores.

I was still a little puzzled. Standing nearby was another young lady. I turned to her and I said, "How do you answer that?"

She was alert. She turned to her friend and she said, "Jan, you're not fair."

Jan said, "Why not?"

She said, "Because you're judging the whole church by two or three examples that don't represent, necessarily, what we believe and teach or how we should live." She said, "Let me ask you a question. When was the last time you had a little personal crisis, maybe a frustrating date, a test, a social situation that worried you a little bit, where your dad sensed it and came into your bedroom and sat on the edge of the bed and stroked your head and said, 'Wouldn't you like a blessing tonight?'"

Jan looked at her and said, "Well, my dad doesn't do that."

The little girl said, "My dad does."

And then together they talked about how her dad regularly taught the family. An experience was shared regarding family prayer. She listed some eight or nine such moments without even pausing. I could see a little change in Jan's heart. You could see in Jan's eyes the expression, "Oh! I would like a husband like that."

I had the thrill some months later of performing that marriage, in the temple. I'd like to think that night, a change occurred.

Teach the "why"

Most wrong choices before and after marriage are not made out of rebellion or intentional error but because of misinformation, miscommunication, and lack of understanding. In most cases, if couples truly understood the whys and the whys and the hows of eternal marriage, no one would have to talk them into the right choices. Indeed, no one would be able to talk them out of them!

Let me ask you young people a question: have you ever wondered why God would restrict us from some things, advise us strongly against them, warn us, even command us? Do you think his commandments are just arbitrary whims, artificial tests of some kind, generalities that are important for some people but not for others?

I don't think so! His commandments are *loving counsel from a wise Father*. Our understanding and concept of God as a loving and personal Heavenly Father allows us no other definition. He gives us commandments for one reason only—because he loves us and wants us to be happy. Chastity is a perfect example. God simply knows that virtue is its own reward, that the saving of oneself for one eternal partner makes that commitment more beautiful, more joyful. It is the simple question of whether you want a penny now or a diamond

later. Any momentary pleasure that might result from a premarital relationship cannot be compared with the vastly greater joy of oneness in marriage. And the indulgence in the former can destroy the potential for the latter.

Chastity is like money in the bank. As you save yourself you are *saving* the joy of belonging to one and only one. You are saving the joy of being able to say, "I am all yours, and I have never been anyone else's."

"Too beautiful to squander, too wonderful to waste"

Some will ask, "What if we already know who 'the one' is? What if the commitment is already there and we're just waiting for the ceremony?" The answer is, *it's not just a ceremony*, it's a covenant, both with God and with your partner, and *waiting* shows the deepest love and respect for both.

Some will say, "But we love each other too much to wait." The answer is that there is no such thing as too much love and that it is too much selfishness, not love, that debates divine counsel and violates virtue.

Any love that is to become eternal must include respect, faith, trust, admiration, honor, and have spiritual and mental aspects as well as physical and emotional. No relationship, either temporal or eternal, can exist without these attributes. Every soap opera is filled with accurate illustrations of misery because these qualities are absent.

If, in your case, the physical tends to dominate, all the more reason to bridle it and find the other dimensions. *Bridle* is the word that wise father Alma used in counseling his son Shiblon, and the promise he attached is the key to understanding: "Bridle . . . your passions, that ye may be filled with love." (Alma 38:12.) Bridling increases strength, increases power, increases love. There are absolutely two ways you can con-

trol a horse. (We learned a little bit about horses last night.) One is to kill it; one is to bridle it. Alma never said kill your passions. The implication is *not* that passions are evil, that we shouldn't have them. On the contrary, we bridle something we love, something whose power we respect.

A horse is stronger than a man, so the man bridles it, thus *controlling* its power and using that power for good. Passions are stronger than we are, so we bridle them, thus controlling their power and using that power to strengthen a marriage and forge it into eternity. One has to know *how* to bridle a horse or a passion.

Remember, a physical relationship is simply too beautiful to squander, too wonderful to waste. It is

the sterling silver too precious to tarnish before the beauty of the banquet.

Let us remember that understanding "the why" in learning is what develops proper attitudes or changes behavior. God grant us the wisdom to teach wisely and with understanding, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Paul H. Dunn has just spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Marion D. Hanks, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, who will be followed by Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Marion D. Hanks

My theme today is mercy. The poet wrote that mercy is "twice blest/It bless[es] him that gives and him that takes," and added that "earthly power doth then show likest God's/When mercy seasons justice." (*Merchant of Venice*, act 4, sc. 1, lines 186-87, 96-97.)

I am sure that everyone within sound of my voice today is in favor of mercy. But mercy merely as a principle, impersonal mercy, is no more useful or virtuous than impersonal faith or impersonal repentance or impersonal love.

"I want justice!" "I want mercy"

As a new mission president years ago I visited, by somewhat imperious invitation, the home of a good and strongly opinionated man who wanted to discuss with me an error of judgment made by a young missionary. The harmless action involved was the result of a misunderstanding for which

the young man had sincerely apologized. I was fully satisfied with the resolution. My friend was not. He insisted on some form of punishment, public punishment, that assured humiliation. The young man must pay, and I must see to it.

We reasoned together. His position was that justice demands payment and that mercy cannot rob justice. I agreed and reminded him that the words he had quoted came from a Book of Mormon incident wherein a choice servant of God, who early in his life had desperately needed mercy had received it, and was now teaching an unrepentant son who was seeking to justify his own serious sin. Alma, the father, taught Corianton the meaning and consequences of the Atonement, in the course of which, acknowledging the place of justice, he three times testified of God's "plan of mercy," brought about through Christ's holy gift.

"Mercy claimeth the penitent," he said.

"Mercy claimeth all which is her own." (Alma 42:23, 24.)

There is "a repentance granted; which repentance mercy claimeth; otherwise, justice claimeth the creature." (Alma 42:22.)

Corianton listened, repented, and was forgiven, and subsequently returned to missionary service to "bring souls unto repentance, that the great plan of mercy may have claim upon them." (Alma 42:31.)

The sin of Corianton was major; the incident involving the missionary was innocent and minor. I thought our discussion would resolve the issue. It did not.

My host leaned across the table and said to me with intensity, "I want justice!"

Quietly I replied, "I want mercy."

Three times with growing force he repeated his message: "I want justice!"

Each time I responded to his crescendo with diminuendo, saying more quietly, "I want mercy."

We parted with the agreement that it was my responsibility to handle the matter, to give justice its due, and to let mercy claim her own.

He is gone now to his eternal reward. I remember him with respect and affection. I came to know him well and love him and to be aware that he, like all the rest of us, needed the promised mercy of Christ to the penitent.

Many times I have mused on that moment: "I want justice!" "I want mercy."

"My specialty is mercy"

Then recently, half a world away, I sat with another good man. He had brought light and warmth and good humor into the room with him, and I was listening with deep interest as he told his "before and after" story. The

"before" involved his life as a nominal but nonpracticing Christian employed in a stressful occupation with rough associates and with a tendency to follow the crowd in all their bad habits. He was not attentive to his wife and children, was worried about his family, suffered from an unhappy conscience, and had developed a serious physical ailment.

Then two young men came to his door. They represented the Lord, they said, with a message of eternal truth for him and his family: the gospel of Jesus Christ is restored to the earth, the church of Jesus Christ reestablished; every individual and every family are important to God and through his plan can find purpose and meaning; families are meant to be together forever; and there is a way to know for oneself the truth of these things, they said, for the Holy Spirit will confirm the knowledge for those who sincerely seek.

He listened and believed. Immediately he put aside bad habits. His wife and children responded also. Their lives changed. They studied and prayed and worshiped, joined the Church, and lived in the light of the Spirit. His work improved, and soon new opportunities and trust and renewed reputation for dependability resulted.

At the conclusion of his story came a ringing declaration of faith, without self-consciousness, without bluster, without guile. "I am like the Lord in one thing," he said; "my specialty is mercy."

My specialty is mercy!

Father's specialty is mercy

One cannot live long with the scriptures without recognizing that God our Father and his holy Son have specialties also.

The specialty of the Father is mercy.

To his people in Isaiah's time, he gave stern counsel and warning. They were, he said, "a rebellious people,

lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord:

"Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits." (Isa. 30:9-10.)

He spoke of their perverseness, their iniquity, their rejection of him and their reliance upon temporal power. Notwithstanding all this, the holy record then announces: "And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you." (Isa. 30:18.)

He waits to be gracious! He loves to be merciful! The prophets call him "the Father of mercies." (2 Cor. 1:3.) They speak of his "abundant mercy," (1 Pet. 1:3), and declare that "whosoever repenteth, and hardeneth not his heart, he shall have claim on mercy" (Alma 12:34). They declare his "wisdom . . . mercy, and grace." (2 Ne. 9:8.) And crowning all of this is the testimony that our Father "delighteth in mercy." (Micah 7:18.)

The specialty of the Father is mercy.

Savior's specialty is mercy

The specialty of the Savior is mercy.

He spoke to the world those things which he had heard of his Father. "As my Father hath taught me, I speak these things." (John 8:26, 28.)

The scriptures teach that he took upon himself the form of man and was "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." (Heb. 4:15.) "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest." (Heb. 2:17.)

There is one who understands, who sympathizes. He was misunderstood, rejected, knew supreme loneliness, was poor and had not a place to

lay his head, suffered anguish and conflict of mind.

He understands.

He can give pardon and bring peace.

The specialty of the Savior is mercy.

Mercy of God must be mirrored in mercy of man

And he requires that we be specialists in mercy.

"Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." (Luke 6:36.)

Through Micah we are taught man's whole duty, which is to walk humbly with God, to do justly among our fellowmen, and to "love mercy." (Micah 6:8.)

Our individual need for mercy and its conditions he explained in a parable of two men who went up to the temple to pray. One proudly announced his own perfections and righteousness. The other "would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner." Of this honest, unpretentious man the Lord declared that he "went down to his house justified rather than the other." (Luke 18:13-14.)

The meaning of mercy he taught in a parable of a man beaten and left at the roadside and concluded the sweet story of the Samaritan by referring to two men who passed by without helping, and to one who stopped to assist him. Which of these three, the Lord asked, was neighbor to the man? And he answered: "He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus, . . . Go, and do thou likewise." (Luke 10:37.)

Thus the mercy of God must be mirrored in the mercy of man, and the field is as broad as the needs of the whole human family. The Psalmist cried, "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble." (Ps. 31:9.)

Promise to those who find Christ and trust him

All of us are in trouble. There is no just man on the earth who doeth good and sinneth not. (See Eccl. 7:20.)

In the most personal of his parables, the Savior identified himself fully with the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the homeless, sick, and imprisoned. "I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: . . . I was a stranger, and ye took me in." (Matt. 25:35.) So many are burdened with earthly care, the stain of sin, poverty, pain, disability, loneliness, bereavement, rejection. The promise of Christ's mercy is sure and certain to those who find him and trust him. He who stilled the winds and waves can bring peace to the sinner and to the suffering saint. And we as his agents are not alone to declare his word, but to represent him in doing unto the least of his brethren that which he himself would do were he now here.

In a refugee camp in Asia was a young former schoolteacher who with her mother had escaped their country after having watched the brutal murder of others in their family. She had been viciously violated to the point where she had vowed never to speak again in this depraved world. It was her way of protesting against the wickedness imposed upon her and countless others. For more than five years she spoke not a word. Then one day she came into the influence of some of our

Church representatives who are performing daily miracles of love in several refugee camps. They had no medical magic, these selfless young ladies representing us there, no professional competence to deal with a tortured mind and spirit. They prayed for her, took her hand, and spoke words of love to her; and she answered! For the first time in five years she spoke, and she has been speaking since. The Spirit of him who said, "Peace be still" (Mark 4:39), reached out through faithful instruments, touched the storm center of a troubled soul, stilled the winds and waves of torment, and brought faith and hope again.

For me and mine, and for you, I pray to be worthy to carry the same banner as our beloved brother who found the way to mercy and who exemplifies in his life what I heard him humbly declare: "My specialty is mercy."

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. 4:16.)

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Marion D. Hanks has just spoken to us. We shall now hear from Elder James E. Faust, who will be followed by President N. Eldon Tanner, First Counselor in the First Presidency.

Elder James E. Faust

Solemn procession with bodies of Joseph and Hyrum

It was Friday morning, June 28, 1844, and already the summer sun was hot in Illinois. Since about eight o'clock that morning Dr. Willard Richards, Samuel H. Smith, and nine

others had plodded along the dusty road between Carthage and Nauvoo, Illinois. Moving along the road with the solemn procession were two wagons heaped with bushes to protect their cargo from the blistering heat of the sun.

Laid out on the wagons were the lifeless bodies of Joseph Smith, age thirty-eight, over six feet tall, and Hyrum, his brother, age forty-four, and even larger in stature than Joseph. Wearily, Dr. Richards and Samuel Smith, brother to the two murdered men, pressed toward Nauvoo and talked of the events just the day before during which Joseph and Hyrum were gunned down by an armed mob with painted faces. The two victims, along with Dr. Richards and John Taylor, were lodged in Carthage Jail, supposedly for their protection, when the mob, numbering from 150 to 200 marauders, stormed the jail and shot to death their intended victims.

Word of the deaths had already reached Nauvoo, headquarters city for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. As the wagons and their foot-weary guardians entered the city, several thousand citizens greeted the procession with the most solemn lamentations and mourning.

The bloodied bodies were tenderly removed from the wagons at the Nauvoo Mansion and were carefully washed from head to foot. The various wounds were filled with cotton, soaked in camphor, and death masks were impressed on each face. Fine, plain clothing was then placed on each body. When these preparations were completed, the bodies were viewed that night by the bereaved widows and children of the two men, along with many of their closest associates. Then on Saturday, more than ten thousand mourning Saints viewed the remains of their beloved Prophet Joseph and his brother, the Patriarch Hyrum. The bodies were then secretly and lovingly buried. (See *History of the Church*, 6:614-31.)

Dramatic growth of the Church

Some of the enemies of Joseph Smith exulted in their infamous deeds; and many proclaimed that the Church,

which he had restored and for which he had given his life, would die with him.

But, to the surprise of its enemies, the Church did not die nor did the work of Joseph Smith cease with his mortal death. What has transpired in a century and a half bears eloquent testimony to the eternal nature of the work of this singularly remarkable man, Joseph Smith. The Church which he restored has had dramatic growth in many parts of the earth. It has produced an unequaled missionary system and an unmatched welfare program. Its governing system gives priesthood power and authority from God to all worthy male members, at the same time recognizing the exalted status of women as being equal to men. The Church has an inspired law of health and temporal well-being far ahead of its time. By revelation from God, the Church also possesses those keys, saving principles, and ordinances which will bring eternal exaltation to mankind, living and dead.

True believer must have testimony of Joseph Smith

Because of these and other reasons, millions of people have become members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. But to each true believer there must ultimately and finally come a conviction that Joseph Smith was a revealer of truth, a prophet of God. Each must be convinced that God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ did appear to Joseph Smith and did commission him to reestablish the church of Christ upon the face of the earth.

I have such a conviction, and it is my humble desire to share with you some of the things which verify my testimony of Joseph Smith and his work. My own witness is a spiritual one more than a scientific or historical one. I doubt that the gospel of Jesus Christ as restored to earth through the

Prophet Joseph Smith and as taught by all the prophets who have succeeded him will ever be completely provable by the scientific method alone. It must be accepted by faith and understood by the gift and power of God. For instance, one of the truths revealed by Joseph Smith on February 27, 1833, taught of the harmful effects of tea, coffee, tobacco, and alcoholic beverages. Such teachings today can be proven scientifically, yet in my opinion, the greatest promises contained in the Word of Wisdom (D&C 89) are spiritual. It contains a promise of wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, and of the passing by of the destroying angel as the children of Israel were passed by. (See D&C 89:19, 21.)

Contribution of the Book of Mormon

One of the most significant contributions of Joseph Smith is his work in translating and publishing the Book of Mormon, a sacred volume of scripture brought forth from ancient records. When it was first published in 1830, there was little scientific or historical evidence to substantiate the claims of Joseph Smith that the record came from metallic plates and told of ancient civilizations on the North and South American continents. Today such outward evidences have been discovered and help confirm that Joseph Smith was telling the truth about the Book of Mormon.

But we also still look to the spiritual witnesses for our confirming belief in the book. Critics have long tried to explain away the Book of Mormon but simply have not been successful. Theories concerning its origin have come and gone, and the book still lives on to testify that Jesus is the Christ.

Most objective, analytical scholars have come to recognize that it would have been impossible for an uneducated boy such as Joseph Smith,

reared on the frontiers of America, to write the Book of Mormon. It contains so many exalted concepts, has such different writing styles, and is compiled in such a way that no one person could be its author. The honest inquirer can be led by faith to believe that Joseph Smith did translate the Book of Mormon from ancient plates of gold which were written with engraved characters in the reformed Egyptian language. No other explanations which have seriously challenged Joseph Smith's own account of the Book of Mormon have been able to survive as being factually correct. The evidences of a century and a half continue, and these increasingly affirm that Joseph Smith spoke the truth, completely, honestly, and humbly.

"Joseph did not claim perfection"

As I submit to you my testimony of Joseph Smith, I acknowledge his humanness along with his great spiritual powers. He did not claim to be divine, nor a perfect man. He claimed only to be a mortal man with human feelings and imperfections, trying honestly to fulfill the divine mission given to him. He so describes himself in recorded counsel given to some of the members of the Church who had just arrived in Nauvoo on October 29, 1842. Said the Prophet, "I told them I was but a man, and they must not expect me to be perfect; if they expected perfection from me, I should expect it from them; but if they would bear with my infirmities and the infirmities of the brethren, I would likewise bear with their infirmities." (*History of the Church*, 5:181.)

I am impressed with his complete candor, for in addition to admitting his own humanness, he also recorded the declarations from the Lord which were given to him in the nature of loving reproof. As such reminders came to him, sometimes kindly and sometimes sternly, he dictated them as the

mouthpiece of the Lord to those who transcribed the revelations. One such example is found in the Doctrine and Covenants, section 5, verse 21: "And now I command you, my servant Joseph, to repent and walk more uprightly before me, and to yield to the persuasions of men no more."

While Joseph sought perfection, he did not claim perfection. If he were intending to fabricate a great falsehood or wanted to perpetrate a fraud or practice deceit, would he have been so truthful about his own humanness? His complete candor in admitting human frailties and in declaring the loving discipline of God offers powerful proof of his honesty and probity. His statements stand on more solid footing because they were declarations against human nature and admissions against self-interest.

He knew that such candor would and did make him an object of hatred, ridicule, and social disapproval, but he spoke openly the unvarnished truth. He was prepared for such vicissitudes of life early in his ministry. He was told by the angel Moroni in 1823, only three years after his glorious vision of God the Father and Jesus Christ, that his name would be known for good and evil among all nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples, and that both good and evil would be spoken of him. (See JS-H 1:33.) However, the intensity of the evil and persecution surprised even Joseph and caused him to ask on one occasion: "Why should the powers of darkness combine against me? Why the opposition and persecution that arose against me, almost in my infancy?" (JS-H 1:20.) But he met the challenges and overcame the strife and was stronger because of them.

Attracted all ages and all classes

There should be no exaggerated emphasis on the fallibility or mortal failings of Joseph Smith. They were only things that are a part of any

human being. He and his work enjoyed the benediction of Deity. On a special occasion, the Lord said to him, "Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you, my servant Joseph Smith, I am well pleased with your offering and acknowledgments, which you have made; for unto this end have I raised you up, that I might show forth my wisdom through the weak things of the earth." (D&C 124:1.)

I am deeply impressed by the kinds of people who became associates of Joseph Smith. His personality was a magnet to many people, attracting those of all ages and all classes. Many whom he inspired were extremely intelligent, dedicated, and capable men and women. The courage which they evidenced in behalf of the work of Joseph Smith, along with their sacrifices, suffering, and dedication, were almost beyond belief.

At the outset I mentioned Dr. Willard Richards, whose loyalty to Joseph is so typical. Before Joseph went to the Carthage Jail, he said to Dr. Richards: "If we go into the cell, will you go in with us?" The doctor answered, 'Brother Joseph you did not ask me to cross the river with you—you did not ask me to come to Carthage—you did not ask me to come to jail with you—and do you think I would forsake you now? But I will tell you what I will do; if you are condemned to be hung for treason, I will be hung in your stead, and you shall go free.' Joseph said, 'You cannot.' The doctor replied, 'I will.' " (*History of the Church*, 6:616.)

Following the martyrdom of Joseph Smith, his successor as prophet was the practical, able Brigham Young. Of Joseph Smith, Brigham Young said:

"When I first heard him preach, he brought heaven and earth together; and all the priests of the day could not tell me anything correct about heaven, hell, God, angels, or devils; they were as blind as Egyptian darkness. When I saw Joseph Smith, he took heaven,

figuratively speaking, and brought it down to earth; and he took the earth, brought it up, and opened up, in plainness and simplicity, the things of God; and that is the beauty of his mission." (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1954, p. 458.)

Expanding inheritance of Joseph Smith

The results of a century and a half of this church offer great authentication to the truthfulness of Joseph Smith's story. The work of this church moves forward in an astonishing way. The great body of the Latter-day Saints remain faithful to their testimonies of Joseph Smith and his work. Since Joseph's day, millions have accepted by faith and have had confirmed by the Holy Spirit that Joseph's account of seeing the Father and the Son is true and that he restored to earth the pure gospel of Jesus Christ.

As the years pass since Joseph's life and death, his history will no doubt be analyzed, picked at, criticized, challenged, and pored over. But the evidences of the truthfulness of his statements will continue to mount. The devotion and commitment of those who accept the restored gospel will continue to be severely tested. Their faith will be sorely tried, as has been the case with so many in the past. But like Joseph himself, millions will live and die faithful to the gospel he restored. As time moves on, the stature of Joseph Smith will loom ever larger. He will stand higher and higher in the esteem of mankind. Ever so many will come to a profound conviction, as I have, that there is a divine source to the message he taught and an eternal purpose to the work which he restored on earth.

There comes down through my family a legacy of testimony concerning the truthfulness of Joseph

Smith's work. I learned of this bequest as a small boy at my mother's knee. My great-great-grandfather, Edward Partridge, was intimately associated with the Prophet Joseph for several years prior to his losing his life in consequence of the persecution. (See *History of the Church*, 4:132.) He was baptized by Joseph. In a revelation received by the Prophet, he was called as the first bishop of the restored Church. (See D&C 41:9.)

Grandfather was so tortured, humiliated, and suffered so much in his calling from lawless mobs, and was still so steadfast and faithful, that he could not possibly have doubted the genuineness of the revelation that appointed him. Like others who were close to the Prophet, he knew Joseph's heart and soul. Grandfather could not have been deceived. I believe his life and death both prove that he did not lie. His devotion, suffering, and sacrifice eloquently testify that he had implicit faith in Joseph as an inspired servant of God.

In addition to this heritage, I have my own inner witness which confirms to my soul that the Prophet Joseph Smith, as the instrument of God, revealed the greatest body of truth that has come to mankind since the Savior himself walked upon the earth.

What has been taught at this pulpit for the last two days is an extension of the expanding inheritance of truth left to all of us by the Prophet Joseph Smith. It was given to save and exalt mankind as directed by the Lord Jesus Christ. I so testify with profound gratitude, in the name of the risen Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Before hearing President Tanner's concluding remarks, we express our sincere gratitude to the choirs that have performed and to their conductors and accompanists.

We appreciate the coverage given by the press and the electronic media.

We thank our city officials for their cooperation and extend our appreciation to the doctors and the Relief Society and Church Health Unit nurses who have been on hand to assist, and likewise to the ushers and interpreters who have done so much.

We thank again the owners and managers of the many radio, television, and cable systems who have generously provided time and facilities to carry sessions of this conference in many countries.

And I'm sure that President and Sister Kimball would have us express

in their behalf their very deep appreciation for your faith and prayers.

We shall now be pleased to listen to President N. Eldon Tanner, First Counselor in the First Presidency, who will be the concluding speaker of the conference, after which the Tabernacle Choir will sing "Abide with Me; 'Tis Eventide."

The benediction will then be offered by Elder Jack H. Goaslind, Jr. of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and this conference will then stand adjourned for six months.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Spirit of the Lord in this conference

I am very happy to be with you this afternoon. I have felt that this is one of the finest conferences I have ever attended. Probably we needed the Spirit of the Lord here in our President's absence, and it has certainly been here. I want to congratulate the speakers, and express my appreciation to this lovely choir.

As we have attended sessions in this conference, we have been informed, we have been advised, we have been counseled in what we should do as members of the Church. When I was with President David O. McKay and he was not able to attend conference, he said, "President Tanner, you remind those people who they are and to act accordingly." This "acting accordingly" is very important to me.

When I remind people who they are, I express some of our articles of faith. First, "We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost." (First Article of Faith.) Now, we believe that. But I wonder how we would act if we realized every day that we are spirit children of God and that Jesus Christ is

our Savior. Would we do some of the things we do? Would we do them more emphatically, or would we not do them at all? We have had that Spirit with us today. And I would like to say that the thing that appeals to me and seems more necessary than anything else in the gospel is that we live every day the teachings of the Lord. I ask you to remind people who they are and ask them to act accordingly. If we act accordingly, we will be keeping the commandments of God. *

We say, "We believe in God, the Eternal Father." Do we really believe that he is the Father of our spirit, and act accordingly? We say, "We believe in . . . His Son, Jesus Christ." Do we really believe that Jesus Christ is our Savior, and act accordingly? Would we live the way we do if we were conscious of that all the time?

Remember who you are, and act accordingly

We say, "We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men." (Thirteenth Article of Faith.) Are we honest every day? True, chaste, benevolent, and virtuous? Are

we, brethren and sisters of this Church, living that in our homes, with our children, with our neighbors, in our businesses? What a tremendous thing it would be if we were doing that and being conscious of it at all times!

I would just like to give you an example of what I'm thinking of. (It may not be as good as some that I have used before.) I was invited when I was with the Alberta, Canadian government to go down to Dallas, Texas, to speak to a large group of oilmen. I was introduced by the governor of Texas. As he introduced me, he said I had been a bishop in the Mormon church and I was now president of the Edmonton, Canada Branch. He said, "I'd like to tell you men that anybody who is worthy to be a bishop in that church needs no other introduction as far as I am concerned." He wasn't complimenting me, but those whom he knew who were members of the Church and holding office there and were dependable. I thought, "What a wonderful thing it would be if each returned missionary could say, 'I am a returned missionary in good standing,' and it could be said of him, 'You need no other introduction.'"

**If honest, honorable, and upright,
all the introduction we should need**

How wonderful it would be for every holder of the priesthood if he knew that the Lord knew he could count on him because of the way he lived. I'd like to say today that it is a

tremendous responsibility for members of this church to so live that others, seeing their good works, can be led to glorify the Lord's name. We must do so every day! If this church, this four million people plus—everyone who is living the gospel or the gospel principles—were honest, honorable, and upright in their dealings and could be depended on in every way, that is all the introduction we should need.

I pray as we leave this conference that each one of us who has had a feeling that he would like to do better from now on will turn that feeling into action; that each of us will be honest and be a full tithe-payer; that we will prepare ourselves to go to the temple where we can be married for time and all eternity and have our families sealed to us.

My appeal to you today, brothers and sisters, is that all of us who desire to be better will go home with that determination and do it the rest of our lives, that we might be an example of good, an influence for good, and a great strength to the Church. That is my prayer for us, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "Abide with Me; 'Tis Eventide."

Elder Jack H. Goasland, Jr. offered the benediction.

GENERAL WELFARE SESSION SATURDAY MORNING

A general welfare services session was held in connection with general conference on Saturday, October 3, 1981, at 7:00 A.M. In attendance at this meeting were General

Authorities, the general Relief Society presidency, Regional Representatives, stake presidencies, high councilors involved in welfare work, bishoprics, stake and ward Relief Society presi-

dencies, and others responsible for operating welfare production projects.

President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

President Romney opened the meeting with the following remarks:

President Marion G. Romney

Dear brothers and sisters, we welcome you to this general welfare services meeting, which has been especially prepared to assist the local leaders in discharging their heavy responsibilities in administering the welfare program.

President Spencer W. Kimball has asked me to conduct this session. His doctors have recommended that he not attend this session and that he watch these proceedings on television. We are happy to report that President Kimball's condition is much improved, and we hope and pray that he will soon be able to return to his normal schedule of duties.

We urge you to take notes during these sessions and, when you return to

your stakes and wards, to pass on what you learn here to your co-workers who have welfare responsibilities.

Under the direction of Donald Ripplinger with Roy Darley at the organ, we shall begin this meeting by singing hymn no. 73, "Improve the Shining Moments." The invocation will be offered by Sister Marian R. Boyer, first counselor in the general Relief Society presidency.

The congregation sang "Improve the Shining Moments."

The invocation was given by Marian R. Boyer.

President Romney

Bishop J. Richard Clarke, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, will be our first speaker, and he will be followed by Sister Barbara B. Smith, general president of the Relief Society.

Bishop J. Richard Clarke

Welfare Services: to perfect the Saints

Brothers and sisters: Rikki Pace, the fifteen-year-old daughter of Glenn Pace, our new managing director of the Welfare Department, was overheard in a conversation with a school friend. It went something like this:

"Where does your dad work?"

"At the Church Office Building."

"Where's the Church Office Building?"

"You know, that tall building by the Temple."

"What does he do?"

"He's in charge of the Welfare Department."

"What's the Welfare Department?"

Well, after several attempts to explain, it didn't appear as if any big impressions had been made. So, with one final attempt to put the subject to rest, Rikki said:

"Let me put it this way: between now and the Millennium if a member of the Church starves to death, it's all my dad's fault."

There are many perceptions of Welfare Services. I suppose most people perceive of welfare as farms,

canneries, bishops' storehouses, and Deseret Industries. Welfare Services is essential to that part of the central mission of the Church, which is: to perfect the Saints. Welfare Services is the gospel in action for individual members. It is not just for group or institutional involvement. Salvation comes to us on an individual basis—each must climb the ladder independently to ascend to the level of the Master. If we are to achieve perfection, we must emulate the works of Jesus as well as his words. The Apostle Peter instructed those who would be disciples of Christ to be "partakers of the divine nature." (2 Pet. 1:4-7.) He told them, "For even hereunto were ye called: . . . that ye should follow his steps." (1 Pet. 2:21.)

Walking in His steps

In 1897 Dr. Charles Sheldon, a young minister in Topeka, Kansas, wrote a book which he titled *In His Steps*. It was a novel based upon an experiment he tried. He disguised himself as an unemployed printer and tramped the streets of Topeka. He was shocked at his treatment by this "Christian" community. In his novel, a Christian minister presents his congregation with this interesting challenge:

"I want volunteers . . . who will pledge themselves, earnestly and honestly for an entire year, not to do anything without first asking the question, 'What would Jesus do?' . . . Our aim will be to act just as He would if He [were] in our places, regardless of immediate results. In other words, we propose to follow Jesus' steps as closely and as literally as we believe He taught His disciples to do." (Charles M. Sheldon, *In His Steps*, New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1935, pp. 15-16.)

The book describes the fascinating experience of those who accepted the challenge. I have been intrigued by the experiment and

wonder, if it were conducted today among the Latter-day Saints, how we would measure up. As latter-day Christians, we know that the "royal law" (James 2:8) of love in action is to "succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees." (D&C 81:5.) Do we catch the significance of this thought? We demonstrate the depth of our love for the Savior when we care enough to seek out the suffering among us and attend to their needs.

Giving at the right moment

The philosopher William George Jordan has identified "four great hungers of life—body-hunger, mind-hunger, heart-hunger, and soul-hunger. They are all real; all need recognition, all need feeding." (William George Jordan, *The Crown of Individuality*, New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1909, p. 63.)

1. Body-hunger is our most conscious biological need. It is difficult to be spiritually strong when temporally deficient.

2. Mind-hunger is a craving for intellectual food, for education, and for personal development.

3. Heart-hunger is to be lonely, to have low self-esteem, to be misunderstood, to crave companionship, sympathy, and appreciation. However, we find that as we seek to satisfy the heart-hunger of our neighbor, we reduce our own.

4. Soul-hunger is the burning desire to know eternal truth. It is the yearning of the spirit to commune with God. (See Jordan, pp. 63-75.)

The restored gospel of Jesus Christ provides the solution to all the hungers of life. Jesus said: "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." (John 6:35.) We would all like to have the Savior's capacity to assuage the hungers of the world; but let us not forget that there are many simple ways by

which we can walk in His steps. Let us remember that in giving of ourselves, it is less a question of giving a lot than of giving at the right moment.

A noted columnist, Erma Bombeck, described an experience which reminds us that little things can mean a lot. She recounted a frustrating morning of numerous phone calls and interrupting conversations before leaving for the airport.

And then she said, "[At last] there were thirty whole beautiful minutes before my plane took off—time for me to be alone with my own thoughts, to open a book and let my mind wander. A voice next to me belonging to an elderly woman said, 'I'll bet it's cold in Chicago.'

"Stone-faced, I answered, 'It's lively.'

"I haven't been to Chicago in nearly three years,' she persisted. 'My son lives there.'

"That's nice,' I said, my eyes intent on the printed page of the book.

"My husband's body is on this plane. We've been married for fifty-three years. I don't drive, you know, and when he died a nun drove me from the hospital. We aren't even Catholic. The funeral director let me come to the airport with him.'

Erma said, "I don't think I have ever detested myself more than I did at that moment. Another human being was screaming to be heard and in desperation had turned to a cold stranger who was more interested in a novel than in the real-life drama at her elbow.

"All she needed was a listener—no advice, wisdom, experience, money, assistance, expertise or even compassion—but just a minute or two to listen. . . .

"She talked numbly and steadily until we boarded the plane, [and] then found her seat in another section. As I hung up my coat, I heard her plaintive voice say to her seat companion, 'I'll bet it's cold in Chicago.'

"I prayed, 'Please, God, let her listen.' " (Erma Bombeck, "Are You Listening?" *If Life Is a Bowl of Cherries—What Am I Doing in the Pits?*, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1978, pp. 197-98.)

Art of awareness

How many times have we observed a benevolent act performed by someone and asked ourselves, "Why didn't I think of that?" Those who do the deeds we would have liked to do seem to have mastered the art of awareness. They have formed the habit of being sensitive to the needs of others before they think of themselves. How swiftly opportunity slips away, and we are left with another unfulfilled good intention. If only our acts of kindness could equal the righteous desires of our hearts.

Striking a blow at our propensity to delay our acting as we know we should, the poet John Drinkwater penned his poem, "A Prayer," which I quote in part:

*We know the paths wherein our feet
should press,
Across our hearts are written Thy
decrees.*

*Yet now, O Lord, be merciful to bless
With more than these.*

*Grant us the will to fashion as we feel,
Grant us the strength to labour as we
know,
Grant us the purpose, ribbed and
edged with steel,
To strike the blow.*

*Knowledge we ask not—knowledge
Thou hast lent;
But Lord, the will—there lies our bitter
need.*

*Give us to build above the deep intent
The deed, the deed.*

(In *Masterpieces of Religious Verse*, ed. James Dalton Morrison, New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1948, p. 418.)

Heroic acts done quietly

When I think of performing deeds of kindness, I immediately think of bishops and Relief Society presidents. Relatively few people know of the many hours they selflessly spend in serving members of their wards. They truly translate principles into deeds.

To illustrate, I quote this heart-warming pioneer account:

"Many years ago in a small town in the southern part of the state of Utah, my great grandmother was called to be the president of the Relief Society. During this period of our Church's history there existed a very bitter and antagonistic spirit between the Mormons and the Gentiles.

"In my great grandmother's ward one of the young sisters married a gentile boy. This of course did not please either the Mormons or the Gentiles very much. In the course of time this young couple gave birth to a child. Unfortunately the mother became so ill in the process of childbirth that she was unable to care for her baby. Upon learning of this woman's condition, great grandmother immediately went to the homes of the sisters in the ward and asked them if they would take a turn going into the home of this young couple to care for the baby. One by one these women refused and so the responsibility fell completely upon her.

"She would arise early in the morning, walk what was a considerable distance to the home of this young couple where she would bathe and feed the baby, gather all that needed to be laundered and take it with her to her home. . . . One morning she felt too weak and sick to go. . . . However, as she lay in bed she realized that if she didn't go the child would not be provided for. [With the help of the Lord,] she mustered all her strength and went. [When she returned home, exhausted, she] collapsed into a large chair and immediately fell into a deep sleep. She said that as she slept

she felt as if she were consumed by a fire that would melt the very marrow of her bones. She . . . dreamed that she was bathing the Christ child and glorying in what a great privilege it would have been to have bathed the Son of God. Then the voice of the Lord spoke to her saying, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, ye have done it unto me.' " (*My Errand from the Lord, A Personal Study Guide for Melchizedek Priesthood Quorums* 1976-77, pp. 154-55.)

Perhaps the most heroic acts are done quietly and with no recognition except from a loving Heavenly Father who rewards us with the sweet peace that passeth understanding (see Philip. 4:7) and by His Spirit whispers, "Well done, [my] good and faithful servant." (Matt. 25:21.)

I was touched by an experience that was recently related to me. A dear sister had been incapacitated for the past eight years—she could not walk or talk and was confined to bed. About six years ago, she and her husband were assigned a faithful home teacher. He asked if his wife could come over to their house every Sunday morning and stay with the invalid woman while her husband attended priesthood meeting. For six years, every Sunday this home teacher would bring his wife over to stay with the invalid sister while her husband went to his meeting. And every Sunday the home teacher's wife would bring with her some baked goods or something special that she had made for this older couple.

Finally, this sister who had been ill passed away. When her daughter tried to express her deep love and appreciation to this loving home teacher and his wife for what they had done over the years, the wife said, "Oh, don't thank us. It was our *privilege* to visit with your sweet mother. What am I going to do now? The hour and a half on Sunday morning will now be, for me, the loneliest hour and a half in the week."

Concern for aging parents

I am impressed that in the last moments of the Savior's life, He had an abiding concern for His mother and for her welfare, thus again setting the example for us. Walking in His steps are the devoted sons and daughters who honor aging parents who are no longer able to help themselves. About two years ago I read this column in the newspaper:

"Dear Abby:

"I'm sitting here on the plane reading the letter in your column about the son who didn't want to put his father up temporarily because he felt his father's visit would be an invasion of his privacy.

"That item caught my eye because I am on my way to visit my son in Omaha for two weeks—at his insistence. I was reluctant to do so initially because I felt I might be interfering with his personal activities.

"I wonder if the son who wrote that letter ever gave a thought to the privacy his father might have forfeited during his son's time at home?

"There were times during my children's lives when, given my druthers, I'd have preferred some alternative activity, but now I don't regret one minute of the time I spent with them. I'm only sorry it couldn't have been more. Their time at home seems to have been so brief.

"I won't mail this, of course, since I realize you will receive thousands of more articulate letters on the above. This is just my way of . . ."

"Dear Abby: My father died suddenly of a heart attack, and this unfinished letter was in his pocket. My wife and I will miss him very much. Sign this—'A son who really wanted his dad to come.' William Smzyk, Omaha, Nebr." (Abigail Van Buren, *Deseret News*, 13 Dec. 1979, p. C7.)

Love extends beyond convenience

Brothers and sisters, what I have

tried to illustrate this morning is that if we are to walk in the steps of the Savior, we cannot do it without personal sacrifice and sincere involvement. It is rarely convenient; but love extends beyond convenience for those who have conditioned themselves to look for opportunities to serve. I believe that the Savior was equipped to accomplish His mission not only through His parentage, but because of His thirty years of preparation in developing an awareness of and a sensitivity to the needs of His fellowmen.

In Alma, chapter seven, we read:

"And he shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; . . . that the word might be fulfilled which saith he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people.

" . . . And he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people." (Alma 7:11-12.)

After a recent stake conference meeting where I had discussed the role of the family in the Church, I was approached by a sweet woman who said: "Bishop, I'm a widow and I really appreciated everything you said today. I have a lovely family, but I have many problems and I do need help. My priesthood leaders have families of their own and they have lots of problems and I don't want to bother them and add to their problems. So what should I do?"

I asked her, "Do you have a good home teacher who really cares about you?"

She said, "Yes, I have a home teacher and he comes by every month or so; but he isn't very involved with our family."

Then I asked, "Well, do you have a visiting teacher who visits you and understands you?"

She said, "Yes, the Relief Society sometimes comes."

At this point, I was praying for a right answer, when a lovely sister, who was standing nearby and heard our conversation, said, "Excuse me, but I was a widow; and even though I have just remarried, I know how you feel and I understand your problems. Please let me drop by. I'd like to visit with you."

Dr. Tom Dooley offers some interesting insights regarding those who have known difficulties and can now share the burden of another. I quote:

"One of Dr. (Albert) Schweitzer's most important concepts is that of the Fellowship of Those who Bear the Mark of Pain. . . . Who are its members? Those who have learned by experience what physical pain and bodily anguish mean. These people, all over the world, are united by a secret bond. He who has been delivered from pain must not think he is now . . . at liberty to continue his life and forget his sickness. He is a man whose eyes are opened. He now has a duty to help others in their battles with pain and anguish. He must help to bring to others the deliverance which he himself knows."

"Under this Fellowship come not only those who were formerly sick, but those who are related to sufferers, and whom does this not include?" (Thomas Dooley, "A Worldwide Fellowship," *Words of Wisdom*, ed. Thomas C. Jones, Chicago: J.B. Ferguson, 1966, p. 150.)

Again I refer to Dr. Sheldon's book:

"It is the personal element that Christian discipleship needs to emphasize. 'The gift without the giver is bare.' The Christianity that attempts to

suffer by proxy [*alone*] is not the Christianity of Christ. Each individual Christian . . . needs to follow in *His steps* along the path of personal sacrifice to Him. There is not a different path to-day from that of Jesus' own times. It is the same path." (Sheldon, *In His Steps*, p. 239; italics added.)

Aware of ways to bless those in need

This has been a difficult assignment for me. As I have pondered how practicing welfare principles brings us to Christ, I have searched my own soul and realized that I am far short of my ideal—the Savior. As a result, I have recommitted myself to achieve the "divine nature" of Christ (see 2 Pet. 1:4) by becoming more aware of ways in which to bless those in need.

I bear my testimony to you that there is a special Spirit of the Savior which accompanies welfare services. I know He loves this work and the thousands of Saints who are engaged in it. And as He counseled His covenant people in the Book of Mormon, so He entreats us today:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, this is my gospel; and ye know the things that ye must do in my church; for the works which ye have seen me do that shall ye also do; . . .

"Therefore, if ye do these things blessed are ye, for ye shall be lifted up at the last day. . . .

"Therefore, what manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am." (3 Ne. 27:21-22, 27.)

That we may walk in his steps and become even as he is I pray, in the sacred name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

Sister Barbara B. Smith

Welfare principles can strengthen marriages and families

My dear brothers and sisters: The basic principles of welfare—love, consecration, work, service, stewardship or accountability, and self-reliance—are not only important to us as individuals working out our own salvation, but if applied in our homes, can strengthen our marriages and our families. May I tell you how?

The scriptural passages in Proverbs 31 are well known for their listing of the admirable qualities of the virtuous woman, whose "price is far above rubies" (verse 10), but in verse 11 we discover a remarkable description of marriage. It reads: "*The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her.*" This memorable line discloses, first, that the husband has entrusted his heart to his wife, and second, that she safeguards it. They seem to understand an important truth, that every man and woman who covenant to establish a family must create a safe place for their love.

The longing of the human heart is often for someone who will treat tenderly the devotion one has to give. We hear it in the words of a poem by William Butler Yeats: the man has just laid the wishes of his heart at the feet of his beloved, and then he pleads, "Tread softly, because you tread on my dreams." ("He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven," *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, 3d ed., New York: Oxford University Press, p. 585.)

Equally trusting are the lines of Anne Bradstreet, the Puritan poetess, who in a piece entitled "To My Dear and Loving Husband" confides:

*If ever two were one, then surely we.
If ever man were lov'd by wife, then
thee.*

(*The New Oxford Book of American*

Verse, ed. Richard Ellmann, New York: Oxford University Press, 1976, p. 6.)

To truth, add love and consecration

Trust is to human relationships what faith is to gospel living. It is the beginning place, the foundation upon which more can be built. Where trust is, love can flourish.

Then add to love consecration, the dedication of two lives to a holy purpose. To provide a safe place for love, there must be this kind of commitment. Notice in the line from Proverbs the man has given his heart—not conditionally, not a half of it or any part—but all.

To consecrate is to give all one has. When a man and woman make marriage covenants in the holy temple, they begin a new, eternal family unit with all of the blessings promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Such a union is dedicated to the sacred purposes of the Lord—"to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." (Moses 1:39.)

The young bride-to-be who is anxious for marriage so she can have a "home of her own" may not realize the selflessness required in a good marriage—the "seeketh-not-her-own" kind of love. The husband whose future plans are centered in his own success has a flawed vision of the responsibilities he must assume in a celestial family.

Let us look for a moment at some of the benefits of a marriage based upon love and consecration.

Committed to help each other achieve

1. Both husband and wife are committed to helping the other achieve the fullest possible development. How inspiring it is, for example, to hear

Elder David B. Haight tell of times he has cooked the dinner so that his wife could attend her Spanish class. Growth can come for both partners when husband and wife develop the kind of love that allows the other to turn potential into perfection and talent into testimony. A strong marriage takes strong individuals equally committed to calling forth the best in themselves as well as in their eternal partner. A husband must give his support if a wife is to adequately use the gifts God has given her. A wife must give her support if her husband is to lead the family.

Love can allow for a variety of opinions

2. A marriage made safe by both love and consecration can allow for a variety of opinions.

For a man and wife to become one there are many differences, large and small, that must be accommodated or resolved. In a marriage relationship that is secure, differences need not lead to discord. They can be openly considered until a satisfactory solution is reached because the premises are agreed upon: both the husband and wife are committed to love one another, to build the kingdom of God, and to establish an eternal family unit. All considerations are made in light of these three basic commitments—these are the “givens.” When they are held inviolate, the marriage remains intact, even though the process of resolution may involve considerable discussion.

While visiting in the home of her younger sister, a woman observed one such discussion. A difference of opinion was resolved in a kindly, open exchange between the husband and wife. The woman later confided that such a discussion could not have occurred in her home “because,” she said, “we cannot afford to have differences aired, for even a small problem challenges our relationship.”

Some marriage relationships are little more than an amicable truce; but

if such couples were to lay the foundation stones of commitment and trust, of consecration and love, they could build a safe place where individuals can be heard, and where love can grow and can encompass and integrate differing points of view.

Children treated fairly by both parents

3. Each child has the love and interest of both mother and father.

When children are treated fairly, there is no cause for jealousy because there is no partiality. Reading the Book of Mormon, we find that whenever the people were truly committed to the Lord and had the Holy Ghost in their midst, the conditions described were similar. We read of such an example in 4 Nephi when “every man did deal justly one with another.

“And they had all things common among them; therefore there were not rich and poor, . . . but they were all . . . partakers of the heavenly gift” of love. (4 Ne. 1:2-3.)

Basis for happiness

4. Finally, love and consecration establish the basis for happiness. This, too, is described in 4 Nephi: “And it came to pass that there was no contention, . . . because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people.

“And there were no envyings, nor strifes, nor tumults; . . . and surely there could not be a happier people.” (4 Ne. 1:15-16.)

Remember that a family established in love and secured by consecration is maintained through work and service. A home is strengthened by work when workers receive respect.

Appreciate and acknowledge contribution of both parents

Often a woman who is feeling discouraged about her lot lacks noth-

ing more than appreciation from those she serves. It is easy for a family to grow accustomed to the pleasant circumstances of a home and fail to remember the management necessary or the energy and skills required to keep a house running smoothly.

It may be that there is need to appreciate the mother who is giving all she can to the upkeep of a home but is still not able to maintain order. Perhaps in addition to a recognition of what she does accomplish, an assessment of what might be required to achieve the desired results would bring about a realization that other members of the family must help—either with specific duties or with a change in their living habits to make the housework easier.

An orderly home is conducive to happiness. But the achievement and maintenance of order, while the primary responsibility of the mother, should be the concern of the whole family. When a mother is required to work outside the home, the cooperation of the family, of the whole household, is often critical.

It is sometimes the case that a husband or father fails to be honored for the work he does. Because he is gone from the home and the family does not see him at his work, they may not acknowledge the full significance of his contribution. A family home evening could be devoted to learning about a father's employment, giving him opportunity to explain all that he does. It may provide not only knowledge but also a clearer understanding of his efforts. The wages earned by a man are necessary, but his family's pride in his work is often more valued by him.

Teach children how to work; prepare for success

Young family members can also learn to have regard for work through being given significant tasks for which they must assume responsibility. The

home is a safe place for children to learn how to work because mistakes can be corrected before they become serious, and they can be forgiven. It is the fortunate child whose parent teaches him the value of doing a job well.

While we may not know what vocation our children will choose when they are grown, we can begin to prepare them for success. Under the direction of loving parents, an apprenticeship can be served by them in learning responsibility for tools and equipment, following instructions, and working thoughtfully and cheerfully, and keeping at the assignment until it is successfully completed. These fulfill the prerequisites for most vocational training programs.

Work becomes service when it is given gladly, often unsolicited, and for the purpose of filling another's need. I know that service should be learned in a home. And I am very certain that it blesses the home where it is found.

One family stands out in my mind. My friend had been the recipient and observer of kindly acts of service by her neighbor. Tenderly and efficiently she saw her care for the sick, notice the shy, cheer the downhearted.

One day, while she was attending a lecture, a mother sitting near her rose hurriedly to take a child out who had become ill. As my friend went to see if she might be of assistance, there was another woman there already. Her manner of helping was quiet and quick, knowing just what to do, and it reminded my friend so much of her neighbor that she finally asked if, by chance, she knew her neighbor, only to find that they were sisters. In that family they had learned the meaning of service. By its selfless nature, service within a family increases spirituality and strengthens bonds of love.

Accountability

Accountability is a necessary condition of work. Responsibility brings system to the workings of a

family and order to a marriage. Defining responsibilities and planning a method of reporting back fosters freedom from family discord and is also a meaningful stage in developing personal discipline.

If accountability is to be a learning experience, it must be taken seriously; even small children can recognize when their best efforts are treated patronizingly.

Evening and morning prayers become reports when one understands accountability. Family home evening discussions of projects planned and accomplished can give each family member a feeling of belonging and being needed. There is no better way to prepare family members for service in the Church, or in the world of work, and, most importantly, in their relationships with our Father in Heaven than to be accountable in meaningful responsibilities.

The family unit

The basic welfare principles fortify and secure. Through them, the home becomes a stronghold, a protection against society's offenses, a haven in time of storm. A family begins with individuals—with two people who become one, and as children are added, in the spiritual arithmetic of family unity, they will still be one. Parents can provide a protecting shelter, a safe place, and children are made strong by the bonds of their love.

Although a family unit is a part of an extended family and participates in the larger circle of the Church, as an eternal organization it must be complete. It must stand alone.

In a profound sense, however, a family is not alone. When it is consecrated to the Lord's work, his Spirit will always be with them.

Welfare is eternal

Should difficulties arise that require a family to receive temporary

assistance, they know that this can be a blessing from the Lord and that the power is within them to rebuild their resources. And even though a marriage partner may die, the family will still be whole and strong, for the Lord's strength will sustain them.

Self-reliance comes by complying so completely with the principles of the gospel that each individual and family are added upon by the Lord's strength, making them able to stand strong against the blows of adversity and the changing winds of time and growth.

One husband and father, who had been a dean of a college in his professional career, was then called to be a temple president and then a mission president. Upon release from his mission assignment, he suffered a severe and disabling stroke. Rather than turning to thoughts of complaint, self-pity, or rejection, his wife rose to the trial of this newest experience by drawing upon the strength of the gospel that had always been a part of their lives, as she lovingly reassured: "This is the time for which we have been preparing. We have the foundation of the gospel principles, and I am going to do all I can to make this the happiest time of our lives together."

Relief is only temporary, but welfare is eternal. Mortal life may be limited in both duration and scope, but principles are everlasting. May we fully employ the basic welfare principles of love, work, consecration, service, stewardship or accountability, and self-reliance, to strengthen our marriages and our families in the safe and holy places of heart, temple, and home, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

Brother Nyle and Sister JoAnn Randall of Snowflake, Arizona, will now speak to us about how welfare principles have influenced their family and their relationship to others.

Sister JoAnn Randall

My dear brothers and sisters: We are happy as a couple to be able to speak to you today about how welfare principles have influenced our family through service.

"We needed help"

It was with awe that our children first heard the story about a family who gave away their entire Christmas—tree, food, and gifts. It all began when their neighbor's home burned early on the morning of Christmas Eve. When the children heard of their friends' situation, a family meeting was called and they all agreed, without exception, that they would share their Christmas.

The day's activities soon centered around switching name tags on gifts and boxing up Christmas goodies, turkey and all. And at the last minute, they even took the tree! When they gathered back home after delivering their project in secret, they had feelings of excitement and love. (See Leon R. Hartshorn, *Memorable Christmas Stories*, p. 41.)

Questions came from our children: "Wasn't it hard for the first family to give?" "Wasn't it difficult for the other family to receive?"

A short time later we had our own opportunity to be receivers of service. After living in a community for only one month, it became necessary for me to stay completely down for two months while expecting our eighth baby. Our first reaction was that we could handle this challenge all alone. The children were used to helping and had regular jobs around the house. However, we soon recognized that despite careful planning and added responsibilities, we needed help.

Even after years of teaching and hearing lessons on serving others and accepting service, we found that to actually let someone help us was

difficult to do. But, as we allowed them to help us, we soon found our hearts full of thanks for their thoughtfulness.

Service became a living principle

A retired couple came by and picked up the youngest children for a morning outing. Our bishop organized a sacrament meeting and brought it in our home. Several busy sisters came by regularly just to chat, because they knew that I enjoyed adult company. A couple prepared and brought in a candlelight dinner to share with us for a date night. A batch of white shirts disappeared and then reappeared, freshly ironed.

The phrase "Call me if I can do anything" took on new meaning. We learned that you will rarely take someone up on such an offer. Instead, we witnessed people who came by saying, "Is it the kitchen you want cleaned, or would you rather have me vacuum?" Many were good examples to us as they not only thought of helpful things to do, but did them.

Another thought came forcefully to mind. Any time service was rendered, they could probably have been doing the same thing for their own family at home. Yet a large family brought a cannister of homemade ice cream to us. A lovely lady made our daughter's eighth grade graduation dress. A sweet friend brought fresh loaves of homemade bread by the armful each week, insisting that our family was used to homemade, not store-bought, bread. One of our grandmas left her home and came to stay with us for two weeks.

A line from my journal says: "If only I can remember the same gift of kindness to others when I am well." Service had become a living principle, and we felt an overwhelming desire to be able to serve others.

Then we could truly answer our children's questions. "Is it hard to give?" Yes. It's a sacrifice on someone's part. "Is it difficult to receive?" Yes. But we love those who serve us and those we may serve.

Joy in serving others

Maybe we don't know a widow whose home needs paint or a new neighbor on our street. But promptings will come, encouraging us to do something good for someone. When we lived in Idaho, we enjoyed doing little things for "Uncle Joe," the ward's favorite pioneer. After we moved, we remembered him occasionally and thought that we really should write a letter to brighten "Uncle Joe's" day. The idea began pressing on my mind, and finally we mailed a note to him. But it was too late. Only one day later we received word that "Uncle Joe" had passed away. An opportunity for service had slipped by because we had ignored a first impulse.

Among our keepsakes is a thank-you note from a sister in our former ward. Our sons were only three and five when their dad followed a prompting to take them with him to an early morning roofing project on this sister's home. She went out of her way to recognize these little boys, to thank them. They tasted of the joy of helping someone in need.

The spirit spreads, so when our daughter came home with an enthusiastic plan about leaving some food on a needy family's doorstep, we were ready to act.

Family service projects

Family service projects don't have to be spectacular or even original. We have found that participating as a family in a welfare farm assignment can be as enjoyable as any recreational outing.

Here are some other projects you may want to do:

1. Pick up a child regularly for Primary. We did this and found that our little friend soon learned that we really would be by for him every Sunday.

2. Write appreciation notes to your Primary, school, or home teachers. They will be surprised to find that someone cares.

3. Sing willingly in the ward choir. The director will be grateful, and you'll be serving through music.

4. Share your garden crops.

5. Invite someone who is usually alone in to dinner.

6. Serve secretly. We think it's great fun to make some goodies together, put them on a porch, ring the bell, and run.

7. Encourage your daughter to babysit for free while a couple attends the temple.

8. Organize a neighborhood potluck dinner to build better friendships. Nonmembers can be influenced through this kind of service.

9. Plan ahead. Start a bank account so that mission service can come later.

10. Be a good example of gospel living so others will be encouraged.

There is an old Relief Society story about a child who came in as his mother was putting the finishing touches on a cake. He asked: "Who are we giving that away to?" There is still merit in this little incident, as we can see that he is from a home where they are used to giving service to others.

There are so many ways that our families can bring joy to others through service by extending ourselves. I am very thankful for the strengthened testimonies we have received through service, and I say this in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Brother Nyle Randall

A foster child

Just five years ago last month, our family got involved in a situation that was quite unexpected at the time, but that has changed our entire family. We took a foster child into our home.

I remember that day very well. It was one of those pressure situations in which they couldn't find anybody else and the child was coming the next day. After our great volunteer effort, as a couple we started having all kinds of misgivings about the commitment we had made. We even became a little upset. We felt like we had almost more children of our own than we could handle at the time. We had five children, and it seemed like all of them were at some special age where they make big messes but are not quite responsible enough to see that things get picked up. Now, here we had another child coming who wasn't even one of our own.

With all of these doubts, we sat down with our children to make some preparations. With the faith that can come only from a child, our children, in just a short period of time, were ready to accept their big sister.

Problems and learning

Jean arrived, and we found a child much more frightened than we were. She was a seventeen-year-old high school sophomore. We were a family that had not seen a child have a ninth birthday yet, so we knew we were in for some quick learning. That was probably the only right assumption we made about the whole situation.

Right off, we found that we had a new problem. It concerned bathing. She was there just a few days when we realized that something had to be done. Finally, it was decided by the matriarch that the patriarch needed to

do his duty—so a daddy-daughter talk was the order of the day. I must say that it went exceptionally well. Starting the next day, we didn't have any hot water for three months.

We look back now on the short time that we had Jean—just a few months—and we realize that we learned many things. Let me take just a minute and review some of them with you.

Both my wife and I had to struggle a little at first to let ourselves accept another child on the same level as our own children. Those first few days were a real struggle as we had to try very hard not to put our own children first. That was an invaluable lesson for us. We can accept anybody now almost immediately. We could have gone a lifetime and not learned how to do that. Our children learned that, too, and we will be eternally grateful for that.

The second thing we learned from Jean was that we can certainly learn many things from others. Jean taught our children many things. She loved to work, and she'd always take a job and do it right. And then she'd pitch in and help the other children with their jobs. She helped our children internalize many of the principles that we were trying to teach them. One of the biggest challenges we were having with them at that time was trying to get them to take a job and do it completely. They seemed to do the minimum—either that or a little less. Jean taught them differently. They would struggle with us, as most children do with their parents, but they would accept it from her.

As an example, Jean liked the satisfaction of doing dishes by hand. She wouldn't use the dishwasher. And to this day we have a daughter that enjoys doing dishes that way.

The third thing Jean helped us with was learning how to commu-

nicate with our children. As an older child, if she understood a situation, she basically felt the same way about it as we did. We found that the goal became one of understanding. At first there was a language problem between us; she nodded her head "yes" all the time, but we soon found out that she had learned to do that when sentences ended, even if she hadn't understood what was being said. We came to realize that we needed to extend the same courtesies to our other children that we were giving to Jean. In the process of raising children every day, we start expecting too much from them, and we think they should automatically understand all the things that are going on in the family. Sometimes some of us treat the neighbor children better than we treat our own. It was a great lesson that we are thankful we were able to learn.

The fourth thing was that this was the first real fast-moving missionary experience we'd had as a family. We used to call Jean our "sponge"—she wanted to learn it all. She would ask us questions about everything. She wanted to know why we had to sit down as a group to eat, why we knelt when we prayed, why a person needs to go to church every Sunday, why we have to have different foods for every meal. When it came to gospel living, she felt a special kinship and wanted to know all that she could find out.

I recall one experience that we had with Jean when we went camping. Immediately after I stopped the car, Jean got out and began sweeping the camping area. Our children just couldn't believe it, but she continued until she had swept over all the area, until all the loose dirt and pine needles were in a neat pile. But she didn't stop there: she came over and knelt down by the children and spent the next few minutes talking to them about the principle of cleanliness—that when you are camping or living outdoors cleanliness becomes a very important thing, and that by taking a few steps

you can make life livable. And the amazing thing was that they listened. We were just grateful that we were in the Rockies of Colorado and not the sands of New Mexico. I always wondered how deep she would have gone to find solid ground.

Just three weeks ago, Jean returned to our home for a few days with her two children. She was quietly asking questions about ways she could be influencing her family and her children.

Living gospel principles through service

Now, I'm sure that as you listen to this, it sounds like the whole experience was joyful and always a good time. But I can promise you that it wasn't. It's like any service done for others; you have to sacrifice something in order to make it happen. The deep feelings of satisfaction that come from service can be gained in no other way. It changes people and prepares them for something very important.

We are eternally grateful to Jean, and not just because we consider her our eldest daughter, or because of the joy that she brings into our home. But we are grateful for the opportunity that she gave us to be of service to another. We have learned as parents that we can spend an awful lot of time teaching gospel principles and applying them in our family and working toward perfection. Sometimes it feels like a great deal of effort is being put forth with very little impact on our children. But as soon as we started living gospel principles through service to another, a great thing began to happen. Our children began to understand the principles of the gospel that we had been trying to teach them.

As we attempted as a family to be of service to another, we found that we received the most. What a marvelous thing that is! By helping someone with something that she couldn't do alone, we received blessings we weren't able

to obtain by ourselves. That's the gospel of Jesus Christ in its truest sense. As the family and the individual are strengthened through service to others, they are blessed, and a Zion people is prepared.

I know that Jesus Christ lives, that this Church contains his complete gospel plan, that welfare principles are the gospel in action. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

Brother Ripplinger will now lead us in singing hymn no. 27, "Do What Is Right," following which we shall hear from Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The congregation sang "Do What Is Right."

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

During a recent department session of Education Week sponsored by Brigham Young University, a wise teacher and stake Relief Society president, Sister Leisel McBride, flashed a large picture on a screen. It showed a bright-eyed boy with unkempt hair and folded arms, deep in thought. The caption read, "I know I'm somebody 'cause God don't make no junk." Please let me repeat, "I know I'm somebody 'cause God don't make no junk."

"Two are better than one"

With the grammar improved, that caption could well be the theme of welfare services.

Every human being in every walk of life needs help in building his self-respect and self-reliance. To be truly effective, welfare services must be concerned with the betterment of the total individual. A person's image of himself is nothing more or less than what he has learned through his experiences and his interactions with others. It is rewarding to note that someone has helped a typical boy develop his personal identity. Someone, perhaps a mother, a Primary teacher, a neighbor, or even a song like "I Am a Child of God," has made this little boy realize he is someone.

He knew he wasn't junk. He knew he wasn't impossible. He knew he was a human being loved by his Heavenly Father.

In Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 we read: "Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour."

"For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up."

Proper application of welfare services principles is simply providing opportunities for one person to work with another to the mutual betterment of both.

It was recently said of a teacher of the year, "He gives no answers to life's questions, but, rather, he directs each student to find his own answers. He doesn't make you feel dumb. He gives you confidence, encourages, doesn't push."

Opportunity to serve and learn

This great arm of the Church about which we are talking today is instituted to instill in all of us a feeling of individual worth by teaching and developing skills, self-sufficiency, and personal pride in a similar way. Welfare services offers us the opportunity to serve and learn on a continuing

basis. Through it we can learn the lessons of never giving up on ourselves or others, or never being defeated by our situations.

The only time we fail in welfare services activities or in the home is when we give up on each other. Patience, long-suffering, and true love can best be taught and learned as we become anxiously engaged in trying to lift all of God's children.

The other day following a Sunday School class a teacher came up and wanted me to shake hands with a special child. As I held my hand out and greeted the boy, I became aware that perhaps the only meaningful thing this child could do was carry the teacher's books to class. What did this empathetic teacher have the boy doing? Carrying the books. Thank God for leaders who know how to teach self-reliance on a level commensurate with the capabilities of those they lead.

Robert Louis Stevenson used these words to remind us of this fact: "To be what we are, and to become what we are capable of becoming, is the only end of life." (Bergen Evans, *Dictionary of Quotations*, New York: Crown Publishers, p. 393.) Our Savior said it this way, "As my Father hath sent me, even so I send you." (John 20:21.) Each one has something special to live for. Some can find their special niche by themselves, but many need added help. All of us are a part of this inspired welfare activity as we assist each other in fulfilling our purposes here on earth.

Beacon to the world

Satan will do his best to deter us and let discouragement impede our progress. Through trying times we would do well to remember and repeat the famous words of Sir Winston Churchill, England's Lion of Courage, during some of his country's darkest days. With character and strength pe-

culiar to himself, he said, "Never give in, never give in, *never, never, never, never.*" (Robert Rhodes James, ed., *Winston S. Churchill: His Complete Speeches, 1897-1963*, 8 vols., New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1974, 6:6,499.) This mighty statesman in his own way was echoing the words of another mighty leader, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:31-32.)

Paul Harvey, news analyst and author, said, "Someday I hope to enjoy enough of what the world calls success so that someone will ask me, 'What's the secret of it?' I shall say simply this: 'I get up when I fall down.'"

There are those who would have us believe that the present welfare services principles are outdated, over-emphasized, and impossible under existing world conditions. To them we would declare it is easier for some skeptics to give up than to learn. It is no doubt easier to be a critic than a servant. In the uncertain days of the present and of the future, welfare services will remain a beacon for the world to see. Its very foundation continues to be built on the rock of helping people to help themselves. Properly implemented, most human needs can be met through this important program of the Church.

Develop self-reliance

Welfare services is God's way. We must have this belief and trust if we are to properly involve ourselves. Besides materials, commodities, money, supplies, labor, and skills, there must be faith—faith to help, lead, and obey in God's way. For guidance and strength may we refer to that great, oft-repeated scripture found in the Doctrine and Covenants, section 104, verses 14 and 16: "I, the Lord,

stretched out the heavens, and built the earth, my very handiwork; and all things therein are mine.

"But it must needs be done in mine own way; and behold this is the way that I, the Lord, have decreed to provide for my saints, that the poor shall be exalted, in that the rich are made low."

Self-reliance is developed through a proper balance of agency and accountability. As we live, teach, and share, we develop self-reliance in ourselves and others.

Involve everyone

For welfare services to be viable and successful, every member of the Church must be appropriately involved. The Lord's way always involves the individual, the family, and the Church working together. A close tie between welfare services and the home is a necessity. Human understanding, wise preparation, and guidance through prayer are essential ingredients. For order and effectiveness, all action should be taken through proper channels.

It is not enough to make elaborate plans, set up programs, and give serious thought to preparation. Most of us can do that, but many have a hard time really practicing the principles we believe. Some of us have a tendency to shun the fight.

May we remind each other that the strongest helping hand is most often the one closest to ourselves—our very own hands. Can you consider your own options for self-help as problems arise? Or do you toss your arms in the air and say, "Oh, no!" or "Why me?" Can you quietly sit down, review the facts, and list all the possible courses of action? Can you identify causes and determine remedies? Quiet contemplation can solve problems more quickly than frantic force.

Home, the heart of welfare

President Marion G. Romney has said so often, "No self-respecting Church member will voluntarily shift the responsibility for his own maintenance to another. Furthermore, a man not only has the responsibility to care for himself; he also has the responsibility to care for his family." (ENSIGN, May 1981, p. 88.) Paul, speaking to this point, said, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." (1 Tim. 5:8.)

The home, which is the heart of welfare services, and its members should always become involved in all we do so self-respect may be maintained. We must constantly bear in mind that if the total well-being of the individual is to be realized, all members of the family must participate.

Family members usually understand each other best. By working as a team, they may see problems from different points of view. When family councils can be held without destructive arguments, new and better solutions to challenging situations may become evident. Pooling of efforts and resources gives family members a chance to reap the rewards of confidence and security as they help each other solve problems and make progress toward self-reliance and accountability.

Of course, there are times when some of us must turn to the Church resources for help. What a comfort it is to know such resources are available when the needs cannot be met by the individual or his family. Here, too, action is to be taken through proper channels which are well defined. Emotion or panic do not determine the path to follow. All things are to be done in the Lord's own way as specified by our modern-day prophets.

Avoid debt

One of the most rewarding projects for the individual and the family is to avoid debt whenever it is possible. Debt in itself is neither good nor bad. It is a financial tool with the potential of being either. Debt in business may be used to increase productivity or aid in expansion. However, most individuals in debt are usually average people, but they are temporarily out of financial control. They are the victims of poor monetary habits and often have no idea of the importance of proper money management. They misuse credit, especially credit cards, and don't live within budgets or wise operational guidelines. For many of us, credit is like a magic carpet on which we can fly to places we couldn't ordinarily get to. We ride free at first, but forget that a little later we will have to pay for the magic carpet. Bondage-producing interest rates added to the original amount will turn out to be staggering.

Debt can cause serious family conflict. Often couples who have trouble stretching their paychecks find their marriage stretched to the breaking point.

In today's marketplace—yes, in your own neighborhood, town, and cities—scheming, deceiving promoters are making available to gullible purchasers all kinds of enticing offers. We are sorry to report thousands within our ranks are being duped by the glib tongues of those who offer and solicit in whispers. "Once in a lifetime opportunities" and "Just for you" approaches are unusual no more. Such offerings and deals should be avoided like a plague.

I believe the Lord wants us to become alarmed and concerned when we see the wicked and unscrupulous taking unfair advantage of the weak and uninformed. No Latter-day Saint should exploit another man's situation, manipulate, lie, steal, cheat, or deceive. Our responsibility is to assist

each other in avoiding involvements that can be devastating to our welfare.

The practice of thrift is not outdated. We must discipline ourselves to live within our incomes even if it means going without or making do. The wise person can distinguish between basic needs and extravagant wants. Some find budgeting extremely painful, but I promise you, it is never fatal.

Debt can be destructive, causing financial bondage and bankruptcy and the loss of self-respect. A family who can manage money wisely and budget well, including tithing and fast offerings, is helping itself and others in the Lord's own way. Just debts should be paid. I believe the Lord wants us to be successful in our honorable occupational pursuits and use wisely our means for the benefit of the individual, family, Church, and community.

Actions show love

Jesus said, "Feed my sheep." (John 21:16.) You can't feed them if you don't know where they are. You can't feed them if you give them reason to resist you. You can't feed them if you don't have the food. You can't feed them if you don't have charity. You can't feed them if you aren't willing to work and share.

Wherever these lost sheep may be, a necessary ingredient for helping is empathy. Empathy is the ability to understand someone else's feelings and to feel what he feels. Meaningful help can never be given without empathy for the recipient. This requires gaining the confidence of the person; listening with eyes, ears, and heart; trying to comprehend how this person feels; and then letting him know by your personal performance that you really understand. One who really understands and practices empathy doesn't solve another's problems, doesn't argue, doesn't top his story, make accusations, or take away

free agency. He merely helps the person build his self-reliance and self-image so he can try to find his own solutions.

Those who need help come in all age brackets. Some of His sheep are young, lonely, and lost. Some are weary, afflicted, and worn with age. Some are in our own family, in our own neighborhood, or in the far corners of the world where we can help with fast offerings. Some are starving for food. Some are starving for love and concern.

If we give His sheep reasons to resist us, the feeding process becomes difficult, if not impossible. No one can teach or help with sarcasm or ridicule. Dictatorship or "I'm right and you are wrong" will negate all efforts to feed a wandering sheep. A wall of resistance will be built, and no one will benefit.

Never encourage a man to do something that causes him to lose his pride, or he will turn away and you will have lost the opportunity to help. May we also bear in mind that we never give one of God's children a lift when we give him a free ride. Every person in the Church should possess a self-sustaining spirit of independence that insists he work for what he receives. The best foods with which to feed His sheep are charity and the restoration of dignity.

By our actions we show our love. Expressions of affection are empty if actions don't match. All His sheep need the touch of a shepherd who cares—who leads His flock along upward paths where they can see the value of walking in obedience to God's laws and feel the dignity of reaching lofty goals.

Charity should start in our own homes. Too many of us extend charity to others when it is often most needed within the family circle.

An old Serbian proverb says, "Kindness is the only service that power cannot command and money cannot buy." The best way to show our love in caring and feeding is to

take time to prove it with kindness hour by hour and day by day. True love is as eternal as life itself.

Suggested goals for welfare services

During the last few days while President Kimball has been recovering from his recent surgery, I have heard many of you express your love and gratitude for him. Many are looking for ways to show sincere gratitude to him for his service and selfless love. From a priceless, intimate association with President Kimball, I think I can give you some guidelines. Learn to love, unconditionally, all of God's children, regardless of race, creed, or color, and try to serve as he serves. This principle is the foundation of welfare services. Each of us could do well to remember Doctrine and Covenants 50:26: "He that is ordained of God and sent forth, the same is appointed to be the greatest, notwithstanding he is the least and the servant of all."

The Lord cares enough about us to give us direction for serving and the opportunity for developing self-reliance. His principles are consistent and never changing. Practices may be altered as situations warrant, but the Lord's principles are ever stable. The success of welfare services depends on obedience to the basic gospel laws upon which it is built. There is room for innovation and use of free agency when we look for wise ways to serve as long as we stay within the framework of the gospel.

May 1, in conclusion, suggest some basic goals as we participate in welfare services:

1. Build self-respect by building self-reliance.
2. Give help and service in the Lord's own way, which is a balance of agency and accountability.
3. Realize the proper sequence of sources of help is (1) the individual, (2) the family, and (3) the Church.
4. Be aware that to feed His

sheep, one must know who and where they are.

5. Proper assisting requires love, empathy, and the restoration of dignity.

6. Finally, welfare services requires planning, obedience to basic gospel principles, and above all the willingness to serve as our prophet serves, with unconditional love.

May God help us to give of ourselves with wisdom that they may receive with dignity. Truly, "God makes no junk." We are His children. He loves us and wants us to love

ourselves, our families, and our neighbors in a meaningful way. I am pleased with this great arm of the Church. It is an inspired way of life. It is the implementation of eternal principles for the welfare and benefit of all mankind. It is welfare services. To this I leave my witness, testimony, and love in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney speaks without announcement.

President Marion G. Romney

"Building character in the givers and receivers"

It is now my responsibility to say a few words about living welfare principles. For over forty years I have studied and taught the principles of the Church welfare program. I love its principles and know they constitute the capstone to a Christian life. I appreciate what has been said by those who have just spoken to us this morning. They have demonstrated the effect living welfare principles has on us individually and collectively.

In 1936 President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., said, "The real long-term objective of the welfare plan is the building of character in the members of the Church, givers and receivers, rescuing all that is finest down deep inside of them and bringing to flower and fruitage the latent richness of the spirit, which after all is the mission and purpose and reason for being of this church." (Special Meeting of Stake Presidencies, 2 Oct. 1936.)

Most of us have experienced the joy of observing someone who has been in need of help receive that help and, consequently, become self-sustaining. Many of us have become

witnesses to the truth that the poor can be exalted when they are administered to in the Lord's way.

Today, however, I would like to direct my comments to the effect living welfare principles has on the giver, as opposed to the receiver. Repeating President Clark's statement of 1936, "The real long-term objective of the welfare plan is the building of character in the members of the Church, givers and receivers." The Lord doesn't really need us to take care of the poor. He could take care of them without our help if it were his purpose to do so. "I, the Lord," he said, "stretched out the heavens, and built the earth, my very handiwork; and all things therein are mine.

"And it is my purpose to provide for my saints, for all things are mine." (D&C 104:14-15.)

Care for others and develop Christlike love

It would be a simple thing for the Lord to reveal to President Kimball where the deposits of oil and precious ores are. We could then hire someone to dig them out and we could float in wealth—and we would float in wealth

right down to Hades. No, the Lord doesn't really need us to take care of the poor, but *we* need this experience; for it is only through our learning how to take care of each other that we develop within us the Christlike love and disposition necessary to qualify us to return to his presence.

That one cannot be a true disciple of Christ without significant giving is dramatically emphasized in the revelation received by the Prophet Joseph Smith in Kirtland, on June 7, 1831. In this revelation, the Lord directed twenty-eight of the elders to travel two by two from Kirtland to Jackson County, Missouri. They were to go by different routes, preaching the gospel as they went. You will recall that they were destitute in those days and had to travel through primitive country. Joseph Smith and his immediate companions "journeyed by wagon and stage and occasionally by canal boat to Cincinnati, Ohio," then to Louisville, Kentucky, and on to St. Louis by steamer. "From this city on the Mississippi, the Prophet of God walked across the entire state of Missouri to Independence, Jackson County, a distance of nearly three hundred miles as traveled." (George Q. Cannon, *Life of Joseph Smith the Prophet*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1958, p. 117.) I call these facts to your attention that you may have in mind the background against which the Lord said to these men as they started, "Remember in all things the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted, for he that doeth not these things, the same is not my disciple." (D&C 52:40.) Imagine that! These elders were nearly destitute and the Lord said, "Remember . . . the poor and the needy."

That the commandment to give is directed to all people is emphasized by King Benjamin when he said to the poor, "And again, I say unto the poor, ye who have not and yet have sufficient, that ye remain from day to day; I mean all you who deny the

beggar, because ye have not; I would that ye say in your hearts that: I give not because I have not, but if I had I would give.

"And now, if ye say this in your hearts ye remain guiltless, otherwise ye are condemned; and your condemnation is just for ye covet that which ye have not received." (Mosiah 4:24-25.)

The "pure love of Christ"

Once we are convinced that we have an obligation to give, we must learn that to render service in the proper spirit is of first importance. Mormon, speaking to those who give for the wrong reasons, said, "For if he offereth a gift, or prayeth unto God, except he shall do it with real intent it profiteth him nothing.

"For behold, it is not counted unto him for righteousness.

"For behold, if a man being evil giveth a gift, he doeth it grudgingly; wherefore it is counted unto him the same as if he had retained the gift; wherefore he is counted evil before God." (Moro. 7:6-8.)

Only by voluntarily giving, out of an abundant love for his neighbor, can one develop that charity characterized by Mormon as the "pure love of Christ." (Moro. 7:47.) In Mosiah we read: "And . . . Alma commanded that the people of the church should impart of their substance, every one according to that which he had; if he have more abundantly he should impart more abundantly; and of him that had but little, but little should be required; and to him that had not should be given.

"And thus they should impart of their substance *of their own free will and good desires towards God.*" (Mosiah 18:27-28; italics added.)

Lose yourself in service

Some may ask, "How do I obtain these righteous feelings in giving?

How do I overcome giving grudgingly? How do I obtain the "pure love of Christ?" To those I would say: Faithfully live all the commandments, give of yourselves, care for your families, serve in church callings, perform missionary work, pay tithes and offerings, study the scriptures—and the list could go on. As you lose yourself in this service, the Lord will touch and soften your heart and gradually bring you to the feelings with which he blessed the people in King Benjamin's time, which prompted them to say, "Yea, we believe all the words which thou hast spoken unto us; and also, we know of their surety and truth, because of the Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent, which has wrought a mighty change in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually." (Mosiah 5:2.)

This charity in its perfection is demonstrated by the Lord in everything that he does. The Lord revealed to Moses the numerous worlds which have been created and said, "For behold, there are many worlds that have passed away by the word of my power. And there are many that now stand, and innumerable are they unto man. . . .

"And as one earth shall pass away, and the heavens thereof even so shall another come; and there is no end to my works, neither to my words." (Moses 1:35, 38.)

After revealing to Moses the vastness of his creations, the Lord gave Moses some insight into his reason for doing all this when he said, "For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." (Moses 1:39.) Hence, we see the complete unselfishness of our Father in Heaven. His whole work and glory is to bring eternal life and happiness to his children. Should not our whole purpose in this life, therefore, be made up of righteous service one to another? If not, how can we ever hope to be as he

is? As we individually become filled with the "pure love of Christ" (Moro. 7:47), we collectively evolve into a church which is "pure in heart" (D&C 97:21). We can therefore become as the people of Enoch of whom was written, "The Lord blessed the land . . . and . . . called his people ZION, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them." (Moses 7:17-18.)

Of the Nephites who survived the cataclysm which accompanied the crucifixion of Jesus and thereafter lived the program, the record says, "And it came to pass . . . the people were all converted unto the Lord . . . and there were no contentions and disputations among them, and every man did deal justly one with another.

"And they had all things common among them; therefore there were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free, and partakers of the heavenly gift. . . . And surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God." (4 Ne. 1:2, 3, 16.)

Why were these people so happy? Because they were free of the shackles of selfishness and had learned what the Lord knows—that ultimate joy comes only through service.

Exalts the poor and humbles the rich

Becoming a people which is collectively pure in heart is not an impossible dream or an idealistic goal. We know this because the Lord has commanded us to become such, and the Lord gives "no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them." (1 Ne. 3:7.)

When we reach the state of having the "pure love of Christ," our desire to serve one another will have grown to the point where we will be

living fully the law of consecration. Living the law of consecration exalts the poor and humbles the rich. In the process, both are sanctified. The poor, released from the bondage and humiliating limitations of poverty, are enabled as free men to rise to their full potential, both temporally and spiritually. The rich, by consecration and the imparting of their surplus for the benefit of the poor, *not by constraint, but willingly as an act of free will*, evidence that charity for their fellowmen characterized by Mormon as "the pure love of Christ." (Moro. 7:47.) This will bring both the giver and receiver to the common ground on which the Spirit of God can meet them.

A people who shall live the gospel to its fulness

It is the mission of the Church of this last dispensation to develop another people who shall live the gospel in its fulness. This people are to become "pure in heart," and they shall flourish and be blessed upon the mountains and upon the high places. They shall be the Lord's people. They shall walk with God because they shall be of one heart and one mind, and they shall dwell in righteousness, and there shall be no poor among them.

Let us have these things in mind and let us go forward with this great program. Welfare principles are eternal. The welfare program is built upon

the principles of the law of consecration. I know from my own experience that this is the Lord's work. It is to prepare us to become like Christ. If you will think of the most holy, sacred place you have ever been, you will remember that the final thing we are all to do is to be able and willing to consecrate all that we have to the building up of the kingdom of God—which includes caring for our fellowmen. Doing this, we will hasten the advent of the Millennium. God grant that we do not fail, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

The first general session of the 151st Semiannual General Conference of the Church will convene in this Tabernacle at ten o'clock this morning.

We will sing in closing hymn no. 66, "How Firm a Foundation," following which the benediction will be offered by Elder Derek A. Cuthbert of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The congregation sang "How Firm a Foundation."

Elder Derek A. Cuthbert offered the benediction.

SALT LAKE TABERNACLE CHOIR AND ORGAN BROADCAST

The following broadcast, announced by J. Spencer Kinard and originating with KSL Radio and Television, Salt Lake City, Utah, was presented from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, October 4, 1981, through the courtesy of the Columbia Broadcasting System's network throughout the United States, parts of Canada, and through other facilities to several points overseas:

Announcer: Once more we welcome you within these walls with Music and the Spoken Word from the crossroads of the West.

CBS and its affiliated stations bring you at this hour the Mormon Tabernacle Choir from Temple Square in Salt Lake City, with Jerold Ottley conducting the Choir, Robert Cundick, Tabernacle organist, and the Spoken Word given by Spencer Kinard.

(Choir without announcement: "Praise"—Rowley)

Announcer: "To the Master of Music and loveliness: Praise, power, dominion forever." We have heard the Tabernacle Choir open today's broadcast with these words by Aidan Clarke set to music by Alec Rowley.

We next hear the music of Edvard Grieg as the Choir sings "How Fair Is Thy Face, . . . Thou Son of God, Thou Prince of Grace."

(Choir: "How Fair Is Thy Face"—Grieg)

Announcer: "The only real differences in the world are made by one person—the right person in the right place at the right time." So wrote Sydney Harris. "It is one person," he continued, "who makes the difference everywhere." And he added that these makers of history don't have to be famous or important in the world.

"John Wilkes Booth, a fanatical failure, changed history quite as much as Lincoln did." ("The Importance of Just One Person," *Deseret News*, 20 Aug. 1981, p. A-5.)

We also sometimes think only the famous dates in history are important, such as 1492 and 1776. But these dates are perhaps no more vital to the history of humanity than some other unnoted days that have passed. The day, for instance, when an obscure patent clerk in Berne, Switzerland began to bring order to the ideas of motion and matter swirling in his head. The day when a sympathetic woman looked on a small boy in the corner of a cabin and agreed to become his beloved stepmother.

Important days? Yes, when one knows that the patent clerk was Albert Einstein and the small boy was Abraham Lincoln.

"History is the essence of innumerable biographies," wrote Thomas Carlyle ("On History," quoted in *The International Thesaurus of Quotations*, p. 280). Now we may think our life story is unimportant or uninteresting, but perhaps that is only because we're so close to it.

John W. Gardner wrote, "History never looks like history when you are living through it. It always looks confusing and messy, and it always feels uncomfortable." (*No Easy Victories* [New York: Harper and Row, 1968], p. 169.)

But it should comfort us to know that every person's life is part of human history. Like the widening ripples of a stone dropped into a still pool, the effects of every life spread and blend with others. It is impossible to say where or when the influence of a life stops.

Because each life is so important, we owe it to ourselves and to those we care about to record our daily deeds: our dreams, our accomplishments, and

our disappointments. By so doing we can see more clearly the purpose of our own lives and how we fit into the whole of human history. And by so recording our personal histories we can leave direction and encouragement to those who follow.

(Choir: without announcement: "A Heritage of History"—Cundick)

Announcer: The Choir has sung the music of Tabernacle organist Robert Cundick with the words of Mabel Jones Gabbott, "A Heritage of History."

At the console of the Tabernacle organ on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Robert Cundick next plays the music of Percy Whitlock, "Divertimento."

(Organ: "Divertimento"—Whitlock)

Announcer: We next hear the words of Philip Doddridge with the music of H. G. Naegeli. The Choir sings "How Gentle God's Commands."

(Choir: "How Gentle God's Commands"—Naegeli)

Announcer: The Tabernacle Choir concludes today's broadcast of Music

and the Spoken Word with a text found in Paul's epistle to the Romans. From Mendelssohn's oratorio *St. Paul* the Choir sings "O great is the depth of the riches of wisdom and knowledge of the Father."

(Choir: "O, Great Is the Depth"—Mendelssohn)

Announcer: Again we leave you from within the shadows of the everlasting hills. May peace be with you this day . . . and always.

Announcer (on radio): This concludes the two-thousand, seven-hundred twentieth performance continuing the fifty-third year of this traditional broadcast from the Mormon Tabernacle on Temple Square, brought to you by CBS and its affiliated stations, originating with Station KSL in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Jerold Ottley conducted the Choir, Robert Cundick was at the organ, the Spoken Word was given by Spencer Kinard.

In another seven days at this same hour, Music and the Spoken Word will be heard again from the crossroads of the West.

This is the CBS Radio Network.

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE MUSIC

The Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir furnished the choral numbers for the Saturday morning, Sunday morning, and Sunday afternoon sessions of the conference with Jerold Ottley and Donald H. Ripplinger conducting.

The music for the Saturday afternoon session was provided by a Primary children's choir from the Ogden Cliffview, Mt. Lewis, and Ben Lomond regions directed by Vanja Y. Watkins.

At the general priesthood meeting, a combined men's choir from the

Tabernacle Choir and the Mormon Youth Chorus directed by Jerold Ottley and Robert C. Bowden furnished the music.

Prelude, postlude, and interlude music and accompaniments on the Tabernacle organ throughout the conference sessions were played by Robert Cundick, Roy M. Darley, and John Longhurst, Tabernacle organists.

Francis M. Gibbons

Clerk of the Conference

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THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY
SAINTS

Official Report of the
One Hundred Fifty-second
Annual General

CONFERENCE

of The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints

held in the Tabernacle
Salt Lake City, Utah

April 3 and 4, 1982

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THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-SECOND ANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The 152nd Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 3, 1982, at 10:00 A.M.

The general sessions of the conference were held at 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday, April 3 and 4, 1982. The general welfare session was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, April 3, 1982, at 7:00 A.M. The general priesthood meeting was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, April 3, 1982, at 7:00 P.M.

President Spencer W. Kimball attended and presided at the Saturday morning and Sunday afternoon sessions of the conference and watched the other sessions on television. President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the general welfare, Saturday afternoon, and Sunday morning sessions of the conference. President Gordon B. Hinckley, Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday morning, general priesthood, and Sunday afternoon sessions.

Television and radio stations carried portions or all of some of the conference sessions to large audiences throughout the world. The general sessions were also carried for the first time via satellite transmission to more than one hundred stake centers in the United States and Canada. The general priesthood session was carried by closed-circuit transmission to approximately 2,252 locations in many different countries.

General Authorities present

The following General Authori-

ties of the Church attended one or more of the general sessions:

The First Presidency: Spencer W. Kimball, N. Eldon Tanner, Marion G. Romney, and Gordon B. Hinckley.

The Council of the Twelve: Ezra Taft Benson, Mark E. Petersen, LeGrand Richards, Howard W. Hunter, Thomas S. Monson, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, Bruce R. McConkie, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, and Neal A. Maxwell.

The First Quorum of the Seventy: Presidents: Franklin D. Richards, J. Thomas Fyans, Carlos E. Asay, M. Russell Ballard, Dean L. Larsen, Royden G. Derrick, and G. Homer Durham. *Additional Members:* Marion D. Hanks, A. Theodore Tuttle, Theodore M. Burton, Paul H. Dunn, Hartman Rector, Jr., Loren C. Dunn, Robert L. Simpson, Rex D. Pinegar, Wm. Grant Bangerter, Robert D. Hales, Adney Y. Komatsu, Joseph B. Wirthlin, Gene R. Cook, Charles Didier, William R. Bradford, George P. Lee, John H. Groberg, Jacob de Jager, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Robert E. Wells, James M. Paramore, Richard G. Scott, Hugh W. Pinnock, F. Enzo Busche, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Ronald E. Poelman, Derek A. Cuthbert, Robert L. Backman, Rex C. Reeve, Sr., F. Burton Howard, Ted E. Brewerton, Jack H. Goasland, Jr., and Angel Abrea.

The Presiding Bishopric: Victor L. Brown, H. Burke Peterson, and J. Richard Clarke.

Emeritus General Authorities: Eldred G. Smith, Sterling W. Sill, Henry D. Taylor, Bernard P. Brockbank, James A. Cullimore, Joseph Anderson, John H. Vandenberg, and O. Leslie Stone.

Other authorities present

Other authorities of the Church in attendance included Regional Representatives, presidents of stakes and their counselors, presidents of

temples, bishops of wards, and presidencies and members of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood quorums.

Many general, stake, and ward auxiliary officers also attended.

FIRST DAY MORNING MEETING

FIRST SESSION

The first general session of the conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 3, 1982, at 10:00 A.M. President Spencer W. Kimball presided at this session. President Gordon B. Hinckley, Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for the opening session was provided by the Tabernacle Choir with Jerold Ottley conducting and Robert Cundick at the organ.

Before the commencement of the meeting, the Tabernacle Choir sang "Come Rejoice" without announcement.

President Hinckley then made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

President Spencer W. Kimball, who is seated on the stand and who presides at this conference, has asked that I conduct this opening general session.

We are all delighted that President Kimball is with us today. He has been convalescing from surgery performed last September, and for several months has been meeting intermittently with his counselors. Also for several months he has attended and has spoken at the weekly temple meetings of the Council of the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve.

This, and the fact that he is with us today, is a testimony of the goodness of the Lord, the power of faith and prayer, and the endurance and strength of this great man to whom we express our love and good wishes.

We welcome all assembled in the Tabernacle on Temple Square at the beginning of this 152nd Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We also welcome all others who are participating by television, radio, cable, direct wire, or satellite transmission. You may be interested to know that the proceedings of this conference will be seen and heard in more than a hundred stake centers where we have facilities for satellite transmission.

There is an overflow congregation in the Salt Palace where Elders Carlos E. Asay and Yoshihiko Kikuchi preside.

We extend a special welcome to government, education, and civic leaders who are present.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Jerold Ottley with Robert Cundick at the organ, rendered the opening hymn, "Come Rejoice."

This session will continue by the Choir singing "Break Forth into Joy." Following the singing the invocation will be offered by Elder Royden G. Derrick, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Choir sang "Break Forth into Joy."

Elder Royden G. Derrick offered the invocation.

The Choir sang "See What Love" without announcement.

President Hinckley

The Tabernacle Choir has sung "See What Love."

President Spencer W. Kimball has prepared a keynote address for this general conference, which will now be read by his personal secretary, D. Arthur Haycock.

President Spencer W. Kimball

(Read by his personal secretary, D. Arthur Haycock)

Love and gratitude

My beloved brothers and sisters, as we begin this conference, I desire publicly to thank the Lord for preserving me once again—as He has done so many times before. I extend my love and gratitude to all of you for the many prayers that you have offered in my behalf.

I am so grateful to have such loyal, devoted, and able counselors in the First Presidency—President Tanner, President Romney, and President Hinckley. I am grateful, too, for President Benson and the members of the Council of the Twelve and the other General Authorities. These wonderful and faithful Brethren lead out so that the Lord's work goes forward. It is His work, and He is at the helm.

Even though my strength will not permit me to do all that I would like at the moment, I am blessed and I will continue to do my part to the best of my ability. I wish I had more strength, but as long as I have any strength, I will continue to bear my testimony to the truth of this great latter-day work and to pray for the Lord's blessings and His guidance to be upon us all!

I am so thankful to be here with you in this general conference. My feelings are those of gratitude to my Heavenly Father for giving me a part to play in His kingdom as it rolls

onward to its divine destiny.

Proclaim the gospel, perfect the Saints, and redeem the dead

It was exactly one year ago that I last attended conference here in the Tabernacle. As you may know, I was in the hospital at the time of the October 1981 conference. Last April I stated that the mission of the Church is threefold:

First, to proclaim the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people;

Secondly, to perfect the Saints by preparing them to receive the ordinances of the gospel and by instruction and discipline to gain exaltation;

Thirdly, to redeem the dead by performing vicarious ordinances of the gospel for those who have lived on the earth. (See *ENSIGN*, May 1981, p. 5.)

All three are part of one work—to assist our Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ, in their grand and glorious mission "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." (Moses 1:39.) I renew that declaration today.

Let us keep these sacred principles in mind and make them an integral part of our lives: that is, to *proclaim the gospel*, to *perfect the Saints*, and to *redeem the dead*.

Temple building and temple attendance

We are grateful for the growth of the Church throughout the world, as we now have reached the five million mark in membership. As I have said before, if we will do our part there will be major growth, not only in numbers, but in the righteousness of our people.

With the announcement just made of the plans to build four more new temples—one in Boise, Idaho; another in Denver, Colorado; another in Taipei, Taiwan; and in Guayaquil, Ecuador—there continues the most intensive period of temple building in the history of the Church. These four, when completed, will bring to forty-one the number of temples operating worldwide.

The building of these temples must be accompanied by an ever stronger emphasis on genealogical research on the part of all the members of the Church. Furthermore, implicit in the building of temples is the principle of regular temple attendance by the Saints. Nothing builds spirituality and our understanding of the priesthood principles more than regular temple attendance.

Love one another, and follow counsel

Now, my brothers and sisters, as you read of troubles in so many parts of the world, remember that the Lord knew these problems would come, and that even with these problems He has foreseen the growth of this Church and its people. Be of good cheer, for the Lord is guiding His church. For nearly forty years as a General Authority, I have watched Him guide this church. I marvel at how He can work to bring to pass His purposes by using us in our weaknesses, but He does!

Love one another, brothers and sisters! Have love in your homes and in your hearts! Be peacemakers even though we must live in a world filled with wars and rumors of wars! (See

D&C 45:26.) Follow the counsel you will receive in this general conference. And I'll do my best to do likewise. Trust the Lord and His unfolding purposes even when His purposes are not always completely clear to us at the moment.

Brothers and sisters, be good member missionaries. Follow the Brethren. Study the new editions of the scriptures. Plant your gardens. Clean up, paint up, fix up your homes and your yards. Live within your means. Be good neighbors. Be good citizens in whatever land you live. Keep the Sabbath day holy. (See Ex. 20:8.) Hold your family home evenings regularly every Monday night. These are my words of counsel to you now, as they have been so many times in the past.

Brothers and sisters, pray for the critics of the Church; love your enemies. (See Matt. 5:44.) Use wisdom and judgment in what you do and say, so that we do not give cause to others to hold the Church or its people in disrepute. This work, which Satan seeks in vain to tear down, is that which God has placed on earth to lift mankind up!

When this conference is over, let us return to our homes, our stakes and wards and branches with fresh determination to do better and to be better. The Lord watches over you. He will see you through your personal trials and challenges if you will stay close to Him. I can testify to that as one who has known a few challenges himself.

The Lord has not promised us freedom from adversity and affliction. Instead, he has given us the avenue of communication known as prayer, whereby we might humble ourselves and seek His help and divine guidance. I have previously said that "they who reach down into the depths of life where, in the stillness, the voice of God is heard, have the stabilizing power which carries them poised and serene through the hurricane

of difficulties.” (ENSIGN, Jan. 1974, p. 17.)

Love and testimony

Now, I have lived for more than half the 152 years the restored Church has been upon the earth in this dispensation. I have witnessed its marvelous growth until it now is established in the four corners of the earth. As the Prophet Joseph said:

“Our missionaries are going forth to different nations, and in Germany, Palestine, New Holland, Australia, the East Indies, and other places, the Standard of Truth has been erected; no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done.” (*History of the Church*, 4:540.)

Let us, then, press on confidently in the work of the Lord as we look forward to the glorious years of promise ahead. Through our faithfulness, all that God has promised will be fulfilled.

Again, I express my love for the Lord, for my wife and family, for my Brethren, and for each of you. I feel your love, and I hope that you feel mine in return. I leave my blessings with you. God, our Heavenly Father, lives. Jesus is the Christ, the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh. He lives. He is our Elder Brother, our Savior, and our Redeemer. This is my solemn testimony to you, my beloved brothers and sisters, and I share it with you in love and in gratitude and in humility, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing” without announcement.

President Hinckley

We have just heard an address prepared by President Spencer W. Kimball, which was read by his personal secretary, D. Arthur Haycock, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing.”

We shall now be pleased to hear President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency.

President Marion G. Romney

My dear brothers and sisters, at this Easter season, I am grateful for this opportunity to bear witness to the resurrection of Jesus and to set forth, in part at least, the basis upon which that witness rests.

Jesus brought a universal resurrection

“He is risen; he is not here.” (Mark 16:6.) These words, eloquent in

their simplicity, announced the most significant event of recorded history, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus—an event so extraordinary that even the Apostles, who had been most intimately associated with Jesus in his earthly ministry and who had been carefully taught of the coming event, had difficulty grasping the reality of its full significance. The first accounts which reached their ears “seemed to them as idle tales” (Luke 24:11) as

well they might, for millions of men had lived and died before that day. In every hill and dale men's bodies mouldered in the dust, but until that first Easter morning not one had risen from the grave.

When we speak of Jesus being resurrected, we mean that his pre-mortal spirit, which animated his mortal body from his birth in the manger until he died on the cross, reentered that body; and the two, his spirit body and his physical body, inseparably welded together, arose from the tomb an immortal soul.

Our belief is, and we so testify, that Jesus not only conquered death for himself and brought forth his own glorious resurrected body, but that in so doing he also brought about a universal resurrection. This was the end and purpose of the mission for which he was set apart and ordained in the great council in heaven, when he was chosen to be our Savior and Redeemer.

Requirements of Jesus' earthly ministry

Concerning his earthly ministry, his role as Redeemer required of him four things:

First, that his premortal spirit be clothed with a mortal body, the accomplishment of which was heaven-announced when to the lowly shepherds the angel said, "Fear not: . . . For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:10-11.)

Second, that he suffer the pains of all men, which he did, principally, in Gethsemane, the scene of his great agony. He himself described that suffering as being of such intensity that it "caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—

"Nevertheless, glory be to the

Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men." (D&C 19:18-19.)

Third, that he give his life. His death on the cross, after having been rejected and betrayed and after having suffered appalling indignities, seems not to be in dispute, even among nonbelievers. That he gave his life voluntarily, with the express purpose of taking it up again in the Resurrection, is not so universally accepted. Such, however, is the fact. He was, it is true, maliciously slain by wicked men, but all the while he held the power to stay them. "I lay down my life," he said, "that I might take it again.

"No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." (John 10:17-18.)

This power was inherently his by virtue of his being born of the virgin Mary (a mortal), and being the Son of God (an immortal, celestialized being).

Having thus taken upon himself mortality, having suffered in Gethsemane for the sins of all men, and having given his life on the cross, there remained for him but to break the bonds of death—the fourth and last requirement—to complete his earthly mission as Redeemer. That the whole of his mortal life moved toward this consummation, he had repeatedly taught. It was foreshadowed in his statement about laying down his life and taking it up again. To the sorrowing Martha he had said, "I am the resurrection, and the life" (John 11:25); and to the Jews, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19).

Resurrection was so foreign to human experience that even his believing followers had difficulty comprehending it. The doctrine, however, had been heard even by the crucifiers. Being disturbed by it, they came to Pilate, "saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was

yet alive, After three days I will rise again." So with Pilate's consent they set a watch "lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead." (Matt. 27:63-64.) Thus it came about that these hireling guards unwittingly became witnesses to the opening of the tomb by the angel (see Matt. 28:2-4), the final preliminary to the appearing of the risen Lord.

Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene

The evidence that Jesus was resurrected is conclusive. Five times on the Sunday following his crucifixion on Friday afternoon he revealed himself.

First to behold him was Mary Magdalene. Early in the morning Peter and John, having verified the report that the body of Jesus was not in the tomb, went away. But Mary lingered in the garden weeping. Turning back from the empty tomb, she "saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

"Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith, . . . Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

"Jesus saith unto her, Mary." Recognizing his voice, "she turned herself" as if to touch him, saying, "Rabboni; . . . Master."

Tenderly restraining her, he continued, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." (John 20:14-17.)

The women at the tomb

Later, about sunrise, Mary the mother of James, and Salome and other women went to the tomb with spices to prepare the body for final burial. (See Mark 16:1.) They found

the tomb open and the body gone. To their consternation, they were met by two men in shining garments who said, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen." (Luke 24:5-6.) As they went to tell his disciples, Jesus himself met them, saying, "All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him." (Matt. 28:9.)

On the road to Emmaus

Later the same day, as Cleopas and another journeyed to Emmaus, Jesus, unrecognized, drew near and went with them. When he inquired into the nature of their conversation, they repeated to him the reports of the women. At their seeming doubt he said, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." Then opened he their understanding of the scriptures concerning him. Tarrying at Emmaus, "he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight." (See Luke 24:13-31.)

Jesus with his disciples

In the evening as the disciples heard the reports that Jesus had appeared to Simon and to Cleopas, "Jesus himself stood in the midst of them." To quiet their fears and give assurance that he was not a spirit, he showed them his hands, his feet, and his side, saying, "It is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

"And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?

"And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb.

"And he took it, and did eat before them." (See Luke 24:36-43.)

Thus, on this eventful day, did his former associates behold his glorious resurrected body. Not only did they see him, but they heard his

voice and felt the wounds in his hands, feet, and side. In their presence he handled food and ate of it. They knew of a surety that he had taken up the body which they themselves had placed in the tomb. Their sorrow was turned to joy by the knowledge that he lived, an immortal soul.

For forty days he ministered among his disciples in the Holy Land. He appeared unto his disciples again at Jerusalem, when Thomas was present (see John 20:26-29), and on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias, where he directed them in casting for fish, invited them to dine, gave them food to eat which he himself had prepared on a fire of coals, and instructed them in the ministry (see John 21:1-14). On a mountain in Galilee he commissioned the eleven to teach the gospel to all nations. (See Matt. 28:16-18.) And finally, after he had blessed them at Bethany, they saw him "carried up into heaven." (See Luke 24:50-53.)

With the Nephites in America

His mission being ended in Palestine, he paid a visit to the Nephites in America, that they too might know of his resurrection. His Father introduced him to them as "my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." When they saw him descend from heaven, they described him as "a Man . . . clothed in a white robe." He announced himself as "Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world." They saw him, they heard him, and at his invitation they all "went forth, and thrust their hands into his side, and did feel the prints of the nails in his hands and in his feet," and knew of a surety and did testify that he was the resurrected Redeemer. (See 3 Ne. 11:7-15.)

Revealed himself to Joseph Smith

As he revealed himself after his resurrection to his followers in the Holy Land and to the Nephites in America, so he has revealed himself in

our day. Indeed, this dispensation opened up a glorious vision in which the Prophet Joseph was visited by the Father and the Son. He heard their voices, for they both spoke to him. He was given a personal introduction to the resurrected Jesus by the Father himself. He beheld their glorious bodies and afterwards thus described them: "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also." (D&C 130:22.)

Some twelve years later the Savior revealed himself to Joseph Smith, Jr.; Sidney Rigdon was with Joseph Smith at the time. They both bore testimony "That he lives! For," said they, "we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father." (D&C 76:22-23.)

In the Kirtland Temple the Prophet, this time in company with Oliver Cowdery, saw him again. "The veil was taken from our minds," they wrote, "and the eyes of our understanding were opened.

"We saw the Lord standing upon the breastwork of the pulpit, before us; and under his feet was a paved work of pure gold, in color like amber.

"His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying:

"I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father." (D&C 110:1-4.)

Atonement—supreme act of charity

Jesus alone could make the required infinite atonement because, being the only sinless person who has ever lived upon the earth, he had a sinless life to offer and because he, being the Son of God, had power over life and death. No one could have

taken his life had he not been willing to give it. "No man taketh it from me," he said, "but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." (John 10:18.) It was, therefore, through acts of infinite love and mercy that he vicariously paid the debt of the broken law and satisfied the demands of justice.

We are still further indebted to Jesus, for by his atonement he not only satisfied the demands of the law of justice, but he made effective the law of mercy, by which men may be redeemed from spiritual death. For, while they are not responsible for mortal death, they are responsible for spiritual death, which shuts them out from the presence of God.

All men who dwell in the earth are subject to the influences of righteousness, and also to the influences of wickedness. They are endowed, too, with the divine gift of moral agency, in the exercise of which no person who has lived upon the earth to the age of accountability, except Jesus, has been able in all things to avoid yielding to the influence of evil. All have sinned. Each person is therefore unclean to the extent to which he has sinned, and because of that uncleanness is banished from the presence of the Lord so long as the effect of his own wrongdoing is upon him.

Since we suffer this spiritual death as a result of our own transgressions, we cannot claim deliverance therefrom as a matter of justice. Neither has any man the power within himself alone to make restitution so complete that he can be wholly cleansed from the effect of his own wrongdoing. If men are to be freed from the results of their own transgressions and brought back into the presence of God, they must be the beneficiaries of some expedient beyond themselves which will free them from the effects of their own sins. For this purpose was the atone-

ment of Jesus Christ conceived and executed.

This was the world's supreme act of charity, performed by Jesus out of his great love for us. He not only thereby met the demands of the law of justice—which would have left us forever marred by the effects of our own transgressions—but made effective the law of mercy, through which all men may be cleansed from their own sins.

Mercy or justice

Regardless of what we believe or how we live, we shall be resurrected, for through the atonement of Christ redemption from the grave is granted to every soul unconditionally. This is not so, however, with respect to forgiveness and redemption from the effects of our own transgressions. The only persons who are thus forgiven and redeemed are those who accept and abide the terms prescribed by the Redeemer, thus bringing themselves, with respect to their own sins, within the reach of his atoning blood.

He has set forth the terms of his gospel—the gospel of Jesus Christ—which is the law of mercy, the first requirement of which is to accept Jesus for what he is, literally our Redeemer. This is "faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." (A of F 1:4.) Then follows the forsaking of one's sins and the making of such restitution as is within one's power. This is repentance.

Without complying with these requirements and the other principles and the ordinances of the gospel, one is left beyond the reach of the plan of mercy, to rely upon the law of justice, which will require that he suffer for his own sins, even as Jesus suffered. (See D&C 19:16-18.) For "he that exercises no faith unto repentance is exposed to the whole law of the demands of justice; therefore only unto him that has faith unto repentance is brought about the great and eternal plan of redemption." (Alma 34:16.)

Intense gratitude and appreciation

Contemplation of the Atonement—by which I am assured of resurrection and given opportunity, through faith and repentance and faithfulness unto the end, to obtain remission of my sins—moves me to the most intense gratitude and appreciation of which my soul is capable, and I respond unstintingly to the theme: “Oh, it is wonderful that he should care for me, Enough to die for me.” (“I Stand All Amazed,” *Hymns*, no. 80.)

Such are the thoughts suggested to my mind by the Easter season, celebrated as the anniversary of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which was calmly announced by the angel when he said, “He is not here: for he is risen, as he said.” (Matt. 28:6.)

To this I bear solemn witness, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, amen.

The Choir sang “How Gentle God’s Commands,” without announcement.

President Hinckley

President Marion G. Romney,

Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has just spoken to us, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing “How Gentle God’s Commands.”

The Choir will now continue by singing “Hail Thou, King of Glory,” following which the congregation will join the Choir in singing “Israel, Israel, God Is Calling.”

The Choir sang “Hail Thou, King of Glory.”

The Choir and congregation sang “Israel, Israel, God Is Calling.”

President Hinckley

We welcome those who have just joined us on radio or television. We are gathered in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, in the first session of the 152nd Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Hugh W. Pinnock, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

Any communication with the intent to deceive

Not often do students remember for twenty-four hours very many words taught by their teachers. Yet fifty years later some former students recall with lasting appreciation the words one teacher had her class repeat at the beginning of each day. Every school morning this rather unpretentious, plain, wise lady implanted the meaning of honesty into

our minds by having us recite “A lie is any communication given to another with the intent to deceive.”

When I compare this definition with that found in the dictionary, which states, “A lie is an untrue statement made with the intent of deceiving,” I greatly appreciate her definition. A lie can be effectively communicated without words ever being spoken. Sometimes a nod of the head or silence can deceive. Recommending a questionable business in-

vestment, making a false entry in a ledger, devious use of flattery, or failure to divulge all pertinent facts are a few other ways to communicate the lie.

After having us go through this daily ritual, this wonderful lady, who never married but who had such a motherly influence over many of us, would teach with few words the importance of communicating truth under all circumstances. Often she simply said, "Don't tell lies. Don't share lies. Don't participate in lies."

There is no harm

How serious is lying? We have a clue when we read all through the scriptures that Satan is the father of lies. His method of teaching this evil practice is illustrated in the tenth section of the Doctrine and Covenants: "Yea, he [Satan] saith unto them: Deceive and lie. . . ; behold, this is no harm. And thus he . . . telleth them that it is no sin to lie. . . . And thus he . . . causeth them to catch themselves in their own snare." (D&C 10:25-26.)

Yet we can't hide behind the father of lies and say, "Satan made me do it." All he does is tell us, "This is no harm," and then he lets us catch ourselves in our own snare.

It is a sin to lie. It is a tragedy to be the victim of lies. Being trapped in the snares of dishonesty and misrepresentation does not happen instantaneously. One little lie or dishonest act leads to another until the perpetrator is caught in the web of deceit. As Samuel Johnson wrote, "The chains of habit are generally too small to be felt until they are too strong to be broken." (*The International Dictionary of Thoughts*, comp. John P. Bradley, Leo F. Daniels, Thomas C. Jones, Chicago: J. G. Ferguson Publishing Co., 1969, p. 348.) Those who become victims of this entrapment often struggle through life bearing their heavy burden because they are unwilling to acknowledge

their problem and make the effort to change. Many are unwilling to pay the price to be free from the chains of lies. Some individuals may be very aware of the value of honesty and yet be unable to come up with the down payment.

Some reasons people lie

Perhaps if we analyze some of the reasons people lie, we can avoid or overcome this vicious snare.

Sometimes we deceive and lie to avoid personal embarrassment. I recently heard of a young woman who had been released from her employment because of dishonesty. When she applied for another job, she told the prospective employer that her former boss had a family member he wanted to put in her place. She probably told her friends and family members the same story to avoid mortification.

Financial setbacks may be explained to others with untruths. Or have you ever heard someone say, "I was just too busy to get the job done," when, in truth, he had forgotten? Others use dishonesty to delay, to gain advantage, to impress, to flatter, or to destroy.

Consciously or unconsciously some people lie to destroy others. Jealousy or feelings of inferiority may cause us to degrade another's habits or character. Have you watched an overly ambitious person turn on false flattery for his own gain?

Lies are often excuses for lack of courage. Sometimes lies are nothing more than excuses for poor performance. Usually one lie or deception has to be covered by another. Lies cannot stand alone. Each one must continually be supported by more and more of its own kind.

Victims of dishonesty

There are some who would have us believe there is no right or wrong—that everything is relative. We must never allow ourselves to think proper

conduct and decision making are found in a convenient path somewhere between right and wrong.

In today's world, where deceitfulness is so widely practiced in advertising, promoting, and marketing, a worthy prayer could well be, "Help me, O Lord, to be free not only of personal deceit, but grant me also the wisdom to avoid those who would damage me or mine through devious means."

How do we become victims of dishonesty? There are many ways, but let us examine a few.

A potent statement from Isaiah sheds light on one reason: "Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter." (Isa. 56:11.) Greed can make a person both dishonest and gullible. Such are spoken of in Doctrine and Covenants 68:31-32: "Their eyes are full of greediness. These things ought not to be, and must be done away from among them." Good advice for those who would avoid deceitful propositions is found in Doctrine and Covenants 9:13: "Be faithful, and yield to no temptation."

A friend recently confided that he had lost heavily in a get-rich-quick scheme because he couldn't turn off his greed valve. Wanting more and more—living beyond one's income—makes many of us susceptible to the dishonest promoter. The plan that offers exorbitant rewards or gives you and only you a once-in-a-lifetime deal is to be avoided.

Use of important, well-recognized names or undue reference to special community or religious affiliations are often used to gain confidence and open the door to sales deceptions.

Cautions

Avoid those who want immediate decisions or cash right now. All worthwhile investment opportunities can

bear deliberation and scrutiny. We must get all the available facts and consider them well, and then make decisions that are in the best interest of all. When marginal cases and situations arise, personal integrity must be an important element in any decision. When right actions are not clearly evident, personal honesty will lead us to discern and reveal relevant points or facts of which others may not be aware. A person of integrity will assist others to be honest. A person of integrity will ask questions and give answers that are accurate. Integrity makes it possible for us to chart a course of righteous personal conduct long before the time for action arrives.

A wise person will not allow himself to be victimized by the unscrupulous because of false pride. Oftentimes people are swindled because false pride prevents them from asking questions and seeking additional information. For fear of embarrassment or being thought ignorant, a prospect oftentimes nods his head in the affirmative when he really doesn't understand the glib salesman's line of chatter. "What does that mean?" "What are the risks?" "What are the pitfalls?" "What is the history of the company?" "What references do you have?" are questions worthy of pursuit. When promoters carelessly use simple but elusive words such as "hedge," "shelter," "exempt," "annuity," "umbrella," "tax free," "insulated," and "deferable," the buyer had better be aware.

If prudent decisions cannot be reached on the basis of one's own expertise, advice should be sought from knowledgeable and trusted counselors. Offers that cannot wait or stand review are not worthy.

Abraham Lincoln once said, "Stand with anybody that stands right. Stand with him while he is right and part with him when he goes wrong." (*The Home Book of Quotations*, sel. and arr. by Burton Stevenson, New York: Dodd, Mead, & Co., 1935, p. 1726.)

We are living in a day and time when the "gentle lie," the "soft lie," the "convenient lie," the "misleading lie," the "once-in-a-lifetime deal," the "opportunity for a few selected friends" are being vigorously advocated and promoted. Designing promoters of questionable schemes have and will continue to prey on the gullible.

Fortunately, or unfortunately, the business climate is always good for those who have a deal to promote. In times of recession or depression, unwise debt is encouraged by promoters who would give us the opportunity to supplement our inadequate means. During periods of prosperity and plenty, some try to convince us that then is the time to borrow, speculate, and move up to higher levels of living by riding the waves of a guaranteed prosperous tomorrow. How often do we hear, "I would have made it big if the economy had not slowed down"? History should have taught all of us that there is enough risk and uncertainty in normal or conservative investments to cause the cautious to rebel at the exorbitant returns offered by those who would have us "bet on the come."

More often than not, those who can least afford to go into debt to provide funds for scheming money managers are those hurt the most when the day of final accounting arrives. It is true, getting into debt is a tangleweb.

Avoid debt

Samuel Johnson also said, "Do not accustom yourself to consider debt only as an inconvenience; you will find it a calamity." (*The International Dictionary of Thoughts*, p. 196.) We encourage all to avoid going into debt for speculation purposes. "The love of money is the root of all evil." (1 Tim. 6:10.) A proper balance in our money management skills should be the continuing goal of all who would be free of financial bondage.

President N. Eldon Tanner wisely suggests, "The choice to serve God, worthily made, does not necessarily preclude a home or sufficient money or income, or the things of this world which bring joy and happiness, but it does require that we must *not* turn away from God and the teachings of Jesus Christ while in the pursuit of our temporal needs." (ENSIGN, June 1971, p. 14.)

It should be the goal of every Latter-day Saint to become the kind of person of whom it can be said, "His word is his bond." In all of our words and deeds we should ask ourselves, "Is it right? Is it true?" not "Is it expedient, satisfactory, convenient, or profitable?" Just, "Is it right?" The wise will consider, "What is right?"; the greedy, "What will it pay?"

Sometimes investment promoters, because of the pressures of pending financial reverses and tragedy, scramble and use devious delay tactics while they struggle for survival. Honesty will be compromised by some when failure lurks. People with integrity will stand true and firm in success or disaster.

The servant of the lie

Honesty is basic. It is true that lying is an accomplice to every other form of vice. Or, as someone has said, "Sin has many tools, but a lie is the handle which fits them all." (O. W. Holmes, in *The Home Book of Quotations*, p. 1111.) Deceit, insincerity, cheating are forms of lying—and, young people, cheating doesn't refer only to examination time.

Lying damages others. Lying subtly permits us to destroy ourselves as we are caught in the snare and shatter our own self-image and credibility. Freedom from deceit and lying improves self and gives all of us peace of mind.

Not long ago a troubled friend of mine who has long suffered and continues to suffer the pains of a victim entrapped in his own snare of lies said,

"I have been living lies for so long and have told so many over the years that, frankly, I don't really know when I am telling the truth." When I first heard this, I was moved with compassion; but a second thought had me wondering if this, too, wasn't just another lie. Lying has filled this friend's life full of trouble. No one will ever convince this victim of deceit that "this is no harm."

He who lies is the servant of the lie. He who tells the lie must live with the results. Deacons and Beehive girls should be taught the evils of deceit. Teachers and Mia Maids should be taught the importance of truth. Priests and Laurels should be taught the pitfalls that accompany dishonesty. Missionaries, to be successful and happy, must live by correct principles. Primary children can learn that telling lies is not good. Children in the home are entitled to see honesty taught by example. Unfortunate is the individual or family who is taught that honesty is a policy rather than the proper way of life.

Honesty—more than a policy

We live in a world of law. We may be able to avoid or skirt laws of the land, but the laws of heaven have an irrevocable effect on us today, tomorrow, and forever.

"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32.) No man will ever be totally free who is living a lie. Only he who bears or who has borne such a continuing burden can relate appropriately to such a declaration. We should ever bear in mind that a wrong isn't right just because many people do it. A wrong deed isn't right just because it hasn't become visible.

May our Heavenly Father help us to have the courage to acknowledge and cast aside the living of a lie or the perpetuation of lies. Honesty is more than a policy. It is a happy way of life as we deal with our fellowmen, and particularly as we live with ourselves.

Be people of integrity

Whether we are like the good school teacher mentioned in the beginning of these remarks, or a friend, neighbor, or family member, let us live and teach honesty. In the academic classroom and in the classroom of life, the virtues of honesty should be stressed by all who espouse that "the glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth." (D&C 93:36.) Light and truth will help us to forsake the evil one and come off victorious. "This is no harm" is the declaration of our mortal enemy. He would lead us to self-destruction.

If a lie is any communication given to another with the intent to deceive, we will all do well to seek God's constant help in understanding and finding the truth. People of integrity will neither foster, nourish, embrace, nor share the lie. People of wisdom will not let greed, fear, or the desire for quick riches lead them into the snares of the dishonest and unscrupulous who prey on the gullible in order to maneuver from them valuable possessions.

May we constantly remind ourselves to "seek not for riches but for wisdom; and, behold, the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto you, and then shall you be made rich. Behold, he that hath eternal life is rich." (D&C 11:7.)

God grant to all of us the power and strength to be people of integrity, and the insight and wisdom to avoid being led into the snares of the dishonest, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Marvin J. Ashton, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

Elder Hugh W. Pinnock, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now address us.

Elder Hugh W. Pinnock

Those aching with grief, anger, and guilt

Lately, I have watched with deep concern a number of instances that have unfolded into frustration, heartache, and seeming hopelessness. I speak today to those who suffer with pain and who are aching with grief, anger, and guilt. What I say applies also to those who will yet pass through periods of anguish and difficulty.

When we were little, many of us repeated a verse that began:

I wish that there were some wonderful place

*Called the Land of Beginning Again,
Where all our mistakes, and all our heartaches*

*And all of our poor selfish grief
Could be dropped like a shabby old coat at the door,*

And never be put on again.

(Louise Fletcher, "The Land of Beginning Again," in *The Best Loved Poems of the American People*, sel. Hazel Felleman, Garden City, New York: Garden City Publishing Co., 1936, p. 101.)

The "Land of Beginning Again" does not exist in a geographical location, but there is a specific spiritual position from which we can all start anew, shedding our pains, guilt, and sorrows. Let us travel there this morning.

The ancient prophet Jeremiah was in his house one day and heard the word of the Lord saying:

"Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words.

"Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels.

"And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.

"Then the word of the Lord came again to me, saying,

"O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? . . . Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel." (Jer. 18:2-6.)

Begin again

The Lord explained to Jeremiah that when we make mistakes, as ancient Israel was making, we can take what we have marred and begin again. The potter did not give up and throw the clay away, just because he had made a mistake. And we are not to feel hopeless and reject ourselves. Yes, our task is to overcome our problems, take what we have and are, and start again.

Some of you who are listening have sinned in ways that are significant, embarrassing, and destructive. Yet, by following the simple instruction given by the Master, you can talk with your bishop, when necessary, and begin again as a renewed person.

Recently, some of you have placed your money in an investment that has proven to be unwise or unprofitable. Now is an opportunity for you to begin again. Don't let a mistake injure you twice as it does if you harbor a past wrong or injustice and let your anger destroy you.

Some of you have hurt others, bringing pain, fear, and heartache to them. Now is the time to go and express sorrow for what you have done, beg their forgiveness, and whenever possible, restore that which has been taken. When? Now! It is God's design that we pay our obligations. In the Doctrine and Covenants he said, "Behold it is my will that you *shall* pay all your debts." (D&C 104:78; italics added.)

At the peak of its power, the Greek Empire sprawled from the Mediterranean Basin on the west to what is present-day India on the east.

Through military strength, the Greeks had conquered countless city-states and nations.

They honored their bravest men, but also hallowed the site at which the tide of each battle turned. They marked that single spot on the plain of conflict where a small victory had made the ultimate triumph inevitable. At that place, they pushed a piece of stone or a pile of captured weapons into an upright position. They called the marker a trophy. In the language of the ancient Greeks, the word *trophy* meant "a turning."

Is now a time for a trophy in your life? In the battles you are fighting, should you erect a monument to show that you have turned, that your life will be different now?

Remember, all problems do not keel over as Goliath did before David. All battles do not end as dramatically as the one fought at Cumorah. All miracles are not as immediate as when Joseph Smith blessed the sick on the banks of the Missouri River. But problems do go away, battles are won, and miracles do occur in the lives of us all. In Deuteronomy 7:22 the Lord described his battle plan for purifying Israel in this way: "And the Lord thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little." Victory often does come little by little.

Eliminate if only

Let me suggest the steps necessary to turn our lives in a new direction. The business of life is to climb higher. The divine step is to repent. Repentance means to find a better way and to follow it.

First, eliminate from our thinking and our vocabulary the phrase "*if only* I had done something differently."

If only Samson had known the results of his association with Delilah, he never would have made the first visit. (See Judg. 16.)

If only Sidney Rigdon had been able to foresee his pathetic end, he

might have humbled himself and stayed with the Church.

If only the rich man could have seen beyond the grave, he might have started praying sooner; but only in hell did he become a praying man. (See Luke 16:19-25.)

If only you had not gone on that date, or taken that trip, or made that investment, or met that person, your life might have been different.

All of us can waste precious time by saying, "What if I had not done something or other?" Brothers and sisters, "What if" is not an appropriate question if we really want to start again. Let us face head-on where we are and where we want to be, and not dwell on the "what ifs" of yesterday.

Today is the day

Second, do not wait for tomorrow to begin again. "Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." (Prov. 27:1.) *Today* is the day for each of us to erect those monuments on our own battlefields and mark the place where we began again. One of the reasons we have conferences is to learn how to be better.

Adhere to pure teachings of Jesus Christ

Third, resolve to live the gospel of Jesus Christ in its entirety. "For you shall live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God." (D&C 84:44.) Many people live the gospel according to themselves. That is self-deception.

There is only one true gospel. We may alter it or tint it with our own notions. But if we will adhere to the pure teachings of Jesus Christ, we will eliminate many of the rationalizations that lead to problems. The menu has only one entree. To pick and choose which of God's precepts to live is satanic self-centeredness. Integrity is the foundation of our life-style.

Face personal responsibility

Fourth, face reality. Sometimes we wish we could fly from our troubles. King David did. He had been a good man, but he engulfed himself in great difficulties. It seemed to be more than he could bear. One day he cried, "Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest." (Ps. 55:6.) His guilt-fired emotions had gained the upper hand. He wanted to get away from everything. Some try to fly away physically, and others try to do so emotionally. That does not solve problems. The only true escape route is marked with the sign "personal responsibility."

Remember, the Savior said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11:28.) He invited us to learn of him and to take his yoke upon us. (See Matt. 11:29.)

Fifth, approach our challenges positively! Take over! Lead out! A poet wrote:

Never give up!

*Never give up! If adversity presses,
Providence wisely has mingled the
cup,
And the best counsel, in all your
distresses,
Is the stout watchword of "Never give
up!"*

(Martin F. Tupper, "Never Give Up," in *Poems of Inspiration*, sel. Joseph Morris and St. Clair Adams, New York: Halcyon House, p. 11-77.)

We recall with clarity these words of the Master: "Seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (JST, Matt. 6:38.) Just a few verses later, the Savior tells us, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." (Matt. 7:7.)

Begin a whole new life

Sixth, don't begin again partially. Be complete! Otherwise, you may be patching up an old article of clothing with a little piece of new material. The old fabric will not hold. As Jesus said, "No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for . . . the rent is made worse." (Matt. 9:16.) Don't patch. Begin a whole new life. The wealthy young man was unwilling to give all, to follow the Master totally, and so "he went away sorrowful" (Matt. 19:22), and was never heard from again.

Don't be double-minded

Seventh, be open and candid in your relationships with others. So many of life's difficulties are brought about by being double-minded. Let us learn to say it as it is. Think of Peter's extreme discomfort when the Master addressed him after Peter had been teaching a false concept: "Thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of man." (Matt. 16:23.) From that moment, Peter was a greater disciple. The person who is open and honest will be vindicated. Time is his friend. Trust is his reward.

Forgive

Last, and perhaps the hardest of all, forgive. Paul said, "To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also." (2 Cor. 2:10.) Certainly part of beginning again is to "love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you." (Luke 6:27-28.) Paul reinforced this admonition when he said, "See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men." (1 Thess. 5:15.) Revenge has no place in the life of a person who has found the "Land of Beginning Again."

Think how young Joseph had been wronged by jealous brothers anciently. They sold him into slavery. He had every reason to seek revenge. But when circumstances joined them together again in Egypt, Joseph said, "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, . . . to save much people. (Gen. 50:20.)

Yes, so much of heartache and grief eventually become blessings, our earthly instructions, and condition us spiritually. Even if we cannot understand the "whys" of our tribulations, we can still turn to God and rededicate our lives to his safekeeping. Yes, "he who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come." (D&C 59:23.)

May each of us, where necessary, Begin Again. I testify that the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored and that we are to live its principles and precepts, and by so doing will be exalted. And this I say humbly in the worthy name of Jesus Christ, our Master, amen.

The Choir sang "Eternal Life" without announcement.

President Hinckley

The Tabernacle Choir has sung "Eternal Life."

We welcome those who have just joined us on television or radio for this, the first session of the 152nd Annual General Conference of the Church.

We are grateful to the managers and operators of the many television and radio stations and cable systems for offering their facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this conference to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

Elder Mark E. Petersen, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our concluding speaker, following which the Tabernacle Choir will sing "Benediction."

The closing prayer will then be offered by Elder William R. Bradford, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, after which this conference will be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

Elder Mark E. Petersen

Basic to our religion are the Articles of Faith given us by the Prophet Joseph Smith.

First article of faith

The first one is the foundation of all for which we stand. It reads, "We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost."

We Latter-day Saints believe in God with all our hearts and all our souls. We know that he lives. Our prophets have seen him. We know that

we are his children, his literal spirit offspring. We have no other source of life. We are his children.

Without God there would be no gospel, no salvation, no resurrection, no light or intelligence, not even life itself. Without God there would be no galaxies in the heavens, no sun, no moon, no stars, no earth, and none of the things this earth can produce. In other words, if there were no God there would not be anything else either.

It is equally so with respect to the Lord Jesus Christ. In this church we

accept the Savior with all our hearts and souls.

He is the divine Son of God! This is our solemn testimony to all the world. We bear it fearlessly and with all the emphasis we possess. Our testimony is *true*, for it is based on revelation.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Redeemer of all humanity. But He is more than that. He is the Creator, for there *is* a divine Creator, and we know Him to be Jesus Christ of Nazareth. He came to earth as the Babe of Bethlehem, but was still that same mighty Being spoken of by Isaiah—“Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.” (Matt. 1:23.)

Jesus Christ, the Jehovah of the heavens, made the heavens and all the galaxies within them. He made our universe, with the sun and its planetary system. He made this earth and all that is in it, both animate and inanimate.

All things came by Him and through Him, for without Him was not anything made that was made.

He came to earth nearly two thousand years ago, gave us His gospel and His church, and then was crucified for all humanity.

Everlasting life comes through Him and in no other way. If we obey His gospel we shall live with Him forever. If we reject it, or neglect it, we still shall live, but not with Him. It shall be in the lesser areas, in some of which will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. (See D&C 19:5.)

Christ is our all, and without Him we are nothing.

We also believe in the Holy Ghost, the third member of the Godhead. As we come into the Church we are blessed with the gift of the Holy Ghost, which will guide us all our lives if we will but follow its promptings.

Sin seems attractive at first

I am very grateful indeed for the marvelous expression we’ve just re-

ceived from Brother Ashton about honesty. It is so basic to our religion. I am grateful because we also have as one of our Articles of Faith a declaration that we believe in honesty, truth, kindness, and virtue. That article, you remember, reads in part, “We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men.” (A of F 1:13.)

Here we come to the point where faith and works meet each other. Here we ask ourselves: Do our works verify our faith, or do they belie our professions? Do we really do good to all men as the article of faith says?

Honesty, truth, virtue, and kindness are hallmarks of true Christianity. If we lack them, we can hardly say that we follow Christ.

Was it not James who said, “Shew me thy faith *without thy works*, and I will shew thee my faith *by my works*”? And did he not say, with such crystal clarity that no one need misunderstand, “Faith, if it hath not works, is *dead*, being alone”? (See James 2:14-18; italics added.)

We agree with him and add that professions of piety, without the works of piety, are sheer hypocrisy and are dead—even “as the body without the spirit is dead.” (James 2:26.)

In its seductive dress, sin always seems to be attractive at first. It was so with Cain, who thought he could sin and get gain. Many today delude themselves into thinking the same thing. But the law of retribution is the same now as it was then. The wage of sin is ultimate misery and death if there is no repentance. (See Rom. 6:23.)

If we renounce Christ’s teachings

Who—understanding the facts—would dare become an enemy to God?

Yet if we lie and cheat, defraud, or seduce others and lead them into sin, to *that extent* we do become His enemies.

Since Christ stands for righteousness in all things, what is our position

before Him if we renounce His teachings by our evil acts? Can we say that we are any different from those of His day who turned their backs upon Him and rejected Him?

They were so sadly deceived as they walked into tragedy completely blind to the facts—blind even amid the light of heaven which He offered them.

Think of the deception under which Korihor denied the Christ. After it was all over and he was brought down to the dust, he confessed:

"I . . . knew that there was a God. But behold, the devil hath deceived me. . . . And he said unto me: There is no God; . . . and he taught me that which I should say. And I . . . taught his words . . . because they were pleasing unto the carnal mind." (Alma 30:52-53.)

Note that last expression—"they were pleasing unto the carnal mind." All sins are pleasing to the carnal mind, and dishonesty is certainly one of them!

What if the Good Samaritan had been a hypocrite and had only pretended to help the injured traveler? What if he had brought the injured man to the inn only to further abuse him? What if he had paid the innkeeper with counterfeit money, or had "run out" on his bill? (See Luke 10:25-37.)

What if he were trying to serve two masters? (See Matt. 6:24.) What if his show of piety and mercy was but a masquerade of duplicity?

What would you have thought of him then? Would the Savior have held him up as an example? Or would he have poured out his condemnation on that Samaritan as he did on other hypocrites?

Dishonesty and all it leads to

What do you think of present-day people who masquerade in the robes of hypocrisy and use deception and misrepresentation to gain advantage over

others, sometimes robbing them of all they have?

What do you think of those whose word is not the word of honor, and who think nothing of cheating at the first opportunity?

Do we understand the gravity of the sin of dishonesty? It is not only unchristian, it is anti-Christian—it is anti-Mormon—it is anti-Christ!

Whether it be lying, or cheating, or robbery or deception; whether it is in the home, in business, in sports, or in the classroom; dishonesty is completely foreign to the teachings of Jesus.

If we do not recognize this, we are blind indeed.

Cain was blind when he slew Abel.

Korihor was blind when he fought Alma.

The crucifiers of Christ were blind when they called down His sacrificial blood upon their own heads and upon the heads of their poor unsuspecting and hapless children. (See Matt. 27:25.)

The traitors from within who helped to bring about the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith were very, very blind—oh, so blind!

Shall we allow selfishness and greed to similarly blind us? Shall we become our own worst enemies by resorting to dishonesty and all that it leads to?

A way of life

The gospel provides many "Thou shalt nots" in its list of commandments. But it is equally positive in commanding constructive action and teaching us that we must make a sincere effort to become Christlike in all we do.

Of what value is Christianity if it does not improve us? It is no mere psychological toy to be tossed about in mental calisthenics as a conversation piece.

The gospel is a way of life.

Its purpose is to help us become like Christ.

Did He not ask, "What manner of men ought ye to be?" And did He not reply, "Even as I am"? (3 Ne. 27:27.)

Did He not command us to seek perfection, even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect? (See Matt 5:48.) He means it. These are His laws. They are not mental exercises. They are commandments, and He will hold us personally accountable for our obedience or disobedience.

If we receive these commandments with a doubtful heart and obey them with slothfulness, we can expect only condemnation. (See D&C 58:29.)

Prepare to meet God

We must take a positive approach to our religion and literally make it a way of life, a plan of daily action. We must reform ourselves day by day along gospel lines, for this is the time of our probation and it is now that we must prepare to meet our God. (See Alma 34:32.)

This was told often in the Book of Mormon, you recall, but most of us have just read that as a matter of rhetoric. But, brothers and sisters, today is the day of our probation, just as it was for them in their day; and today is the time when we must prepare to meet our God. Who knows whether we will be alive today or tomorrow or the day after? When will we face almighty God?

Do we suppose that we can enter His presence if we are offensive to Him? And what will make us offensive? It will be our own stubbornness which has kept us from following His plan. It will be our own refusal to put Him first in our lives. It will be because we love darkness better than light.

Obedience is the thing

Why do we suppose that He asks

us to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness? (See Matt. 6:33.) Would He do this if He did not mean it? Half obedience will be rejected as readily as full violation, and maybe quicker, for half rejection and half acceptance is but a sham, an admission of lack of character, a lack of love for Him. It is actually an effort to live on both sides of the line.

We need not suppose that we can serve two masters. If we try, we may be sure of one thing—that our master will *not* be the Christ, for He will not accept us on those terms.

How did our Father in Heaven describe His Beloved Son? Do you remember His wonderful words?

He declared that Jesus is "full of grace and truth." (John 1:14.)

Christ is a God of truth. He is a God of love, but He is also a God of grace.

What do we mean by the grace of God?

Jesus is gracious—that is, He is kind, merciful, compassionate. It is out of His grace, His compassion and His love for us, His mercy, His kindness, His desire for us to become like Him, that He provides for us His glorious gospel.

But to reject His truth is to reject His grace, His mercy, His kindness, His compassion. It is to say that we want none of it. And of one thing we may be sure: if such is our attitude, we most certainly shall have none of it.

Obedience is the thing. What did Samuel say to Saul when he tried to serve two masters? "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." (1 Sam. 15:22.)

Become like Christ

If we try to serve two masters, are we any better than Saul? If we try to deceive the brethren by professions of piety, hiding our sins from them, are we any better than Ananias and Sapphira, who were stricken at the feet of the Apostle Peter when they lied to him? (See Acts 5:1-10.)

We are commanded to become like Christ. We are commanded to develop both grace and truth in our lives. If we are to be like Him, and He is a God of grace and truth, we must begin right now to build grace and truth into our own lives.

Must we not recognize now that we cannot serve two masters? If we should try, the Lord will reject us. He will never be found in tandem with Lucifer, so let us not try to put Him there. When Alma baptized his converts in the waters of Mormon, those humble Saints were filled with the grace of God, the love of God, mercy, brotherly kindness, charity. And their priests labored so righteously that they too were filled with heavenly grace. (See Mosiah 18:16-26.)

When the Lord addressed the early elders of this Church, He taught them that they must grow in grace as well as knowledge before they went out to preach. (See D&C 50:40.)

The Lord told the Prophet Joseph Smith that all who keep the commandments will be blessed with grace from heaven—the love of Christ, charity, compassion, mercy, kindness, honesty.

These are the characteristics of the Savior. These we must seek for ourselves. The Lord has promised that if we obey Him, He will lead us from grace to grace. (See D&C 93:20.)

Humble obedience is the thing

Then shall we not obey? Shall we not plan for it? Shall we not seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness first, last, and always? We must never allow our religion to slip into second place in our lives.

We are the covenant people of the Lord. In baptism we agreed to serve Him to the end, and we received the Holy Ghost to help us to do so. If now we turn to dishonesty and other sins, what do we do to this spirit of truth? By our sins we drive Him from us.

If we who have the gift of the Holy Ghost shall lie or cheat or in other ways resort to dishonesty, if we flout the truth and contaminate ourselves with untruth, where is our allegiance to God?

What shall we do with the covenants we have made, promising to serve Him—this God of truth—in nothing but the truth?

What shall we do with the sacrament of the Lord's Supper wherein we pledge to high heaven, by the very crucifixion of the Christ, that we will always remember Him and keep His commandments which He has given us? (See D&C 20:77.) Shall we repudiate it by our sins—or shall we bow our heads in humility and say, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt"?

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not grace, mercy, honesty, kindness, and the charity of Christ, I am as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. (See 1 Cor. 13:1.)

Humble obedience is the thing. It alone can save us. To this I testify, in the sacred name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "Benediction."

Elder William R. Bradford pronounced the benediction.

FIRST DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

SECOND SESSION

The second general session of the 152nd Annual General Conference began at 2:00 P.M. on Saturday, April 3, 1982. President Marion G. Romney conducted this session.

Music for this session was provided by the Brigham Young University combined choirs directed by Ronald Staheli with Roy M. Darley at the organ.

At the beginning of the meeting, President Romney made the following remarks:

President Marion G. Romney

President Spencer W. Kimball is watching the proceedings of this session on television and has asked that I conduct it. Our love and best wishes go to President Kimball, who is revered and admired throughout the Church.

We welcome all assembled in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on Temple Square in this, the second session of the 152nd Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We also welcome the many members and friends of the Church tuned to these proceedings by radio, television, and direct wire. There is an overflow congregation in the Salt Palace where Elders M. Russell Ballard and Derek A. Cuthbert preside.

We are pleased to acknowledge especially our guests who are present this afternoon, along with general and local Church leaders and members from many parts of the world.

We express our appreciation to the owners and operators of many radio and television stations and to the owners and operators of cable systems

for their cooperation in making these proceedings available to members and friends of the Church in many countries.

These proceedings are also being carried to approximately one hundred stake centers in the United States and Canada by satellite transmission.

The music for this afternoon will be provided by the Brigham Young University combined choirs under the direction of Ronald Staheli with Roy M. Darley at the organ.

The choir will begin these services by singing "The Lord's Prayer." The invocation will be offered by Elder Theodore M. Burton, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "The Lord's Prayer."

The invocation was given by Elder Theodore M. Burton.

President Romney

The choir will now sing "Awake, Ye Saints of God, Awake!"

The choir sang "Awake, Ye Saints of God, Awake!"

President Romney

Brother Wilford G. Edling will now read the auditor's report. Afterward, Brother Francis M. Gibbons will present the statistical report of the Church for the year 1981.

Auditor's Report 1981

Wilford G. Edling

We have reviewed the annual financial report of the Church as of 31 December 1981 and the operations for the year then ended. The financial statements and operations reviewed by the committee include the general funds of the Church and of other controlled organizations, the accounts of which are maintained by the Finance and Records Department of the Church. We have also examined the budgeting, accounting, and auditing procedures employed and the manner in which funds are received and expenditures are controlled. We determined that expenditures of general Church funds were authorized by the First Presidency and by budgetary procedures. The budget is authorized by the Council on Disposition of Tithes, composed of the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, and the Presiding Bishopric. The Budget and Appropriations Committee, in weekly meetings, administers the expenditure of funds under the budget.

Modern accounting technology and equipment are employed by the Finance and Records Department and other departments in keeping abreast of the rapid Church expansion and changing methods of electronic data processing. The committee and the Church legal representatives are conjointly giving continuous attention to matters relating to taxation of churches by the federal government, the states, and by foreign governments.

The Auditing Department, which is independent of all other departments, functions in the three-fold capacity of performing financial audits, operational audits, and audits of computer systems employed by the Church. These services are conducted

on a continuous basis and include all Church departments, other Church-controlled organizations (the accounts of which are maintained in the Finance and Records Department), and worldwide operations, including missions, financial centers, and departmental activities conducted in foreign countries. The extent and scope of the Auditing Department in safeguarding the resources of the Church are increasing commensurate with the growth and widening activities of the Church. The audit of local funds of wards and stakes is assigned to stake auditors. Incorporated businesses owned or controlled by the Church, for which accounts are not maintained in the Finance and Records Department, are audited by professional auditing firms or by governmental regulatory agencies.

Based on our review of the annual financial report and other accounting data, and our study of the accounting and auditing methods by which financial operations are controlled, together with continuing discussions with personnel of the Finance and Records Department, the Auditing Department, and Church legal representatives, we are of the opinion that the general funds of the Church received and expended during the year 1981 have been properly accounted for in accordance with established procedures outlined herein.

Respectfully submitted,
Church Audit Committee

Wilford G. Edling
David M. Kennedy
Warren E. Pugh
Merrill J. Bateman
Ted E. Davis

Statistical Report 1981

Francis M. Gibbons

For the information of the members of the Church, the First Presidency has issued the following statistical report concerning the growth and status of the Church as of December 31, 1981. Membership figures include estimates based on 1981 reports available prior to conference.

Church Units

Number of stakes	1,321
Number of districts	342
Number of missions	188
Number of wards	8,392
Number of branches in stakes	2,719
Number of branches in missions	2,102
(These statistics reflect an increase of 103 stakes and 622 wards and branches during 1981.)	
Number of countries with organized wards or branches	86

Church Membership

Total membership at the close of 1981	4,936,000
It is estimated that current Church membership exceeds 5 million.	

Church Growth during 1981

Children blessed	111,000
Children of record baptized	69,000
Converts baptized	224,000

Social Statistics

Birthrate per thousand	28.1
Number of persons married per thousand	12.2
Death rate per thousand	3.9

Priesthood

Deacons	213,000
Teachers	159,000

Priests	311,000
Elders	419,000
Seventies	32,000
High priests	170,000

Missionaries

Full-time missionaries	29,700
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Genealogical

Names cleared in 1981 for temple endowments	4,346,000
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Temples

Number of endowments performed during 1981:	
For the living	49,800
For the dead	4,101,000
Temples in operation	19
With those announced this week, the number of temples planned and under construction	21
Temples closed during the year	1
(There were 139,000 more endowments performed in 1981 than in 1980, even though the Manti Temple was not in operation for part of the year.)	

Church Educational System

Total enrollment during 1980-81 school year:	
Seminaries and Institutes, including special programs	326,200
Church schools, colleges, and continuing education	72,500

Welfare Services

Persons assisted by LDS Social Services	62,800
Persons placed in gainful employment	27,200
Man-days of labor donated to welfare services	533,800
Commodities distributed from storehouses in pounds	31,342,000

Prominent Members Who Passed Away during the Year

Elder S. Dilworth Young, emeritus member of the First Quorum of the Seventy and former Senior President of the First Council of the Seventy; Elder Del Alvin Talley, senior Regional Representative; Freda Joan Jensen Lee, widow of President Harold B. Lee; Belle Smith Spafford, general president of the Relief Society from 1945 to 1974 and former president to the National Council of Women; Lucile Reading, managing editor of the *Friend* magazine and former counselor in the General Presidency of the Primary; Dr. Henry Eyring, world-renowned scientist and author; Dr. Harvey Fletcher, interna-

tionally known expert and inventor in the field of communications; A. Hamer Reiser, former counselor in the General Presidency of the Sunday School; Louise J. Lake, teacher of the handicapped and recipient of the President's Trophy for Handicapped American of the Year; and George S. Eccles, prominent banker and civic leader.

President Romney

Elder Howard W. Hunter, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our first speaker. He will be followed by Elder Robert L. Simpson, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Howard W. Hunter

World's greatness

There are some among us who have been unhappy with their lives because they have wanted to achieve a measure of greatness in this life but now feel they have failed in some fundamental way. We have concern for those who have worked hard and who have lived righteously but think—because they haven't achieved in the world or in the Church what others have achieved—that they have failed.

Perhaps we should consider the things that make a person great.

We live in a world that seems to worship its own kind of greatness. It's true that the world's heroes don't last very long in the public mind, but, nevertheless, there is never a lack of champions and great achievers. We hear almost daily of athletes breaking records; scientists inventing marvelous new devices, machines, and processes; and doctors saving lives in new ways. We are constantly being exposed to exceptionally gifted musicians and

entertainers, also to the work of unusually talented artists, architects, and builders. Magazines, billboards, and television commercials bombard us with pictures of individuals with perfect teeth and flawless features, wearing stylish clothes and doing whatever it is that successful people do.

True greatness

Because we are being constantly exposed to the world's definition of success and greatness, it is understandable that we might frequently find ourselves making comparisons between what we are and what others are, or seem to be, and also between what we have and what others have. Although it is true that making comparisons can be beneficial and may motivate us to accomplish much good and improve our lives, yet we often allow unfair and improper comparisons to destroy our happiness when they cause us to feel unfulfilled or inadequate or unsuccessful. Some-

times, because of these feelings, we are led into error, and we dwell on our failures while ignoring aspects of our lives that may contain elements of true greatness.

In a short editorial written by President Joseph F. Smith in 1905, he made this most profound statement about what true greatness really is:

"Those things which we call extraordinary, remarkable, or unusual may make history, but they do not make real life.

"After all, to do well those things which God ordained to be the common lot of all mankind, is the truest greatness. To be a successful father or a successful mother is greater than to be a successful general or a successful statesman." (*Juvenile Instructor*, 15 Dec. 1905, p. 752.)

This statement raises a query as to what are the things God has ordained to be the common lot of all mankind. Surely they include the things that must be done in order to be a good father or a good mother, but, to generalize, they are also the thousands of little deeds and tasks of service and sacrifice that constitute the giving or losing of one's life for others and for the Lord. They include gaining a knowledge of our Father in Heaven and his gospel. They include bringing others into the faith and fellowship of his kingdom. These things do not usually receive the attention or the adulation of the world.

Those who do the Lord's work

To extend the statement of President Smith and to be more specific, we could say: To be a successful Primary president or den mother or Spiritual Living teacher or loving neighbor or listening friend is much of what true greatness is all about. To do one's best in the face of the commonplace struggles of life, and possibly in the face of failures, and to continue to endure and persevere with the ongoing difficulties of life—when those

struggles and tasks contribute to the progress and happiness of others and the eternal salvation of one's self—this is true greatness.

Surely we need not look far to see the unnoticed and forgotten heroes of daily life. I am speaking of those you know and those I know who quietly and consistently do the things they ought to do. I am talking about those who are always there and always willing. I am referring to the uncommon valor of the mother who—hour after hour, day and night—will stay with and care for a sick child, or the invalid who struggles and suffers without complaint. I'm including those who always volunteer to give blood or volunteer to work with Scouts. I am thinking of those who may not be mothers but who nevertheless "mother" the children of the world. I am speaking of those who are always there to love and nurture.

I am also talking about teachers and nurses and farmers and others who do the good work of the world, who teach and feed and clothe, but who also, in addition, do the work of the Lord—those who lift and love. I am referring to those who are honest and kind and hardworking in their daily work, but who are also servants of the Master and shepherds of his sheep.

Secondary achievements

Now, I do not mean to discount too much the great accomplishments of the world that have given us so many opportunities and which provide culture and order and excitement to our lives. I am merely suggesting that we try to focus more clearly on the things in life that will be of greatest worth. You will remember that it was the Savior who said, "*He that is greatest among you shall be your servant.*" (Matt. 23:11; italics added.)

Listen to the words of President Joseph F. Smith as he goes on in his remarks to help us place in proper perspective the achievements and ac-

complishments that lead to worldly success and recognition. Notice that he refers to worldly achievements—that is, those that may bring the fame and fortune of the world—as “secondary.” He said:

“It is true that such secondary greatness may be added to that which we style common-place; but when such secondary greatness is not added to that which is fundamental, it is merely an empty honor, and fades away from the common and universal good in life, even though it may find a place in the . . . pages of history.” (*Juvenile Instructor*, p. 752.)

A long-term process

With this definition of true greatness, how do we proceed to achieve it? The Lord has said, “*Out of small things proceedeth that which is great.*” (D&C 64:33; italics added.) Each of us has seen individuals become wealthy or successful almost instantaneously, almost overnight. But I believe that even though this kind of success may come to some without a prolonged struggle, there is no such thing as instant greatness. This is because the achievement of true greatness is a long-term process; it may involve occasional setbacks. The end result may not always be clearly visible, but it seems that it always requires regular, consistent, small, and sometimes ordinary and mundane steps over a long period of time.

True greatness is never a result of a chance occurrence or a one-time effort or achievement. It requires the development of character. It requires a multitude of correct decisions for the everyday choices between good and evil that Elder Boyd K. Packer spoke about when he said, “Over the years these little choices will be bundled together and show clearly what we value.” (ENSIGN, Nov. 1980, p. 21.) Those choices will also show clearly what we are.

Self-evaluation—effect on others

As we evaluate our lives, it is important that we look, not only at our accomplishments, but also at the conditions under which we have labored. We are all different and unique individuals; we have each had different starting points in the race of life; we each have a unique mixture of talents and skills; we each have our own set of challenges and constraints to contend with. Therefore, our judgment of ourselves and our achievements should not merely include the size or magnitude and number of our accomplishments; it should also include the conditions that have existed and the effect that our efforts have had on others.

It is this last aspect of our self-evaluation—the effect of our lives on the lives of others—that will help us understand why some of the common, ordinary work of life should be valued so highly. Frequently it is the commonplace tasks that have the greatest positive effect on the lives of others, as compared with the things that the world so often relates to greatness.

Out of small things

It appears to me that the kind of greatness that our Father in Heaven would have us pursue is within the grasp of all who are within the gospel net. We have an unlimited number of opportunities to do the many simple and minor things that will ultimately make us great. To those who have devoted their lives to service and sacrifice for others and for the Lord, the best counsel is simply to do more of the same.

To those who are doing the commonplace work of the world but are wondering about the value of their accomplishments; to those who are the workhorses of this Church, who are furthering the work of the Lord in so

many quiet but significant ways; to those who are the salt of the earth and the strength of the world and the backbone of each nation—to you we would simply express our admiration. If you endure to the end, and if you are valiant in the testimony of Jesus, you will achieve true greatness and will live in the presence of our Father in Heaven.

As President Joseph F. Smith has said, “Let us not be trying to substitute an artificial life for the true one.” (*Juvenile Instructor*, p. 753.) Let us remember that “out of small things proceedeth that which is great.” (D&C 64:33.) Let us remember that doing the things that have been ordained by God to be important and needful and necessary, even though

the world may view them as unimportant and insignificant, will eventually lead us to true greatness.

That we may never be discouraged in doing those daily tasks which God has ordained to the common lot of man is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

Elder Howard W. Hunter, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder Robert L. Simpson, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He will be followed by Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Robert L. Simpson

My thoughts today are centered in the concern we all share over a growing crisis in today's world, a sort of spreading cancer which continues to eat away at the family unit, which has been ordained of God.

Divorce rate

Divorce, with all of its diabolic side effects, threatens the very foundations of society. President Joseph F. Smith observed: “Marriage is the preserver of the human race. Without it, the purposes of God would be frustrated; virtue would be destroyed to give place to vice and corruption, and the earth would be void and empty.” (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1939, p. 272.) Each prophet of this dispensation has said essentially the same thing in his own way.

According to data from the National Center for Health Statistics, nearly two million divorces are being granted this year in the United States. This is the highest number ever record-

ed and three times the number reported just twenty years ago. Most nations of the world seem to be following a similar trend. Today, more than one out of every three marriages is terminating in divorce. Families within the Church, unfortunately, are following this world pattern to an alarming degree, and it should not be so.

Lack of communication

U.S. News & World Report recently quoted Herbert A. Gliberman, a recognized authority on divorce and domestic relations, as follows: “The biggest rise in the divorce rate has been among couples married 10 years or longer. It's not uncommon today for couples 25 and 30 years into their marriage to seek and obtain a divorce.” He then identifies the main cause:

“No. 1,” he states, “is the [couples'] inability to talk honestly with each other, bare their souls and treat each other as their best friend. . . . They [talk] about mostly

superficial things in order to impress one another."

And then he continues, "I find that too many people talk right through each other rather than to each other." He concludes: "The lack of communication brings on drinking, infidelity or physical or mental abuse. . . .

"For many, there is a lack of tolerance, an inability to bear discomfort or to recognize that they're not perfect and neither is their mate." ("Why So Many Marriages Fail," *U.S. News & World Report*, 20 July 1981, pp. 53-54.)

Family council and reasoning together

There is really only one way to ensure good family communication, and that is the Lord's way. He advocates the council method.

The Church is made up of councils. Certainly, one of the most important of all Church councils must be the family council, presided over by the husband and the wife. In this council parents should stand equally yoked together, just as they are meant to share equally in every priesthood blessing that accrues to their family circle. Through the eternities the Lord's eternal objective for a married couple is that they become one!

Next, the Lord instructs us to "reason together" (D&C 50:10)—no arguing, no haranguing, no backbiting, but rather reasoning together with soft-spoken voices. What a great example for the children! How can a family go wrong if each major decision is carefully measured by gospel teachings? And then, after reasoning together, the decision can be made to move forward confidently and in harmony with divine law.

Pillow-talk

The Savior taught the extra mile (see Matt. 5:41), which means unselfishness. By just going the extra mile almost every couple could make

their marriage relationship successful. But an extra effort on just one side of the boat means imbalance, and a capsized marriage is likely. Unselfishness must come from both sides.

Every couple, whether in the first or the twenty-first year of marriage, should discover the value of pillow-talk time at the end of the day—the perfect time to take inventory, to talk about tomorrow. And best of all, it's a time when love and appreciation for one another can be reconfirmed. The end of another day is also the perfect setting to say, "Sweetheart, I am sorry about what happened today. Please forgive me."

You see, we are all still imperfect, and these unresolved differences, allowed to accumulate day after day, add up to a possible breakdown in the marital relationship—all for the want of better communication, and too often because of foolish pride.

Dictatorship—against gospel teaching

The Church has always taken a firm stand against dictatorships of any form. Any man who chooses to administer the office of his calling as a priesthood leader in the home by dictatorial methods is out of harmony with gospel teaching. He will not enjoy the spiritual rewards of reasoning together. His pillow talk will cease to be a two-way communication, and rebellion will usually follow.

Dictators are always quick to issue an ultimatum; and in case you have not discovered, an ultimatum to today's youth is almost guaranteed failure. It is the equivalent of waving a red flag; it is like declaring war on those you love.

The Lord warns us that "no power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned:

"By kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile." (D&C 121:41-42.)

I like the advice given by President Joseph F. Smith. He said this to fathers: "It is only when men depart from the right spirit, when they digress from their duty, that they will neglect or dishonor any soul that is committed to their care. They are bound to honor their wives and children." (*Gospel Doctrine*, p. 285.)

Family finances

There is yet another major cause for divorce that should not go unattended: the mismanagement of family financial resources. To pay tithes and offerings while ignoring the balance of Heavenly Father's advice concerning sound judgment in family finances will probably cause the windows of heaven to stick a little bit. The promised blessings will not likely be forthcoming as expected.

Every prophet in this dispensation has taught in clear, unmistakable terms that the Saints should stay out of debt (we heard it again this morning from President Kimball), that we should not participate in "something-for-nothing" schemes, which has been stressed today. He advises us to be frugal, to save, and to earn our money the old-fashioned way, by the sweat of our face. We are admonished to teach our children the ethic of work. We have been encouraged at every turn to set the proper example of industry and thrift and also to be generous and consistent in our offerings to the poor and the needy.

During these days of a strained economy it is imperative that the family live within these divine injunctions. Each husband and wife needs to reason together about the family budget on a regular basis. If downward adjustments need to be made in the family spending habits, it is far better to do what needs to be done now rather than build up to an impossible financial

crisis later on—a crisis that too often leads to the divorce courts.

Few things are as destructive in a marriage as the statement, "Sweetheart, I just signed up today for a \$200 course at the local health spa." A well-planned health course may be just the thing, but not as a surprise addition to an already strained budget. This could have been and should have been a prime topic for pillow talk beforehand. As Elder Neal A. Maxwell told us so well recently, "If your companion is going to participate in a crash landing, then she should also help file the flight plan."

Faith, obedience, loyalty

Now, quickly, just to mention three items as foundation stones to a secure marriage:

First: *faith*, the first principle of the gospel. It must be the first principle of your marriage—not only faith in God and in His beloved Son, not only in the living prophet, but, may I also suggest, a sincere and ever-growing faith in each other, and also in your children.

Second: *obedience*, often referred to as the first law of heaven. Without obedience to God's laws there could be no blessings. Obedience to our covenants with the Lord is a prerequisite to peace and love within the family circle.

Third: *loyalty*. Loyalty to a companion through thick and thin will develop a basic character trait so strong that loyalty to the Church and true principles will follow just as naturally as the night follows the day.

The law of chastity is one of the Ten Commandments. This demands loyalty in marriage. Brothers and sisters, protect this sacred principle as though your life depended upon it, because gospel truth confirms that your eternal life most certainly does depend upon fidelity in your marriage.

The scriptures confirm the eternal truth that "marriage is ordained of God." (D&C 49:15.) And then this:

"Neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord." (1 Cor. 11:11.)

And according to a prophet in this dispensation, "God not only commands but he commands marriage. While man was yet immortal, before sin had entered the world, our heavenly Father himself performed the first marriage. He united our first parents in the bonds of holy matrimony, and commanded them to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. This command he has never changed, abrogated or annulled; but it has continued in force throughout all the generations of mankind." (Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, p. 274.)

Mark confirms: "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." (Mark 10:9.)

Unselfishness is the key

Now, brothers and sisters, every divorce in the Church affects the work of the kingdom adversely. There needs to be greater effort on the part of each companion threatened by divorce. There needs to be more counseling, not only one with another, but also with appropriate priesthood leaders. There needs to be a more universal understanding about the eternal nature of the marriage covenant.

Time and experience have proven that unselfishness is the key to successful marriage, for, you see, unselfishness invites reasoning together.

Unselfishness insists on an extra-mile effort.

Unselfishness paves the way for family financial security.

Unselfishness stops divorce.

And don't you agree that perhaps the most important questions that will need to be answered by a divorced person in the hereafter will be these:

1. "Did you do everything possible to save your marriage?"

2. "Were gospel truths applied to the fullest?"

3. "Did you seek out, listen to, and abide by priesthood counsel?"

May He bless us to regard every marriage as an act ordained of God; for, as President Joseph F. Smith said, it is the hope of the human race.

And these thoughts I leave with you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

We have just listened to Elder Robert L. Simpson, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now address us.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

Pondering can open spiritual eyes

In a revelation given to President Joseph F. Smith, which has recently been added to the Doctrine and Covenants as section 138, there is an important message for all of us.

"On the third of October," writes President Smith, "in the year nineteen hundred and eighteen, I sat in my room pondering over the scriptures;

"And reflecting upon the great atoning sacrifice that was made by the Son of God, for the redemption of the world. . . .

"As I pondered over these things which are written, the eyes of my understanding were opened, and the Spirit of the Lord rested upon me." (Verses 1-2, 11.)

It is about pondering and what can be gained therefrom that I should like to address my remarks today.

Pondering, which means to weigh mentally, to deliberate, to meditate, can achieve the opening of the spiritual eyes of one's understanding. Also, the Spirit of the Lord may rest upon the ponderer as described by President Smith.

And Jesus admonished the Nephites, "Therefore, go ye unto your homes, and ponder upon the things which I have said, and ask of the Father, in my name, that ye may understand." (3 Ne. 17:3.)

We are constantly reminded through the scriptures that we should give the things of God much more than usual superficial consideration. We must ponder them and reach into the very essence of what we are and what we may become.

Ponder the consequences

There is a story about a young builder who had just gone into business for himself. A wealthy friend of his father came to him and said: "To get you started right, I am going to have you build a ranch house for me. Here are the plans. Don't skimp on anything. I want the very finest materials used, and I want flawless workmanship. Forget the cost. Just send me the bills."

The young builder became obsessed with the desire to enrich himself through this generous and unrestricted offer. Instead of employing top-grade labor and buying the finest materials, he shortchanged his benefactor in every way possible. Finally, the last secondhand nail was driven into the last flimsy wall, and the builder handed over the keys and bills, totaling over a hundred thousand dollars, to his father's old friend. That gentleman wrote a check in full for the structure and then handed the keys back to the builder. "The home you have just built, my boy," he said with a pleasant smile, "is my present to you. May you live in it in great happiness!"

In this story the young builder did not ponder the consequences of his dishonest thoughts and acts. If he had pondered, perhaps he would have come to a clear understanding of what Jesus so long ago described:

"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

"And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it." (Matt. 7:24-27.)

Had he pondered his actions, this unwise builder might have learned that to consent verbally to do the right thing and then to live and to act without effort to achieve what is right, is ruinous.

The story of the unwise builder could have application in the lives of all of us. We must ponder the consequences of our mistakes. Our Father in Heaven has generously given to all of us life, which includes our free agency. With free agency comes the challenge to make the right decisions and choices, including the achievement of joy and happiness. This is an art in itself and must be earned. It is not possible to have a free ride on the road to joy, and there is no real joy that does not involve self-denial and self-discipline; we must ponder our actions and their results.

Right choice and true application of thought

We all know that there is much evil abounding in the world today. Many people are addicted to drugs that

cause mental, emotional, and physical problems of great magnitude and of long-lasting duration. Marriage partners are unfaithful and cause the breakup of homes and families. Satan is working harder and is having greater success than perhaps ever before in history.

All evils to which so many become addicted begin in the mind and in the way one thinks. Experience teaches that when the will and imagination are in conflict, the imagination usually wins. What we imagine may defeat our reason and make us slaves to what we taste, see, hear, smell, and feel in the mind's eye. The body is indeed the servant of the mind.

In his widely acclaimed essay *As a Man Thinketh*, James Allen reinforced what Jesus so beautifully proclaimed. Mr. Allen wrote:

"Man is made or unmade by himself; in the armoury of thought he forges the weapons by which he destroys himself; he also fashions the tools with which he builds for himself heavenly mansions of joy and strength and peace. By the right choice and true application of thought, man ascends to the Divine Perfection; by the abuse and wrong application of thought, he descends below the level of the beast. Between these two extremes are all the grades of character, and man is their maker and master. . . .

"All that a man achieves and all that he fails to achieve is the direct result of his own thoughts." (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., n. d., pp. 8-9, 34.)

Plant good seeds in your heart

The insidious process of transforming a person from goodness to evil is a subtle, usually undeliberate one. It is a process of pondering the wrong thoughts, of planting evil seeds in the heart. The word *seeds* is a graphic description of what begins the process and is so well described by Alma:

"Now, we will compare the word unto a seed. Now, if ye give place, that a seed may be planted in your heart, behold, if it be a true seed, or a good seed, if ye do not cast it out by your unbelief, that ye will resist the Spirit of the Lord, behold, it will begin to swell within your breasts; and when you feel these swelling motions, ye will begin to say within yourselves—It must needs be that this is a good seed, or that the word is good, for it beginneth to enlarge my soul; yea, it beginneth to enlighten my understanding, yea, it beginneth to be delicious to me." (Alma 32:28.)

To soundly plant good seeds in your heart requires prolonged, intense, unremitting pondering. It is a deep, ongoing, regenerating process which refines the soul.

Nearly a hundred years ago Stanford University had a most distinguished president, David Starr Jordan. These thoughts from *The Strength of Being Clean* by President Jordan will, I believe, summarize my convictions on this critical subject:

"Vulgarity [now known as pornography] is an expression of arrested development in matters of good taste or good character. . . . Vulgarity weakens the mind, and thus brings all other weakness in its train. . . . It is vulgar to like poor music, to read weak books, to feed on sensational newspapers [or debasing TV], . . . to find amusement in trashy novels, to enjoy vulgar theatres, to find pleasure in cheap jokes, to tolerate coarseness and looseness in any of its myriad forms. . . .

" . . . [For] the basis of intemperance is the effort to secure through [thoughts first and then] drugs the feeling of happiness when happiness does not exist. Men destroy their nervous system for the tingling pleasures they feel as its structures are torn apart." (New York: H. M. Caldwell Co., 1900, pp. 24-25, 27.)

Ponder over your responsibilities

Parents should ponder over their family home evenings and their responsibility to teach the gospel to their family. All members should ponder over the instructions received in sacrament and priesthood meetings, in Relief Society, and in messages from home teachers. Priesthood bearers should ponder over their responsibility to honor their priesthood, to be examples of righteousness. Quorum leaders should ponder over their responsibilities to serve, teach, and strengthen their quorum members and to lead in love and kindness. Young people should ponder over problems that might confront them and be prepared to cope with them in a way that their parents, their leaders, and their Heavenly Father would have them cope that they might keep themselves clean and pure.

In striving to be the best by God's standards, King Benjamin, a great Book of Mormon prophet, points the way:

"But this much I can tell you, that if ye do not watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe the commandments of God, and continue in the faith of what ye have heard concerning the coming of our Lord, even unto the end of your lives, ye must perish. And now, O man, remember, and perish not." (Mosiah 4:30.)

Jesus counseled, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Matt. 6:21.)

President Spencer W. Kimball is a model, a great example to us of a prophet, seer, and revelator who does ponder, and who prays, and who receives revelations for the kingdom.

In our quest for pure hearts, may we ponder on righteous acts and thoughts, and may we be faithful and diligent.

I bear earnest and sincere testimony to the mighty transforming power of these noble ideals in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Come, O Thou King of Kings," following which Elder Gene R. Cook, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will speak to us.

The choir and congregation sang
"Come, O Thou King of Kings."

President Romney

We shall now hear from Elder Gene R. Cook, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and he will be followed by Elder Ronald E. Poelman, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Gene R. Cook

Satan—master of illusion

Last summer on a lonely stretch of desert highway, we saw ahead what appeared to be the road covered with

water. My children would have wagered their entire savings on that fact. But within a few minutes we were at the distant spot and saw not one drop of water. What an illusion!

How many things there are in this life that appear to be one way and all of a sudden are the reverse. (See Alma 62:41.) Satan operates that way. He is the master of illusion. He creates illusions in an attempt to detour, dilute, and divert the power and the attention of the Latter-day Saints from the pure truth of God.

He is particularly effective at creating spiritual illusions that cause a counterfeiting of spirituality, a spiritual instability, a self-deception—spiritual illnesses sowed in the heart little by little to harden the hearts of men and to lead them into sin and away from God. (See 1 Ne. 12:17; 3 Ne. 6:15.)

Puffed up in pride

May I share a few of Satan's cunning illusions which undermine spirituality. Satan, with an illusion, leads a man to puff himself up with pride to say, "I am my own man. I know the Lord lives, but he expects me to handle this particular matter on my own and not bother him with any details." Not being familiar with the scriptures, the man may not know that Satan teaches the world there is no God. But to the Saints he simply says, "There is a God, but he is only *generally* involved in your life. He would not *specifically* help you today." Or he teaches the world not to pray, but to the Saints he simply says, "Don't pray now. You don't feel like praying right now." (See 2 Ne. 32:8-9.) The net effect is the same.

Holier-than-thou attitude

Satan, in another illusion of vain imagination, teaches a man that the man is spiritual and humble. He begins to believe it and then acts in the eyes of the people as if he were. He begins to drift but full well believes, because of the illusions being created, that he is still on the strait and narrow. He develops a holier-than-thou attitude, but in his heart he is hardened, "past

feeling" (1 Ne. 17:45), and prideful. The master of illusion teaches men to honor the Lord with their lips, while their hearts are far from the Lord. (See JS-H 1:19.)

Spirituality and knowledge

With others he disguises truth and equates spirituality with knowledge, with little or no emphasis on application of truths in personal lives. The man goes along his own way imagining himself to be learned, leaning on his own understanding (see Prov. 3:5; 2 Ne. 9:28), seeking the honor and esteem of men, and feeling it is sufficient to teach and not to do. The knowledge then, in and of itself, becomes an illusion and a stumbling block to maintaining the Spirit of the Lord.

Heart set on things of the world

Still others the Lord blesses with great material blessings. But then Satan cunningly creates illusions and reverses the use of these blessings. He leads one to set his heart on the things of this world. (See D&C 121:35.) The man begins not to esteem his brethren as himself, but creates divisions, inequalities, or status distinctions among the people. Yes, Satan has been a liar from the beginning; he is "the author of all sin. . . . He doth carry on his works of darkness . . . as he can get hold upon the hearts of the children of men." (Hel. 6:30.)

Selfishness, spiritual instability, and general concern for self

In this world of illusions, Satan sows selfishness, unbelief, fear, doubt, greed, spiritual instability, and a general concern for self into men's hearts. He is a master builder of spiritual detours to waste time, divert attention from that which is good, and diminish spiritual receptivity. Satan especially desires to deceive the Latter-day Saints, those who know the

truth about him, those who can particularly influence others in their teaching and living of the gospel in the home, in the classroom, from the pulpit, and in the world. In these days of increasing deception, and more to come, one must be aware of Satan's spiritual snares and be sure of his own discernment.

Spiritual Guides for Teachers of Righteousness

I would like to suggest eight standards against which a person can measure his own teaching of the gospel as well as the doctrines taught by others, to help him unravel illusions and discern the truth. These standards might be entitled "Spiritual Guides for Teachers of Righteousness."

1. Not only will the teacher teach the truth, but the Spirit of the Lord will accompany the truth *and* the teacher. (See D&C 50:17-22.) Both should be subject to spiritual confirmation at any time. The teacher will not teach without authority nor speak independently for himself, knowing that even the very elect can be deceived. (See Matt. 24:24.)

2. The teacher will be in accord with the General Authorities as a group and with his local leaders, knowing they are guides to safety. He will have desires to follow and conform to their teachings and example in all their spiritual and temporal declarations, knowing the Lord gives them the gifts of discernment. (See D&C 46:27.) He will not complain, criticize, or speak evilly of the Lord's anointed, knowing that such a practice is an early warning sign of apostasy.

3. The teacher of righteousness will teach from the holy scriptures and will teach that which is taught and confirmed by the Holy Ghost. (See D&C 52:9.) He will not "teach for doctrines the commandments of men." (JS—H 1:19.) He will not mingle the history and opinions of men with the scriptures nor spend religious

instruction time teaching speculation or the philosophies of the world, thereby giving Satan's views exposure. He will not teach "doctrines" upon which the Lord's prophet has not spoken. (See D&C 28:2-3.) He knows that the scriptures lead one to faith on the Lord and unto repentance, which bring a change of heart. (See Hel. 15:7; Al. 37:8.)

4. The teacher will teach in simplicity, according to the true needs of the people, basic gospel doctrines like faith, repentance, and prayer, which all men—all men—can apply. (See D&C 19:31; Al. 26:22.) He will not look beyond the mark by exaggerating, by teaching in the fringe areas, by expanding on the scriptures, or by teaching exotic extremes in any principle, like excessively lengthy prayers, false doctrines about the Savior or about Adam, or extremes in diet, or politics, or investments. He will remember that Satan works in the extremes. He knows of the exactness of the Lord's doctrine, but also of "temperance in all things." (D&C 12:8.)

5. The teacher will speak in the light of day. (Moro. 7:15, 18-19.) He will not speak of secret doctrines, of special elite groups "in the know," or of secret ordinations. (See Jacob 4:13; D&C 42:11.) Whatever he does will be in the plain view of the people. He knows that doctrines and ordinations are subject to the open view and vote of the Saints.

6. The teacher will treat all those being taught as like unto himself, not esteeming himself above his brethren. (See Jacob 2:17.) He will seek excellence before the Lord, but not to excel over his companions in the work. (See D&C 58:40-41.) He knows that "none is acceptable before God, save the meek and lowly in heart." (Moro. 7:44.)

7. The teacher of righteousness will be anxious to glorify the Lord. He will refuse to assume any glory unto himself. He will not practice priestcrafts—that is, preaching and holding himself up as a light to the

world for gain or for the honor of men. (See 2 Ne. 26:29; Mosiah 18:26.) He will be a preacher of righteousness speaking forcefully against sin, having an eye single to God, not to personal gain, honor, or popularity among men. He knows worldly aspirations leave the door open wide to apostasy.

8. The teacher himself will be in the process of continual personal repentance. (See Moro. 8:26.) He will be an example of meekness, charity, pure motives, dependence on the Lord. He will not just be teaching the doctrine, but also applying it. (See D&C 41:5; 52:15-16.) All in all, it will be evident whom he represents.

Full purpose of heart

In summary, then, how does one keep himself from falling, as some have, into teaching and living semi-truths? Is it not by maintaining his own spirituality? What is true spirituality? Is it knowledge, intellect, academic learning? Perhaps more than anything else it is an ongoing, purifying condition of the heart. It is an eye single to God. It is a broken heart and a contrite spirit. (See 3 Ne. 9:20; D&C 136:32-33.) It is a "full purpose of heart."

As I have had opportunity over the years to be among the Brethren, the one distinguishing characteristic that seems to be found in all of them, as well as in other spiritual leaders, is their intense desire to take upon them the name of the Lord with "full purpose of heart," a desire to serve the Lord above all else, at any cost. (See

D&C 18:27-28, 38.)

It should not surprise one to see that the Lord's requirements to serve him in church callings are conditions of the heart (see D&C 4; 12:8; 41:11), nor that the Lord has said, "I, the Lord, will judge all men according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts." (D&C 137:9.)

Brothers and sisters, no Latter-day Saint will go astray if he will follow the inspired counsel of the Lord and his servants. I testify that if a man will maintain his own spirituality—

- by praying without ceasing,
- by studying and pondering the scriptures continually, and
- by obeying his leaders and the light and truth that he presently understands—

He will not be deceived.

May the Lord bless all of us not to be fooled by illusions created by the devil. May we maintain our spiritual fine-tuning by yielding our hearts to God, becoming firmer and firmer in the faith (see Hel. 3:35), is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

Elder Gene R. Cook, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

Elder Ronald E. Poelman, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will be our next speaker. He will be followed by Elder LeGrand Richards, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Ronald E. Poelman

The Galilean fisherman Simon Peter, upon recognizing for the first time the divine power of Jesus, exclaimed, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." (Luke 5:8.)

Father's strengthening influence

Each one of us, at times, may feel as Peter, conscious of our failings and uncomfortable at the thought of

approaching the Lord. Transgression causes us to feel estranged from our Father in Heaven, and we feel unworthy of his love and fearful of his disapproval.

Yet, having transgressed his laws or disobeyed his commandments, we need the strengthening influence of our Father to help us overcome our weakness, to repent and become reconciled with him. Unrepented sin tends to become habitual and is frequently accompanied by a deepening sense of guilt which may make repentance increasingly difficult. This feeling of estrangement from the Lord becomes, itself, an impediment to repentance and reconciliation with him.

Knowing we have offended our Father in Heaven, we are afraid to ask his help, feeling that we don't deserve it. Paradoxically, when we are most in need of the Lord's influence we deserve it least. Nevertheless, in such circumstances he says to us, as Jesus said to the trembling Peter, "Fear not." (Luke 5:10.)

Example of merciful forgiveness

My message today might best be illustrated through the experiences of a young couple whom I will call John and Gayle.

John was a thoughtful, kind young man, affectionate, with a frank and open manner. He sincerely tried to obey the Lord's commandments and found honest contentment in the joys of family life. Gayle, his wife, was young, attractive, high-spirited, but inclined toward more worldly interests and activities. The society in which they lived was, in general, one of affluence and materialism. People seemed preoccupied with temporal gain, social status, entertainment, and self-gratification. Religious leaders were concerned about the apparent breakdown in family life and moral standards.

In the early years of their marriage, John and Gayle were blessed

with children, first a boy and then a girl; but Gayle seemed uninterested in her domestic responsibilities. She longed for glamour and excitement in her life and was frequently away from home at parties and entertainments, not always with her husband. In her vanity, Gayle encouraged and responded to the attentions of other men until eventually she was unfaithful to her marriage vows.

Throughout, John encouraged Gayle to appreciate the joys of family life and experience the rewards of observing the laws of God. He was patient and kind, but to no avail. Shortly after the birth of a third child, a son, Gayle deserted her husband and children and joined her worldly friends in a life of self-indulgence and immorality. John, thus rejected, was humiliated and brokenhearted.

Soon, however, the glamour and excitement that had attracted Gayle turned to ashes. Her so-called friends tired of her and abandoned her. Then each successive step was downward, her life becoming more and more degraded. Eventually she recognized her mistakes and realized what she had lost, but could see no way back. Certainly John could not possibly love her still. She felt completely unworthy of his love and undeserving of her home and family.

Then one day, passing through the streets, John recognized Gayle. Surely he would have been justified in turning away, but he didn't. As he observed the effect of her recent life, all too evident, a feeling of compassion came over him—a desire to reach out to her. Learning that Gayle had incurred substantial debts, John repaid them and then took her home.

Soon John realized, at first with amazement, that he still loved Gayle. Out of his love for her and her willingness to change and begin anew, there grew in John's heart a feeling of merciful forgiveness, a desire to help Gayle overcome her past and to accept her again fully as his wife.

Through his personal experience there arose in John another profound awareness, a realization of the nature of God's love for us, his children. Though we disregard his counsel, break his commandments, and reject him, when we recognize our mistakes and desire to repent, he wants us to seek him out and he will accept us.

John had been prepared, through his personal experiences, for a divine mission. Though I have taken some literary license in telling the story, it is the account, perhaps allegorical, of Hosea, prophet of the Old Testament, and his wife, Gomer.

Portraying God to ancient Israel as a loving, forgiving father, Hosea foreshadowed, more than most Old Testament prophets, the spirit and message of the New Testament, the Book of Mormon, and modern revelation.

God's love transcends our transgressions

In these latter days the Lord has said:

"For I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance;

"Nevertheless, he that repents and does the commandments of the Lord shall be forgiven." (D&C 1:31-32.)

By disobeying the laws of God and breaking his commandments, we do offend him, we do estrange ourselves from him, and we don't deserve his help and inspiration and strength. But God's love for us transcends our transgressions.

When we disobey the laws of God, justice requires that compensation be made—a requirement which we are incapable of fulfilling. But out of his divine love for us, our Father has provided a plan and a Savior, Jesus Christ, whose redeeming sacrifice satisfies the demands of justice for us and makes possible repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation with our Father. For indeed, "God so

loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16.)

We may accept this great gift through faith in Jesus Christ and repentance, followed by a covenant made with him through baptism of the water and of the Spirit. Then, each week, as we receive the sacrament, we renew our covenant that we will "always remember him and keep his commandments." The promise attached to that covenant is that we "may always have his Spirit to be with [us]." (D&C 20:77.)

Repent and forgive

Hosea's ancient message is repeated and elaborated throughout the scriptures. Through Isaiah, another Old Testament prophet, the Lord said to his people:

"Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

"Learn to do well. . . .

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Isa. 1:16-18.)

The Lord, speaking to Alma, the Nephite prophet, says: "Whosoever transgresseth against me, him shall ye judge according to the sins which he has committed; and if he confess his sins before thee and me, and repenteth in the sincerity of his heart, him shall ye forgive, and I will forgive him also.

"Yea, and as often as my people repent will I forgive them their trespasses against me." (Mosiah 26:29-30.)

Too often we make repentance more difficult for each other by our failure to forgive one another. However, we are admonished in modern revelation that "ye ought to forgive one another; for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth con-

demned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin.

"I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men." (D&C 64:9-10.)

Also from modern revelation comes one of the most comforting, hopeful pronouncements ever spoken:

"He who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more." (D&C 58:42.)

God's love, infinite and unconditional

God is our father; he loves us; his love is infinite and unconditional. His sorrow is great when we disobey his commandments and break his laws. He cannot condone our transgressions, but he loves us and wants us to return to him.

I am proud to be a member of this great church—The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. What an appropriate name for the true church of Christ to bear in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times. I love the Church because of what it teaches me.

Church teaches me I am a son of God

Some years ago during the war, Elder John A. Widtsoe went to the land of Great Britain to preside over the European Mission. When the immigration official saw his papers and who he was, he said, "Nothing doing. We have been letting your missionaries in, but we don't want any of your leaders—go sit down." So Brother Widtsoe went and sat down.

In a few minutes, he called him back and he said, "If I let you enter my country, what will you teach my countrymen?"

I know of no greater inducement to repentance and reconciliation with our Father in Heaven than an awareness of his love for us personally and individually. That such awareness may increase within each of us is my prayer, to which I add my personal witness to you individually that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God, the Savior of all mankind, and the Redeemer of each of us individually, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

Elder Ronald E. Poelman, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us.

Elder LeGrand Richards, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our concluding speaker.

Elder LeGrand Richards

And Brother Widtsoe said, "I'll teach them where they came from, and why they are here, and where they are going."

The man looked up at him and he said, "Does your church teach that?"

And Brother Widtsoe said, "It does."

"Well, mine doesn't," he said.

To me, that knowledge is worth more than all the wealth in this world. If we don't know where we came from, and we don't know why we are here, and we don't know where we are going, nor how to get there, we are just like a ship on the ocean without a rudder, or a sail, or anyone to guide it. We might keep afloat, but we would never come into port.

My church teaches me that I am a son of God the Eternal Father, and therefore I have all of the attributes in embryo to develop like my Father, just like my sons have become like me and I became like my earthly father.

Church teaches me I kept my first estate

The Lord stood in the midst of the spirits before this world was created. He said there were many of the noble and great ones—and they couldn't be noble and great if they hadn't done something to achieve nobility and greatness before they were born here in this world. He said to those who were with him, "We will go down, for there is space there, . . . and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell;

"And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them."

Then he adds: "And they who keep their first estate shall be added upon; and they who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate; and they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever." (Abr. 3:24-26.)

The right to have a body

I thank the Lord that my church teaches me that I kept my first estate in that spirit world or else I would have been cast down to this earth with Satan and a third of the hosts of heaven. And the cry went out: "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth . . . for the devil is come down unto you," and he "walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." (Rev. 12:12; 1 Pet. 5:8.) And so the fact that I kept my first estate entitled me to all the beauties and the joys of this world that have been mentioned here in this meeting today. And it gave me the right to have this body—and maybe I can't appreciate as much what that ought to mean to me as I do by reading the scriptures.

Then we read of when Jesus cast the devils out of the man who was possessed. And he asked his name, and he said: "Legion," because

legions had entered into the man. And so eager were those devils to get a body that they asked permission to take possession of the bodies of the swine that were feeding in the field. And Jesus permitted it, and they ran off into the sea and were drowned, as I remember about two thousand of them. (See Mark 5:1-17.) Just think how eager those spirits were to get a body, and because we kept our first estate we are now in our second estate.

Honoring the second estate

I love the statement in the Bible where Enoch of old, that prophet who was translated into heaven with his people, obtained the assurance while yet here in mortality that he had pleased the Lord. (See Heb. 11:5.) I think by the keeping of His commandments—doing all things, as the Lord said, that the Lord God had commanded (see Deut. 12:32; Matt. 28:20)—that we can get an assurance that comes through the Holy Spirit that our labors are acceptable to the Lord and that we have pleased him.

I thank Him for the many beautiful truths, many of which have been proclaimed here today. This principle of eternal marriage—I just can't imagine living on forever and forever after I pass out of this life without the companionship of my sweet wife and my children. How I thank God for them, and for the knowledge that marriage and the family unit are intended by Him, as proclaimed so plainly in the Holy Scriptures, to endure for ever.

Then I think of my children one by one (and I have over a hundred descendants!), and I see what they are accomplishing and the nobility of their lives, and I can hardly realize that I can be their daddy. I feel that that is nearer to becoming a god than anything else I can do here in mortality. And from the days of my youth and young manhood, I have tried to live before those children and descendants of mine so that if they walked in my footsteps they would be honoring their

second estate and preparing themselves to have glory added upon their heads forever and forever.

"A marvellous work and a wonder"

Then there are so many other beautiful principles of the gospel. When I first became a missionary, I never met anybody who believed in a personal God. My, what a joy to realize that Christ gave his life for us, and took upon him the sins of the world—as Paul said: "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:22)—and to know that his Father is as real as my father, and that they have revealed themselves as two glorified personages in this dispensation, after centuries of darkness, unto the Prophet Joseph Smith. The Lord had him in waiting thousands of years ago, according to the Book of Mormon, for his day and time to come, to bring men to a knowledge of the truth and to bring forth his truth among the people of this world. These are great truths, and many more can be taught.

When I wrote the book *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder* as a missionary tool, I chose the statement of Isaiah when he said, "Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men." Then he goes on: "Therefore, behold, I [the Lord] will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." (Isa. 29:13-14.) The message of this great church is that marvelous work and a wonder that Isaiah saw would come forth when men would teach for doctrine the precepts of men.

Missionary example of the precepts of men

Being a missionary, as long as I

have time, let me give you one or two little missionary experiences to indicate what Isaiah meant when he said that they would worship Him by the precepts of men.

As I finished my first mission over in Amsterdam, over seventy-five years ago, I was invited into the home of one of the Saints to talk to her neighbor. When my companion and I arrived, the neighbor was there but she had her minister with her. We had a little difference of opinion on priesthood, and right there he challenged me to a debate in his church the next Saturday night.

When we arrived, the church was full; all of his people were there, and all of our people. How our people found it out, I don't know; I didn't tell them!

The minister stood up and said, "Now, inasmuch as Mr. Richards is a guest in our church, we will accord him the privilege of opening this debate, and we will each talk for twenty minutes. Is that agreeable with you, Mr. Richards?"

I said, "Very much." I didn't tell him, but I would have given him the shirt off my back for the privilege of opening that debate, and he just handed it to me on a silver platter! I didn't know whether the Lord had anything to do with it or not, but I thought He did!

Then I stood up and I said, "The last time I talked with my friend, we had a difference of opinion on priesthood. Tonight I have come prepared to discuss that subject, but I don't propose to start at that point. (This was one of my strong points in my mission.) If you are going to build a house, you don't try to put a roof on it before you get the foundation in." They agreed with that, so I said, "I propose to lay the foundation of the gospel of Jesus Christ," and I chose for my text the sixth chapter of Hebrews where Paul said:

"Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto

perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

"Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." (Heb. 6:1-2.)

I hurried over faith and repentance—I thought they believed in them. I spoke on baptism by immersion for the remission of sin until everybody was giving me accord.

Then it came to the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. And they didn't believe that. I never found a church that did believe it outside of our Church—they think the Holy Ghost comes just like the breezes that blow over the head. I quoted them the passage saying that when the Apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God through the preaching of Philip, they sent Peter and John. And when they came, they prayed for them, they laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon the sorcerer saw that the Holy Ghost was conveyed by the laying on of the Apostles' hands, he offered them money, saying: "Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost."

"But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money." (Acts 8:19-20.)

And then I gave them a few more references on the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, and sat down.

The minister stood up and talked for twenty minutes, and he never once mentioned a word I had said. He started on the Mountain Meadows Massacre and the "Mormon Bible," and stated that Joseph Smith had admitted he had made many mistakes; and then in a most courteous manner, he said: "Now if Mr. Richards will enlighten us on these matters, I am

sure this audience will be most appreciative."

I was on my feet just like that. (My companion later said, "How did you think so fast?" I said, "What have you been praying for all week?") I said, "In the days of the Savior, his enemies tried to trick him with cunning and craftiness. I don't suppose there's anybody here tonight that would like to see us resort to those old tactics." I said, "If I understand a debate, it is the presentation of argument and the answering of those presentations. Has this man answered any of my arguments?"

Everybody said, "No."

I said, "All right, my friend, you may have your twenty minutes over again." He couldn't do it, and I knew he couldn't.

Finally his wife stood up in the audience, and she said, "What Mr. Richards is asking you is fair. You ought to answer him."

But he couldn't do it, and I said to my companion, "Stand up and give me my coat and hat." I said, "One more chance. I am willing to remain here until ten o'clock tomorrow morning, when we have to be in our own church, provided this debate can go forward on the basis that you set it up. If not, I am going to leave and ask my companion to leave and ask our members to leave, and we will leave it with you to settle with your people for what has transpired here tonight."

I met him on the street a number of times after that, but he would duck his head so he didn't need to speak to me!

Now that is what Isaiah meant when he said they would teach for doctrines the precepts of men.

Eternal marriage covenant and family

Now I will give you one more. Down in Quitman, Georgia, while I was a mission president, I preached a sermon on the eternal duration of the marriage covenant and the family unit.

I had a chart there that listed the churches and what their beliefs were on major things, and those were official statements from the leaders of those different churches. And not one of them believed that the family unit or the marriage covenant would endure beyond the grave. I stood at the door when the meeting was over and a man came up and introduced himself as a Baptist minister, and I said, "Did I misquote you here tonight?"

He said, "No, Mr. Richards, it's just like you say. We don't all believe all the things our churches teach."

I said, "You don't believe them either. Why don't you go back and teach your people the truth? They will take it from you; they are not ready to take it from the Mormon elders yet."

He said, "I'll see you again." That's all I could get out of him that night!

Next time I went there, about four months later, he had read of my coming in the newspaper, and there he was standing outside that little church. As we shook hands I said, "I would certainly be happy to know what you thought of my last sermon here."

He said, "Mr. Richards, I have been thinking about it ever since, and I believe every word you said, only I would like to have heard the rest." (We never get talked out; that's why I've asked Brother Benson to tap me on the leg when my time is up!)

Let him be accursed

Now I will tell you one more if there is time for it. Over in Utrecht, Holland, they had a seminary where they trained ministers, and the young men who were studying for the ministry used to come and stand outside our meetings and listen. And then when the meeting was over, they would come in and argue with us.

I convinced one of those young men that baptism was to be by immersion for the remission of sins, and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost—he hadn't been

taught that and he didn't believe it. He said: "Mr. Richards, do you think the Lord will hold us responsible if we teach things that we know are not in full accord with the Holy Scriptures?"

I said, "My friend, I'd rather let the Apostle Paul answer that question. He said, 'Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.' (Gal. 1:8.)" We didn't have any more arguments then.

I think my time is up. God bless you all. I love the Lord. I love his church. I love the Saints. I love them all. God bless you, I pray, and leave you my blessing in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

Elder LeGrand Richards, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has been our concluding speaker.

We remind the brethren of the general priesthood meeting which will convene here in the Tabernacle this evening at 7:00 P.M.

The nationwide CBS Radio Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those desiring to attend this broadcast must be in their seats no later than 9:15 A.M.

The singing for this session has been furnished by the BYU combined choirs. We are grateful for the presence of you young people and for the beautiful spirit your music has added to this meeting.

The choir will now sing in closing "Oh, May My Soul Commune with Thee."

Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder Jacob de Jager, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Oh, May My Soul Commune with Thee."

Elder Jacob de Jager offered the benediction.

GENERAL PRIESTHOOD MEETING

THIRD SESSION

The general priesthood meeting convened in the Tabernacle at 7:00 P.M. on Saturday, April 3, 1982.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for this session was provided by a combined priesthood choir from the American Fork, Alpine, and Timpanogos Utah regions directed by Donald H. Ripplinger and Leslie Rees with Roy M. Darley at the organ.

President Hinckley opened this session with the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Brethren, President Spencer W. Kimball is watching the proceedings of this session on television and has asked that I conduct it.

For the information of the brethren in the outlying areas who are participating in this meeting by satellite or closed-circuit transmission, President Kimball is much improved in health and attended the opening session of the conference this morning. Also, for many weeks he has attended intermittently meetings of the First Presidency and the Thursday meetings of the Brethren in the temple.

He asked that we extend his love and best wishes to all of the brethren participating in this session.

We also note that on Wednesday announcement was made of the plans to construct new temples in Boise, Idaho; Denver, Colorado; Guayaquil, Ecuador; and Taipei, Taiwan.

These services are being relayed by closed-circuit transmission and will reach members of the priesthood gathered in the Salt Palace, in the Marriott Center on the BYU campus, and in approximately 2,252 locations in many countries around the world.

Also, they are being carried to

approximately one hundred stake centers in the United States and Canada by satellite transmission.

We extend our greetings and blessings to all the priesthood brethren wherever they may be.

We note that Elders Dean L. Larsen and Robert L. Backman are seated on the stand in the Salt Palace, and Elders George P. Loe and Rex C. Reeve, Sr., preside at the BYU Marriott Center.

The singing during this session will be furnished by a combined priesthood choir from the American Fork, Alpine, and Timpanogos Utah regions under the direction of Donald H. Ripplinger and Leslie Rees with Roy M. Darley at the organ.

We shall begin this service with the choir singing "Ye Who Are Called to Labor."

Following the singing, Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The combined priesthood choir sang "Ye Who Are Called to Labor."

Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

The choir will now favor us with "Behold! I Come Quickly."

The combined priesthood choir sang "Behold! I Come Quickly."

President Hinckley

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Council of the Twelve

Apostles, will be our first speaker this evening. He will be followed by

Bishop Victor L. Brown, Presiding Bishop of the Church.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie

My brethren of the priesthood: To all of you, to all holders of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods, I issue this challenge: Come, learn the doctrine of the priesthood; come, live as befits one who is a servant of the Lord.

Doctrine of priesthood by revelation

This doctrine, this doctrine of the priesthood—unknown in the world and but little known even in the Church—cannot be learned out of the scriptures alone. It is not set forth in the sermons and teachings of the prophets and Apostles, except in small measure.

The doctrine of the priesthood is known only by personal revelation. It comes, line upon line and precept upon precept, by the power of the Holy Ghost to those who love and serve God with all their heart, might, mind, and strength. (See D&C 98:12.)

We have the revealed promise that if our souls are “full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith” and if we “let virtue garnish [our] thoughts unceasingly; then shall [our] confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon [our souls] as the dews from heaven.” (D&C 121:45.)

Infinite God in finite terms

I have wondered and pondered and prayed about how best to proclaim the doctrine of the priesthood.

I have thought, if I could but speak with the voice of seven thunders or send forth the word by ten thousand trumpets, then men would hear the message.

But I remember how Alma wished that he might go forth and

speak with the trump of God, with a voice to shake the earth, as he cried repentance unto every people. (See Alma 29:1.)

And I know that the Lord does not work in this way. His word goes forth by the mouths of his servants as they minister and labor in their weakness. That word is then carried into receptive hearts by the still small voice of the Spirit. (See D&C 85:6.)

How else than by the power of the Spirit can any of us ever understand spiritual truths? How does one describe an infinite God in finite terms?

Can our voices, as weak and distant earthly echoes, recapture the glory and power of the Eternal Voice that speaks in heaven? Can man in his weakness and frailty portray God in his power and might?

Power of God himself

Knowing our limitations, let us then reason together, and perhaps we can at least glimpse the wonders of that power by which the worlds were made. Perhaps we can see how and in what manner we as mortals may use this same power to bless our fellows and save ourselves.

What, then, is the doctrine of the priesthood? What is this doctrine, framed in the courts above, which can distil upon faithful men as the dews from heaven? (See D&C 121:45.)

Priesthood is power like none other on earth or in heaven. It is the very power of God himself, the power by which the worlds were made, the power by which all things are regulated, upheld, and preserved.

It is the power of faith, the faith by which the Father creates and governs. God is God because he is the

embodiment of all faith and all power and all priesthood. The life he lives is named eternal life.

And the extent to which we become like him is the extent to which we gain his faith, acquire his power, and exercise his priesthood. And when we have become like him in the full and true sense, then we also shall have eternal life.

Faith and priesthood go hand in hand. Faith is power and power is priesthood. After we gain faith, we receive the priesthood. Then, through the priesthood, we grow in faith until, having all power, we become like our Lord.

Our time here in mortality is set apart as a time of probation and of testing. It is our privilege while here to perfect our faith and to grow in priesthood power.

We received the priesthood first in the premortal existence and then again as mortals. Adam held the keys and used the priesthood when he participated in the creation of the earth. After his baptism he received the priesthood again, and he now stands as the presiding High Priest over all the earth.

Priesthood in days of Enoch and Melchizedek

All of us who have calls to minister in the holy priesthood were fore-ordained to be ministers of Christ, and to come here in our appointed days, and to labor on his errand.

The holy priesthood did more to perfect men in the days of Enoch than at any other time. Known then as the order of Enoch (see D&C 76:57), it was the power by which he and his people were translated. And they were translated because they had faith and exercised the power of the priesthood.

It was with Enoch that the Lord made an eternal covenant that all who received the priesthood would have power, through faith, to govern and control all things on earth, to put at

defiance the armies of nations, and to stand in glory and exaltation before the Lord.

Melchizedek was a man of like faith, "and his people wrought righteousness, and obtained heaven, and sought for the city of Enoch." (JST Gen. 14:34.) Since his day the priesthood has been called after his name.

Two priesthoods

There are in the Church two priesthoods: the Aaronic or Levitical, and the Melchizedek. The Aaronic Priesthood is a preparatory priesthood, a schooling priesthood, a lesser priesthood, a divine system that prepares men to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood.

The Melchizedek Priesthood is the highest and holiest order ever given to men on earth. It is the power and authority to do all that is necessary to save and exalt the children of men. It is the very priesthood held by the Lord Jesus Christ himself and by virtue of which he was able to gain eternal life in the kingdom of his Father.

Both of these priesthoods are given by covenant. (See D&C 84:33-41.) Both of them surpass any earthly power; both of them prepare men for salvation.

Those who receive the Aaronic Priesthood covenant and promise to magnify their callings, to serve in the ministry of the Master, to forsake the world, and to live as becometh Saints.

The Lord covenants and promises

In return, the Lord covenants and promises to enlarge the standing and station of all who keep their Aaronic covenant. He promises to give them the Melchizedek Priesthood, out of which eternal life comes.

Those who receive the Melchizedek Priesthood covenant and promise, before God and angels, to magnify their callings, to "live by

every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God" (D&C 84:44), to marry for time and all eternity in the patriarchal order, and to live and serve as the Lord Jesus did in his life and ministry.

In return the Lord covenants and promises to give them all that his Father hath, meaning eternal life, which is exaltation and godhood in that eternal realm where alone the family unit continues in eternity.

In return the Lord admits them to his eternal patriarchal order, an order that prevails in the highest heaven of the celestial world, an order that assures its members of eternal increase, or in other words of spirit children in the resurrection. (See D&C 131:1-4.)

God's eternal oath

These are the most glorious promises given to men. There neither is nor can be anything as wondrous and great. And so the Lord uses the most powerful and emphatic language known to the human tongue to show their importance and immutability. That is to say, the Lord swears with an oath in his own name, because he can swear by no greater, that everyone who keeps the covenant made in connection with the Melchizedek Priesthood shall inherit, receive, and possess all things in his everlasting kingdom, and shall be a joint-heir with that Lord who is his Only Begotten.

God swore with an oath that Christ would be exalted, and he swears anew, at the time each of us receives the Melchizedek Priesthood, that we will have a like exaltation if we are true and faithful in all things.

Speaking messianically of the Lord Jesus, David said, "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." (Ps. 110:4.)

And Paul, after quoting this messianic word, this eternal oath sworn by God himself, said that Christ was "called of God an high priest after the

order of Melchisedec." (Heb 5:10.)

Then of Melchizedek, to whom Abraham paid tithes, Paul said, "For this Melchizedek was ordained a priest after the order of the Son of God, which order was without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life." (JST Heb. 7:3.)

We covenant with Deity

Anciently the Aaronic Priesthood was limited to the Levites. It came because of father and mother; it was conferred only upon the worthy male descendants of Levi. But the Melchizedek Priesthood was to be conferred upon any male person of any lineage who was worthy to receive it.

And so Paul continued, "And all those who are ordained unto this [higher] priesthood are made like unto the Son of God, abiding a priest continually." (JST Heb. 7:3.)

Christ is the prototype; he is the Son; he is the Heir of the Father. But we, as joint-heirs, inherit equally with him because we also abide as priests forever.

Thus we make the covenant with Deity; and God swears the oath to us all, to show the importance and eternal worth of the covenant.

Nephi's oath

This matter of swearing with an oath in ancient days was far more significant than many of us have realized.

For instance: Nephi and his brethren were seeking to obtain the brass plates from Laban. Their lives were in peril. Yet Nephi swore this oath: "As the Lord liveth, and as we live, we will not go down unto our father in the wilderness until we have accomplished the thing which the Lord hath commanded us." (1 Ne. 3:15.)

Thus Nephi made God his partner. If he failed to get the plates, it meant God had failed. And because God does not fail, it was incumbent

upon Nephi to get the plates or lay down his life in the attempt.

God's testimony of Book of Mormon

One of the most solemn oaths ever given to man is found in these words of the Lord relative to Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon. "He [meaning Joseph Smith] has translated the book, even that part which I have commanded him," saith the Lord, "and as your Lord and your God liveth it is true." (D&C 17:6.)

This is God's testimony of the Book of Mormon. In it Deity himself has laid his godhood on the line. Either the book is true or God ceases to be God. There neither is nor can be any more formal or powerful language known to men or gods.

And so it is with the Melchizedek Priesthood. As the Lord lives, it is his holy order, and all those priesthood holders of every nation and kindred and tongue and people and race and color who will keep the covenant shall abide as priests forever, ruling and reigning everlastingly with the great High Priest of our profession, who is the Lord Jesus Christ.

What is the doctrine of the priesthood?

What, then, is the doctrine of the priesthood? And how shall we live as the servants of the Lord?

This doctrine is that God our Father is a glorified, a perfected, and an exalted being who has all might, all power, and all dominion, who knows all things and is infinite in all his attributes, and who lives in the family unit.

It is that our Eternal Father enjoys this high status of glory and perfection and power because his faith is perfect and his priesthood is unlimited.

It is that priesthood is the very name of the power of God, and that if we are to become like him, we must receive and exercise his priesthood or power as he exercises it.

It is that he has given us an endowment of heavenly power here on earth, which is after the order of his Son and which, because it is the power of God, is of necessity without beginning of days or end of years.

It is that we can enter an order of the priesthood named the new and everlasting covenant of marriage (see D&C 131:2), named also the patriarchal order, because of which order we can create for ourselves eternal family units of our own, patterned after the family of God our Heavenly Father.

It is that we have power, by faith, to govern and control all things, both temporal and spiritual; to work miracles and perfect lives; to stand in the presence of God and be like him because we have gained his faith, his perfections, and his power, or in other words the fulness of his priesthood.

Power in the priesthood

This, then, is the doctrine of the priesthood, than which there neither is nor can be anything greater. This is the power we can gain through faith and righteousness.

Truly, there is power in the priesthood—power to do all things!

If the world itself was created by the power of the priesthood, surely that same power can move mountains and control the elements.

If one-third of the hosts of heaven were cast down to earth by the power of the priesthood, surely that same power can put at defiance the armies of nations or stay the fall of atomic bombs.

If all men shall be raised from mortality to immortality by the power of the priesthood, surely that same power can cure the diseased and the dying and raise the dead.

Truly there is power in the priesthood—a power which we seek to acquire to use, a power which we devoutly pray may rest upon us and upon our posterity forever.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

Bishop Victor L. Brown, the Presiding Bishop of the Church, will be our next speaker, and he will be followed by Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Council of the Twelve.

Bishop Victor L. Brown

I approach this assignment tonight with a prayer in my heart. The subject assigned to me is one of great importance and one that does not necessarily have easy, quick answers. It is: "Steps that can be taken by the leaders and members of the Aaronic Priesthood to reactivate those members who are inactive." My remarks, therefore, will be addressed primarily to bishops and their associates.

Aaronic Priesthood

I am well aware that all here tonight know what the Aaronic Priesthood is. Nevertheless, may I refresh our memories. The name *Aaronic Priesthood* comes from Aaron, a brother of Moses. Because Moses was halting in speech, Aaron became his spokesman. They were very close associates and went through many trials together. The Lord chose to give Aaron's name to the Aaronic Priesthood.

I would think the most important event in all history in exercising this priesthood was when John the Baptist baptized the Savior in the river Jordan. The next most important event took place on May 15, 1829, when the same John the Baptist, now a heavenly messenger, laid his hands on the heads of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, saying,

"Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never

be taken again from the earth, until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness." (D&C 13.)

If we just had the capacity to understand the full meaning of the holding of the keys of the ministering of angels and of the gospel of repentance and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, I believe every young man who has gone into the waters of baptism would look forward to receiving the Aaronic Priesthood with all his heart and would do everything in his power to become worthy of it. I am confident there are some who feel this way, but there are many who do not.

Priesthood activation

Each bishop should know exactly how many boys in his ward have not been ordained, how many do not hold the priesthood office they should based on activity and age, and how many do not attend any meetings. Each of these boys is just as much a child of God as are the active youth.

As leaders, what are our attitudes toward percentages as they relate to active versus inactive? You have probably heard the story of the father who had four daughters. As each of them left on a date one evening, he cautioned them to be home by midnight. The first returned at 11:45; the next, at 11:50; and a third came in at midnight, whereupon he locked the doors, turned out the lights, and went to bed. When his wife reminded him that Mary had not come in yet, he said with great satisfaction, "Seventy-five

percent of them are home—isn't that a pretty good percentage?"

It is so easy to love those who are active and responsive and sometimes so difficult to do the same for those who are inactive and rebellious. To help us be successful leaders of youth, the Lord gave us a lesson we should learn well. It is the story of the prodigal son found in Luke 15:11-32.

The prodigal son

You will remember that a father divided his wealth between his two sons, the younger of whom "took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living." When famine came, he tended hogs for a rich man, eating from what he fed the animals.

"And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! . . .

"And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

"And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

"But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet."

When the older brother, who had remained true and faithful, heard how his father rejoiced over the return of his wayward brother, he became angry and complained that no one had given him a party. His father replied: "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

"It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

A road that prevents receiving God's greatest gifts

The lesson I would like to empha-

size from this scripture is the importance of love. To be successful as a teacher of youth, one must truly love each of them regardless of his activity. Without sincere love, one can hardly qualify as a leader of young men.

I in no way wish to imply that all or even most of those who are not active in their priesthood responsibility conduct themselves as did the wayward son. I have great faith in all youth. Notwithstanding this, I feel it is extremely important that those who do not honor their priesthood understand that they have taken a road which, if not changed, will eventually prevent them from receiving the greatest gift of God to man—that of eternal life and exaltation.

I should like now to suggest how we as leaders can be an influence for good in the lives of these young men in order to help them become obedient to gospel laws and thus qualify themselves for eternal blessings.

Boy must know his leaders

First, it is important that they know who their leaders are. The bishop is the president of the Aaronic Priesthood in his ward and also the president of the priests quorum. As president of the Aaronic Priesthood he has the ultimate responsibility for each young man between the ages of twelve and eighteen, whether ordained or not. He, of course, cannot possibly do all that is necessary by himself. He must have help. Nonetheless, he determines the spirit in which the work will be done.

A wise bishop will recognize each boy's father as his most important helper. This sometimes is a problem, particularly when the father is inactive or is not a member, or there is no father in the home. In most cases, however, the father still exerts the greatest influence on his own son. Studies indicate that a large majority of inactive boys have inactive fathers.

If the father is to have a positive influence on his son, the bishop, through the elders quorum presidency and the home teachers, will exert a positive influence on the father, leading him to activity—or at least to an attitude of encouraging his son to be active.

The quorum president

At the same time, there is another officer who can have a profound influence on the boy, and that is his quorum president, working with his counselors. Too often we do not recognize the importance of peer influence. Of course, if the quorum president is to have much influence he must acknowledge and understand his responsibility for every member of his quorum. If he is called in a casual way and his office is not recognized by his adult leaders, his attitude will probably be very casual and his success very limited. If the bishop delegates the responsibility of the call to anyone else, its importance will be diminished in the eyes of the boy. The call should come from the president of the Aaronic Priesthood.

The counselors in the bishopric have vitally important responsibilities, but they do not have the keys of presidency as the bishop does. They participate in the selection process, but the bishop makes the final decision. The quorum president should know how earnestly the bishopric has prayed for direction, and that he has been selected through inspiration from the Lord.

When a twelve- or thirteen-year-old boy is called to be the president of a quorum and is left alone by his adult leaders, he might well flounder and fail. It is critically important that his adviser and others teach him how to be an effective president. To do this, the adviser, who has a major role to play, will not take over his responsibility but rather will coach him in order to help him grow in the office. One deacons quorum president must have been

taught well by his adviser to have had the following experience:

A stake Aaronic Priesthood committee member attended one of the quorum meetings for several weeks in a row. One Sunday morning, he noticed a boy in attendance who had not been there before. To his dismay, this inactive boy was called on to offer one of the prayers. Anyone would know that the first time an inactive boy comes to priesthood meeting he should not be embarrassed by being asked to pray.

After the meeting, this high counselor asked the adviser why the president of the quorum would do such a foolish thing. The adviser said, "Why don't you ask him?" When asked, the quorum president replied, "I just spent three days this week teaching him how to pray." Sometimes these young people have a special touch which only peers seem to have. However, they do need to be taught well how to lead.

Tailor program to the boy

Even though we have all made an effort to diminish the role of programs and increase the importance of the individual, we have not yet made enough progress. We sometimes develop a program and expect every boy to fit it. If he does not, then it is just too bad. I would hope that each boy is considered as an individual with personal interests, desires, problems, and talents.

If we accept this proposition, then the member of the bishopric who has responsibility for the quorum, with the quorum presidency and the adviser, will very carefully and diplomatically determine why the interests of the world have become more important to a young man than activity in and devotion to the priesthood. This will result from very carefully listening to every boy's needs. Leaders will then see that the priesthood appeals are so designed as to prick the interest of each individual boy. I have grave doubts that success can be found in the

reactivation of members of the quorums by using a broad brush approach. The approach must be tailored to the boy if it is to be successful.

Internalizing teachings

Every quorum activity should have a designated purpose, and that purpose should be gospel oriented. For example, may I relate a story of an Aaronic Priesthood youth in Korea who happened to come from a rather affluent family. One day one of his father's business associates called the father and inquired if he were having financial difficulties, offering help if it were needed.

The father responded that things were going well.

The man asked, "Are you sure?"

The father replied, "Things are fine. Why do you ask?"

The friend then indicated he had seen the young man on a street corner selling newspapers. The father couldn't believe it. He told his friend that his son received an adequate allowance and asked if there might have been a mistake of identity. The friend responded there was no mistake; he had personally visited with the boy.

That evening when his son came home from school, the father asked him if he had been selling newspapers on the street corner. The reply was yes. The father asked, "Why? Isn't your allowance sufficient?"

His son responded that it was adequate, but he had a friend at school who was very poor and who was going to have to drop out of school if he didn't get some financial assistance. As it turned out, this young Aaronic Priesthood holder was using his allowance money to buy newspapers. Then he and some of his classmates were selling the newspapers to raise money to help keep his friend in school.

A short time before this, he had asked his mother to pack larger lunches for him. She did so, thinking that as a growing teenager he was just extra

hungry. He confessed to his father he had been sharing his lunch with this same friend, who otherwise would have gone hungry.

The father was obviously touched by his son's thoughtfulness but asked the reason for such action. The boy replied, "We studied the lesson of the Good Samaritan a few weeks ago. I wanted to know the real meaning of this lesson by being a good Samaritan, not just learning about one." (See "Profiting for Others," NEW ERA, June 1979, p. 50.)

When a young man participates in this kind of spiritual experience, his life changes. The priesthood means something to him that it did not mean before, and the chances are he will always be an active priesthood bearer. Such internalizing of the teachings of the Savior in the heart of any boy can become a protection from the evils of the world.

There is no magic formula I know of which will cause an inactive boy to become active. It takes interested, caring, loving, consistent leadership on the part of adults and the quorum president, with the help of the quorum members. Whatever they do must be appealing, meaningful, and must result in a fulfilling experience. *Fun and games will not save any boy.* They may help him feel good about his association, but if he does not gain a testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel which causes him to live the gospel, we will have missed the mark as leaders.

May we be so perceptive as to look through the window of each boy's heart and then have the wisdom to reach out, take his hand, and walk beside him on the pathway to exaltation and eternal life, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Bishop Victor L. Brown, the Presiding Bishop of the Church, has just addressed us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a mem-

ber of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

Our Shepherd, Jesus Christ, has repeatedly given us counsel, brethren, about those things which can cause some in His flock to become inactive, indifferent, offended, or to fall away. The cares and pleasures of the world, temptation, persecution, tribulation—all take their toll; so do being wronged, being ignored, and seeing hypocrisy in others. (See Matt. 13:21; 24:10; Luke 8:13-14.)

Inactives have accountability

Brethren, except for our own families, no group of men needs us more than these souls. Unlike those who have never heard the gospel, these individuals have known some light and so have some accountability—hence the urgency!

This work of reactivation often involves group study and socials, but, essentially, it is done a soul at a time, quietly and with dignity. It is done less “by the numbers” and more “by the Spirit.” It is less technique than genuine caring, more extending a helping hand than writing new handbooks.

There are no slick tricks, and quickie campaigns usually fail, for “a brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city.” (Prov. 18:19.) Further, while we must stand on higher ground in order to lift another, there must be no condescension or suggestion that our concern is statistical rather than spiritual. Nor are souls to be dropped soon after they have been painstakingly lifted. How many times are we supposed to find the elect anyway?

Customize concern

A *first* step is to recognize, where

known, the causes of inactivity in these men. This often suggests how to customize our expressions of concern. However, never underestimate the power of privately extending a simple, loving, but direct challenge. Though it may not be reciprocated, such love is never wasted.

Reactivation takes time

Second, recognize that this work takes time; it does interrupt our regular routine. The parable of the Good Samaritan teaches us that. (See Luke 10:29-37.) Some wounds require more than a quick Band-Aid.

Inspired effect needed

A *third* step to be overseen by priesthood executive committees and ward correlation councils, is the careful matching of person to person. Organized love is better than generalized concern. Yet this redemptive labor should not be so institutionalized that friends and neighbors feel released from their responsibilities. An inspired effort is needed, for in the work of reactivation the *best* approach may be the *only* approach! Fasting and praying may be necessary to know when the timing is right to make an approach to a certain brother.

Provide fresh opportunity to serve

Fourth, provide such individuals with a fresh opportunity to serve, because they are genuinely needed. Moses learned this principle while recruiting Hobab as a guide. (See Num. 10:29-32.) Remember, while their condition cries out for unconditional love, they usually desire a modest

chance to express their own love and talents. For instance, elders quorum presidencies should organize several appropriate committees, each chaired by an active elder, who is to report regularly to the quorum presidency, with two or three active brethren to help. Each committee may be given the names of the inactive brethren most likely to respond when invited to serve on that committee, such as an athletic or welfare committee. These inactive men are less likely to respond to a general invitation to start coming to church than to a request to serve on a specific committee which takes account of their interests. One inactive brother started serving as a greeter and is now a bishop.

Significantly, brethren, Church members did not become inactive while crossing the plains, when the sense of belonging and being needed was so profound.

Help them understand gospel beliefs

Fifth, provide the needed teaching. Activation requires conversion. Believing requires gospel beliefs to be understood. Quorum instruction and Gospel Essentials classes must be of a high quality. Attendees must feel the Spirit as they are taught. These individuals need the bread of life, not crumbs from the table. After all, the father of the prodigal son prepared a feast for the returnee—he did not merely warm up some leftovers!

Temple preparation seminars should feature enough informality to make real learning possible. Assign fellowshiping couples to attend these same seminars along with the inactive couples. Those attending should be lovingly encouraged to set some personal goals in order to be ready to go to the temple.

Surveys indicate 30 percent of those invited to attend seminars will attend! Of the remainder, experience shows that eight out of ten, properly approached, will permit priesthood leaders to go into their homes to teach

them. Brethren, in view of such realities, what are we afraid of?

These encouraging statistics suggest how important it is not to stand by and wring our hands but to do something! The reason, frankly, brethren, that so little is happening is that so little is being tried. An experienced woodcarver was asked how one begins to be a woodcarver. He said bluntly, "Start making some chips." Brethren, let's start making some chips!

The Lord's hand

A *sixth* step is to remember the Lord's hand is in this work. He can bring about those circumstances in which such souls are "in a preparation to hear the word." (Alma 32:6.) His Spirit can prod the prodigals—some of whom will come to their senses. And as that happens, however, let us run to greet them while they are "yet a great way off." (Luke 15:20.)

Prevention better than rehabilitation

Seventh, prevention is always better than rehabilitation. Sometimes, ironically, prevention requires no more than a few extra minutes of loving conversation or an expression of empathy. Being given the priesthood and a church assignment soon after baptism not only helps to anchor new converts, but assists other Church workers who are busy and whose hands hang down and whose knees are feeble. (See D&C 81:5.)

Help each other

Likewise, as the Lord's undershepherds, let us take preventive care to set a prudent pace for Church activities and extra financial contributions. The Lord wants dedication, not prostration! Even the vital Book of Mormon was translated only as strength and means were provided. (See D&C 10:4.)

Now, brethren, let us step back

from the details of this demanding challenge and speak of overall realities and responsibilities for inactive and active men alike—in a perfect Church filled with imperfect individuals. Part of the manhood that goes with priesthood requires us to take account of such things as the following.

Let us acknowledge that the strait and narrow path, though clearly marked, is a path, not a freeway nor an escalator. Indeed, there are times when the only way the strait and narrow path can be followed is on one's knees! And we are to help each other along the path, not give offense.

Avoid looking beyond the mark

Whatever the dislocating offense which takes one from that path, once it occurs, unless such a one is humble, his search commences—but for vindication, not for reconciliation and communication. Brethren, it is so difficult to carry our cross and grudges, too.

Quickly forgotten by those who are offended is the fact that the Church is "for the perfecting of the saints" (Eph. 4:12); it is not a well-provisioned rest home for the already perfected.

Likewise, unremembered by some is the reality that in the kingdom we are each other's clinical material; the Lord allows us to practice on each other, even in our imperfections. And each of us knows what it is like to be worked on by a "student" rather than a senior surgeon. Each of us, however unintentionally, has also inflicted some pain.

Often unallowed for, too, are the differing styles of leadership we experience in the kingdom. Paul was thoughtfully sensitive to the need not to offend weak members by eating meat (see 1 Cor. 8:13), while John the Baptist's diet of locusts and wild honey may not have proven contagious—surely not with Jerusalem's country club set.

It is our individual and constant responsibility to avoid "looking

beyond the mark." (Jacob 4:14.) My focus is my responsibility! What is most to be focused on—the fact that Peter walked briefly on the water or that he did not continue? Has any other mortal so walked, even that briefly?

Let mistakes become instructive

Imperfect people are, in fact, called by our perfect Lord to assist in His work. The Lord declared to certain associates of Joseph Smith that He knew that they had observed Joseph's minor imperfections. Even so, the Lord then testified that the revelations given through the Prophet were true! (See D&C 67:5, 9.)

Unsurprisingly, therefore, we do notice each other's weaknesses. But we should not celebrate them. Let us be grateful for the small strides that we and others make, rather than rejoice in the shortfalls. And when mistakes occur, let them become instructive, not destructive.

I cherish these generous lines from that very able, but very humble, prophet-editor Moroni:

"Condemn me not because of mine imperfection, neither my father, because of his imperfection, neither them who have written before him; but rather *give thanks unto God* that he hath *made manifest unto you our imperfections, that ye may learn to be more wise than we have been.*" (Morm. 9:31; italics added.)

If such is our attitude, we are far less likely to be offended.

Besides, if the choice is between reforming other Church members or ourselves, is there really any question about where we should begin? The key is to have our eyes wide open to our own faults and partially closed to the faults of others—not the other way around! The imperfections of others never release us from the need to work on our own shortcomings.

We all need tutoring

People who spend their time

searching for feet of clay will miss not only the heavens wherein God moves in His majesty and power, but God's majesty as He improves and shapes a soul.

So in the give-and-take in the kingdom, we jostle and are jostled. Offenses will come. (See Matt. 18:7.) Once ego is unwisely committed, no cause seems too trivial for some. In a dispute over milk, Thomas B. Marsh soon let himself become offended at the Prophet Joseph.

Lorenzo Snow, Marsh's contemporary, said that while he, too, noticed some minor imperfections in the Prophet Joseph, he was grateful that the Lord could use Joseph Smith for so very significant a work. Thus, there might be some hope for him, Lorenzo Snow. Indeed, there was hope for President Snow, who viewed others charitably, as if through the "windows of heaven."

Prophets need tutoring, as do we all. However, this is something the Lord seems quite able to manage without requiring a host of helpers. The Lord provides discreet but needed feedback, as He did to Peter by the shattering sound of a rooster crowing (see Luke 22:54-62), or to an undelegating Moses through a caring, observing, and wise father-in-law—without Jethro's placing an ad in the *Sinai Sentinel* (see Ex. 18:13-16).

Happily for us all, the gospel is redemptive. It focuses not on Peter's lapse in the hall of the high priest, but on Peter's testimony of Jesus, bold and ringing, before Annas and Caiaphas and the council. (See Acts 4:5-12.)

Moreover, as we view others, humility should counsel us that we do not have all the data. Though Peter and Paul had a difference over a particular, but passing, policy of the Church in the meridian of time, the record does not yet tell us about their developing relationship in the richness of their special apostolic brotherhood.

Besides, in true discipleship, no one regrets a lapse more than the

sincere lapsers. Who is more conscious of the imperfections in their writings than the writers of God's word?

"And whoso receiveth this record, and shall not condemn it because of the imperfections which are in it, the same shall know of greater things than these." (Morm. 8:12.)

And who, more than the Lord, knows what it costs to process His eternal truths through mortals? "Behold, I am God and have spoken it; these commandments are of me, and were given unto my servants in their weakness, after the manner of their language, that they might come to understanding." (D&C 1:24.)

Above and beyond the usual sources of offense, there are those special circumstances, and we do well to note them, which can cause even strong people to falter briefly. Prior to His arraignment, Jesus told the Twelve how the Shepherd would soon be smitten and the sheep would be scattered. Peter denied that he would falter, and "likewise also said they all." (See Mark 14:26-31.)

Before judging these disciples, consider their anguishing circumstances. Things looked really ominous for the flock. They were understandably fearful as the establishment closed in on them. The danger to the disciples was real; hence Jesus encouraged them to leave. Then their Savior submitted to arrest, trial, and even crucifixion! The disciples felt keenly the deprivation and the humiliation of those circumstances, which—though warned of—they still had not fully expected. Yet, very soon, just as fore-ordained, these faithful undershepherds rallied and went on with the Savior's glorious work.

Did not somewhat similar circumstances prevail briefly at Nauvoo?

Now, brethren, the adversary and his helpers will continue to seek to discredit today's undershepherds in order to try to scatter some of the sheep.

When both circumstances and teachings became hard to bear, Jesus

questioned the Twelve, "Will ye also go away?" The question is the same today, and so is the answer: "Lord to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

"And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." (John 6:67-69.)

Avoid giving and taking offense

In closing, I appeal to the offended and inactive: Do not let yesterday hold tomorrow hostage! Walk away from your investment in the penny stock of pride; it never pays dividends.

Remember, too, that it is not the flock, the body of the Church and its leaders, who stray, but individuals who stray. (See Matt. 18:12-14.)

Likewise, I appeal to us all to consider anew this counsel from Jesus: "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." (Matt. 18:15.) To win a point does not compare with "gaining" a brother!

Let us all take extra care to avoid both giving and taking offense.

Let us be loving, kind, and forgiving—helping these friends to become, as Peter and Paul said, grounded, rooted, established, and settled! (See Eph. 3:17; 1 Pet. 5:10.) "The time is far spent." (*Hymns*, no. 184.)

Savor these words quoted by a magnanimous and forgiving Prophet Joseph Smith to a repentant and returning W. W. Phelps:

*Come on, dear brother, since the war
is past,
For friends at first, are friends again
at last.*

(Quoted in *History of the Church*, 4:164.)

Such is my counsel, brethren. Such is my prayer. It is given in the name of Him who said, "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended" (Luke 7:23). Jesus' redemptiveness and his love cause Him to stand at the very gate, and we are told he waits there for us with open arms. I so certify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "The World Has Need of Willing Men."

The combined priesthood choir and congregation sang "The World Has Need of Willing Men."

President Hinckley spoke without announcement.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

That's a great song ("The World Has Need of Willing Men") and I'm sorry we did not sing the last verse—

*Then work and watch and fight and
pray*

*With all thy might and zeal;
Push every worthy work along;
Put your shoulder to the wheel.
(Hymns, no. 206.)*

Put your shoulder to the wheel in moving along the kingdom of God. I would like to talk about some of the aspects of that effort.

Sacred law of tithing

I recall as a boy coming to these general conferences, as you young

men have done tonight. On more than one occasion I heard President Heber J. Grant, his voice ringing with conviction, bear his witness concerning the sacred law of tithing and the marvelous promises which the Lord has made to those who are honest in paying their tithes and offerings. I was deeply impressed by what I heard.

I knew it was the Lord, the God of heaven, who made these promises. I knew that he was in a position to keep his promises, and I have come to know that he does so.

I will always be grateful for a father and a mother who, as far back as I can remember, taught us to pay our tithing. In those days, in the ward in which we lived the bishop did not have an office in the meetinghouse. We went to his home for tithing settlement. I can still sense my feelings of trepidation as I walked into that home as a very small boy to settle my tithing with Bishop John C. Duncan. The amount may have been only twenty-five cents, since we did not have very much of an allowance in those lean times, but it was an honest 10 percent as we had figured it in our childish way, based on the little couplet that we would recite in Sunday School:

What is tithing? I will tell you every time.

Ten cents from a dollar, and a penny from a dime.

An obligation

We never felt that it was a sacrifice to pay our tithing. We felt it was an obligation, that even as small children we were doing our duty as the Lord had outlined that duty, and that we were assisting his church in the great work it had to accomplish.

We did not do it with the expectation of material blessings, although we can testify that we have been so blessed. The Lord has opened the windows of heaven and poured out his blessings in marvelous measure. (See

Mal. 3:10.) I am satisfied that he will bless all who walk in obedience to this commandment.

Now, do not get me wrong. I am not here to say that if you pay an honest tithing you will realize your dream of a fine house, a Rolls Royce, and a condominium in Hawaii. *The Lord will open the windows of heaven according to our need, and not according to our greed.* If we are paying tithing to get rich, we are doing it for the wrong reason. The basic purpose for tithing is to provide the Church with the means needed to carry on His work. The blessing to the giver is an ancillary return, and that blessing may not be always in the form of financial or material benefit. In speaking of opening the windows of heaven, Malachi continues by saying:

"And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field. . . .

"And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts." (Mal. 3:11-12.)

Promised blessings

There are many ways in which the Lord can bless us beyond the riches of the world. There is the great boon of health. The Lord has promised that he will rebuke the devourer for our sakes. Malachi speaks of the fruits of our ground. May not that rebuke of the devourer apply to various of our personal efforts and concerns?

There is the great blessing of wisdom, of knowledge, even hidden treasures of knowledge. We are promised that ours shall be a delightsome land if we will walk in obedience to this law. I can interpret the word *land* as people, that those who walk in obedience shall be a delightsome people. What a marvelous condition to be a delightsome people whom others would describe as blessed!

We hear some these days who say that because of economic pressures they cannot afford to pay their tithing. I recall an experience I had as a stake president some years ago. A man whom I knew came to get his temple recommend signed. I questioned him in the usual way and asked, among other things, whether he was paying an honest tithing. He candidly replied that he was not, that he could not afford to because of his many debts. I felt impressed to tell him that he would not pay his debts until he paid his tithing.

He went along for a year or two in his normal way, and then made a decision. He talked about it some time later and he said: "What you told me has proved to be true. I felt I could not pay my tithing because of my debts. I discovered that no matter how hard I tried, somehow I could not manage to reduce my debt. Finally my wife and I sat down together and talked about it and concluded we would try the promise of the Lord. We have done so. And somehow in a way we can't quite understand, the Lord has blessed us. We have not missed that which we have given to him, and for the first time in many years we are reducing our debt. We have come to the wisdom of budgeting our expenditures and of determining where our funds have been going. Because we now have a higher objective, we are able to curtail some of our appetites and desires. And above all of this, we feel we can now go to the house of the Lord with clear consciences as those deserving of this wonderful blessing."

Live honestly with the Lord

With all my heart, my brethren, I plead with the Latter-day Saints to live honestly with the Lord in the payment of tithes and offerings. I plead with you young men who are with us tonight to establish this habit while you are still young and to resolve to continue with it all the days of your lives. I plead with you who are Church

officers to plead with the people for their benefit and blessing to increase their faithfulness in the payment of tithes and offerings.

There has been laid upon the Church a tremendous responsibility. Tithing is the source of income for the Church to carry forward its mandated activities. The need is always greater than the availability. God help us to be faithful in observing this great principle which comes from him with his marvelous promise.

Calling stake presidents

While we are speaking of financial matters, I wish to touch on another thing. In the last little while I have received two letters, the import of which was to complain that eligibility to serve in responsible office in the Church is equated with financial success, that in order for one to qualify to serve as a bishop or stake president it is necessary to demonstrate a capacity to gather and husband wealth, and that men of modest means and humble vocations never seem to qualify.

If that is the perception, I am sorry, because it is a false perception. Out of the experience of nearly a quarter of a century in organizing and reorganizing scores of stakes, I can say that the financial worth of a man was the least of all considerations in selecting a stake president. One of the most loved and able presidents I know, in whose humble home I have stayed, is a carpenter by trade who earns his living with his tools. He presided over a stake in which lived many men of affluence who looked to him with love and respect as their leader.

Within the past month I have been with another stake president who is a carpenter who earns his living with his hands. He too is deeply loved and respected as the spiritual leader of his people.

The stake president of course must be the spiritual anchor. He also must be able to manage the complex

affairs of the stake, and therefore he must have administrative ability or at least the capacity to learn. On occasion, he stands as a judge of the people and must be a man of wisdom and discernment. But wealth and financial success are not criteria for Church service. I think I speak for all of my brethren when I say that in selecting a man to preside over a stake of Zion there is much of prayer with much of seeking the will of the Lord, and only when that will is recognized is action taken.

It is with us as it was with Samuel when he was sent to find a successor to Saul. When the first of Jesse's sons passed by, a fine-looking man, Samuel was favorably impressed.

"But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature [or I might add parenthetically, on his financial statement]; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." (1 Sam. 16:7.)

Nominating bishops

I am confident that it is so, likewise, with stake presidents in nominating men to serve as bishops, and with others in the selection of various Church officers. If a chosen individual happens to be a man of substance honestly gained, so be it. He may then have more time and more resources to give to the work, and the work may be blessed by his superior management skills. But this will not be the reason for his selection. Personal worthiness is the key to fitness for office in the kingdom of God.

"We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof." (A of F 1:5.)

It must always be so in this, the work of the Lord.

Influence of good reading

Now may I mention another matter. The older I grow, the more thankful I feel to my parents in providing for us, in the home in which we were reared, good things to read. We had a library in that home with more than a thousand volumes. In those days, of course, we had no television, and radio was not even available during most of those earlier years. I do not wish to convey the idea that as children we read extensively in our father's books. But they provided an environment. We saw our father and mother read, and they read to us. It did something of an indefinable nature. It gave us a familiarity with good books. We felt at home and at ease with them. They were not strangers to us. They were as friends, willing to give to us if we were willing to make a little effort.

In addition to such books we had the Church magazines. Our parents read them and read to us from them.

We likewise had the *Deseret News* in our home. This was long before publication of the *Church News*. We read the newspaper and felt a certain kinship with it.

As I look back upon my high school and university days, I am amazed that we had so little exposure to what we call today pornography and obscenity. Perhaps ours was a sheltered society, but it was a wonderful environment in which to grow.

Unfortunately, we live now in a sex-saturated society. Pornography comes at us from all sides: in the theater, in books and magazines, in newspaper advertising, in television in its various forms, and in some instances from radio.

There is no way to blank it out entirely. But we can do something to offset its corrosive influence. We can expose our children to good reading. Let them grow with good books and good Church magazines around them. Have handy the weekly *Church News*, which will bring to them the feeling that they belong to a great, viable,

vital organization that moves across the world, affecting the lives of men and women for good in many lands.

Years ago I read that Emerson was once asked which one of all the books he had read had most affected his life. His response was that he could no more remember the books he had read than he could remember the meals he had eaten, but they had made him. All of us are the products of the elements to which we are exposed. We can give direction to those elements and thereby improve the result. I pray that we shall make an effort to improve the environment in which we and our children live.

Prepare for missionary service

Now, I'd like to say in conclusion a few words to the young men who are here. I do not know how many of you heard Elder LeGrand Richards speak this afternoon. President Lee once referred to Elder Richards as the marvelous work and a wonder. He is now past ninety-six years of age. His feet are giving him some trouble, but there is nothing wrong with his head. Without notes or manuscripts of any kind, he stood before us. He quoted scripture. He recounted experiences. He made us laugh as he talked of his missionary days. He made us pray that each of us might become more powerful in our advocacy of the word of the Lord.

Yesterday we announced a reduction in the term of missionary service for young men from twenty-four months to eighteen months. That means that all young men who go out now will have a twenty-five percent discount in the time they give to the work. And it means that the Lord's work will have to bear the cost of that discount. There are only two ways that it can be made up. First, if each missionary will go out better prepared to be effective in his work—much more effective. And secondly, that more of you young men go on missions.

As I listened to Elder Richards this afternoon, I said to myself, "His tremendous enthusiasm, his powerful knowledge of the scripture, his capacity to reason with great persuasion are the sweet fruits of his missionary life." I want to say to you young boys and young men, prepare for that service. Save money for that purpose. Save it in a secure way so that it will be available when you need it.

Study a foreign language if you have opportunity to do so. You may never be called to a land where that language is spoken, but the study will have given you a better understanding of your own tongue or of another tongue you may be asked to acquire.

Take advantage of every opportunity to enlarge your understanding of the gospel. Make the effort to participate in seminary and institute programs.

The Lord's work needs the very best you are capable of providing. Now is the time to prepare for that service. Keep yourselves clean as those worthy to represent the Lord before the world. That means no alcohol, no tobacco, no drugs, no immorality or anything approaching that.

God bless you, my brethren of the priesthood, with faith and testimony and a love for him and his great and sacred work. You know it is true, and I know it is true, and together we so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

It will now be our pleasure to listen to President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, who will be our concluding speaker.

Before President Romney speaks, we note that the nationwide CBS Radio Tabernacle Choir broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 o'clock Sunday morning. Those desiring to attend must be in their seats before 9:15 A.M.

As you leave this priesthood

meeting tonight, we remind you to obey traffic rules, to use caution, and to be courteous in your driving.

The beautiful music for this priesthood session has been furnished by the combined priesthood choir from the American Fork, Alpine, and Timpanogos Utah regions. We are grateful to you dedicated men for your inspiring music and express sincere

thanks for the great service you have given here tonight.

Following President Romney's address, the choir will close this meeting with "Guide Us, O Thou Great Jehovah," following which Elder James M. Paramore, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the benediction.

President Marion G. Romney

Brethren, I came to the conclusion after studying for some time on the matter that priesthood is power. As I speak tonight I desire to remind us of the importance of magnifying our callings in the priesthood. (See D&C 84:33.)

Priesthood is power

By reason of our ordination to the priesthood, we are the most honored of all men. By the same token, we are charged with the greatest responsibility. We should diligently try—through prayer, study, and the faithful performance of our priesthood duties—to learn all we can about the priesthood. Even so, we will not be able, in mortal life, to fully comprehend it. We can, however, understand that priesthood is power—the power of God. By means of the priesthood he exercises, God the Father brings into existence and governs all of his creations. President Brigham Young said that "the Priesthood of the Son of God . . . is the law by which the worlds are, were, and will continue for ever and ever. It is that system which brings worlds into existence and peoples them, gives them their revolutions—their days, weeks, months, years, their seasons and times and by which they are rolled up as a scroll, as it were, and go into a higher state of existence." (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1941, p. 130.)

Jesus used power of priesthood

Jesus gave us demonstration after demonstration of the power of the priesthood. In his first recorded miracle, he turned water into wine. (See John 2:1-11.)

Matthew tells us that as Jesus slept on a ship a great tempest covered the vessel with waves. So concerned were his disciples that they came to him, saying, "Lord, save us: [or] we perish. . . ."

"Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

"[And] the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!" (Matt. 8:25-27.)

On another occasion, with "but five loaves, and two fishes" Jesus fed the multitude:

"And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.

"And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children." (Matt. 14:17, 19-21.)

By the power of the priesthood Jesus gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, strength to the lame, and healed all manner of diseases. He raised from the dead the son of the widow of Nain. (See Luke 7:11-15.) He even resurrected himself by the power of the priesthood.

He and his Father exercise the

power of the priesthood directly at their own pleasure and in their own right. When Jesus summoned Lazarus from the tomb, he simply "cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

"And he that was dead came forth." (John 11:43-44.)

Exercise priesthood within the Lord's limits

We mortals, in exercising the priesthood, do not do so in our own right as Jesus did. The priesthood we hold is a delegated power. We can only exercise it within the limits the Lord has set, upon the conditions he has specified, and in his name. But we can do many of the works which he did if we fully magnify our callings.

To his Apostles, in his great and final discourse delivered following the Last Supper and just before they went to Gethsemane, he said:

"Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake." (John 14:11.)

Well, the priesthood, as I have come to understand it through studying, is power. It's the power that God used in the Creation. It is the power that he used to feed the people

in the days of Moses. It is a power which we can exercise by means of our priesthood if we have the faith and learn to follow the inspiration of heaven. (Brother McConkie gave a fine discourse on this subject earlier tonight, as you remember.)

It is a power that we can exercise in our callings in the Church if we will be humble and study, and live worthy of the holy priesthood and be guided by the influence of the Lord in our administrations and our other work that we are called to do.

I pray that we will all magnify our priesthood by living the gospel, so that we can use that power for furthering the work of the Church and for perfecting our lives on our way to the great hereafter, I humbly pray, and bear my testimony, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The combined priesthood choir sang "Guide Us, O Thou Great Jehovah."

Elder James M. Paramore offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY MORNING MEETING

FOURTH SESSION

The fourth session of the general conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 4, 1982. President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music for this session with Jerold Ottley directing and John Longhurst at the organ.

Prior to the opening of the session, the Choir sang "God of Our Fathers, We Come unto Thee" without announcement.

President Romney made the following remarks:

President Marion G. Romney

We welcome all who are present this morning in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on Temple Square in this fourth

session of the 152nd Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We also acknowledge those tuned to this conference by radio and television and those who are seated in the overflow congregation in the Salt Palace where Elders Robert E. Wells and Ted E. Brewerton preside.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders, and officers and members of the Church from many lands who have assembled to worship and to counsel together in this conference.

The Tabernacle Choir under the direction of Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger with John Longhurst at the organ is providing the music for this session. The Choir opened these services by singing "God of Our Fathers, We Come unto Thee," and will now sing "For the Beauty of the Earth,"

following which Elder Loren C. Dunn, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The Choir sang "For the Beauty of the Earth."

Elder Loren C. Dunn offered the invocation.

The Choir sang "Prayer Is the Soul's Sincere Desire" without announcement.

President Romney

The Tabernacle Choir has sung "Prayer Is the Soul's Sincere Desire."

It will now be our privilege to hear from President Gordon B. Hinckley, Counselor in the First Presidency.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

As you have heard, earlier this week the membership of the Church reached five million. This is a significant milestone. It is an occasion for quiet gratitude, but also for sober reflection. Those who laid the foundation of this work must greatly rejoice.

God gave faith, strength, and courage

And those of their generation who with bitterness predicted that it would fade and die must, if they are in any position to know, look with wonder and frustration at what God has wrought. For this is his work, and he has brought it to its present strength through his miraculous power. He it was who opened it in this dispensation of time. In that process he used as his instrument a boy whose mind was clean and unencumbered, into which

could be infused the instruction of divine beings and the revelation that comes through the Holy Spirit.

It was God who planted in the hearts of men and women the faith to see a chosen prophet in the young man Joseph Smith. It was the Spirit of God that opened their eyes to the miracle of this remarkable Book of Mormon, which was brought forth as a voice speaking from the dust in testimony that Jesus is the Christ. (See 2 Ne. 33:13.)

He it was who gave strength and courage when the very powers of hell were marshaled against the infant Church and against those few who comprised its membership. Thanks be to him, those days are behind us. Gone are the terrors of forced winter marches, of burning homes and desecrated temples, of unmarked prairie graves and sobbings in the night of those

bereft and lonely.

We walk today in the sunlight of goodwill. The Church is widely respected and honored. The virtue of our people and the integrity of our efforts have come to be recognized and appreciated.

Our challenge and responsibility

Let us be grateful. But let us not be boastful. Let us rather be thankful and humble, as becomes those who are the beneficiaries of such rich blessings from the Almighty.

This is a time to ask ourselves whether, although we have grown in numbers and strength, we are any nearer perfection in the virtue of our individual lives. The milestone of five million members has real significance only to the degree that we as a people bring the gospel into our lives and demonstrate its fruits in our actions. The Lord has reminded us in no uncertain terms that "of him unto whom much is given much is required." (D&C 82:3.)

As we go forward we must never be distracted from the great and compelling triad of responsibility laid upon the Church to, first, carry the gospel of Jesus Christ to the people of the earth; second, to implement that gospel in the lives of the membership of the Church; and, third, to extend through vicarious work its blessings to those who have passed beyond the veil of death. Our mission is "as broad as eternity and as deep as the love of God." Adherence to that mission has brought us to this significant milestone, and this must be only a milestone and not a summit.

The Lord set the parameters of this work when he declared, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." (Matt. 24:14.)

This is our great challenge and our responsibility.

I have no doubt whatever that this

work will continue to grow in magnitude. I am confident that its progress will be enhanced if our people will live the gospel with faithfulness and devotion. In harmony with that observation I should like to suggest five imperatives for our observance.

Hold fast to the doctrine

The first: We must hold fast to the doctrine.

The gospel for me is not complex. It is a beautiful and simple pattern, a constant source of strength, a wellspring of faith. The keystone of that doctrine is that God is our Eternal Father and Jesus is the Christ, our living Redeemer. We are sons and daughters of God. He loves us and invites us to love him, showing that love through service to others of his children. His Beloved Son is our Savior, who gave his life on the cross of Calvary as a vicarious sacrifice for the sins of mankind. By the power of his divine Sonship he rose from the grave, becoming "the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15:20), assuring for all a resurrection from the dead and inviting each of us to partake of eternal life according to our obedience to his laws and commandments.

They, that is, the Father and the Son, appeared to the boy Joseph Smith in a most glorious and wonderful manifestation to open this, the dispensation of the fulness of times. (See D&C 112:30.) All of the elements of previous bestowals of divine teaching and authority are now brought together through restoration in a final and everlasting dispensation.

God has not left us in ignorance to walk in darkness. His word, spoken both anciently and in our generation, is available to all to read, to ponder, and to accept. There are many books among us and many preachers, and I find virtue in the words of all. But the truest source of divine wisdom is the word of the Lord in these sacred vol-

umes, the standard works of the Church. Here is found the doctrine to which we must hold fast if this work is to roll forth to its divinely charted destiny.

Implement doctrine

My second imperative: We must implement that doctrine more fully in our lives.

The most persuasive gospel tract is the exemplary life of a faithful Latter-day Saint. We live in a time when the pressures of life make it so easy and so tempting, in fulfillment of the words of Nephi, to commit "a little sin; yea, lie a little, take the advantage of one because of his words, dig a pit for thy neighbor; . . . turn aside the just for a thing of naught and revile against that which is good." (2 Ne. 28:8, 16.)

Said the Savior while speaking on the mount: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 5:16.)

If we as a people will walk with integrity, will be honest and moral in our actions, will put into our lives the simple and basic and wonderful principle of the Golden Rule, others will be led to inquire and learn. We shall become as a city set upon a hill whose light cannot be hid. (See Matt. 5:14.) We shall witness an ever-growing fulfillment of the promise of Isaiah: "And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths." (Isa. 2:3.)

Cultivate love and charity

My third imperative: We must work more diligently to cultivate a spirit of love and charity in our homes.

The homes of our people have been great homes where there has been love, a spirit of sacrifice, an attitude of

respect for one another. There will be need for greater emphasis of these qualities in the future. Selfishness is the canker that drives out peace and love. Selfishness is the root on which grow argument, anger, disrespect, infidelity, and divorce.

Later this month we shall dedicate a beautiful new building on the Brigham Young University campus to the memory of a woman, Caroline Hemenway Harman. You probably have never heard of her. I would like to tell you briefly her story.

At the age of twenty-two Caroline married George Harman. They had seven children, one of whom died in infancy. Then, at the age of thirty-nine, her husband passed away and she was left a widow.

Her sister, Grace, had married her husband's brother, David. In 1919, during the terrible influenza epidemic, David was seriously stricken, and then his wife, Grace, became ill. Caroline cared for them and their children as well as her own. In the midst of these afflictions, Grace gave birth to a son, and then she died within a few hours. Caroline took the tiny infant to her own home and there nurtured it and saved the child's life. Three weeks later her own daughter, Annie, passed away.

By now Caroline had lost two of her own children, her husband, and her sister. The strain was too much. She collapsed. She came out of that collapse with a serious case of diabetes. But she did not slow down. She continued to care for her sister's baby; and her brother-in-law, the child's father, came each day to see the little boy. David Harman and Caroline were later married, and there were now thirteen children in their home.

Then five years later David suffered a catastrophe that tried to the very depths those who agonized with him. On one occasion he used a strong disinfectant in preparing seed for planting. This got on his body, and the effects were disastrous. The skin and

flesh sloughed off his bones. His tongue and teeth dropped out. The caustic solution literally ate him alive.

Caroline nursed him in this terrible illness, and when he died she was left with five of her own and eight of her sister's children, and a farm of 280 acres where she and the children plowed, sowed, irrigated, and harvested to bring in enough to provide for their needs. At this time she also was Relief Society president, a position she held for eighteen years.

While caring for her large family and in extending the hand of charity to others, she would bake eight loaves of bread a day and wash forty loads of clothes a week. She canned fruits and vegetables by the ton, and cared for a thousand laying hens to provide a little cash. Self-reliance was her standard. Idleness she regarded as sin. She cared for her own and reached out to others in a spirit of kindness that would permit no one of whom she was aware to go hungry, unclothed, or cold.

She later married Eugene Robison, who, not long afterward, suffered a stroke. For five years until his death she nursed him and cared for him in all his needs.

Finally, exhausted, her body racked by the effects of diabetes, she passed away at the age of sixty-seven. The habits of industry and hard work which she instilled in her children rewarded their efforts through the years. Her sister's tiny baby, whom she nurtured from the hour of his birth, together with his brothers and sisters, all acting out of a sense of love and gratitude, have given to the university a substantial bequest to make possible the beautiful building which will carry her name.

It is well to remember men and women who have made outstanding contributions in terms of science, education, business, and the arts. Their examples can motivate all of us to higher endeavor. How appropriate also that there should be remembered with a beautiful and useful structure on the

campus of a great university a woman, a mother, largely unknown and unsung, who held together, nurtured, loved, and reared to useful maturity two large families, and all of this in an environment of grinding adversity.

Her case is not unique except in a few particulars. It is, as a matter of fact, somewhat characteristic of the great families of the early days of the Church who worked together, through sunshine and storm, to break the wilderness, to educate children and teach them the refining arts and useful skills.

The circumstances of our society have changed somewhat. We have become largely an urban people. But this only emphasizes the need for additional effort in cultivating, in the coming years, family spirit, family appreciation, and family love.

Strengthen and sustain

My fourth imperative: We must continue even with greater effectiveness to strengthen and sustain one another.

The Lord has admonished us: "Therefore, strengthen your brethren in all your conversation, in all your prayers, in all your exhortations, and in all your doings." (D&C 108:7.)

We live in a society that feeds on criticism. Faultfinding is the substance of columnists and commentators, and there is too much of this among our own people. It is so easy to find fault, and to resist doing so requires much of discipline. But if as a people we will build and sustain one another, the Lord will bless us with the strength to weather every storm and continue to move forward through every adversity. The enemy of truth would divide us and cultivate within us attitudes of criticism which, if permitted to prevail, will only deter us in the pursuit of our great divinely given goal. We cannot afford to permit it to happen. We must close ranks and march shoulder to shoulder, the strong helping the weak, those with much

assisting those with little. No power on earth can stop this work if we shall so conduct ourselves.

Move forward with faith

My fifth imperative flows from the last, and it is that we move forward with faith. Said the Lord to his Saints in a more difficult day: "Therefore, fear not, little flock; do good; let earth and hell combine against you, for if ye are built upon my rock, they cannot prevail.

"Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not." (D&C 6:34, 36.)

I urge you to see the big picture and cease worrying about the little blemishes. Abraham Lincoln was a gangling figure of a man, with a long and craggy face. There were many who looked only at the imperfections of his countenance. There were others who joked over the way he walked, and kept their eyes so low that they never saw the true greatness of the man. That enlarged view came only to those who saw the whole character—body, mind, and spirit—as he stood at the head of a divided nation in its darkest hour, lacing it together "with malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God" gave him to see the right. (Second Inaugural Address.)

Of course, there are aberrations in our history. There are blemishes to be found, if searched for, in the lives of all men, including our leaders past and present. But these are only incidental to the magnitude of their service and to the greatness of their contributions.

Keep before you the big picture, for this cause is as large as all mankind and as broad as all eternity. This is the church and kingdom of God. It requires the strength, the loyalty, the faith of all if it is to roll forward to bless the lives of our Father's children over the earth.

Five million—a milestone, not a summit

In reaching a membership of five million, we have reached a milestone. It must not be a summit. A far, far greater future lies ahead. Let us go forward. If we will hold fast to the doctrine, if we will live with integrity, if we will cultivate love and charity in our homes, if we will build and sustain one another and move forward with faith, the Almighty, whose church this is, will bless us and his glorious work. There is so much to do. Great sacrifice was made in the past to bring us to this level of growth. Lives were forfeited, and those not a few. We are not asked to give up our lives, and actually very little of our comfort. But we are expected to give of our loyalty, our devotion, our hearts, minds, might, and strength to the on-rolling of this, the Lord's work. (See D&C 59:5.) God help us to be faithful, as those before us have been faithful, as we walk toward the light of an even brighter and more significant day, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "O Brother Man!" without announcement.

President Romney

We have heard from President Gordon B. Hinckley, Counselor in the First Presidency, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "O Brother Man!"

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder James E. Faust, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder James E. Faust

I should like to emphasize today three important elements of integrity—dealing justly with oneself, dealing justly with others, and recognizing the law of the harvest. I apologize for my directness. I do not wish to offend. I wish only to be understood.

Honor and integrity

The dictionary defines *integrity* as a firm adherence to a code of moral values (see *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*). It connotes soundness and incorruptibility. It is the mother of many virtues. It begins when we deal justly with ourselves.

Walter Spat, the first stake president in South America, for many years has owned a furniture factory in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The delicately hand-carved roses, figures, and designs in the beautiful woods make his furniture as lovely as I have ever seen. Every piece is exquisite. Every creation is a masterpiece. One day my Ruth and I were in the entrance of his factory when a beautiful, newly made piece of furniture was carried in from the factory for showing. The grain of the wood flowed beautifully, and the finish was perfection. But to President Spat the hardware did not seem up to standard. Without hesitation, he took a screwdriver and a pair of pliers and pulled off all the hardware. His only remark was, "That is not my work." President Spat seems incapable of making a piece of furniture which is not as near perfect as it can be. His work reflects his honor and integrity.

Ralph Waldo Emerson stated: "Every man takes care that his neighbor shall not cheat him. But a day comes when he begins to care that he do[es] not cheat his neighbor. Then all goes well. He has changed his market-cart into a chariot of the sun." (*Conduct of Life*, in *The Complete Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*,

New York: William H. Wise and Co., 1929, p. 585.)

A vow binds the soul

Integrity is the value we set on ourselves. It is a fulfillment of the duty we owe ourselves. An honorable man or woman will personally commit to live up to certain self-imposed expectations. They need no outside check or control. They are honorable in their inner core.

Where does the soul play its part best? Is it in outward show? Or is it within, where no mortal eyes can penetrate and where we have an inner defense against the tragedies of life?

Integrity is the light that shines from a disciplined conscience. It is the strength of duty within us. Moses gave the following counsel: "If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth." (Num. 30:2.)

The power of keeping an oath was manifested by Nephi, who held Zoram, the frightened servant of Laban, to keep him from fleeing. Dr. Hugh Nibley has written:

"Nephi, a powerful fellow, held the terrified Zoram in a vise-like grip long enough to swear a solemn oath in his ear, 'as the Lord liveth, and as I live' (1 Ne. 4:32), that he would not harm him if he would listen. Zoram immediately relaxed, and Nephi swore another oath to him that he would be a free man if he would join the party. . . .

" . . . As soon as Zoram 'made an oath unto us that he would tarry with us from that time forth . . . our fears did cease concerning him.' (1 Ne. 4:35, 37)." (*An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, 2nd ed., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976, pp. 103-4.)

Shoot, and be damned

Being true to oneself at times requires extraordinary strength and courage. For instance, in the early days of the Church it was very unpopular, even dangerous, to uphold Joseph Smith as a prophet of God. Lyman Wight was one of those imprisoned by the leaders of a mob in 1839.

General Wilson advised Brother Wight, "We do not wish to hurt you nor kill you," and then following an oath said, "but we have one thing against you, and that is, you are too friendly to Joe Smith. . . . Wight, you know all about his character."

Brother Wight said, "I do, sir."

"Will you swear all you know concerning him?" said Wilson.

Brother Wight then told Wilson he "believed . . . Joseph Smith to be the most philanthropic man he ever saw, and possessed of the most pure . . . principles—a friend to mankind, a maker of peace."

Wilson then observed, "Wight, I fear your life is in danger, for there is no end to the prejudice against Joe Smith."

"Kill and be damned, sir," was Brother Wight's answer.

Returning later that night, Wilson told Lyman Wight: "I regret to tell you your die is cast; your doom is fixed; you are sentenced to be shot tomorrow morning on the public square in Far West, at eight o'clock."

Brother Wight answered, "Shoot, and be damned."

The decree of execution of the prisoners was revoked the next morning. (See *History of the Church*, 3:446-47.)

Dealing justly with others

Dealing justly with oneself lays a foundation for dealing justly with others. During World War II, I came home on leave early one September. It was time to put peaches in bottles to preserve them for winter. My beloved mother-in-law called an old friend,

George B. Andrus, of Holladay in this valley. The conversation on the telephone was brief: "George, do you have any peaches for sale?" mother asked.

Patriarch Andrus answered, "I have a few, but they are not very good."

I volunteered to drive Mother Wright to pick up the peaches. When we arrived she said, "George, where are your peaches?"

Brother Andrus opened his garage door, and I saw bushel baskets filled with large golden fruit with red kisses from sun ripening. Each basket was filled so full that when I lifted them into the trunk of the car some of the luscious peaches on top of the piled basket rolled off and bruised. Brother Andrus immediately replaced them with other perfect fruit.

On the way home I said to Mother Wright, "What did he mean when he said his fruit was not very good?"

She answered, "If you knew George Andrus, you would know that any fruit he would put on the market would be good and that he would give more than full value."

I wondered what the fruit would have been like if George had said it was good. Brother Andrus's self-imposed expectations led him to go beyond what we expected of him in his dealings with us.

Natural, inherent integrity is manifested almost every hour of every day of our lives. Those who unjustly profit at the expense of others may gain a fortune, but they forfeit something more important, which is their own integrity. Taking advantage of others is a counterfeit form of true success and honor.

Performance of duty

Those who have children and are involved in doing something less than they should may be involved in a double evil, for in addition to the inherent wrong they commit, they also teach another generation to do wrong.

There seems to be an immutable law that children may take license from what their parents do and expand upon it, confirming the old adage that the chickens not only come home to roost, but they bring their chicks with them.

Performance of duty, regardless of the sacrifice involved, is a part of dealing justly with oneself and others. Early in the history of this valley Joseph W. McMurrin was placed in charge of guarding some of the leaders of the Church. At a meeting in Social Hall in Salt Lake City, an intruder under a claim of authority tried to enter the hall; and Joseph W. McMurrin, being true to his trust to guard the servants of the Lord, restrained him from going through the door. President Heber J. Grant relates that the intruder "finally got his hand loose and took his pistol and, pressing it against Brother McMurrin's body, fired two bullets . . . through his vitals. Those bullets lodged just under the skin in his back. He was attended by Dr. Joseph Benedict who told Joseph W. McMurrin that no man could live after two bullets had passed through his vitals, and then added: 'If you wish to make a dying statement you should do so immediately.'

"I went with John Henry Smith to Brother McMurrin's home and saw where the flesh was burned away around those terrible gaping wounds. I saw where the bullets had gone clear through him. I heard John Henry Smith say, 'By the authority of the Priesthood of the living God which we hold, and in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ, we say that you shall be made absolutely whole, and that there shall be no physical weakness left upon your body because of these terrible wounds that you have received while guarding the servants of the living God.'"

On November 21, 1931, President Grant concluded, "Joseph W. McMurrin is alive and well, and has never had any physical weakness because of those terrible wounds."

(*Gospel Standards*, Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1969, pp. 310-11.)

We reap that which we sow

It is difficult to be just with oneself and others unless we recognize the law of the harvest. We reap that which we sow. Latter-day Saints have long been taught to live by the virtues of independence, industry, thrift, and self-reliance. Working for what we receive is a cardinal, timeless principle of self-respect. The whole world admires success. But how each of us defines success and how we seek it is crucial to our happiness.

The fruits of industry and thrift may appropriately be put into sound investments. A good solid investment can equal years of toil, and there is some risk in all we do. But investments that are highly speculative and promoted with unsound, vague promises of inordinate return should be viewed very carefully. The leaders of the Church have long warned against speculation.

Brigham Young said, "If the Lord ever revealed anything to me, he has shown me that the Elders of Israel must let speculation alone and attend to the duties of their calling." (*Journal of Discourses*, 8:179.)

In our time President Nathan Eldon Tanner has said:

"Investment debt should be fully secured so as not to encumber a family's security. Don't invest in speculative ventures. The spirit of speculation can become intoxicating. Many fortunes have been wiped out by the uncontrolled appetite to accumulate more and more. Let us learn from the sorrows of the past and avoid enslaving our time, energy, and general health to a gluttonous appetite to acquire increased material goods." (In Conference Report, Oct. 1979, p. 120; also in *ENSIGN*, Nov. 1979, p. 82.)

What is success? Is it money? Is it achievement? Is it fame? Is it position? Is it dominion? The prophet Micah

defined success as follows: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8.)

The prophet Ezekiel also gave a formula for success:

"But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right, . . .

"And hath not oppressed any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment; . . .

"Hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord God." (Ezek. 18:5, 7, 9.)

The Lord appeared to the great Solomon in a dream and said, "Ask what I shall give thee." (1 Kings 3:5.) Solomon replied, "Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad." (1 Kings 3:9.) The Lord was pleased because Solomon had not asked for success as the world defines it.

A place for mercy

Complete and constant integrity is a great law of human conduct. There need to be some absolutes in life. There are some things that should not ever be done, some lines that should never be crossed, vows that should never be broken, words that should never be spoken, and thoughts that should never be entertained.

Yet there is a place for mercy, for equity, and for forgiveness. Even the stalwart Peter, the chief Apostle, was forgiven for a moment of weakness. Luke records:

"Then took they [the Lord], and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off.

"And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were

set down together, Peter sat down among them.

"But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him.

"And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.

"And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not.

"And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaean.

"And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.

"And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

"And Peter went out, and wept bitterly." (Luke 22:54-62.)

I believe this incident strengthened Peter's commitment. He was never to be weak again. The resolve borne of that disappointment in his own temporary weakness tempered his metal into the hardest steel. He proved his devotion every day of his life thereafter, and in his death. So it can be with all of us. When we have been less than we ought to be and have fallen below our own standards, we can have newfound resolve and strength by forsaking our weakness.

God help us to be honest and true. May we always be thoroughly dependable, standing firm and upright though others may fail, and be fearless, constant, and just. May we say with the much-tested Job: "Till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me." (Job 27:5.)

I leave my testimony that dealing justly with oneself and others, and observing the law of the harvest, is a part of the inner peace of the sweet gospel of the Lord Jesus, of whose divinity as the risen Christ I testify in his holy name, amen.

The Choir sang "We Ever Pray for Thee" without announcement.

The Choir sang "Lord of the Hills."

The Choir and congregation sang "High on the Mountain Top."

President Romney

We have just listened to Elder James E. Faust, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, followed by the Choir singing "We Ever Pray for Thee."

The Choir will continue by singing "Lord of the Hills," after which the Choir and congregation will join in singing "High on the Mountain Top."

President Romney

To those of the television and radio audience who have just joined us, we are convened in the historic Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, in this fourth session of the 152nd Annual General Conference of the Church.

Elder John H. Groberg, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now address us.

Elder John H. Groberg

My dear brothers and sisters, I ask for your faith and prayers as we consider a vitally important key to our happiness and success in life. I speak this morning on the importance and power of family prayer.

Pray in your families

Our Father in Heaven wants us to have strong, loving families. One of the great helps he has given us to achieve this is family prayer.

All of us, single or married, are eternally part of some family—some way, somewhere, somehow—and much of our joy in life comes as we correctly recognize and properly develop those family relationships. We come to this earth charged with a mission: to learn to love and serve one another. To best help us accomplish this, God has placed us in families, for he knows that is where we can best learn to overcome selfishness and pride and to sacrifice for others and to make happiness and helpfulness and humility and love the very essence of our character.

We learn that friends and neighbors come and go but family is forever, and as we learn this, we find that we are eternally our brother's keeper and we begin to realize how much help we need. How we should thank God for the opportunity of family prayer!

Listen to the admonition of the Savior in Third Nephi: "Pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name, that your wives and your children may be blessed." (3 Ne. 18:21.)

Unifying families

Can you detect that if we do not pray in our families always they may not be blessed—or at least not so fully? If we truly love our families we will constantly pray for them and with them. I know of no single activity that has more potential for unifying our families and bringing more love and divine direction into our homes than consistent, fervent family prayer.

Think of the power for good as you gather your family together and thank God for all of his blessings.

Think of the eternal significance of daily thanking him for each member of your family and asking him to guide and bless and protect each one. Think of the strength that will come to your family as, daily, one member or another pours out his or her soul in love to God for other family members.

Of course, our prayers must be more than words, for as President Marion G. Romney has so clearly stated, "The efficacy of our prayers depends on how we care for one another." (ENSIGN, Nov. 1980, p. 93.) Family prayer is fully effective, then, only as we rise from our knees and, with increased love and understanding, take better care of each other.

Regular family prayer

We all want more love and unity in our families. We all need more help with some who may be wayward or in special need. We all desire more assurance of divine guidance and direction.

I promise you that as you consistently and fervently pray as a family, and as each member takes his or her turn and sincerely prays for others, impressions will come as to what you individually should do to help others. Thus, you can, in family prayer, receive personal and family revelation as to how to love and serve one another.

Now, Satan will do everything he can to keep us from family prayer, or at least to see that our prayers are only intermittent and mechanical and without sincerity. In Daniel's day, Satan influenced evil men to pass laws against praying. In our day, Satan's efforts seem a little more subtle (although he is trying a little of that law business, too).

But remember, the greatest schools on earth are individual homes. Yet how many homes voluntarily give up family prayer by allowing other less important things to take priority.

If Satan can get us thinking that our children are too young or too old,

or if he can get us angry with one another or preoccupied with TV programs or over-crowded schedules or caught up in some other aspect of the press of modern life so that we do not have family prayer, he has effectively won on that point—even though many of the other things we do may be good in and of themselves.

Satan doesn't care how he stops us—just so he stops us. Ask yourself: How many times did you have family prayer this last week? Who is winning in your home? What's the score? Don't let the evil one win. You can overcome him with God's help.

I appeal with all the fervor of my soul to every family in the Church, every family in the nation, every family in the world, to organize your priorities so that God is first in your lives and to show this by having regular family prayer. There may be extenuating circumstances occasionally; but as a rule, we should have family prayer every morning and every evening.

Power in family prayer

Oh, if we would do this, if we would show our families and our God on a regular basis how much we love them, how much we appreciate them, how much we need their help, and how much we rely on His protection, one of the greatest changes for good to ever take place in the Church, in the nation, and in the world would occur. Don't let anything stand in the way of consistent, fervent family prayer! Think of what you teach by having family prayer. Then think of what you teach by not having family prayer.

I testify to you that there is real power in family prayer. I testify that families can be brought together and can help and strengthen one another through family prayer.

Missionary in Tonga

Let me illustrate this with an incident that happened some years ago.

As a young man I was called on a mission to Tonga. Through a series of unusual circumstances, such as ship strikes, and so forth, it took three months to get to Tonga from Salt Lake. As I was the only one assigned to Tonga at that time, much of the journey was made alone.

Finally, in Samoa, the mission president put me on a boat to Fiji and assured me that he would telegraph ahead, and when I arrived in Suva two elders would meet me and put me on a boat to Tonga.

Even though I had been in transit for two and a half months at that time, that several-day voyage to Suva seemed extra-filled with trepidation. How I looked forward to seeing those two missionaries!

The boat arrived in Suva early in the morning. I looked and looked, but could see no elders. An hour went by, then two, then three—still no elders. The captain kept telling me to get off the boat as they were leaving soon. I kept telling him that I would be met soon by two young men, but they didn't come.

Finally, noon arrived and the captain was ready to leave. "Get off," he said, "you only have a ticket to Suva. I'm leaving, and you're staying here."

With great fear I started down the gangplank only to be met by the immigration officials. "Let us see your visa, your onward ticket, and the money to keep you while here," they demanded.

I had no visa. I had no onward ticket. I had not sufficient money. But I assured them that two young men would be there right away with whatever was needed. How I prayed! But they didn't come.

"Back on the ship then," they insisted.

"Not on my ship," bellowed the captain.

I can remember standing in the middle of the gangplank, looking up at the folded arms and glaring eyes of the

stern captain, and then looking down at the equally determined faces and set jaws of the immigration men.

I looked at the ocean under the gangplank. I should have wondered how long I could tread water, but I was too scared to think of anything right then.

In the end, the captain proved to be the toughest; and amidst cursing and yelling and banging of bags, the gangplank went up, the ship departed, and I found myself in the not-too-friendly hands of the immigration officials.

There was a long discussion among them, most of it in a foreign tongue. Finally, one of the younger men, who seemed more friendly, came over and explained that for now I should move with my things into the "customs shed." That's where things go that aren't really allowed into the country until duty or tax is paid on them. He assured me that he, too, felt that the two young men I referred to would soon be along and everything would be fine.

The afternoon wore on. I tried several times to contact the missionaries every way I knew how, but to no avail. I know missionaries are supposed to be brave, but right then I was scared and tired and hungry.

The sun was getting low, and it seemed the lower it got in the sky the lower my spirits became. I knew I wasn't really in danger or in prison, but to one used to lots of freedom it seemed like it.

The pungent odor of curry and copra and drying fish and the myriad other sights and sounds and smells of an oily tropical wharf seemed so foreign to the cool, fresh smells of my Idaho home. I knew I was homesick. I wanted to cry, but I knew that wouldn't do any good.

Finally, the whirring of winches, the groaning of blocks and cables, the banging of cargo, and the sputtering of machines ceased. The dock workers began to leave, then the immigration

people, until just a few watchmen and supervisors were left. It was silent now. I don't know when I have felt more alone.

I tried to lie down on the dirty, uneven cement floor. I prayed to know what to do. There seemed to be no answer. I watched the last rays of sunlight as they broke through the clouds and blazed across the ocean and through the holes of the metal customs shed.

"How long will the light last?" I thought. Then I wondered, "What will happen when those last rays disappear and fold into the night?" (Have you ever wanted to just sort of close your eyes and disappear—or have things around you change?) "But, no, I must have hope. Things *must* turn out all right."

Once more, I closed my eyes in prayer, when suddenly I felt almost transported. I didn't see anything or hear anything, in a physical sense; but, in a more real way, I saw a family in far-off Idaho kneeling together in prayer; and I heard my mother, acting as mouth, say as clearly as anything can be heard, "And bless John on his mission."

Warmth of security

As that faithful family called down the powers of heaven to bless their missionary son in a way they could not physically do, I testify that the powers of heaven did come down, and they lifted me up and, in a spiritual way, allowed me, for a brief moment, to once again join that family circle in prayer. I was one with them. I was literally swallowed up in the love and concern of a faithful family and sensed for a moment what being taken into Abraham's bosom may be like. (See Luke 16:22.) I was given to understand also that there are other circles of love and concern unbounded by time or space to which we all belong and from which we can draw strength. God does not leave us entirely alone—ever!

Tears of joy flowed freely as I had restored to me the warmth of security, the light of love, and the strength of hope. And when I again felt the hard, uneven cement beneath me, there was no fear, no sorrow, no trepidation, only deep gratitude and certain assurance.

To conclude the incident, within a half hour I saw the young immigration man who had befriended me coming towards the shed with two young elders behind him. It seemed that on his way home he just happened to run into two young Americans with white shirts and ties and told them about one just like them down at the wharf. Apparently the telegram never arrived, but they followed him down to the shed, and soon all was straightened out, and within a few weeks I landed in Tonga and was ready to begin my mission.

Family prayers—top priority

Brothers and sisters, I testify that there is great power in loving, consistent, fervent family prayer. Don't deny your families this blessing. Don't allow the strength that comes from family prayer to slip away from you and your loved ones through neglect.

No matter what other inheritance you leave your family, give them the inheritance of knowing through experience that, forever, you will be praying for them and they for you.

Call your families together. Make your family prayers a top priority item. It may be awkward at first, if you aren't doing it now; and since Satan doesn't want you to do it at all, he will throw all sorts of excuses and roadblocks at you; but just proceed and be persistent, and I promise you great blessings.

Love and serve one another

Remember, all that we are commanded to do in this life is patterned after that of a better life. Do you think it a strange thought that maybe part of

the power of family prayer is in the fact that we are part of a heavenly family, that they are interested in us, and that by tying in with them some way we get hold of something much bigger than ourselves?

Think of the power of the thousands of prayers of parents and grandparents and back and back even to Jacob and Isaac and Abraham and beyond, all requesting essentially the same thing: "Bless my children. Bless my children. Bless my children." Can you hear it as it rolls and echoes throughout all eternity?

Let us all be part of that great power for good.

I testify that time and space are no barriers to these righteous influences, and no matter where we are or what our situation is—even in the depths of discouragement, far from our loved ones—we too can feel and be strengthened by those soul-stirring words, "and bless John or Jane or whomever on his or her mission," for indeed life is a mission. We are all here on assignment to learn to love and serve one another; and we can't do this as well as we should unless we have consistent, fervent family prayer.

I testify that God is our Father, that he lives and loves us, that he is the

giver of all good things. I testify that Jesus lives and loves us, that he is the Son of God, the Christ, the Savior of the world, the head of this, his church. I testify that as we pray to the Father, in his name, all things are possible.

May we all gather our families around us and consistently and fervently pray for one another and thus, in righteousness, feel the needs of others and then fill the needs of others, thereby fulfilling much of our mission in life, I do humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "Come, We That Love the Lord" without announcement.

President Romney

We have just listened to Elder John H. Groberg, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "Come, We That Love the Lord."

We shall now hear from Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder L. Tom Perry

Interest in family

The assignment we were given for Saturday evening sessions of stake conference during the first half of 1982 was directed toward the theme "Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob." (Isa. 2:3.) The objective of these meetings has been to inspire the members to obtain their own temple blessings, attend the temple in behalf of their deceased relatives and others, complete their four-generation records, extend research on family lines, and

organize and strengthen the family organizations. The first instruction after the glorious First Vision to the Prophet Joseph Smith, in the act of restoring the gospel of Jesus Christ, was concerning the family unit. History records this account in the words of the Prophet:

"A messenger [was] sent from the presence of God to me, . . . that his name was Moroni; and God had a work for me to do. . . .

"After telling me these things, he commenced quoting the prophecies of the Old Testament. . . .

"Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

"... And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming." (JS-H 1:30, 33, 36, 38-39.)

Preparation for these conference sessions each weekend has aroused my interest in my own progenitors. I was impressed with the phrase that unless families are united together and the hearts of children are turned to their fathers, the whole earth would utterly be wasted at the Savior's return.

My interest in my family has prompted us to hold a special family home evening each month with my children. They are invited to bring their families into our home. As a part of the lesson of each of these family home evenings, I have tried to tell them about one of their progenitors. The oldest in the line I can remember is my grandfather, Henry Morgan Perry. As I prepared to give a lesson on his life, I became very excited about his accomplishments.

Tribute to Henry Morgan Perry

My father once wrote this tribute to his father:

"Father was a conservative. He never went into debt. When we didn't have it, we went without. He never mortgaged the farm. He was very reluctant to impose anything on his homestead. I've often heard him say that the only people who had their financial heads above water were the ones who hadn't mortgaged their farms. He was a public-spirited man. I remember four important positions he held. First was justice of the peace; second, school trustee; third, a member of a bishopric; and fourth, his work on the Great Feeder Canal. He was a pioneer in the development of

irrigation in the fertile Snake River Valley."

Dad's account describes the tenderness with which grandfather taught his family. My father was one who desired an education and was earnestly seeking to get the best he could with the means available to him. When his father would see him struggling, he would give him fatherly lectures like, "My boy, be humble in your studies, and remember your prayers. Yes, and in your prayers, remember your studies."

Then dad tells of the time he became a little arrogant as he acquired a little knowledge. One day he challenged his father to a debate to be held after their church service. The subject was: "Resolved: That science has done more for the welfare of the human family than has religion."

The whole congregation stayed after to listen to the debate. Each speaker was allowed fifteen minutes with a rebuttal of three minutes. My father spoke first. He spoke of the progress science had made and how it had lifted up the standard of living of all. Then he stated how many failures religion had had in the past. Dad was a member of the debating society at school and was gifted in speech. He knew how to sway an audience. When he sat down, he thought he had convinced the people to throw away their Bibles and take up science.

Then grandfather got up. He had never had the privilege of having much schooling, but was an avid reader. He told how religions, many of them, had influenced the human family for good. He explained their merits, their excellence, and their worth. Then he sat down.

My father got up for rebuttal. He spent most of his time saying, "I have proven. I have proven." But each "I have proven" seemed to be a little less forceful as he thought of the sincerity of his father's message. Realizing this, he sat down.

Then grandfather arose. He didn't

say much. He just added this: "I give all credit to science for what science has done. It has changed our way of life and, in a way, our thinking. It has built, encircled, and constructed. None of us want to go back to yesterday when today holds so much, and tomorrow even more. But with all of the credit to its progress, and all of the glory to its accomplishments, your scientists have not yet come up with anything that compares with the tenderness of a human heart."

Grandfather had won the debate. Even dad was convinced. He rushed over and threw his arms around him and congratulated him. Grandfather then said to dad, "My boy, remember this: There is more satisfaction in the humble teachings of the Master than all the glamour of a false ideal." (*"They Came,"* Albert Z. Perry, 1955.)

Work to do

As you can see, from stories such as this I have developed a love for my grandfather.

I started looking at what has happened to his extended family since his death. Henry Morgan and Fannie Young Perry were blessed with 10 children, then 48 grandchildren, 161 great-grandchildren, 241 great-great-grandchildren, and now 22 great-great-great-grandchildren, a total of 482. Including their companions, their number reaches 639. Why, their posterity is a ward almost ready for division!

But in becoming acquainted, I've found that not all of the family have been blessed with a knowledge of the teachings of their grandfather. Not all have embraced the gospel. Suddenly I realized that I had a great work to do. Some of those 639 will not be part of his eternal family unit because they have not received the witness in their hearts of what they have to do to accomplish this.

I have discovered that certainly if there was a man qualified to inherit the

celestial kingdom, it would have been my grandfather, Henry Morgan Perry. I am excited as I anticipate being with him in the eternities if I qualify myself. But then I start worrying about meeting grandfather and wondering how he will greet me. The realization comes to me again of the great work I have to accomplish. Because of this concern, I have researched the names of all the descendants of Henry Morgan Perry who have not taken advantage of the glorious privilege of becoming part of an eternal family unit. I have sent them letters inviting them to listen to me today. For the next few minutes I would like to address my remarks to these members of our family.

Those who have not embraced gospel

The Lord has declared, "For behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God." (Alma 34:32.) In the Lord's plan for the salvation of his children, he has made two points clear: first, Jesus Christ is the only name under heaven by which authority is given for man's salvation (see Acts 4:11-12); and second, every man and woman must accept the gospel and receive its ordinances by authority, or they cannot be saved (see John 3:5).

The prophets have instructed us concerning the eternity of the family organization. President Joseph F. Smith has said:

"Our [family] associations . . . are not exclusively intended for this life, for time, as we distinguish it from eternity. . . . We form associations and relations for time and all eternity. . . .

"A man and woman who have embraced the gospel of Jesus Christ and who have begun life together, should be able by their power, example and influence to cause their children to emulate them in lives of virtue, honor, and in integrity to the kingdom of God which will redound to their own interest and salvation. No

one can advise my children with greater earnestness and solicitude for their happiness and salvation than I can myself. . . . I cannot be satisfied without them. They are part of me. They are mine; God has given them to me, and I want them to be humble and submissive to the requirements of the gospel." (*Gospel Doctrine*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939, pp. 277, 278.)

Ordinances needed

Now what are these ordinances we must partake of in order to qualify? Our faith has taught us that the principles and ordinances of the gospel are first, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, repentance; third, baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and fourth, the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. (See A of F 1:4.) Following the acceptance of the first four principles of the gospel and a reasonable time in proving ourselves by conducting our lives in harmony with its teachings, it is then possible to enter the Lord's temple and receive the endowment.

Elder James E. Talmage has written this of the endowment:

"The ordinances of the endowment embody certain obligations on the part of the individual, such as covenant and promise to observe the law of strict virtue and chastity, to be charitable, benevolent, tolerant and pure; to devote both talent and material means to the spread of truth and the uplifting of the race; to maintain devotion to the cause of truth; and to seek in every way to contribute to the great preparation that the earth may be made ready to receive her King,—the Lord Jesus Christ. With the taking of each covenant and the assuming of each obligation a promised blessing is pronounced, contingent upon the faithful observance of the conditions." (*The House of the Lord*, rev. ed., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976, p. 84.)

After receiving your own endowment, you may be united with your companion and sealed in marriage for time and eternity. The Lord has said, "All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations, that are not made and entered into and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, of him who is anointed, both as well for time and for all eternity, . . . are of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end have an end when men are dead." (D&C 132:7.)

Family is most important

Now, regarding our eternal relationship in temple marriage, President Ezra Taft Benson has told us:

"The family [is] the most important organization in time and all eternity; . . . the preservation of family life in time and eternity takes precedence above all other interests. . . . Because of this confidence in the perpetuity of the home and family into the eternities, we build our most elaborate and expensive structures—temples of God . . . so that man, woman, and their children may be bound together by covenant in an everlasting union which will transcend all the limitations of this mortal sphere." ("America's Strength—The Family," unpublished transcript of an address given as part of the National Family Night Program, Seattle World's Fair Coliseum, 23 Nov. 1976, p. 5.)

How glorious are the Lord's teachings to his children that there can be eternal family associations with grandparents, parents, children, and grandchildren in one eternal family organization.

Let us teach

Now my dear family members who have not completed all that the

Lord would require of you to become part of this great eternal family organization—I must confess that there are times when we focus so much on the worldwide impact of missionary programs, genealogical records extraction, on preparation to teach Sunday School classes, etc., that we fail to make ourselves available to help you understand the blessings which await you as part of an eternal family organization. I want you to know that I am now available. I have reordered my priorities. I want to do all in my power to be certain that our eternal family association is complete. Let us teach you the doctrines which are necessary for you to join with us for time and eternity.

I give you my witness that God is our eternal Father, that we are his children, that he has provided a way for us to have an eternal family organization that will endure beyond the grave. I give you my witness that this gift, the gift of life eternal, is the greatest gift of God to his children. (See D&C 14:7.)

May God bless us that we may find the joy and satisfaction that come from learning gospel principles that will lead us to life eternal, is my humble prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang “Jesus, Our Lord, We Adore Thee” without announcement.

President Romney

Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just addressed us, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing “Jesus, Our Lord, We Adore Thee.”

We appreciate the courtesies shown by the owners and operators of the many radio and television stations and cable systems who have offered their facilities as a public service to make the proceedings of this conference available to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

Elder Thomas S. Monson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our concluding speaker, following which the Tabernacle Choir will sing “Thy Spirit, Lord, Has Stirred Our Souls.”

The benediction will be pronounced by Elder F. Burton Howard, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

This conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

Elder Thomas S. Monson

On February 14, 1939, Americans were celebrating Valentine's Day. Postmen delivered sealed envelopes, and small children placed at the doorsteps of special friends folded papers containing brightly colored pictures. Each contained a greeting—a message of love. After all, Valentine's Day is a day of love.

The unsinkable *Bismarck* is sunk

Far from America's shores, in Hamburg, Germany, a public holiday

also was being celebrated. However, a more somber mood prevailed. Amid fervent speeches, cheering throngs, and the playing of the national anthem, the new battleship *Bismarck* rumbled down into the River Elbe. This, the most powerful vessel afloat, carried not a message of love; rather, the *Bismarck* bristled with weapons of war.

The mighty colossus was a breathtaking spectacle of armor and machinery. Construction required more than fifty-seven thousand blue-

prints for the 406-millimeter, triple turret, radar-controlled guns. The vessel featured twenty-eight thousand miles of electrical circuits, and thirty-five thousand tons of armor-plate provided maximum safety. Majestic in appearance, gigantic in size, awesome in firepower, the *Bismarck* was considered unsinkable.

The *Bismarck's* day of destiny dawned more than two years later, when on May 24, 1941, the two most powerful warships in the British navy, the *Prince of Wales* and the *Hood*, engaged in battle the *Bismarck* and the German cruiser *Prinz Eugen*. Within four minutes, the *Bismarck* had sent to the depths of the Atlantic the *Hood* and all but 3 men of a crew of 1,419. The other British battleship, the *Prince of Wales*, had suffered heavy damage and turned away.

Three days later, the *Bismarck* was engaged again, by four British warships. In all, the British concentrated the strength of eight battleships, two aircraft carriers, eleven cruisers, and twenty-one destroyers in an effort to seek and sink the mighty *Bismarck*.

Shell after shell inflicted but superficial damage. Was the *Bismarck* unsinkable after all? Then a torpedo scored a lucky hit which jammed the *Bismarck's* rudder. Repair efforts proved fruitless. With guns primed, the crews at ready, the *Bismarck* could only steer a slow and stately circle. Just beyond reach was the powerful German air force. The safety of home port was ever so close. Neither could provide the needed haven, for the *Bismarck* had lost the ability to steer a charted course. No rudder; no help; no port. The end drew near. British guns blazed as the German crew scuttled and sank the once proud vessel. The hungry waves of the Atlantic first lapped at the sides, then swallowed the pride of the German navy. The *Bismarck* was no more. (See David Irving, *Hitler's War*, New York: The Viking Press, 1977.)

Undeviating course to celestial kingdom

Like the *Bismarck*, each of us is a miracle of engineering. Our creation, however, was not limited by human genius. Man can devise the most complex machines, but he cannot give them life or bestow upon them the powers of reason and judgment. Why? Because these are divine gifts, bestowed solely at God's discretion. Our creator has provided us with a circulatory system to keep all channels constantly clean and serviceable, a digestive system to preserve strength and vigor, and a nervous system to keep all parts in constant communication and coordination. God gave man life, and with it, the power to think, to reason, to decide, and to love.

Like the vital rudder of a ship, we have been provided a way to determine the direction we travel. The lighthouse of the Lord beckons to all as we sail the seas of life. Our home port is the celestial kingdom of God. Our purpose is to steer an undeviating course in that direction. A man without a purpose is like a ship without a rudder—never likely to reach home port. To us comes the signal: Chart your course, set your sail, position your rudder, and proceed.

As with the ship, so it is with man. The thrust of the turbines, the power of the propellers are useless without that sense of direction, that harnessing of the energy, that directing of the power provided by the rudder, hidden from view, relatively small in size, but absolutely essential in function.

Our Father provided the sun, the moon, the stars—heavenly galaxies to guide mariners who sail the lanes of the sea. To all who walk the pathways of life, He cautions: Beware the detours, the pitfalls, the traps. Cunningly positioned are those clever pied pipers of sin beckoning here or there. Do not be deceived. Pause to pray. Listen to that still, small voice

(see D&C 85:6) which speaks to the depths of our souls the Master's gentle invitation: "Come, follow me" (Luke 18:22). We turn from destruction, from death. We find happiness and life everlasting.

Pursuit of power and quest for position

Yet, there are those who do not hear, who will not obey, who listen to the beat of a different drummer. Most prominent among their number was that son of Adam born of Eve, even Cain—a well-known name among men. Powerful in potential, but weak of will, Cain permitted greed, envy, disobedience, and even murder to jam that personal rudder which would have guided him to safety and exaltation. The downward gaze replaced the upward look; Cain fell. (See Moses 5:16-41.)

Less known, but more typical of our day, was that person of power, that cardinal of the cloth—even Wolsey. The prolific pen of William Shakespeare described the majestic heights, the pinnacle of power to which Cardinal Wolsey ascended. That same pen told how principle was eroded by vain ambition, by expediency, by a clamor for favor. Then came the tragic descent, the painful lament of one who had gained everything, then lost all. The words are beautiful; they border on scripture.

To Cromwell, his faithful servant, Cardinal Wolsey speaks:

*When I am forgotten, as I shall be,
And sleep in dull cold marble, where
no mention
Of me more must be heard of—say, I
taught thee,
Say, Wolsey—that once trod the ways
of glory,
And sounded all the depths and shoals
of honour—
Found thee a way. . . .
A sure and safe one, though thy master
mist it.*

*Mark but my fall, and that that ruin'd
me.*

. . . Fling away ambition:

*By that sin fell the angels; how can
man then,*

*The image of his Maker, hope to win
by it?*

*Love thyself last; cherish those hearts
that hate thee; . . .*

Take an inventory of all I have,

*To the last penny; 'tis the king's: my
robe,*

And my integrity to heaven, is all

I dare now call my own.

O Cromwell, Cromwell!

*Had I but serv'd my God with half the
zeal*

*I served my king, He would not in mine
age*

Have left me naked to mine enemies.

*(King Henry the Eighth, act 3, sc. 2,
lines 435-58.)*

That heavenly rudder which would have ever been a guide to safety was ruined by the pursuit of power and quest for position. Like others before him and many more yet to follow, Cardinal Wolsey fell.

Steer a steady course

In an earlier time and by a wicked king, a servant of God was tested. Aided by the inspiration of heaven, Daniel, son of David, interpreted to the king the writing on the wall. Concerning the proffered rewards—even a royal robe and a necklace of gold—Daniel said: "Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another." (Dan. 5:17.)

Belshazzar's successor, King Darius, also honored Daniel, elevating him to the highest position of prominence. There followed the envy of the crowd, the jealousy of princes, and the scheming of ambitious men.

Through trickery, aided by flattery, King Darius signed a proclamation that provided that anyone who made a request of any god or man,

except the king, should be thrown into the lions' den. (See Dan. 6:7.) The law was signed, the proclamation sent forth. Prayer was forbidden. In such matters, Daniel took direction not from an earthly king but from the king of heaven and earth, his God. Over-taken in his daily prayers, Daniel was brought before the king. Reluctantly, the penalty was pronounced. Daniel was to be thrown into the lions' den. The sentence was carried out.

I love the biblical account which follows:

"The king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting . . . and his sleep went from him. . . .

"The king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions.

"And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel. . . . O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?

"Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever.

"My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me. . . .

"Then was the king exceeding glad. . . . Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God." (Dan. 6:18-23.)

In a time of critical need, Daniel's determination to steer a steady course yielded divine protection and provided a sanctuary of safety.

Sail safely seas of life

The clock of history, like the sands of the hourglass, marks the passage of time. A new cast occupies the stage of life. The problems of our day loom ominously before us. Surrounded by the sophistication of modern living, we look heavenward for that unfailing sense of direction, that we might chart and follow a wise and proper course. He whom we call our

Heavenly Father will not leave our sincere petition unanswered.

This lesson I learned anew some years ago as I received a rather unique and frightening assignment. Folkman D. Brown, then the Director of Mormon Relationships for the Boy Scouts of America, came to my office, having learned that I was about to depart for a lengthy assignment to New Zealand. He told me of his widowed sister, Belva Jones, who had been stricken with terminal cancer, who knew not how to tell her only son—a missionary in that far away country. Her wish, even her plea, was that he remain in the mission field and serve faithfully. She worried about his reaction; for the missionary, Elder Ryan Jones, had lost his father just a year earlier to the same dread disease.

I accepted the responsibility. Following a missionary meeting held adjacent to the majestically beautiful New Zealand Temple, I met privately with Elder Jones and, as gently as I could, explained the situation of his mother. Naturally there were tears—not all his—but then the handclasp of assurance and the pledge: "Tell my mother I will serve, I will pray, and I will see her again."

I returned to Salt Lake City just in time to attend a conference of the Lost River Stake at Moore, Idaho. As I sat on the stand with the stake president, my attention was drawn almost instinctively to the east side of the chapel, where the morning sunlight bathed the lone occupant of a front bench. I said to the stake president, "Who is the sister upon whom the sunlight is resting? I feel I must speak to her today." He replied, "Her name is Belva Jones. She has a missionary son in New Zealand. She is very ill and has requested a blessing."

Prior to that moment, I had not known where Belva Jones lived. My assignment that weekend could have been to any one of fifty stakes. Yet the Lord, in His own way, had answered the prayer of faith of a concerned

mother. We had a wonderful visit together. I reported word-for-word the reaction and the resolve of her son, Ryan. A blessing was provided, a prayer offered, a witness received. Belva Jones would live to see her son complete his mission. This privilege she enjoyed. Just one month prior to her passing, his mission completed, Ryan returned home.

As we venture forth on our individual voyages, may we sail safely the seas of life. With the never-failing rudder of faith guiding our passage,

we too will find our way safely home. *"Home is the sailor, home from sea."* Home to family, home to friends, home to heaven, home to God.

Of this truth I testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "Thy Spirit, Lord, Has Stirred Our Souls."

Elder F. Burton Howard offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

FIFTH SESSION

The fifth and final general session of the 152nd Annual General Conference commenced at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, April 4, 1982.

President Spencer W. Kimball presided at and President Gordon B. Hinckley, Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

Music was provided by the Tabernacle Choir directed by Jerold Ottley with Robert Cundick at the organ.

President Hinckley made the following remarks at the outset of the meeting:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

We welcome you to this session of our conference. We are honored and delighted again to have with us President Spencer W. Kimball, who presides at this conference and has asked that I conduct this service.

We extend a sincere welcome to all assembled this afternoon in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah for the fifth and concluding session of the 152nd Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We

also welcome those seated in the Salt Palace, where Elders Richard G. Scott and Jack H. Goasland, Jr., preside.

We send our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere who are participating in these proceedings by radio and television and by means of satellite transmission.

The Tabernacle Choir, with Jerold Ottley directing and Robert Cundick at the organ, is providing the music for this session.

The Choir will begin this service by singing "Lord, Accept into Thy Kingdom." The invocation will then be offered by Elder Adney Y. Komatsu, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Choir sang "Lord, Accept into Thy Kingdom."

Elder Adney Y. Komatsu offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

There have been no changes among the General Authorities since

the last general conference. It is therefore proposed that we sustain all of the General Authorities and general officers of the Church as at present constituted.

All in favor, manifest it by the uplifted hand. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "With a Voice of Singing." Following the singing, we shall hear from President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The Choir sang "With a Voice of Singing."

President Hinckley

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us. He will be followed by Elder A. Theodore Tuttle, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

President Ezra Taft Benson

My beloved brethren and sisters, with a heart full of gratitude I stand before you today, thankful for your faith and prayers, for life itself and all its blessings. Today, at this Easter time, I will speak a few words about what constitutes a valiant testimony of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer.

Testimony of Jesus

A most priceless blessing available to every member of the Church is a testimony of the divinity of Jesus Christ and His church. A testimony is one of the few possessions we may take with us when we leave this life.

To have a testimony of Jesus is to possess knowledge through the Holy Ghost of the divine mission of Jesus Christ.

A testimony of Jesus is to know the divine nature of our Lord's birth—that He is indeed the Only Begotten Son in the flesh.

A testimony of Jesus is to know that He was the promised Messiah and that while He sojourned among men He accomplished many mighty miracles.

A testimony of Jesus is to know that the laws which He prescribed as

His doctrine are true and then to abide by these laws and ordinances.

To possess a testimony of Jesus is to know that He voluntarily took upon Himself the sins of all mankind in the Garden of Gethsemane, which caused Him to suffer in both body and spirit and to bleed from every pore. All this He did so that we would not have to suffer if we would repent. (See D&C 19:16, 18.)

To possess a testimony of Jesus is to know that He came forth triumphantly from the grave with a physical, resurrected body. And because He lives, so shall all mankind.

To possess a testimony of Jesus is to know that God the Father and Jesus Christ did indeed appear to the Prophet Joseph Smith to establish a new dispensation of His gospel so that salvation may be preached to all nations before He comes.

To possess a testimony of Jesus is to know that the Church which He established in the meridian of time and restored in modern times is, as the Lord has declared, "the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth." (D&C 1:30.)

To possess a testimony of Jesus is to receive the words of His servants, the prophets, for as He has said,

"whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same." (D&C 1:38.)

A testimony of Jesus means that you accept the divine mission of Jesus Christ, embrace His gospel, and do His works; it means you accept the prophetic mission of Joseph Smith and his successors.

Those who are just and true

Speaking of those who will eventually receive the blessings of the celestial kingdom, the Lord said to Joseph Smith: "They are they who received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his name and were baptized after the manner of his burial, being buried in the water in his name, and this according to the commandment which he has given." (D&C 76:51.) These are they who are valiant in their testimony of Jesus, who, as the Lord has declared "overcome by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true." (D&C 76:53.)

"Those who are just and true"! What an apt expression for one valiant in the testimony of Jesus. They are courageous in defending truth and righteousness. These are members of the Church who magnify their callings in the Church (see D&C 84:33), pay their tithes and offerings, live morally clean lives, sustain their Church leaders by word and action, keep the Sabbath as a holy day, and obey all the commandments of God.

To these the Lord has promised that "all thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, shall be revealed and set forth upon all who have endured *valiantly* for the gospel of Jesus Christ." (D&C 121:29; italics added.)

Not valiant in testimony of Jesus

Concerning those who will receive the terrestrial, or lesser, kingdom, the Lord said, "These are they

who are *not* valiant in the testimony of Jesus; wherefore, they obtain not the crown over the kingdom of our God." (D&C 76:79; italics added.) Not to be valiant in one's testimony is a tragedy of eternal consequence. These are members who know this latter-day work is true, but who fail to endure to the end. Some may even hold temple recommends, but do not magnify their callings in the Church. Without valor, they do not take an affirmative stand *for* the kingdom of God. Some seek the praise, adulation, and honors of men; others attempt to conceal their sins; and a few criticize those who preside over them.

Statements from former Church leaders

Considering some of the challenges which the Church faces currently, and which it will continue to face in the future, three statements of former Church leaders come to mind.

President Joseph F. Smith said, "There are at least three dangers that threaten the Church within, . . . they are flattery of prominent men in the world, false educational ideas, and sexual impurity." (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939, pp. 312-13.) These three dangers are of greater concern today than when they were identified by President Smith.

A second statement was a prophecy by Heber C. Kimball, counselor to President Brigham Young. Speaking to members of the Church who had come to the Salt Lake Valley, he declared:

"To meet the difficulties that are coming, it will be necessary for you to have a knowledge of the truth of this work for yourselves. The difficulties will be of such a character that the man or woman who does not possess this personal knowledge or witness will fall. If you have not got the testimony, live right and call upon the Lord and cease not till you obtain it. If you do not you will not stand. . . .

"The time will come when no man nor woman will be able to endure on borrowed light. Each will have to be guided by the light within himself. . . .

"If you don't have it you will not stand; therefore seek for the testimony of Jesus and cleave to it, that when the trying time comes you may not stumble and fall." (Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1967, p. 450.)

The third statement is from President Harold B. Lee, my boyhood companion and friend, and eleventh President of the Church:

"We have some tight places to go before the Lord is through with this church and the world in this dispensation, which is the last dispensation, which shall usher in the coming of the Lord. The gospel was restored to prepare a people ready to receive him. The power of Satan will increase; we see it in evidence on every hand. There will be inroads within the Church. . . . We will see those who profess membership but secretly are plotting and trying to lead people not to follow the leadership that the Lord has set up to preside in this church.

"Now the only safety we have as members of this church is to do exactly what the Lord said to the Church in that day when the Church was organized. We must learn to give heed to the words and commandments that the Lord shall give through his prophet, 'as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me; . . . as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith.' (D&C 21:4-5.) There will be some things that take patience and faith. You may not like what comes from the authority of the Church. . . . But if you listen to these things, as if from the mouth of the Lord himself, with patience and faith, the promise is that 'the gates of hell shall not prevail against you; yea, and the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before you, and cause the heavens to shake for your good, and

his name's glory.' (D&C 21:6.)" (In Conference Report, Oct. 1970, p. 152.)

Now, it seems to me that we have within those three prophetic statements the counsel we need, the counsel that is necessary to stay valiant in our testimony of Jesus and of the work of His church in these troubled times.

The Prophet as God's servant

One who rationalizes that he or she has a testimony of Jesus Christ but cannot accept direction and counsel from the leadership of His church is in a fundamentally unsound position and is in jeopardy of losing exaltation.

There are some who want to expose the weaknesses of Church leaders in an effort to show that they, too, are subject to human frailties and error like unto themselves. Let me illustrate the danger of this questionable philosophy.

President Brigham Young revealed that on one occasion he was tempted to be critical of the Prophet Joseph Smith regarding a certain financial matter. He said that the feeling did not last for more than perhaps thirty seconds. That feeling, he said, caused him great sorrow in his heart. The lesson he gave to members of the Church in his day may well be increased in significance today because the devil continues more active:

"I clearly saw and understood, *by the spirit of revelation manifested to me*, that if I was to harbor a thought in my heart that Joseph could be wrong in anything, I would begin to lose confidence in him, and that feeling would grow from step to step, and from one degree to another, until at last I would have the same lack of confidence in his being the mouthpiece for the Almighty. . . .

"I repented of my unbelief, and that too, very suddenly; I repented about as quickly as I committed the error. It was not for me to question

whether Joseph was dictated by the Lord at all times and under all circumstances. . . .

"It was not my prerogative to call him in question with regard to any act of his life. He was God's servant, and not mine. He did not belong to the people but to the Lord, and was doing the work of the Lord." (In *Journal of Discourses*, 4:297.)

From the days of my youth, I have gratefully cherished a testimony of the truth of this glorious work in which we are engaged. I want you to know of my love for President Spencer W. Kimball—and how grateful we are that he is here with us at the closing session. I feel the same toward his counselors, and my brethren of the Twelve, the Seventy, and the Bishopric. I know them to be men appointed by our Lord, under the inspiration of heaven. I sustain their inspired words and counsel and testify to you of the unity that we all feel among the General Authorities of this Church.

I love you, the members of the Church. I love all our Father's children and desire all to realize the blessings of

eternal life, and I know that is what the Lord, our Savior and Redeemer, desires for each one of us.

My appeal to all members of the Church is to be valiant—true and loyal, "True to the faith that our parents have cherished, True to the truth for which martyrs have perished, To God's command, Soul, heart, and hand, Faithful and true [may] we ever stand." ("Shall the Youth of Zion Falter?" *Hymns*, no. 157.)

I bear testimony that this is the Church of Jesus Christ. He presides over it and is close to His servants. God bless us all to be valiant in our testimony of Him, I pray. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

President Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder A. Theodore Tuttle, of the First Quorum of the Seventy, who will be followed by Elder G. Homer Durham.

Elder A. Theodore Tuttle

Center of spiritual strength

If we were to speak of the very center of spiritual strength in the Church, surely it must be the sacred ordinances of the temple of the Lord.

It is not generally known that almost the first words of the Lord to the Prophet Joseph—the intent of the gathering and building up of the Church—and almost the last words of the Lord to the Prophet pertained to temple work.

After the wondrous First Vision of the Prophet in the spring of 1820, three and a half years passed. The next divine manifestation he had was when

the angel Moroni appeared to him. He told Joseph about the Book of Mormon.

Because of the preeminence of this message, most people do not realize that Moroni brought another momentous message! First he quoted, with some variation, the prophecy of Malachi:

"Behold, I will reveal unto you the *Priesthood*, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

"And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the *promises* made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers.

"If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming." (D&C 2:1-3; see also JS—H 1:36-39; italics added.)

Moroni also quoted from Isaiah, Acts, Joel, and "many other passages of scripture." (JS—H 1:41.)

The prophecy of Malachi concerning Elijah was treated differently from all other scriptures quoted by Moroni. It was considered of such unique importance that it now appears as section 2 in the Doctrine and Covenants.¹

The house of the Lord

Moroni's message signaled to the Prophet that Elijah soon would appear. The foreordained events pertaining to temple work began to unroll like a scroll. Less than a year and a half after the organization of the Church, the Prophet dedicated the site for the temple in Jackson County, Missouri (August 1831). But the Saints were prevented from building it.

Then followed a score of significant events pertaining to the building of the house of the Lord. (See chart at end of talk.)

The first temple completed was Kirtland—built under great difficulties. The dedication of this temple was accompanied by the visitation of angels and fire resting upon the temple. Some saw visions and experienced other glorious manifestations.

Savior accepted temple

On the third of April, 1836, one week after the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, the monumental event occurred! The Savior appeared and accepted the temple. Moses and Elias also came. Then, Malachi's prophecy was fulfilled—for Elijah the prophet stood before them and said:

"Behold, the time has *fully* come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi—testifying that he

[Elijah] should be sent, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come—

"To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse—

"Therefore, the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands; and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors." (D&C 110:14-16; italics added.)

That event occurred 146 years ago yesterday, on the day that the Jews were celebrating their traditional ritual. For more than two millennia the Jews have looked for the coming of Elijah. Even today, in connection with the feast of the Passover, they will reenact the scene as they have done for centuries: they will set a place at their table, reserve an empty chair, open the door, raise their cups, and rise as if to greet Elijah.

Consummate authority in kingdom

Elijah has returned! Thanks be to God! He bestowed his keys! Work could now commence in the temples to weld eternal links between husbands and wives, between parents and children, through the sealing power of God.

It is essential to obtain the sealing power of the holy priesthood so that whatsoever an authorized officiator shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever he shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (See D&C 127:7.) For in the sacred ordinances and through this sacred power come glory and honor and eternal life. (See D&C 128:11-12.)

¹ This declaration by Moroni was placed as section 1 in the Book of Commandments. After the preface was given to the Book of Commandments on November 1, 1831, this revelation was then made section 2. Today it is found as section 2 in the Doctrine and Covenants.

It is by this power that husband and wife are sealed in a never-ending bond of marriage. It is by this power that a welding link is forged between children and parents. This is the holy power that is exercised in the temple. It is the power that validates all ordinances in the Church. This is the consummate authority in the kingdom of God.

Without the authority and use of that power, in all ages of the world, none of our Heavenly Father's children can enter His presence or ever become like Him! And if this were not so, the whole purpose of existence would be useless. That is why the Lord said "the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming." (D&C 2:3.)

Almost the last words of the Lord to the Prophet, so far as we can tell, also pertained to temple work. The Lord commanded the Prophet to build a temple in Nauvoo. The Saints set about to do it.

Prior to its completion, the Lord revealed His sacred ordinances, "things which have been kept hid from before the foundation of the world, things that pertain to the dispensation of the fulness of times." (D&C 124:41.) The order of performing baptism for the dead was revealed. Also the Lord required that witnesses verify the performance of ordinances, "that in all your recordings it may be recorded in heaven." (D&C 127:7.)

Finally, the members of the Twelve Apostles were endowed and the sealing authority conveyed to them, thereafter never to be lost. They could now carry on the fulness of the gospel. These crucial things the Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph only months before his martyrdom.

Consummate work of kingdom

From this brief account of signifi-

cant events in the life of the Prophet, it becomes apparent that his first and foremost duty was to build temples and restore the sealing power to perform sacred and eternal ordinances.

All the prophets since his time have likewise shown a concern for this work. During President Kimball's presidency more temples have been constructed than in any other time. We are now truly taking temples to the people.

And now, brothers and sisters, I want to testify concerning this sacred work. I know that it is true. The principles are eternal. The ordinances are divine—they are eternal—framed before the world was. You and I are responsible to carry on this work. The Lord has no one else to do it.

Surely this is not an onerous burden! It is a privilege. A temple recommend is one of the highest accolades we may receive. To use it regularly permits us to participate in the choicest gifts within the keeping of the Church. Those who attend feel a special spirit there. Peace comes. I know that their service there assists a departed one to gain exaltation. And I know that they in turn qualify for blessings from the other side of the veil. And I know that blessings will follow you home from the temple.

God lives. Jesus is the Christ. This is the consummate work of the kingdom. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder A. Theodore Tuttle of the First Quorum of the Seventy and president of the Provo temple has just addressed us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder G. Homer Durham, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder G. Homer Durham

By the testimony of skilled physicians, you are looking at a miracle as you see me at this pulpit. And I would be most ungrateful if I did not acknowledge before my Heavenly Father his intervention, the blessings of the holy priesthood, the support and prayers of my beloved wife, my brethren, family, and many here today.

Hole-in-the-Rock expedition

Now, with the help of the Spirit, I would like to speak of the future history of the Church, and do it by means of an example from our past history.

The quarterly conference of the Parowan Stake in December 1878 witnessed the call of forty-nine men and their families to a new mission. The call came from President John Taylor and the Twelve through Elder Erastus Snow. Later, others from nearby settlements joined the final company. What followed became the Hole-in-the-Rock expedition, an epic in Church history. Two hundred fifty of our people, with eighty wagons and hundreds of loose cattle and horses, cut their way through the rough, unknown country of southeastern Utah. The area traversed remains one of the least-known regions of the world today. Their objective was the San Juan country. In addition to desert cliffs and canyons, the forbidding Colorado River gorge stood in their way. No highway bridge crossed that gorge until 1934. No commercial airline flew from Utah to Arizona, near their route, until 1959.

Seeking the shortest route, Mormon explorers found a narrow slit in Glen Canyon. The river ran two thousand feet below the red cliffs. This "Hole in the Rock" seemed to offer the shortest route.

Only a slit in the sheer cliffs, the hole was too narrow for teams, or in some places even for a man. Sheer

drops of as much as seventy-five feet made it impossible even for a mountain sheep, let alone loaded wagons. In December 1879, after having left the Parowan and Cedar valleys the previous April, the Saints began to cut a precipitous, primitive road with blasting powder and tools. Elder Platte D. Lyman, leading the party, found that if a road could be built, it would drop eight feet every sixteen and one-half, the first third of the way to the river. Thereafter came several sheer precipices. But the party was prepared. With faith, they were equipped not only for blasting cliffs and carving passages, but for building a raft-boat capable of carrying teams and wagons across the river.

A road was built and a boat made by January 25, 1880. Now came the effort to get families and the first forty wagons, camped at the rim, down the "Hole." The others, back at Fifty-Mile Spring, would follow later.

Last wagon of the day

Kumen Jones has left a description of the method of descent. Twenty men and boys would hold long ropes back of each wagon. The wheels were brake-locked with chains. Otherwise, rolling wheels would pitch, unchecked, into the struggling team. On January 26, 1880, a month later, Platte D. Lyman recorded in his journal: "Today we worked all the wagons in this camp down the Hole and ferried 26 of them across the river. The boat is worked by 1 pair of oars and does very well."

The family of Joseph Stanford Smith and his wife, Arabella, was the last wagon to descend that day. A grandson, Raymond Smith Jones, has described their experience. I doubt that a modern film company, with millions of dollars and modern engineering resources, could film this epic.

Stanford Smith had helped the preceding wagons down that long day. His outfit had evidently been forgotten. Deeply disturbed, he climbed the two-thousand-foot incline. He found Arabella sitting on a quilt, holding the baby, patiently waiting. His outfit and their two other children in the wagon were hidden behind a huge, mountainous rock.

Stanford Smith moved his load to the edge. A third horse was hitched to the rear axle. Stanford and Arabella looked down the "Hole." He said, "I am afraid we can't make it."

The wife replied, "We must make it."

He said, "If we only had a few men to hold the wagon back we might make it, Belle."

Replied his wife, "I'll do the holding back."

A quilt was laid on the ground. There she placed the baby between the legs of three-year-old Roy. "Hold little brother til papa comes for you," she said. Ada, the older girl, was placed in front of them. Behind the wagon Belle Smith grasped the reins of the horse hitched to the rear. Stanford started the team down the "Hole." The wagon lurched downward. The rear horse and Belle were thrown from their feet. Recovering, she hung back, pulling on the lines with all her strength and courage. A jagged rock cut a cruel gash in her leg from heel to hip. The horse behind the wagon fell to his haunches. The half-dead animal was dragged down most of the way. The gallant woman, clothes torn, with a grievous wound, later said, "I crow-hopped right along!"

On reaching the bottom, Stanford and Arabella heard a faint call from the children. Joseph Stanford Smith climbed to the top to get them. They were safely in place. Carrying the baby, the other children clinging to him and to each other, he led them down the rocky crack. As they approached the river's edge, they saw

five men carrying chains and ropes in the distance. The Smiths had been missed. The men were coming to help. Stanford called out, "Forget it, fellows. . . . My wife here is all the help a fellow needs." (See David E. Miller, *Hole-in-the-Rock: An Epic in the Colonization of the Great American West*, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1959, pp. 101-18.)

Greater history ahead

The history of the Church is filled with such thrilling episodes. This history is the heritage of the most recent convert, whether in Asia, Africa, or elsewhere in the world. As Paul wrote to the Galatians, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." (Gal. 3:27, 29.)

We face serious challenges today. Are Latter-day Saint homes throughout the world producing men and women of courage, and obedient children? Will our children stay in place and not fall into the dangerous defiles of life? What kind of history are Latter-day Saints today producing for the future history of the Church?

The plains and oceans have been crossed. The Hole-in-the-Rock has been conquered. How are we laboring today?

Great events lie before us, leading to the second coming of Christ. What is the significance of the many new temples that are being announced? What is implied for us in the revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1831: "The keys of the kingdom of God are committed unto man on the earth, and from thence shall the gospel roll forth unto the ends of the earth." (D&C 65:2.)

There is a great Church history behind us. There is an even greater Church history ahead of us for every member, every unit of the Church.

That history is being made every day, some way, in Korea, in the Philippines, in the Andes, and in every stake.

Prepare to abide the day of his coming

The vision of the New Jerusalem has moved generations of mankind. It has moved our people. We look to the day when "Christ will reign personally upon the earth." (A of F 1:10.) But, as the prophet Malachi asked, "Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth?" (Mal. 3:2.) Let us prepare to abide the day of his coming by building Zion in our hearts, in our families, as we make pages for the future history of the Church. President Kimball has told us repeatedly to beautify our lives, our homes. He has challenged us to render more Christlike service.

I testify that the gospel of Jesus Christ as restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith is the power of God unto salvation, that he is our Savior and Redeemer, that God the Father lives, and that President Spencer W. Kimball is the Lord's living prophet today. If we respond to his prophetic leadership as the Hole-in-the-Rock pioneers did to the call of President Taylor, we will help prepare the time when Christ shall reign "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords." (Rev. 19:16.)

We must prepare now to "abide

the day of his coming." The future history of the Church can then be marked by successful passage through times of trial and adversity. That we may each do our part, loving the Lord and our fellowmen in doing so, is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder G. Homer Durham, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy and the Church historian who, if I remember correctly, was born in Parowan, has just addressed us.

The Choir and congregation will now join in singing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet." After the singing, Elder F. Enzo Busche, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will speak to us.

The Choir and congregation sang "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

President Hinckley

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder F. Enzo Busche, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, who will be followed by Elder William Grant Bangerter.

Elder F. Enzo Busche

There has never been a time in the entire history of mankind when marriage and the institution of the family have been so endangered as in this generation. Nearly all the circumstances that have made family life in the past the most natural way for people to live together have changed—

and it has all happened in the brief span of the last seventy years.

Family setting changed

Just a little over a generation ago, members of the average family had to

work a long day to provide a humble living, and the dark evenings found them huddled around a fire, enjoying one another's company in singing and sharing personal experiences. This was the natural way for education and entertainment and was nearly the perfect environment for a harmonious family life.

Today influences from literally unlimited sources through the media of radio, television, and print, together with numerous inventions of modern civilization, have drastically changed the historical cultural setting of the family. In this time of special challenge for marriage and the family, the Lord has restored, through his prophets in these latter days, the eternal dimension of that sacred covenant between husband and wife and has charged us with a new awareness of the real purpose of the family.

The integrity of this covenant became the center of revealed gospel truths in these latter days, well summarized by the late prophet David O. McKay, who said, "No other success can compensate for failure in the home." (In Conference Report, Apr. 1964, p. 5.) It is obvious that in marriage today we cannot rely merely on patterns of the past without developing, perfecting, and putting into action that power that the Lord has given us as the greatest commandment—the commandment to love one another.

Christ's love versus world's love

Still, after nearly two thousand years, the people of the world are refusing to accept the words of the Savior found in Matthew, chapter 5:

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you,

and persecute you." (Verses 43-44.)

This love that Christ is teaching us is not the same as the world's love. It does not mean just to love the one who is nice, who behaves well and is respected, powerful, and influential. Our Heavenly Father, through his prophets in these latter days, calls us to develop the love of God as a power from above that cannot be threatened through outward circumstances. This love of God, according to the prophet Nephi of the Book of Mormon, has to be achieved and is "the most desirable above all things." (1 Ne. 11:22.)

However, as King Benjamin, another great Book of Mormon leader, teaches us, this love of God will not be in us as long as we remain in our natural state. "The natural man is an enemy to God," he explains. (Mosiah 3:19.) We have to overcome this natural man—this "enemy to God"—our natural self. According to King Benjamin, we have to learn to listen to the enticings of the Holy Spirit and literally make a covenant with God, accepting the atonement of the Savior, and becoming as a child—submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, and willing to submit to all things, even as a child submits to his father. (See Mosiah 3:19.)

Unconditional love

What a powerful message, and what a challenging responsibility! We have to learn to commit ourselves every day anew, to have our lives centered around *this*—the key commandment from God to his children.

Moroni, another Book of Mormon prophet, tells us how we can achieve this love:

"But charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him.

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled

with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons of God." (Moro. 7:47-48.)

Our Heavenly Father wants us to fill ourselves with this love—this love which is without condition. Filled with this love, we are prepared to receive the admonition to take upon ourselves the cross of our daily lives and in humility learn to follow in his footsteps, according to the Savior's words found in Matthew, chapter 10:

"And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

"He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." (Verses 38-39.)

A marriage that is built on this foundation of unconditional love in the covenant and oath of the eternal dimension does not know the *two* self-centered individuals living together as we often observe in today's society. In the marriage that is built on the cornerstone of unconditional love, which is the love of God, the idea of divorce is unthinkable, and even short separations bring unquenchable pain. Separations and divorces are a sign of weakness and sometimes wickedness.

The Lord has given a clear teaching in behalf of the sacredness of the marriage covenant. We read in Matthew, chapter 19, the words of the Savior to the Pharisees:

"Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

"And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,

"And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

"Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

"They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing

of divorcement, and to put her away?

"He saith unto them, Moses *because of the hardness of your hearts* suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so." (Verses 3-8; italics added.)

Love as a power

The only way that we will not be suffering from the hardness of our hearts, as Christ explains, is to build within ourselves that power of love, literally asking our Heavenly Father for this gift of love—and becoming a Saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord and becoming as a child in humility, that we can be filled with this unconditional love, and in this love, being in the Spirit and with this Spirit, being directed in all the challenges of our lives.

We know that we, in our imperfect bodies and in our strivings for perfection, are confronted with situations where members of our own families, or even a spouse, can behave like an enemy. Then the time comes when love as a power is needed and tested, for the person who has earned love the least needs it the most.

In closing I want to share with you a personal experience. One day when circumstances made it necessary for me to be at home at an unusual time, I witnessed from another room how our eleven-year-old son, just returning from school, was directing ugly words towards his younger sister. They were words that offended me—words that I had never thought our son would use. My first natural reaction in my anger was to get up and go after him. Fortunately, I had to walk across the room and open a door before I could reach him, and I remember in those few seconds I fervently prayed to my Heavenly Father to help me to handle the situation. Peace came over me. I was no longer angry.

Our son, being shocked to see me home, was filled with fear when I

approached him. To my surprise I heard myself saying, "Welcome home, son!" and I extended my hand as a greeting. And then in a formal style I invited him to sit close to me in the living room for a personal talk. I heard myself expressing my love for him. I talked with him about the battle that every one of us has to fight each day within ourselves.

As I expressed my confidence in him, he broke into tears, confessing his unworthiness and condemning himself beyond measure. Now it was my role to put his transgression in the proper perspective and to comfort him. A wonderful spirit came over us, and we ended up crying together, hugging each other in love and finally in joy. What could have been a disastrous confrontation between father and son became, through the help from the powers above, one of the most beautiful experiences of our relationship that we both have never

forgotten.

Brothers and sisters, I know that God lives, that this is his church, that these are the days of preparation and warning; and I testify that when we are not fully exercising the love of God as a power as he has commanded us to do, our marriages will not be strong, our families will be weak, and our own salvation will be in jeopardy. I bear you this testimony in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder F. Enzio Busche has just spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder William Grant Bangerter of the First Quorum of the Seventy, who will be followed by Elder David B. Haight of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder W. Grant Bangerter

Others today here have spoken about the temple, but last November, at the dedication of the Jordan River Temple, we held three services a day for five days, and we didn't say it all. This is a good time to talk about temples, and I would like to explain what temples are for. As a people, the Latter-day Saints have accomplished a magnificent work in the temples. They serve with commendable devotion to find the names of deceased relatives, to work in extracting names from the records, and then to perform the ordinances for the redemption of the dead as well as for themselves. Over sixteen thousand temple workers give voluntary service in the temples, thus approaching in numbers the force of full-time missionaries who are proclaiming the gospel.

Serve in house of the Lord

This is a day of prophetic fulfillment. As Isaiah said twenty-seven hundred years ago:

"It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

"And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Isa. 2:2-3.)

The meaning, depth, and power of that expression can only be per-

ceived by those who know about temples.

We are passing through a remarkable period in connection with the temples. Four more new temples were announced last week. The past two years have seen the number of temples, including those in operation and those in planning or under construction, increase from twenty-one to forty-one. Three of these have been dedicated and have commenced their operation in the same period. Nothing of like nature has taken place in the entire history of the Church. The stake conferences now being conducted throughout the Church are to teach the Latter-day Saints more about our mission to serve in the house of the Lord.

Doctrine of the temple

I think it will serve a purpose, however, to mention some generalizations and misconceptions about temples which have developed which show a less than perfect understanding. For example, it is sometimes said:

1. My genealogy has all been done.
2. Computers and the name extraction will do the work for me.
3. Temple work is for the dead.
4. Temple work is for old people.
5. We go to the temple to do a name.
6. Going to the temple is optional.

As we study the scriptures, we learn that the doctrine of the temple requires the following of the Latter-day Saints:

First, the building of temples.

Second, going to the temple for our blessings.

Third, returning to perform the ordinances for deceased relatives.

Fourth, doing the work for others as well.

Fifth, frequent attendance for per-

sonal spiritual benefit.

What are all these temples for?

Temples are for the living

First: *Temples are for the living members of the Church.* Going to the temple is *not* optional. Temples are "a place of instruction for all those who are called to the work of the ministry . . . that they may be perfected in [their] understanding . . . in all things pertaining to the kingdom of God on the earth." (D&C 97:13-14.) "Therefore, verily I say unto you, that your anointings, and your washings, . . . your solemn assemblies, . . . and . . . your oracles in your most holy places . . . [are] for the glory, honor, and endowment of [Zion's] municipals [or in other words, her citizens, and] are ordained by the ordinance of my holy house, which my people are always commanded to build unto my holy name." (D&C 124:39.)

The endowment in the temple is a necessary and sacred blessing as essential for the members of the Church as baptism. Thereafter come the sealings of wives to their husbands and of children to their parents. Without these blessings there is no fullness of the gospel. Without them, said Moroni, the "earth would be utterly wasted at his coming." (D&C 2:3.)

Countless families in distant areas have never had this privilege. Even in areas where temples have been established for generations, half of the families have never been sealed together. *Temple work is for the living members of the Church.*

Redemption of the dead

Second: *Temple work is for the redemption of the dead.* The scriptures and the doctrine, however, refer more specifically to a particular group of the dead. Malachi spoke about "binding" fathers to children and children to

fathers. (See Malachi 4:6.) Joseph Smith emphasized temple blessings for our *kindred* dead, *our* dead. (See D&C 124:32-36, 127:5-6; 128:8, 14-15.) The emphasis is on the family. The priority is to seek out our own deceased relatives.

The work is just beginning

Your genealogy has not all been done. My own grandparents performed "all" the temple work for their deceased relatives fifty-five years ago. Since that time our family has discovered sixteen thousand others. In areas where new temples are being built, this work is just beginning. The controlled extraction process being carried on in many of the stakes of the Church with such great devotion and success does not touch those of the more recent generations and will not save those of our own close relationship. It is, however, of immeasurable value as the more distant generations are reached.

And may we always remember that we perform the temple ordinances for people and not for names. Those we call "the dead" are alive in the spirit and are present in the temple.

Preparing a people

The purpose of the Church, then, is to have a prepared people, ready to receive the temples as they are completed. It would be unfortunate to build temples around the earth and have them stand largely idle. One way to prepare people is to give a strong sermon. Sometimes the result is that we feel guilty. Then after two weeks this feeling wears off, and we get over it. The answer to having a prepared people lies with the leadership of the priesthood.

In Chile, for example, where I served at the time the temple in Santiago was announced, it was found that among one hundred thousand

members only three thousand men had been ordained to the priesthood. Thus, since they must have the priesthood to enter the temple, only a limited number would be qualified. We determined, therefore, that we would prepare at least ten thousand men to be thus ordained so that they with their faithful companions could then go to the temple.

The Saints in Chile have also undertaken the responsibility to prepare one hundred thousand names of their deceased relatives to take with them to the temple by the time it is ready. Similar preparations are being made in other areas.

Renewed and continued preparation

Now, where temples have long been established, it is time for a renewed and continuing preparation. This is the work of home teachers, quorum presidents, bishops, and especially high priests, as well as all others involved in teaching the gospel. I remember one elders quorum president who determined that his leadership objective would be to help every member in his quorum to go to the temple. His initial report stated that all but six had qualified. He later reported that all but three had gone before he was released. After his release, however, they "got" the other three.

Having the privilege of working each day in the administration of the temples, I am constantly impressed with the richness, the holiness, and the glory of the blessings administered there. Questions come to us about the ordinances performed in the temple. We, of course, are not permitted to discuss them outside the temple, because of their sacred nature. Others press for a preparatory orientation so that those who enter the temple will not be confused. I want to emphasize that *the preparation to enter the temple lies in the gospel*. Nothing is said or

done in the temple which does not have its foundation in the scriptures.

Teach them the gospel

The gospel is *faith in the Lord, Jesus Christ*. This implies a willingness to accept His doctrine and take upon us His name, being obedient to His commandments. *The gospel is repentance* and a cleansing from all iniquity. *It is baptism* whereby we have made the covenant and promise. It is the right to have the *companionship of the Holy Ghost*, which, when we have a correct frame of mind, will teach us as we go through the temple. *The gospel is the scriptures*. The answer to almost any appropriate question about the temple will be found in the scriptures for those who seek it. *The gospel is prayer, humility, teachableness, charity*. It is *commitment* and it is *covenant and ordinances*. It is also *blessings*.

Now may I give some counsel to teachers, bishops, and stake presidents. No one, of course, will learn all

about the temple by only one experience; but if you want to prepare your people for the temple, teach them the gospel. Don't try to teach them what goes on in the temple—we go to the temple to learn about that. If these gospel principles are properly established in our lives, we will understand the temple all right. If they are not in place, nothing else can help, and those lacking that knowledge ought not yet to go.

May God bless this people to embrace the blessings and perform the sacred service provided in the temples, is my sincere prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder William Grant Bangerter has just addressed us.

Elder David B. Haight, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our next speaker. We shall then hear from President N. Eldon Tanner, First Counselor in the First Presidency.

Elder David B. Haight

I'm going to ask you to pause for a moment and recall the feeling that you just had as you stood and joined in the singing of "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet" (*Hymns*, no. 196), as you looked upon our living prophet.

Love for prophet

Never have I experienced the spontaneous outpouring of love that we witnessed during our singing of that great song. We felt the love taught by the Savior.

I hope that all of you will recall this experience, will remember it, will

write it down. Perhaps you might say that words really cannot describe the way you felt as you looked up here at our prophet. Maybe you felt as I did—that my heart would burst. May that become part of your history.

In the hearts of all mankind, of whatever race or station in life, there are inexpressible longings for something they do not now possess. This longing is implanted in man by a loving Creator.

Jesus Christ, Savior and Redeemer

It is God's design that this longing of the human heart should lead to

the one who alone is able to satisfy it. That fulness is found only in Jesus the Christ, the Son of our Eternal Father in Heaven. Paul declared, "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." (Col. 1:19.)

Jesus Christ was chosen and ordained to be the one and only Savior and Redeemer of the world. To the brother of Jared He said:

"Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. . . . In me shall all mankind have life, and that eternally, even they who shall believe on my name." (Ether 3:14, 1982 edition.)

He taught His disciples:

"I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. . . .

"That every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:38, 40.)

Jesus taught and ministered to His disciples

Today, much of the world is celebrating Palm Sunday—commemorating our Lord's entrance into Jerusalem. The multitudes, as described by Matthew and John, "spread their garments in the way" (Matt. 21:8), and "took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him" (John 12:13).

It was the time of the annual feast of the Passover. For some time the chief priests of the Sanhedrin had conspired together to find an excuse for taking Jesus and plotted to put Him to death. They felt their opportunity had arrived.

The day preceding the eating of the Passover, Jesus instructed His disciples where to find a room so they could meet together and receive His instructions. In that room Jesus met with the Twelve, and they sat down to eat. After they had finished, Jesus

taught them and ministered to them. He washed their feet and said to them:

"Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet." (John 13:13-14.) Then He taught them:

"Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. . . .

"Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me; and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; . . .

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John 13:31, 33-35.)

He continued to teach:

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

"And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." (John 14:1-4.)

But Thomas asked, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?" (John 14:5.) The Savior replied:

"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

"If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him." (John 14:6-7.)

"I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." (John 16:28.)

"Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." (John 16:23.)

Initiated sacrament and prayed for believers

While in that upper room, Jesus, initiating the sacrament, picked up bread, brake it, prayed over it, and passed it to the disciples, saying:

"This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

"... This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." (Luke 22:19-20.)

After introducing the sacrament, the Savior said to His disciples, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." (John 16:7.)

The Savior prayed to the Father for the Apostles and all believers:

"Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

"As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John 17:1-3.)

The betrayal

After Jesus had finished His prayer to His Father, He left the upper room with the disciples and entered the Garden of Gethsemane to seek solitude and to pray:

"O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Matt. 26:39.)

Of His suffering in the garden, the Savior Himself has said:

"Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—

"Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my

preparations unto the children of men." (D&C 19:18-19.)

"Behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent." (D&C 19:16.)

As the guards and Judas approached Him, the Lord said, "Behold, he is at hand that doth betray me." (Matt. 26:46.)

Then Judas kissed Him on the cheek.

Jesus asked, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" (Matt. 26:50.) "Whom seek ye?" (John 18:4.)

A guard replied, "Jesus of Nazareth."

The Savior said, "I am he." (John 18:5.)

The guards then led Jesus away to the Jewish rulers and then to Caiaphas, the high priest. (See Matt. 26:57.)

The Crucifixion

"I adjure thee by the living God," said Caiaphas, "that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God." (Matt. 26:63.)

"I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." (Mark 14:62.)

Jesus was then taken before Pilate, who asked, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" (John 18:33.)

Jesus replied, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews." (John 18:36.)

Pilate said to the crowd:

"I find in him no fault at all.

"But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?" (John 18:38-39.)

The crowd shouted, "No! No! Not this man, but Barabbas." (See John 18:40.)

Then Pilate took Jesus and

scourged Him. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe. (See Mark 15:15-17.)

Pilate said, "I find no fault in this man." (Luke 23:4.)

The crowd shouted, "Crucify him. Crucify him. Away with him. Crucify him." (See Luke 23:21.)

And they took Him, the Master—He whom Peter denied three times—and led Him forth. He carried His own cross. He began the long journey to the hill, past the crowds that lined the way, past the weeping women, past the murderous mob that had cried for His crucifixion and through the gates of the city, out to the hill called Golgotha—the "place of a skull." (See John 19:17.) And there they crucified Him.

To the penitent thief hanging beside Him, Jesus said, "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:43.)

The last mortal words of Jesus:

"Woman, behold thy son!" (John 19:26.)

And then turning to John, "Behold thy mother!" (John 19:27.)

And then, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." (Luke 23:46.)

"It is finished." (John 19:30.)

The Resurrection

"Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning," women went to the sepulchre with spices they had prepared, and "found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre." (Luke 24:1-2.)

The voice of an angel asked:

"Why seek ye the living among the dead?"

"He is not here, but is risen." (Luke 24:5-6.) This announcement proclaimed the most glorious event since the dawn of creation.

Mary heard a voice ask: "Woman, why weepest thou? whom

seekest thou?"

She said, "Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away."

She heard someone say, "Mary."

Then she knew Him and replied, "Master."

"Touch me not," He said, "for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." (See John 20:15-17.)

Later Jesus appeared to the Apostles in the upper room where He had spent the evening with them prior to His death. They were frightened. Then they heard the voice of the Master:

"Peace be unto you. . . .

"Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?"

"Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." (Luke 24:36, 38-39.)

Later, on the seashore at Galilee, while the Savior and the disciples were eating fish together, Jesus asked Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?"

"Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee."

"Feed my lambs."

"Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?"

"Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee."

"Feed my sheep."

"Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?"

"Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."

And the Savior replied yet again, "Feed my sheep." (See John 21:15-17.)

Three times Peter had openly denied the Lord. Now, three times Jesus drew from him the assurance of his love and loyalty.

The time had come for Jesus to

ascend to His Father's throne. Before His death He had declared to His Father, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." (John 17:4.)

After His resurrection He tarried on the earth for some forty days, that His disciples might more fully comprehend His risen and glorified being and be instructed in matters of the kingdom of God.

Now He was ready to leave. The Apostles knew He was the Savior. His disciples would no longer associate Him with only the tomb. They would testify of Him as glorified.

Mount of Olives

As the place for His ascension Jesus chose the Mount of Olives, which He knew well; for nearby, on the slope of the mount at Bethany, He had found rest and affection with Mary and Martha and Lazarus. Also near was the Garden of Gethsemane where He had prayed and agonized alone. He chose the Mount of Olives to ascend from, and upon its summit His feet will rest when He comes again—not as a man of sorrows, but as a glorious and triumphant king.

There on the Mount of Olives the Savior instructed the Apostles and all who believe:

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28:19-20.)

I testify by the power of the Holy Ghost that this same Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, crucified for the sins of the world "to cleanse it from all unrighteousness;

"That through him all might be saved." (See D&C 76:41-42.) "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he

shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom." (Isa. 40:11.)

He is our Redeemer, our Lord, our King. His kingdom is again established on the earth, which is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This church, by divine direction, is preparing the world for His second coming—for He will come again—I humbly declare in His holy name, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder David B. Haight, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

Before hearing President Tanner's remarks, we should like to express appreciation to all of you who have participated in the meeting of this great conference. We pray that you may return safely to your homes, basking in the inspiration that you have felt here. On behalf of all who have listened to the singing during sessions of this conference, we express our thanks to the choirs that have performed and to their conductors and accompanists.

We appreciate the attention given by representatives of the media in reporting the sessions of this conference.

We thank our city officials for their cooperation, as we express gratitude likewise to the attending physicians, the Relief Society and Church Health Unit nurses who have been on hand to render service, and to the ushers and interpreters.

We give our thanks to the owners and managers of the many radio and television and cable systems who have given public service time to carry sessions of this conference in many countries.

We shall now be pleased to hear President N. Eldon Tanner, First Counselor in the First Presidency, and following that to listen to a few words

of blessing and benediction from our beloved prophet, President Kimball; after which the Tabernacle Choir will sing "Our God Is a God of Love."

The benediction will then be

offered by Elder Rex D. Pinegar of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and this conference will then stand adjourned for six months.

President N. Eldon Tanner

President Kimball is directing us

I'm very pleased to say a few words to you before we close this meeting. I feel very blessed this afternoon as I sit here by our President [President Spencer W. Kimball], whom I miss more than I can possibly say whenever he is not with us. We've appreciated very much having him come and attend the Council of the Twelve and First Presidency meetings. When we had all of the General Authorities of the Church meet in the temple last Thursday, President Kimball came in and expressed his love and appreciation for us. We still have him directing us.

These good men have testimonies

Before I go any further, I would like to say that I've had the privilege of attending some of the meetings directed by the sisters. And I want to tell them I think it is a wonderful thing the way they carry on the work. May the Lord bless them in their work.

Now, as we've sat here in this conference we have been very fortunate to hear all the General Authorities who have borne testimony, who have referred to prophecies and blessings, and who have described the progress that this Church has made. I would like to say to each and every one of you that all these good men have testimonies of the gospel. They wouldn't lie to you. They are telling you the truth—and in a spirit we can't

forget. As they have talked to us, I'm sure in most of your minds you have felt it is right, and you have agreed with what they have said.

Help us live worthy of this conference

Now, determine as you review in your minds their words, which one of your weaknesses you are going to try to get rid of in order to enjoy the presence and blessings of our Heavenly Father.

I have had the great privilege of being a counselor and working very closely with four of our Presidents. These prophets had entirely different personalities, but to see how the Lord works through them is a great privilege, and one can realize why they were chosen. Follow their teachings.

I humbly pray that each and every one of us will go home with one thought—and that is to improve ourselves and be worthy of the blessings we enjoy. I asked a grandson of mine to bless the food at lunch today, and I was very pleased to hear him say, "And help us to remember what we learn at this conference, and help us to live worthy of it and apply it in our lives."

Brethren and sisters, may the Lord give us a clear understanding of where we should improve to serve him. Start right now, as I have done, to determine to put into practice some

of the things that have been taught to us today.

I'm very happy to have been here this afternoon. I'm glad to see how the conference proceeded. It's a very great conference, and to have our President

here at two of the sessions is a great blessing indeed. May the Lord bless us that we may do his will and keep his commandments, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

Gratitude and love

My beloved brothers and sisters, this is a great experience for me. I have waited for this day and hoped for it and believed for it. I have a great love for the people of this Church, and gratitude for the love expressed by them and by all of the people of these valleys.

and for the memory of the great experiences I've had with you, I bear my testimony: this work is divine, the Lord is at the helm, the Church is true, and all is well. God bless you, brothers and sisters, I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

The Lord is at the helm

So as I express that love for you

The Choir sang "Our God Is a God of Love."

Elder Rex D. Pinegar offered the benediction.

GENERAL WELFARE SESSION SATURDAY MORNING

A general welfare services session was held in connection with general conference on Saturday, April 3, 1982, at 7:00 A.M. In attendance at this meeting were General Authorities, the Relief Society General Presidency, Regional Representatives, stake presidencies, high councilors involved in welfare work, bishoprics, stake and ward Relief Society presidencies, and others responsible for

operating welfare production projects.

President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

President Romney opened the meeting with the following remarks:

President Marion G. Romney

We are mindful of the absence of

President Kimball, whose doctors recommended that he watch these proceedings on television. He continues to improve, but it was felt wise that he not attend this meeting. We hope and pray that he will soon be able to return to his normal schedule of duties.

We urge you to take notes during these sessions and, when you return to your stakes and wards, to pass on to your co-workers who have welfare responsibilities what you learn here this morning.

Under the direction of Donald Ripplinger with Roy M. Darley at the organ, we shall begin this meeting by singing hymn no. 118, "Now Let Us Rejoice." The invocation will be offered by Elder Franklin D. Richards,

a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The congregation sang "Now Let Us Rejoice."

Elder Franklin D. Richards offered the invocation.

President Romney

Bishop J. Richard Clarke, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, will be our first speaker. He will be followed by Sister Barbara B. Smith, General President of the Relief Society.

Bishop J. Richard Clarke

Work is a blessing

Few writers in our generation have produced the number and quality of best-selling books that James A. Michener has. I am amazed at the range of his interests and his commitment to excellence. His success is not accidental. It does not come solely from the endowment of a natural talent. His success comes from developing the habit of hard work.

He was raised in poverty by a widowed mother. From age eleven, James worked six days a week every summer and delivered papers during the winter. At age fourteen he apprenticed as a plumber and worked fourteen hours a day in the summer and four hours a day in the winter. Looking back he says, "Instead of turning me against work, this ingrained in me the attitude that sensible people work hard to attain sensible goals—a philosophy I still adhere to." ("An Authentic Work Ethic: 1. The

Path to Achievement," *Reader's Digest*, Jan. 1977, p. 149.)

Work is a blessing from God. It is a fundamental principle of salvation, both spiritual and temporal. When Adam was driven from his garden home, he was told that his bread must be produced by his physical toil, by the sweat of his brow. Note carefully the words: "Cursed shall be the ground *for thy sake*" (Moses 4:23; italics added), that is, for his good or benefit. It would not be easy to master the earth; but that was his challenge and his blessing, as it is ours.

A Mormon trademark

We are cocreators with God. He gave us the capacity to do the work he left undone, to harness the energy, mine the ore, transform the treasures of the earth for our good. But most important, the Lord knew that from the

crucible of work emerges the hard core of character.

Work has become a Mormon trademark. We are known throughout the world as a highly motivated, industrious people. Eric Hoffer once cautioned, "Put a Mormon in a hopper and out comes a tycoon." (Quoted by C. Brooklyn Derr in *ENSIGN*, Feb. 1978, p. 3.)

This intense commitment to the work ethic is our tradition. Mormon industry has left its mark upon every piece of land we have occupied. Missouri, Nauvoo, the Salt Lake Basin, and all the valleys of the mountains where the Saints have settled are famous monuments to Mormon toil.

Of this period, President J. Reuben Clark observed: "We moved under our own power, without subsidy, without loan, wished on our way only by the maledictions of those who drove us out from our own homes and then appropriated, without paying for it, the property they forced us to leave behind. . . .

"So we struggled on against want and misery; toil and hardship were with us daily. . . .

"But the Church survived; the people prospered. *Character endured intact*. We took care of our own poor. In times of scarcity neighbors helped one another.

"Time and again, we passed through the fiery furnace; we came out of it each time, refined, with the dross burned away, re-inspired, sanctified." (*Church Welfare Plan*, pamphlet, 1939, pp. 8-9; italics added.)

President Kimball sets a high standard

In this commitment, our prophets have led by example. It is said that President Wilford Woodruff loved work. "To him it was a blessing, a privilege. . . . His toil in the canyons, his sweat in the harvest field, . . . were all important parts in divine economy. . . .

"To sweat, was a divine command as much so as to pray." (Matthias F. Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff: History of His Life and Labors*, Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1909, pp. 644-45.)

In our day, I know of no better example of obedience to the divine law of work than President Kimball. Personifying his "Do it!" philosophy, President Kimball has committed himself not only to the pursuit of happiness, but to the happiness of pursuit. On one occasion, when Dr. Wilkinson showed concern for President Kimball's health and the increasing demands he was making on his body, President Kimball responded in a kindly way, "Your job, Brother Wilkinson, is to keep me going at the pace I am going to go."

This reminds me of the farmer who was feeling a little sluggish and went to see his doctor. After examination, the doctor told him that his problem was that he was burning his candle at both ends. The farmer replied, "I knew that before I came. What I want from you is some more wax."

President Kimball's complete dedication to his work sets a high standard for all of us. We have a moral obligation to exercise our personal capabilities of mind, muscle, and spirit in a way that will return to the Lord, our families, and our society the fruits of our best efforts. To do less is to live our lives unfulfilled. It is to deny ourselves and those dependent upon us opportunity and advantage. We work to earn a living, it is true; but as we toil, let us also remember that we are building a life. Our work determines what that life will be.

Work faithfully

Work is honorable. It is good therapy for most problems. It is the antidote for worry. It is the equalizer for deficiency of native endowment. Work makes it possible for the average

to approach genius. What we may lack in aptitude, we can make up for in performance.

As recommended by Korsaren: "If you are poor, work. . . . If you are happy, work. Idleness gives room for doubts and fears. If disappointments come, keep right on working. If sorrow overwhelms you, . . . work. . . . When faith falters and reason fails, just work. When dreams are shattered and hope seems dead, work. Work as if your life were in peril. It really is. No matter what ails you, work. Work faithfully. . . . Work is the greatest remedy available for both mental and physical afflictions." (*The Forbes Scrapbook of Thoughts on the Business of Life*, New York: Forbes Inc., 1968, p. 427.)

Four elements of work ethic

Let me suggest some other elements of the work ethic which are important:

1. As Latter-day Saints, if we would be true to our religion, we must perform high-quality work. It is a matter of integrity. Every piece of work we do is a portrait of the one who produced it. We are increasingly concerned with the diminishing quality of work in our society. On every hand we see shoddy workmanship for which full compensation is expected, whether the product meets acceptable standards or not. We must be motivated by a higher ideal than simply meeting the artificial standard of a society which has allowed inferior performance to be acceptable. That is not the Mormon ethic. In times of unemployment, Latter-day Saints who practice the work principles of our religion should be in great demand.

2. Let us give full, honest effort to our jobs as though we owned the enterprise. In a very real sense, each of us is in business for ourselves, no matter who pays us. Be honest with your employer. Make sure that "the laborer is worthy of his hire." (D&C 84:79.) Our employers should get the

best we have in us, not just enough to get by or to meet common standards. Each of us should set a personal standard based upon our ability. Let us exemplify the old pioneer motto: A Full Day's Work for a Full Day's Pay.

3. Continue to invest in your personal development. Expand your occupational horizons by constant study. Use your spare time wisely. If we waste thirteen minutes each day, it is the equivalent of two weeks a year without pay. Look to your present job as a stepping-stone along your career path. Take time to think. The dimensions of most jobs are constrained only by the mind of the uncreative worker. I like what one businessman counseled: "If at first you do succeed, try something harder!"

4. To teach our children to work is a primary duty of parenthood. Our children have experienced unprecedented prosperity created by parents who have worked hard to provide what they themselves did not have as youngsters. If we are to save our children temporally and spiritually, we must train them to work. They must learn by example that work is not drudgery, but a blessing.

Fortunate is the young man or woman who has learned how to work. Wise is the parent who requires children to learn responsibility and to meet acceptable performance standards.

In a Mother's Day tribute, a lovely Latter-day Saint mother, Beverly Graham, expressed appreciation for her home training. She said:

"Mother's love included strict discipline, definite rules, and regulations that were firmly enforced. We used these rules as the starch for our backbone.

"Mother loved being a mother and a lady and enjoyed the arts of homemaking. She has passed this on to my sister and me. It was with great patience that she taught us to sew, cook, clean house, iron, etc. Can reironing one of Daddy's white shirts until it was perfect be a blessing? Or getting up to do the washing and

ironing before school—a blessing? Or peeling beets, shelling peas by the hour, husking bushels and bushels of corn for canning, picking berries at the crack of dawn before the sun got too hot—blessings? You couldn't convince me then, but you can now. They taught me great lessons in the value of thrift, work, and responsibility."

As we teach our children these values, let us emphasize the principle of shared responsibility. Do not be confused by attempts to label some jobs as strictly male or strictly female. Generally speaking, each child should know how to do simple cooking, wash dishes, clean the house, mow the lawn, tend the baby, and wash the car. These skills will do much to make their adult lives happier and more productive.

Leisure is not idleness

Now, what about our leisure time? How we use our leisure is equally as important to our joy as our occupational pursuits. Proper use of leisure requires discriminating judgment. Our leisure provides opportunity for renewal of spirit, mind, and body. It is a time for worship, for family, for service, for study, for wholesome recreation. It brings harmony into our life.

Leisure is not idleness. The Lord condemns idleness. He said, "Thou shalt not idle away thy time, neither shalt thou bury thy talent" (D&C 60:13.) Idleness in any form produces boredom, conflict, and unhappiness. It creates a vacancy of worth, a seedbed for mischief and evil. It is the enemy of progress and salvation.

Design of the welfare plan

Work is an essential element in the Lord's welfare plan; but it is a special kind of work. Work of the members, sanctified by love, produces the commodities which solve the temporal needs of our worthy poor. The laborer is blessed and sanctified in

his unselfish service. The needy member accepts assistance in the spirit of love and gratitude. He knows it was provided by the toil and sacrifice of the Church members. To the extent of his ability, the needy member works for what he receives, as assigned by the bishop, thereby preserving his dignity.

The individual is all-important in the Lord's plan. Any system which does not require initiative, self-reliance, and the necessity of work for what we receive, if able, will not preserve its integrity. The design of the welfare plan of the Church is to abolish the dole. The dole is a blight in any welfare system and should be feared as cancer in the human body.

Brigham Young declared, "It is never any benefit to give out . . . to man or woman, money, food, clothing, or anything else, if they are able-bodied, and can work and earn what they need. . . .

"To give to the idler is as wicked as anything else. Never give anything to the idler.

"Set the poor to work." (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954, pp. 274-75.)

President Clark added, "Brethren, . . . do your best to see that those . . . who consume, shall be among those who produce. It is a principle . . . that destroys character [and] initiative, to get into the frame of mind where our sustenance comes as a gift." (Transcript of talk given in welfare meeting, Apr. 1960, p. 3.)

Our divine heritage

In the broader sense, work is the means to achieve happiness, prosperity, and salvation. When work and duty and joy are comingled, then man is at his best. Tagore wrote,

*I slept and dreamt
That life was joy
I woke and saw
That life was duty*

I acted, And behold!

Duty was joy!

(Quoted by Earl Nightingale, "Our Changing World," #5193.)

Work was instituted from the beginning as the means by which the children of God were to fulfill their earthly stewardship. Work is our divine heritage. Elder Stephen L Richards taught: "Work with faith is a cardinal point of our theological doctrine and our future state—our heaven, is envisioned in terms of eternal progression through constant labor." (In

Conference Report, Oct. 1939, pp. 65, 68.)

The voice of the Lord to this generation is:

"Behold, I say unto you that it is my will that you should go forth and not tarry, neither be idle but labor with your might. . . .

"And thus, if ye are faithful ye shall be laden with many sheaves, and crowned with honor, and glory, and immortality, and eternal life." (D&C 75:3, 5.)

To this I testify, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

Sister Barbara B. Smith

In Proverbs, King Lemuel speaks of what his mother taught him. She gave him such an impressive guide that it is recorded in great detail. She made a particular point of telling him about the qualities and attitudes to look for in a wife and in the mother of his children, if his household were to be so well managed that in the end the children would rise up and call their mother blessed. (See Prov. 31:28.)

No one way will fit all circumstances

We need this kind of specific counsel in this day when so many avenues of interest are open to women, and when more and more opportunities are coming to us. We need to look very closely not only at the offerings, but also at our own family's needs if, finally, our children are to receive here in mortality the eternal blessings that a mother is so ably qualified to give.

Each mother will have to determine how she can bless her children. Because of the many options from which a woman might choose, it becomes extremely important that she select carefully.

To the woman with children at

home, that choice becomes not only important but critical. She will need unerring sources for direction—the scriptures, the teachings of Church leaders, and personal affirmation to her prayers of supplication—for the "changing winds," of which we are warned in Ephesians (4:14), are perhaps nowhere more apparent than in the challenges and decisions women are facing now.

We could be easily "tossed to and fro" (Eph. 4:14) if it were not for the "more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place." (2 Pet. 1:19.)

In that light of truth each woman can walk with confidence, knowing what is right for her. There is no one way that will fit all circumstances. Some women must come to one solution and some to another.

Give help and encouragement

The ideal for a family is, and always has been, to have a mother in the home to be with the children, to care for them and to help them grow, to coordinate and correlate the family's activities, and to be a stay against

intrusions of unrighteousness. There are times, however, under unusual circumstances, when, in order to help provide for even the basic needs of her family, a mother may be required to accept employment outside her home. As President Ezra Taft Benson has stated, "Many of you often find yourselves in circumstances that are not always ideal . . . who, because of necessity, must work and leave your children with others." (ENSIGN, Nov. 1981, p. 105.)

It is to those mothers we address these remarks today. We urge also that Relief Society leaders make certain that they include those mothers in Relief Society callings and that lessons and programs address their needs. We hope that husbands, home teachers, and visiting teachers will give them encouragement and positive reinforcement in the demanding role that is theirs, for we know that in spite of their added working role they still must provide the emotional support that children need. In addition to the obvious physical needs of children, there are other aspects of a child's life that should not be neglected even though a mother has employment outside the home.

Challenges

The challenges facing the working mother of small children are many. First, she must find someone to give good care to her child. Next, she has to decide what to do in an emergency situation when there is an accident or sickness. She must rely on the help of an understanding employer, a relative, a neighbor, a schoolteacher, or someone else to help in those times of crisis.

We find that most working mothers organize their time by advance planning, shopping, scheduling, and assigning chores to include each member of the household. They realize the importance of having meals that provide essential nutrients and the

warmth of gracious family dining—even though fast-food establishments appeal to and even cater to the working-outside-the-home mother as an easier alternative.

We are well aware, however, that the real challenges for many working mothers come in their responsibility for guiding children through periods of questioning and decision making and in their times of trouble. These challenges come in being able to sense the unexpressed needs of children and those of which young people, in their immaturity, may not themselves be aware. A mother may not always be on hand when her child's needs seem most acute. But we find that many working mothers take every opportunity to be with their children—to work with them in accomplishing household duties; when it is appropriate, to shop, plan, and play together; and sometimes just to be in the same room so that they have the sense of being with someone who loves them.

Balance between work and play

It might be a temptation for a working mother to plan special outings and play times as the so-called "quality" time she has with her children. But many are aware of the danger this poses in giving them a distorted picture of life by using all their time together in recreation. It is important for children to see the balance that is necessary between work and play. They need to know that special events are more meaningful when daily routines are established and when assigned duties are completed.

One grandmother helped her grandchildren learn this truth. When they came to her house she was careful to have jobs they could do together; then afterward, they played a game. Then another task was followed by another game. The children learned, as she hoped they would, the relationship between work and play and the comfortable sense of playing after work is completed.

Schoolwork, too, and practicing to develop musical or other talents can become part of the daily routine. A mother who strives to know success can help her children learn the *price* of success by working with them, when necessary, to help them reach a degree of excellence. A mother can make the difference in a child's achievement. She can give support by monitoring the completion and accuracy of assignments. She can help a child reap the rewards of persistent effort.

Even though a working mother cannot be the full-time model she might be if she were home with her children, she can help them learn the personal discipline that comes with daily, routine responsibilities, and, afterward, the well-being resulting from praise for work well done.

A mother must consider the essential purposes of life. Leo Rosten, writer, scientist, professor, has made a statement that gives us purposes to ponder:

"Where was it ever promised us that life on this earth can ever be easy, free from conflict and uncertainty, devoid of anguish and wonder and pain? . . .

"The purpose of life is to *matter*, to be productive, to have it make some difference that you lived at all. Happiness, in the ancient, noble sense, means self-fulfillment—and is given to those who use to the fullest whatever talents God . . . bestowed upon them."

He continues: "Happiness, to me, lies in stretching, to the farthest boundaries of which we are capable, the resources of the mind and heart." (*This Week Magazine*, 20 Jan. 1963, p. 2.)

Nourish body and spirit

A woman who must work to care for the needs of her children should learn the essential purposes of life and come to know the Lord and feel his love and direction. Then she can help

her children know him and grow to feel secure in our Heavenly Father's love.

One woman who came to this realization wrote:

"Right after my divorce, I determined that I was going to give my children the *best* of everything. . . . I would provide well for them. . . . I would substitute in every way for their father. I would take them on picnics, build them a tree house, and play baseball with them. I would not allow them to suffer because of our divorce.

"I baked, sewed, ran, played, wrestled. I cleaned, I ironed. I was busy being both mother and father for them.

"One evening I put the three of them in the bathtub together while I finished a chore. Then I came back, soaped the youngest, rinsed him, lifted him from the tub, and stood him on a bath mat while I wrapped a towel around him. Then I carried him off to the bedroom to put his pajamas on and tuck him into bed. I repeated the process with his brother and then his sister.

"As I bent down to kiss them goodnight, my older son said, 'Sing us a song, please.'

"Which one?' I asked.

"'Rudolph'!' said the youngest immediately.

"No, 'Johnny Appleseed,'" said his brother.

"Then their sister said, 'Sing, 'Stay Awake.'"

"I can see if I stay to sing one song, I'll be singing for an hour, and I don't have an hour to spare. So goodnight.' I turned off the lights.

"Please sing just one song, mommy. You can choose the song."

"What about our prayers?"

"Firmly, I replied, 'I said goodnight and I mean goodnight.'

"As I walked back to the bathroom to tidy up, I thought of how grateful they would be someday when they were old enough to understand how much I had done for them!

"As I entered the room I stopped short. There on the bath mat were three perfect sets of damp footprints. For one brief moment I thought I saw standing in the footprints the spirits of those precious children I had just tucked into bed. In that instant I saw the foolishness of my ways. I had been so busy providing for the physical needs of their mortal bodies that I was neglecting their spirits. I knew then that I had a sacred obligation to nourish both. If I were to clothe them in the latest fashions and give them all that money could buy and fail to tend to their spiritual needs, I could not justifiably account for my awesome responsibility as their mother.

"Humbled, I went back to their bedroom. We knelt together in prayer. We all four climbed up on the boys' big bed and sang song after song until I was the only one awake to sing."

The single parent

Latter-day Saint mothers can find programs in Relief Society that will help them meet the many needs of their children—not only their health and safety, their food and clothing, their social and emotional needs, but their spiritual growth, and the establishment of good family relationships that will last beyond time.

Testimonies abound in support of those who have provided extraordinary care as single parents. We are confident that the Lord is particularly mindful of such women and that, while their role is an unusually challenging one, they can succeed. But they too must make their decisions in the light of the principles and purposes of the Lord, in that faith which is truly the substance of things hoped for.

With the help of the Lord, families will be given strength to do what they must do—working together, using every skill to organize and to be provident, in order that they might accomplish the goals they have set.

Young children respond readily to real need and can work together with their parent or parents to achieve family success.

A model of righteousness

Of all the creations of God, men and women are the ones that are to become as he is. We are his children. He has given us a plan, a model, and teachings that will help us gain his attributes.

We can learn to become like him as we use his ways to teach our children: establishing regular communications with them; listening, guiding, prompting; watching over them always; protecting but not manipulating; allowing them to learn by experience; correcting them in such a way that they learn to obey—not because it is our will, but because they have learned to do what is right to do to grow in wisdom.

We can plan our lives and, to the degree that it is possible, determine the end from the beginning by building upon God-given principles to provide the security of truth.

We can strive to be a model of righteousness. Children learn what life is by observing and doing.

When a mother provides an example of joy, the children's world is one of happiness. When she makes wise choices, she helps them to learn discernment, and she brings to her home the refining quality that is such an important element in worthwhile progress. Learning from the Lord a Christlike love, she can manifest this kind of selfless care that will bless her home and at the same time show her children how to love. As we are told in the scriptures, "by laboring with all the might of [our] body and the faculty of [our] whole soul," we can have peace in our lives, and we can "teach [our] children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord." (W of M 1:18; D&C 68:28.)

The end better than the beginning

Mothers have the special opportunity of bringing children into the world; they can also play a significant role in bringing to pass their success and happiness here as they prepare them for life eternal.

The economic conditions of today present problems to women and their families that have many implications and far-reaching effects. A woman can find solutions as she recognizes the needs that only she can fill and the part that she must play in the Christlike development of her children. As she lives close to the Spirit, that way will be made clear for her. A wife may be compelled to help with the finances of her family. In this matter we have been given direction. President Kimball has stated:

"Some women, because of circumstances beyond their control, must work. We understand that. . . . Do not, however, make the mistake of being drawn off into secondary tasks which will cause the neglect of your eternal assignments such as . . . rearing the spirit children of our Father in Heaven. Pray carefully over all your decisions." (ENSIGN, Nov. 1979, p. 103.)

In "A Little Parable for Mothers" by Temple Bailey, a young mother setting out on her path of life

was told that the way would not be easy but that the end would be better than the beginning. She taught her children that life was good. She gave them courage, fortitude, and strength. And finally she was able to teach them to look above the clouds that bring shadows of darkness into this life, to see the glory of God. Knowing how to find their Heavenly Father through the darkness and living by the light of his glory, her children could walk alone. The mother's journey was over, but the end was better than the beginning because of what she was able to teach her children. (Typescript, LDS Church Historical Dept., Salt Lake City, Utah.)

In the end it is you wonderful, wonderful mothers—you who have put your families first, who have helped each child come to feel the acceptance of your love and the love of our Father in Heaven, and to know the truth of the gospel as your life bears witness of it—it is you whose children will "arise up, and call [you] blessed." (Prov. 31:28.) I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

Elder J. Thomas Fyans, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now address us.

Elder J. Thomas Fyans

With the headlines of newspapers and cover stories of magazines full of doom and gloom about the economy, it is well for us to recall the counsel which we as a church have heard for years. That counsel has included such things as obtaining a year's supply of food, staying out of debt, and preparing for employment. Following this counsel has meant financial salvation to many who have found themselves unemployed during the past year.

Stand independent

The Lord has commanded us to remain self-sufficient, thus retaining our independence. He has said:

"Behold, this is the preparation wherewith I prepare you, and the foundation, and the ensample which I give unto you, whereby you may accomplish the commandments which are given you;

"That through my providence,

notwithstanding the tribulation which shall descend upon you, that the church may stand independent above all other creatures beneath the celestial world." (D&C 78:13-14.)

How are we to "stand independent above all other creatures beneath the celestial world"? In 1946, Elder Albert E. Bowen had some thoughts on this scripture which struck a familiar chord in my heart. He said:

"The only way the Church can stand independent is for its members to stand independent, for the Church IS its members. It is not possible to conceive of an independent Church made up of dependent members—members who are under the inescapable obligation of dependency. The Lord must want and intend that His people shall be free of constraint whether enforceable or only arising out of the bindings of conscience. It is not believed that any person or people can live from gratuities—rely upon them for means of subsistence and remain wholly free in thought, motive and action. History seems to record no such instance. That is why the Church is concerned that its members, who have physical and mental capacity to do so, shall render service commensurate with their capacities for aid extended. That is why the Church is not satisfied with any system which leaves able people permanently dependent, and insists, on the contrary, that the true function and office of giving is to help people into a position where they can help themselves and thus be free.

"Hesitancy to extend basic welfare principles to this previously unthought of application arises, no doubt, out of a natural human reluctance to forego an apparent benefit which may be had for the taking and ostensibly without price, though this latter is a delusion, since no one ever gets something for nothing, the recipient always pays; if not in money, then in forfeiture of some invaluable right or freedom." (Albert E. Bowen *The*

Church Welfare Plan [Gospel Doctrine manual, 1946], p. 77.)

The Church can be no more independent than the collective independence of its individual members. We fear that some may misunderstand the intent of the resources of the welfare program of the Church and fall into a false sense of security that will lead to reduced efforts toward self-sufficiency. It is not financially possible, nor is it sound in principle, for the Church to amass the assets necessary to take care of the members of the Church who are physically able to work. All the efforts of the welfare program are directed to helping people become self-sufficient. The exceptions to this, of course, are those who cannot take care of themselves. The program provides a brief, temporary port in the storm for the able-bodied and is not meant to be a permanent home. The welfare program of the Church does not represent Church independence, but is a means toward the end of making individuals independent. For the Church, as an organization, to be independent, it would basically have to duplicate the economy of the individual members. This is neither practical, possible, nor prudent. We have all been taught that dependence on the government is not good. Neither is dependence on the Church—that principle runs as deep as free agency itself.

Employment problems

In order to become independent, members must be employed. The economy today is not conducive to obtaining employment with ease. Here are some of the problems with which we are faced:

Last year in the United States there were 1.1 million new homes or apartments started. This was the lowest number since 1946. The first few months of this year show signs of being even more challenging. Mortgage interest rates have climbed from

9 percent in 1977 to over 17 percent in recent months.

Last year, automobile sales were the lowest they have been in twenty years. Losses of United States auto makers have been astronomical. Companies that supply auto makers, such as steel companies, are beginning to feel the seriousness of the situation.

The result of these conditions is a large increase in unemployment. Currently, unemployment is very close to 9 percent, and many economists project it will go even higher before there is a substantial reduction. This 9 percent unemployment equates to 9.5 million Americans being out of work.

These unemployment problems are not limited to the United States. The unemployment rate is 8.6 percent in Canada and 9 percent in Europe. In other places, such as South America, great numbers of people are without work.

Proceed with optimism

These economically turbulent times should not come as a shock to members of the Church who have been listening. Neither should they be devastating to those who have followed the counsel which they have heard. The scriptures tell us we will have this and much more, while at the same time whispering, "Peace, be still." (Mark 4:39.) "If ye are prepared ye shall not fear." (D&C 38:30.) And "All these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good." (D&C 122:7.)

Therefore, at this time of economic difficulty, let us rejoice in the fact that we have the restored gospel which gives perspective to the ups and downs in life. Let troubled times serve as a catalyst for introspection and soul searching—followed by increased spirituality. We need to be more sensitive to those around us who may be affected more than ourselves and help each other through this valley. As a people, we should rise to the challenge

and grow from it. We need to proceed with optimism and not fall victim to the debilitating effects of negative, doomsday attitudes.

Church employment system

I would like to direct the balance of my remarks to a program which will have a great impact on helping us meet today's challenges. I speak of the Church employment system. This is not a new program, but, as is so often the case, it is not appreciated or understood until such time as it is dearly needed.

Priesthood leaders will receive a copy of the *Church Employment System Guidebook*, which details the workings of the system. You will also be taught in the various councils of the Church. The objectives of the Church employment system are (1) to help individuals find gainful employment by collecting and quickly sharing job information from members and others in the community; (2) to provide counseling and improved opportunities for those in need of better employment or rehabilitation; and (3) to help parents, through priesthood quorums and Relief Society, to counsel family members about employment and career planning.

To help coordinate this effort, ward and stake employment specialists are called. Careful thought should be given to the persons selected as employment specialists. You bishops know the amount of time and energy you are directing to problems either directly or indirectly related to unemployment. Let this employment specialist serve as a resource in helping you solve some of these problems. We would encourage every ward and stake to have qualified employment specialists called in the near future.

At the request of local priesthood leaders and as approved by the Executive Administrator and General Welfare Services Committee, an employment center may be set up. The

objectives of employment centers are to (1) coordinate job opportunities; (2) place applicants who are not placed at the ward level; (3) at the invitation of priesthood leaders, train stake and ward specialists; and (4) coordinate job solicitation in the business community.

Individual's responsibilities

Let us emphasize that the success of the employment program of the Church lies with the individual members. National studies have shown that 80 percent of all job opportunities are filled by word of mouth, as opposed to employment services, newspapers, or other types of advertising. If 10 percent of our members are unemployed, 90 percent of our members are employed. It is through the employed members of the Church that job opportunities are initially uncovered. We urge each of you who do have jobs to be on the lookout for openings which can be filled by members of your ward who are out of work. In a time when jobs are scarce, priesthood participation is absolutely vital.

Let's not underestimate the strength of our position. As employment center managers contact businesses, they have learned that, in general, members of the Church enjoy a good reputation as employees. Indeed, any member who is living what he has been taught represents an ideal employee. During times of heavy unemployment, employers can be very selective about the people they employ. We feel our members are prime candidates for the limited jobs available at this time.

We encourage members of quorums to work with those who are unemployed and help them with skills needed in looking for employment. Many people who are unemployed now are unemployed for the first time. They may need additional help in such things as writing an adequate resume and in being effective in job interviews. Resources of the quorum can

do much to help members with proper techniques when applying for a job. Another area where quorums and employment specialists can be of much help is underemployment. Many of our employed members live in constant fear of losing their jobs; others are not being fulfilled by the job which they have. Therefore, another purpose of this program is to upgrade employment.

We counsel bishops to use ward employment specialists in coordinating temporary job opportunities for those who are out of work and who are receiving assistance. We can do much more in the area of providing an opportunity for people to work for that which they receive while they are temporarily unemployed.

Work within the law

This program is one which can be applied in most countries. Obviously, nothing should be done which is contrary to the laws of the land in which you live. It is our feeling that in light of today's economy and in view of our objective to remain independent, the employment program has much to offer. No one can see the deterioration which takes place in a man's spirit when he is unemployed without wanting to do something to help. It is desirable not only to relieve human distress but also to prevent and eliminate its causes. Progress *can* be made with the generous use of talents, time, and resources of many individuals. The Church employment system allows the 90 percent of the Church who are employed to help the 10 percent who are unemployed.

May we be committed and involved in this modern-day response to the Savior's command, "Love one another; as I have loved you" (John 13:34), I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

Brother Ripplinger will now lead

us in singing hymn no. 64, "Hope of Israel," following which we shall hear from Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The congregation sang "Hope of Israel."

Elder Boyd K. Packer

There is a recurring theme in the revelations having to do with learning. And, from the beginning, Church leaders have counseled us to get all of the education we can as a preparation for and as an improvement of our careers. For example:

Dignity and worth in honest work

"Seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by *study* and also by *faith*." (D&C 88:118; italics added. See also D&C 90:15; 109:7.)

Learning is to be accompanied by faith, and as the Book of Mormon teaches us, learning "is good if [we] hearken unto the counsels of God." (2 Ne. 9:29.)

There is one thought that must come at the very beginning of a discussion on occupations and careers in order to establish it as preeminent, and it is this:

Do not ever belittle anyone, including yourself, nor count them, or you, a failure, if your livelihood has been modest. Do not ever look down on those who labor in occupations of lower income. There is great dignity and worth in any honest occupation. Do not use the word *menial* for any labor that improves the world or the people who live in it.

There is no shame in any honorable work, and the principle of faith, which the Lord connected with learning, is precious above the technologies of man.

There will be many who struggle

through life with small ownership and low income who discover, because they have been decent, the meaning of the scripture, "He that is greatest among you," let him be "the least and the servant of all." (Matt. 23:11; D&C 50:26.)

Elisha and Naaman

While *schooling* and *education* generally go together, there are kinds of wisdom which are not usually taught in school classrooms.

To illustrate, I begin with the Old Testament record of Naaman who, as the commander of the armies of Syria, had "given deliverance" to his country. He became a leper and the king of Syria feared he would die.

An Israelite slave girl who served Naaman's wife spoke of prophets in Israel who had the power to heal.

The king of Syria sent a message to the king of Israel saying, "I have . . . sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy." The king of Israel suspected a plot and complained, "He seeketh a quarrel against me. . . . Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy?"

Elisha, the prophet, heard of the king's distress. And "he sent to the king, saying, . . . let him come now to me." Elisha would heal Naaman, and he told why: that "he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel."

When Naaman was near, Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, . . . and thou shalt be clean." Naaman was

angry. There were rivers aplenty in Syria, as good, he thought, as the Jordan. He had expected Elisha to perform some impressive ceremony like clapping his hands upon him. And he "turned . . . away in a rage."

But one of his servants (it seems there is always a servant) courageously chastized the general and said, "If the prophet had bid thee do some *great* thing, wouldest thou not have done it?"

Humbled by his servant, Naaman "went . . . down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: . . . and he was clean." (2 Kgs. 5:1-14; italics added.)

Self-reliance

Human nature hasn't changed over the years. Even today some of us expect to be bidden to do some "great things" in order to receive the blessings of the Lord. When we receive ordinary counsel on ordinary things, there is disappointment, and, like Naaman, we turn away.

Let me give you a modern-day example. President Kimball has been President of the Church for eight years. In virtually every conference sermon he has included at least a sentence telling us to clean up, paint up, and fix up our property. Many of us have paid little attention to the counsel.

Question: Why would a prophet tell us to do that? Has he no great prophecies to utter?

But, is that not a form of prophecy? For has he not said to us over and over again, "Take good care of your material possessions, for the day will come when they will be difficult, if not impossible, to replace."

Already there is a fulfillment. Families who might have afforded a home when first he spoke now despair of getting one.

For some reason, we expect to hear, particularly in welfare sessions, some ominous great predictions of

calamities to come. Instead, we hear quiet counsel on ordinary things which, if followed, will protect us in times of great calamity.

It was Alma the prophet who said, "By small and simple things are great things brought to pass; and small means in many instances doth confound the wise." (Alma 37:6.)

Now, all of this was to prepare you for the fact that the counsel I will give may seem ordinary, even trivial to some of you. But it will be consistent with the doctrines and principles announced by the First Presidency when the welfare program was first introduced:

"Our primary purpose [is] to set up, in so far as it might be possible, a system under which the curse of idleness would be done away with, the evils of a dole abolished, and independence, industry, thrift and self-respect be once more established amongst our people. The aim of the Church is to help the people to help themselves. Work is to be re-enthroned as the ruling principle of the lives of our Church membership." (In Conference Report, Oct. 1936, p. 3.)

That emphasis, on self-reliance, suggests something about education. We cannot expect the Church to assume responsibility for the schooling of all of us.

Direction, counsel, encouragement, vision

One of the questions most often asked of General Authorities as we travel usually begins in this way: "Why doesn't the Church . . .?" And then there follows a description of some worthy project that would, if it should succeed, bring credit to the Church and benefit many people.

For example, why doesn't the Church establish schools to prepare members for financial security?

Some years ago I was near our front gate splitting rails for a fence. A young man came to make a delivery. He had recently returned from over-

seas combat duty. He had falsified his age and left school to join the Marines. When I asked about his future plans, he didn't know. Jobs were scarce; he had no skills to offer.

I counseled him to go back to high school and get his diploma. He thought he couldn't do that; he was too old now. "If you do it," I told him, "you probably will not exactly fit in. And the students will call you the 'old man' or 'grandpa.' But you faced an enemy in combat; surely you've got the courage to face that."

The lesson is this. I only spent ten minutes with him, sitting on a log by our front gate. I did not build a school nor ask the Church to build one. I did not pay his tuition or prepare his lessons. What he needed was some direction, some counsel, some encouragement, and some vision. In this case he took the counsel and returned to school. Now he has a family and an occupation.

I only gave him vision and encouragement. It does not take additional Church budget to do that. That is the responsible role of every priesthood leader in counseling members on careers. We must help people to *help themselves*.

Several years ago a certain country was emerging from a long period of political and economic distress, and there was a need for skilled workers of many kinds. Some of our local leaders, sensing the need, conceived the idea of establishing vocational schools in our chapels to train the brethren in their skills. They could then upgrade themselves in their employment. It was a very appealing idea.

They pointed out that the money expended would be justified on the basis that these brethren would return in tithes more than the cost of the program. They were greatly disappointed when the Brethren did not approve their idea.

There were several things they'd not considered. The most important was that vocational training was

already available to those who *really* looked for it. Classes to train new employees, and to upgrade the experienced ones, were offered by business and industry, and by their government.

What our brethren needed most was counsel and encouragement to take advantage of opportunities that were already available.

We ourselves are responsible to seek out and take advantage of every opportunity to improve ourselves.

Teach moral and spiritual values

Now, there are some things that the Church *must* do, for we are commanded to do them. We must preach the gospel. We must build temples. We must perfect the Saints. These things others cannot do. The many other good things (which are not central to the mission of the Church) must take second place. For we do not have the resources to do all that *is* worth doing, however worthy it may be.

While we cannot build schools for everyone, there is a most important contribution the Church *can* make to our careers, one that *is* central to the mission of the Church. And that is to teach moral and spiritual values.

There are ordinary virtues which influence our careers even more than technical training; among them are these:

Integrity.

Dependability.

Courtesy.

Respect for others.

Respect for property.

Let me illustrate one or two of these.

It is likely that our children, and yours, for the first part of their married life at least, will live in rented apartments.

I had a conversation with a stake president who owns a large number of apartments which he rents to middle-income families. As he showed them to me, he described the abuse of his property, not just the normal wear and

tear, but outright abuse bordering on vandalism.

Such conduct is unworthy of a Latter-day Saint! We should know better than that. We should be willing to drive a nail or set a screw in a hinge, if it's needed.

Our people should regard an apartment as their home and keep it inviting and clean and in good repair. Has not the prophet told us to do it? When they leave an apartment, it should be clean and essentially ready for the next tenant.

Transfer learning from home to work

Now, what has this got to do with a career? Surely you can see the transfer of learning from our homes to our work.

Years ago my father, as a young married man with several children, went nervously into the bank in Brigham City to ask for a loan to start in business. He was asked about collateral. He had none beyond his willingness to work and some mechanical aptitude.

The banker, in turning down his request, happened to ask father where he lived. "In the old box house on First West," was the answer. The banker passed that corner on the way to work. He'd watched the transformation in the yard. He'd wondered who lived there, and admired what they were doing.

Father got the loan to start in business on the strength of the flowers that mother had planted in the yard of a very modest adobe house they were renting.

We have raised a large family on a very modest income, and it's likely that our children are going to have the same privilege. In order to prepare them, we've trained them to do ordinary, necessary things as preparation for their careers.

For instance, we have maintained an area (sometimes it's the corner of a basement room) where there is a work

bench, where projects could be left. There can be some paint or a little sawdust on the floor, without a problem. In spite of continuous cleanup, this area is perpetually untidy, but with a purpose.

We have followed another practice. Each Christmas, at least one of the presents for the boys has been a hand tool. When they were old enough, a good metal toolbox was included. When each has left home, he has had his own set of tools and some knowledge of how to use them. He can tune up a car, or drive a nail, or turn a screw, or replace a plug or a faucet washer.

The girls, in turn, have learned to cook and to sew, and each has left home with a sewing machine. This training is doubly important—first, in frugal living at home, and then in their value as an employee. They would, we hoped, be not only good, but good for something.

Be really willing to work

Now, I have an idea that some soul will be very upset with us for not providing our boys with a sewing machine and our girls a box of tools as well.

So I hasten to explain that our boys can cook enough to survive a mission and they can sew on a button. The girls in turn can change a faucet washer and drive a nail, and both of them can type and even change a tire on a car.

While many, many occupations suit a man or a woman equally well, I, for one, have grave concern over the growing trend for both men and women to choose careers which in some respects are against their very natures.

We have tried to prepare our boys for manly work and our girls for work that would suit the opportunities that womanhood will bring them. In defense of our doing that, I can only observe that in this Church we are not exempt from using common sense.

There are so few nowadays who are really willing to work. We must train our children and ourselves to give, in work, the equivalent of the pay we receive and perhaps just a little extra.

There are so few who will come a bit early to get organized for the day, or stay a minute after to tidy up the work bench or the desk for tomorrow's work.

The attitude that demands compensation and benefits in excess of the value of labor has come near destroying the economy of the world. Now, however, many workers quite willingly accept reductions in pay just to keep their jobs. That spirit of doing a little extra would have prevented the crisis had it been evident earlier.

The gospel—formula for success

Family responsibilities and tight budgets sometimes prevent us from obtaining all the schooling we desire.

We can, however, improve ourselves. The only tuition required is the time it takes, the work required, and the desire to build into our lives the ordinary virtues so much in demand and so short in supply.

I hope you have not been too disappointed that I have not presented some "great thing" for you to do, some elaborate formula for career planning, rather than such ordinary things so obvious, so close to us, that they are often overlooked.

There is a formula. The Lord said, "Verily I say unto you, that every man who is obliged to provide for his own family, let him provide, and he shall in nowise lose his crown; *and let him labor in the church.*" (D&C 75:28; italics added.)

The gospel of Jesus Christ is the formula for success. Every principle of the gospel, when lived, has a positive influence over your choice of an occupation and on what you will achieve. The counsel to labor in the Church has great value. Living the gospel will give you a perspective and an inspiration that will see you successful however ordinary your work may be or however ordinary your life may seem to others.

God bless the members of this Church, that you can be happy with who you are and where you are, that you can improve yourselves. We pray that God will bless those who are struggling now with unemployment, with the loss of their employment, with the fear of that loss. May he bless us that we can build into our lives those principles of reliance and integrity that have been part of the gospel from the very beginning, for the gospel is true. Of this I bear witness, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney spoke without announcement.

President Marion G. Romney

Some fifty years ago, when the Church launched its welfare program, President Heber J. Grant stated, as was quoted by the former speaker: "Our primary purpose was to set up, in so far as it might be possible, a system under which the curse of idleness would be done away with, the evils of a dole abolished, and independence,

industry, thrift and self-respect be once more established amongst our people. The aim of the Church is to help the people to help themselves. Work is to be re-enthroned as the ruling principle of the lives of our Church membership." (In Conference Report, Oct. 1936, p. 3.)

Gospel principles remain constant

We've all heard that quoted many times, but do we fully understand its significance? Bishops, are any of your people idle? Are all of your members independent, industrious, thrifty, and do they all have self-respect? Are any members receiving assistance as a dole? Are we helping our members to help themselves, or are we just taking care of the people? Finally, do our members understand the significance of work? If you don't feel good about your answers, you will understand why we keep emphasizing President Grant's statement.

I remember that when my brother was called to be a stake president, he came to me and said, "Now, tell me all about this welfare program." He asked many questions. After answering them, I said, "You have been in dozens of meetings where I have addressed all of these questions, haven't you?" He answered, "Yes, I'm sure that's true, but I wasn't a stake president then."

I believe the attention many of us pay to gospel principles fluctuates as our circumstances in life change. However, the principles remain constant and are true, whether or not we live up to them. The consequences of *not* living these principles also remain constant.

American work ethic

A few years ago I read a lengthy book dealing with the reasons for the fall of the Roman Empire. That fall, in large measure, was due to the purchasing of votes with unearned benefits, such as entertainment, circuses, and food. The government's actions built up in the people an expectation and demand which eventually could be kept down only by the establishment of a dictatorship. Many of our members live in countries where this history has repeated itself. In the United States, our treasured American

work ethic is waning and the purchasing of votes with unearned benefits is dangerously common.

I used to hear the story, when I first came under President Harold B. Lee's influence in the welfare program, about a man whom they could not get to work. He wanted to be taken care of. The Church or government, so he thought, owed him a living because he had paid his tithing and taxes. He did not have anything to eat and refused to labor to care for himself. Out of desperation and disgust they decided they might as well take him to the cemetery.

On the way, one man said, "We can't do this. I have some corn I will give to him."

So they explained this to the man, and he said, "Is it husked?"

They said, "No."

He said, "Well, then, drive on."

This would not be humorous if it were not so close to the truth. You cannot save a man who has such an attitude, and a nation made up of men and women with similar attitudes is vulnerable to the problems which led to the fall of Rome. The saddest day of a person's life is when he sits down to work out a means whereby he can live thereafter without his own effort. One of the most demeaning things a government can do is to teach people that the government owes them a living.

The Lord's economic system

By contrast, ever since the Church was organized, it has encouraged its members to maintain their own economic independence and to work for what they get, to produce that which they consume. I thought it might be helpful to remember what the Church has done since its inception to give life to the principles stated so well by President Grant.

Church welfare principles have always been with us. Although President Grant's statement came in 1936, you will note he said that "independ-

dence, industry, thrift, and self-respect [should] be *once more* established." Also note that he said work should be *re-enthroned*, not *enthroned*. If time permitted, we could begin when Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden and found the earth cursed *for their sake*. (See Gen. 3:17.) We could trace these principles through biblical and Book of Mormon times. However, in the interest of time, we will limit our comments to a few things done in this, the last dispensation.

Within a year after the organization of the Church, the Lord had revealed his economic system, and it was practiced in Missouri. The first "welfare program" of this dispensation was the United Order, under which a person consecrated all that he had to the Church and received back that which was necessary to provide for his family according to their wants and needs. The portion of the property retained by the Church was used in one of two ways: first, if a person was able-bodied, he was given the means whereby he could earn a living; second, if a person was incapable of working, his needs were met.

As individuals worked in their various jobs, the surplus generated over and above the needs of their family was turned in to the Church. This surplus was also used to give more people jobs and to take care of the needy. As the Saints arrived in Missouri, many were destitute. The program provided these people with the opportunity to work and earn their own living. They were not given a handout, but they were given a job.

After the United Order

The United Order was discontinued by commandment in 1834, but its basic principles were practiced in Nauvoo. For example, in an orderly immigration, some 5,000 converts came to Nauvoo from Great Britain. The more wealthy members gave of

their means to assist the poor in both their transportation to America and in helping them obtain work after they arrived. The economy of Nauvoo was based primarily on agriculture and construction. The largest construction project was the Nauvoo Temple, which provided jobs for many of its members. One traveler is quoted as saying there was no pauperism in Nauvoo because those without subsistence were provided with work by the Church.

The Church also provided town lots for those people unable to buy one for themselves. Many Nauvoo residents were able to provide the largest part of their basic necessities from their own plots, which normally were one acre in size. They cultivated extensive gardens and often kept chickens, a milk cow, and several pigs, which they would get in exchange for several days' work.

The whole objective behind giving help in Nauvoo was to enable people to be self-sustaining as soon as possible, by providing an avenue for work and production.

After arriving in Salt Lake City with Brigham Young, the Church became completely responsible for its own economy, since it was isolated from any other society. There was no room here for the idler because survival literally depended on work.

Brigham Young's philosophy regarding work and employment can be seen in a statement he made in August of 1860: "The reason we have no poor who are able to work is because we plan to set every person to work at some profitable employment, and teach them to maintain themselves. If a person is not able to take care of himself, we will take care of him. . . ."

"If a Bishop will act to the extent of his calling and office, and magnify it, there will not be an individual in his Ward that is not employed to the best advantage." (In *Journal of Discourses*, 8:145-46.)

Depression of 1890s, economic conditions

As conditions changed, so did the program. By 1880, the relatively independent economic kingdom had to be abandoned as Utah became nationalized. The Church sold many of its economic enterprises, and its leaders ceased to direct the economic affairs of Church members. Utah had become an integral part of the national economy—hence, the dawning of a new era in the manner in which the Church could help employ its members. It is interesting to note that just as the Church became dependent on the nation for its economy, the nation entered the depression of the 1890s.

During the depression, the Church established employment bureaus to aid its members in finding employment. Costly efforts were also made to bolster the economy. Assistance was given to such industries as sugar, salt, and coal.

Throughout the early 1900s, the Church's efforts regarding work and employment were directed to helping members find jobs. For example, in the 1920s, bishops were charged with the responsibility of finding employment for needy ward members. They were instructed to appoint a special person within each ward to be concerned with employment problems and discuss the problems in quorum meetings. This was very similar to the program Elder Fyans explained to us this morning.

Welfare program of 1930s

Those who could not take care of themselves were given appropriate assistance. However, the emphasis was always on self-sufficiency. When the depression of the 1930s came, the members of the Church found themselves in a situation altogether different. There were no jobs, and many people were out of work. The government stepped in to alleviate this problem, but some of their methods

promoted idleness because there was a dole involved. It was in this climate that President Grant announced the welfare program for that day. A model of production projects was announced six months earlier in a letter dated April 21, 1936 to the stake presidents and bishops, which stated in part:

"The following is a suggestive outline for a . . . project for each ward in the Church in the beet-growing districts of Utah and Idaho, . . . to take care of the unemployed members of the Church:

"The Bishopric of each ward [is] requested to select and secure at once 100 or more acres of land suitable for sugar beets. . . .

"Then the Bishopric could divide up the acreage, . . . according to the size of the family, to do the hand work; namely, the thinning, the hoeing, irrigating, keeping the beets clean, the pulling and topping, and loading the same into the wagon at the time of harvesting. . . .

"The laborers should receive an advance payment at the time of thinning, hoeing and irrigating, and when the work is done so that they may be able to live during the summer while the crop is growing. . . .

"If this unemployment is to be solved, it must be done by all the people working together and helping each other to find employment, and if the start is made this season, more preparation can be made for another season and the project expanded so that it will become of material benefit and absorb a large percentage of the unemployed."

Programs added

Once again, the purpose of this program was to help people to help themselves and to get them actively involved in work or production. Since that time, many programs have been followed, a few of which are the following:

Deseret Industries was set up to employ the unemployable, as well as

supply clothing and household goods at a low cost. An organization was created to make small character loans to men and women who could not borrow from financial institutions. An agriculture committee was set up whose business it was to investigate what, if anything, the Church could widely undertake to do in setting up cooperatives, both for production and marketing. In each case, the objective has been to help people help themselves.

It is hoped that this illustration will help implant in our minds and hearts the fact that the welfare program has been with us from the beginning. Programs must be modified to fit circumstances prevailing at the time, but the principles and objectives are unchanging.

We have to be flexible and adapt to changing circumstances. Sometimes it is possible to get so wrapped up in a program that we forget the objective. We must be more alert and creative in accomplishing the objective of making our people independent and self-sustaining.

Work and employment

Today we are an international church, and problems vary in our homelands. This means that different programs may be necessary in different countries, but the primary purpose as stated by President Grant in the beginning of the welfare program is universal.

The theme of this welfare session has been work and employment. The priesthood-based employment system of the Church is one program which can benefit most, if not all countries. We invite you members of quorums who are blessed with employment to

participate in the sanctifying effort of helping others who are in need of employment find work.

In those cases when it is necessary to provide temporary assistance to those who are able-bodied, we challenge bishops and other priesthood leaders anew to find appropriate services for them to perform in order that pride and self-respect may remain intact.

God bless us all with a keen understanding of the foundation upon which all these activities are built. We are anxious to make our people independent, industrious, and self-sufficient. We want to accomplish this in a way which will be sanctifying to the giver as well as the receiver. When we can understand this principle, our current welfare activities will take on more meaning, and any changes or additional programs required for today's society can be revealed.

President Romney

The first general session of the 152nd Annual General Conference of the Church will convene in this Tabernacle at ten o'clock this morning.

We shall sing in closing hymn no. 66, "How Firm a Foundation," following which the benediction will be offered by Elder Charles Didier, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The congregation sang "How Firm a Foundation."

Elder Charles Didier offered the benediction.

SALT LAKE TABERNACLE CHOIR AND ORGAN BROADCAST

The following broadcast, announced by J. Spencer Kinard and originating with KSL Radio and Television, Salt Lake City, Utah, was presented from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 4, 1982, through the courtesy of the Columbia Broadcasting System's network throughout the United States, parts of Canada, and through other facilities to several points overseas:

Announcer: Once more we welcome you within these walls with Music and the Spoken Word from the crossroads of the West.

CBS and its affiliated stations bring you at this hour the Mormon Tabernacle Choir from Temple Square in Salt Lake City, with Donald Ripplinger conducting the Choir, John Longhurst, Tabernacle organist, and the Spoken Word given by Spencer Kinard.

(Choir without announcement: "The Palms"—Faure/Ringwald)

Announcer: "Green wave the palms along the path today; . . . Jesus, our Lord, in triumph leads the way." The Tabernacle Choir has opened today's broadcast of Music and the Spoken Word singing "The Palms" by Jean-Baptiste Faure.

We next hear the words of the 137th Psalm set to music by Philip James, "By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept; when we remembered thee, O Sion."

(Choir: "By the Waters of Babylon"—James)

Announcer: Among the most poignant scriptures to be found in the sacred writings of Christianity is that which is recorded in the New Testament Gospel of John.

A short verse there describes Christ's response to the death of one of

his friends. Recorded are these two words: "Jesus wept" (John 11:35).

On that occasion, Jesus shed tears for a single contemporary whom he loved. The event openly displays Christ's capacity to love and feel sorrow for the misfortunes of those around him.

It was not long after this tragedy that Christ faced his own imminent death. Shortly before the Crucifixion he went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane. There in prophetic agony he witnessed the passing of all peoples, of all nations, of us. He discerned that his commandment that we love one another even as he loved us would be largely rejected by mankind.

Once, twice, and for a third time he returned to his friends to share the awesome burden; each time he found them asleep.

Alone, he took upon himself the sins of the world, suffering for all generations of humanity.

And in the depths of that divine despair, he wept:

—Wept for the countless unknown soldiers of nameless battles and forgotten wars and for their orphaned children, their widowed wives, their grieving mothers.

—Wept for the maimed in body and soul who haunt the boweries of large cities, for the aged who wait in nursing homes for visitors who never come, and for the meek and believing who are taken advantage of by the crafty and unscrupulous.

—He wept because of the ignorance which has made much of mankind live out its life in political and intellectual slavery, and because of supersition which still keeps men in spiritual bondage.

For all of this, and more, the Creator of heaven and earth suffered an exquisite agony.

Across the centuries, the lone figure of noble manhood, weeping among the shadows of Gethsemane, looms above humanity.

And thus, while his disciples slept, Jesus wept; and perhaps still weeps, while mankind sleeps.

(Organ without announcement: "Wachet Auf"—Bach)

Announcer: We have heard Tabernacle Organist John Longhurst play a chorale prelude by Bach, "Sleepers, Wake, a Voice Is Calling."

Soloist Gregory Griffiths now joins the Choir in performing music by Charles Gounod, "Holy, Holy, Holy."

(Choir: "Holy, Holy, Holy,"—Gounod)

Announcer: The Tabernacle Choir next sings a text by Gordon Johnson set to music by Geoffrey O'Hara, "There Is No Death!"

(Choir: "There Is No Death"—O'Hara)

Announcer: "Father in Heaven . . . thanks for peace abiding, Ever abiding." The Choir concludes this

broadcast by singing John Longhurst's arrangement of a hymn tune by Friedrich Flemming with text by Agnus Hibbard, "Father in Heaven."

(Choir: "Father in Heaven"—Flemming)

Announcer: Again we leave you from within the shadows of the everlasting hills. May peace be with you this day . . . and always.

Announcer (on radio): This concludes the two-thousand, seven-hundred, forty-sixth performance continuing the fifty-third year of this traditional broadcast from the Mormon Tabernacle on Temple Square, brought to you by CBS and its affiliated stations, originating with Station KSL, in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Donald Ripplinger conducted the Choir, John Longhurst was at the organ, the Spoken Word was given by Spencer Kinard.

In another seven days at this same hour, Music and the Spoken Word will be heard again from the crossroads of the West.

This is the CBS Radio Network.

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE MUSIC

The Tabernacle Choir furnished the choral numbers for the Saturday morning, Sunday morning, and Sunday afternoon sessions of the conference with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducting.

The music for the Saturday afternoon session was provided by the Brigham Young University combined choirs directed by Ronald Staheli.

At the general priesthood meeting a combined priesthood choir from American Fork, Alpine, and Tim-

panogos Utah regions furnished the music, directed by Donald Ripplinger and Leslie Rees.

Prelude, postlude, and interlude music and accompaniments on the Tabernacle organ throughout the conference sessions were played by Robert Cundick, John Longhurst, and Roy M. Darley, Tabernacle organists.

Francis M. Gibbons

Clerk of the Conference

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THE CHURCH OF
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OF LATTER-DAY
SAINTS

Official Report of the
One Hundred Fifty-second
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THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-SECOND SEMIANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The 152nd Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, October 2, 1982, at 10:00 A.M.

The general sessions of the conference were held at 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday, October 2 and 3, 1982. The general welfare session was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, October 2, 1982, at 7:00 A.M. The general priesthood meeting was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, October 2, 1982, at 7:00 P.M.

President Spencer W. Kimball attended and presided at the Saturday morning and Sunday afternoon sessions of the conference and watched the other sessions on television. President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the general welfare and Saturday morning sessions of the conference. President Gordon B. Hinckley, Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday afternoon, general priesthood, Sunday morning, and Sunday afternoon sessions.

Television and radio stations carried portions or all of some of the conference sessions to large audiences throughout the world. The general sessions were also carried via satellite transmission to approximately four hundred and fifty stake centers. The general priesthood session was carried by closed-circuit transmission to approximately 1,770 locations in many different countries.

General Authorities present

The following General Authorities of the Church attended one or

more of the general sessions:

The First Presidency: Spencer W. Kimball, N. Eldon Tanner, Marion G. Romney, and Gordon B. Hinckley.

The Council of the Twelve: Ezra Taft Benson, Mark E. Petersen,¹ Howard W. Hunter, Thomas S. Monson, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, Bruce R. McConkie, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, and Neal A. Maxwell.

The First Quorum of the Seventy: Presidents: Franklin D. Richards, J. Thomas Fyans, Carlos E. Asay, M. Russell Ballard, Dean L. Larsen, Royden G. Derrick, and G. Homer Durham. *Additional Members:* Marion D. Hanks, A. Theodore Tuttle, Theodore M. Burton, Paul H. Dunn, Hartman Rector, Jr., Loren C. Dunn, Robert L. Simpson, Rex D. Pinegar, Wm. Grant Bangerter, Robert D. Hales, Adney Y. Komatsu, Joseph B. Wirthlin, Gene R. Cook, Charles Didier, William R. Bradford, George P. Lee, John H. Groberg, Jacob de Jager, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Robert E. Wells, James M. Paramore, Richard G. Scott, Hugh W. Pinnock, F. Enzo Busche, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Ronald E. Poelman, Derek A. Cuthbert, Robert L. Backman, Rex C. Reeve, Sr., F. Burton Howard, Ted E. Brewerton, Jack H. Goasland, Jr., and Angel Abrea.

The Presiding Bishopric: Victor L. Brown, H. Burke Peterson, and J. Richard Clarke.

Emeritus General Authorities: Eldred G. Smith, Sterling W. Sill,

¹Elder LeGrand Richards was recuperating from surgery.

Henry D. Taylor, Bernard P. Brockbank, James A. Cullimore, Joseph Anderson, John H. Vandenberg, and O. Leslie Stone.

Other authorities present

Other authorities of the Church in attendance included Regional Rep-

resentatives, presidents of stakes and their counselors, presidents of temples, bishops of wards, and presidencies and members of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood quorums.

Many general, stake, and ward auxiliary officers also attended.

FIRST DAY MORNING MEETING

FIRST SESSION

The first general session of the conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah on Saturday, October 2, 1982, at 10:00 A.M. President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The music for the opening session was provided by the Tabernacle Choir with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducting and John Longhurst at the organ.

Before the commencement of the meeting, the Tabernacle Choir sang "All Creatures of Our God and King" without announcement.

President Romney then made the following remarks:

President Marion G. Romney

President Spencer W. Kimball, who is seated on the stand and who presides at this conference, has asked that I conduct this opening general session.

We are very pleased that President Kimball is with us today. He has been greatly blessed since we met in general conference last April and in the interim has regularly attended the meetings with his Counselors and with the Twelve and other General Authorities.

We welcome all assembled in

the Tabernacle on Temple Square at the beginning of this 152nd Semi-annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We also welcome all others who are participating by television, radio, and direct wire, or by means of satellite transmission and reception facilities through which members of the Church gathered in approximately four hundred and fifty stake meetings are watching this conference.

There are overflow congregations in the newly remodeled Assembly Hall, where Elders J. Thomas Fyans and Charles Didier preside, and in the Salt Palace, where Elders Wm. Grant Bangerter and F. Enzio Busche preside.

We extend a special welcome to government, education, and civic leaders who are present.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger with John Longhurst at the organ, is providing the music for this session.

The Choir opened this session by singing "All Creatures of Our God and King."

The Choir will now sing "Lead, Kindly Light." Following the singing, the invocation will be offered by Elder M. Russell Ballard, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Choir sang "Lead, Kindly Light."

Elder M. Russell Ballard offered the invocation.

The Choir sang "Praise to the Lord" without announcement.

President Romney

The Tabernacle Choir has sung "Praise to the Lord."

President Spencer W. Kimball has prepared a keynote address for this general conference, which will now be read by his personal secretary, D. Arthur Haycock.

President Spencer W. Kimball

(Read by his personal secretary, D. Arthur Haycock)

My beloved brothers and sisters, I am deeply grateful for the privilege of meeting with you once again in a general conference of the Lord's church. I look forward to, and draw strength from, these general conferences, and I am anxious to receive the counsel and instructions given to us under the inspiration of the Lord. I find that if I listen carefully and heed all that is said, my life is enriched and my inner soul is nourished with the bread of life.

Grateful for Choir

This wonderful Tabernacle Choir has just sung to us, and they add so much to the spirit and enjoyment of our conference sessions. The Choir recently celebrated another anniversary, more than a half-century of "Music and the Spoken Word," the longest continuous radio broadcast in the free world. As I listen to the lovely melodies of the Tabernacle Choir and organ, I am comforted by the assurance that there will be beautiful music in heaven, and for that I am most grateful. Some say there will be no music in that other place—but then some sounds that pass for music probably belong in that other place!

Report of activities

The past six months have not been the most active of times for Sister Kimball and me. As you are aware, we have been somewhat restricted due to a condition known as growing older. I believe I now understand a bit more clearly what is meant by enduring to the end. It is difficult and frustrating not to be able to do all that I would like to do. Nevertheless, I still do many things. Almost daily I join with my Brethren for meetings at the Church office, and I meet every Thursday in the temple with the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve.

I have enjoyed some extracurricular activities as well. During the summer, Sister Kimball and I attended the Salt Lake Valley Dance Festival. We rode in the days of '47 Pioneer Parade and attended the rodeo. Last Saturday, we joined with 65,000 others at the BYU-Air Force football game at the newly expanded BYU stadium in Provo.

Support during advancing years

I am grateful for my able and devoted Counselors, President Tanner, President Romney, and President

Hinckley. As I reflect upon the great loyalty and love these men extend to me daily, I am reminded of an experience that Moses had during his advancing years. The Israelites were contending with the Amalekites, "and it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.

"But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron [his brother] and Hur [the husband of his sister, Miriam] stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun." (Exodus 17:11-12.)

Surely Moses had no greater support than that which I receive from my beloved Brethren. I am thankful, too, for President Benson and the members of the Council of the Twelve and the other General Authorities, all of whom labor so diligently in the Lord's vineyard. I am sorry, however, that my dear friend Elder LeGrand Richards is not with us this morning. He has been sitting here on this stand since 1938.

I am gratified with the growth of the Church around the world, for the nearly fifty new stakes which have been approved or created since we were in general conference last April, and for the groundbreaking that have occurred for the building of five more temples. These are all important indicators of the growth of the kingdom. I hope and pray always for the spiritual as well as the numerical growth of the Lord's church.

Wickedness in the world

My brothers and sisters, there seems to be a general state of wickedness in the world in these perilous yet crucially momentous days. But in the midst of all the turmoil

about us, we can have an inner peace. We are richly blessed and have so much to be thankful for. As I meditate upon these things, I remember the words of the Lord, "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required" (Luke 12:48). The Lord expects of us righteousness and obedience to His commandments in return for the bounties of life He has so richly bestowed upon us. It seems that iniquity abounds on all sides, with the Adversary taking full advantage of the time remaining to him in this day of his power. The leaders of the Church continually cry out against that which is intolerable in the sight of the Lord: against pollution of mind and body and our surroundings; against vulgarity, stealing, lying, cheating, false pride, blasphemy, and drunkenness; against fornication, adultery, homosexuality, abortion, and all other abuses of the sacred power to create; against murder and all that is like unto it; against all manner of degradation and sin.

Warning and call to repentance

As Latter-day Saints we must ever be vigilant. The way for each person and each family to guard against the slings and arrows of the Adversary and to prepare for the great day of the Lord is to hold fast to the iron rod, to exercise greater faith, to repent of our sins and shortcomings, and to be anxiously engaged in the work of His kingdom on earth, which is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Herein lies the only true happiness for all our Father's children. We invite all men and women of good will everywhere to join in this divine and redeeming latter-day work.

Let us honor our families and enjoy our happy homes. As I speak to you of home and family, I desire to give some further counsel

regarding the safety and well-being of your loved ones. There is a growing evil in our nation—the kidnapping of children. Our hearts go out in love and sympathy and compassion to all who have been thus bereft of precious little ones. I implore you mothers and fathers of Zion to keep a constant watchcare over your children. Teach them to beware of the growing danger of evil and designing men and pray ever for your children's welfare. The Devil is not dead, nor does he sleep.

The Savior loved little children. He often spoke of them, and He called them, like lambs, to His side, and He blessed them. And He said, "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." (Matthew 18:6.)

I call upon all who, for whatever reason or purpose, have torn a little child from the arms of its mother, to repent and hearken to my plea. I pray that the tears and pleadings of loved ones will soften their hearts so that they may be constrained to return these little ones to the bosom of their grieving families.

Obligation to share the gospel

My brothers and sisters, the day for carrying the gospel to ever more places and people is here and now. We must come to think of our obligation to share the message rather than of our own convenience. Calls from the Lord are seldom convenient. The time is here when sacrifice must become an even more important element in the Church. We must increase our devotion so that we can do the work the Lord has for us to do. There is a growing need for more missionaries now that the term of service is shorter—but they must be those who have a desire to go and

who have been carefully trained and prepared through the family and the various Church organizations. Young men, with the encouragement of their parents, should begin early in life to prepare with the spirit of saving, with the spirit of studying and praying about the gospel, with the spirit of attending seminary and institute classes. And of prime importance is preparation by keeping their lives clean and worthy. The parting words of the Master to His Apostles just before His Ascension were, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15-16.)

We must not falter nor weary in well-doing. We must lengthen our stride. Not only is our own eternal welfare at stake, but also the eternal welfare of many of our brothers and sisters who are not now members of this, the true Church. I thrill to the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith in a letter that he sent to the Church from Nauvoo on September 6, 1842: "Shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward. . . . Courage . . . and on, on to the victory!" (D&C 128:22.)

Latter-day testimonies of Jesus Christ

Now, my dear brothers and sisters, there are some in the world who mistakenly say that we are a non-Christian Church—a cult; that we worship Joseph Smith rather than our Savior, Jesus Christ. How far from the truth they are! What heresy! The Lord declared, "For thus shall my church be called in the last days, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (D&C 115:4).

We have a hope in Christ here and now. He died for our sins.

Because of Him and His gospel, our sins are washed away in the waters of baptism; sin and iniquity are burned out of our souls as though by fire; and we become clean, we have a clear conscience, and we gain that peace which passeth understanding.

We *believe*, and it is our testimony, and we proclaim it to the world, "that there shall be no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent" (Mosiah 3:17).

We *know*, and it is our testimony, and we proclaim it to the world, that to be saved men must "believe that salvation was, and is, and is to come, in and through the atoning blood of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent" (Mosiah 3:18).

"And we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins" (2 Nephi 25:26).

For the past century and a half since the Restoration, beginning with the Prophet Joseph Smith, the latter-day prophets of God have raised their voices in clarity and with authority and truth as they have borne their testimonies of the divinity of this

great latter-day work and the redemptive power of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

To the testimonies of these mighty men I add my testimony. I know that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God and that He was crucified for the sins of the world. He is my friend, my Savior, my Lord, and my God. With all my heart I pray that the Saints may keep His commandments, have His Spirit to be with them, and gain an eternal inheritance with Him in celestial glory.

As we begin this conference let us wait upon the Lord for His blessing and His divine approbation. I pray the Lord to bless you; and as His servant, I bless you. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "Come unto Jesus" without announcement.

President Romney

We have just heard an address prepared by President Spencer W. Kimball, which was read by his personal secretary, D. Arthur Haycock, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "Come unto Jesus."

We shall now be pleased to listen to President Gordon B. Hinckley.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My brethren and sisters, I am confident that I speak for all of you when I express appreciation to President Kimball for his message just read by his able and faithful secretary, D. Arthur Haycock.

Testimony and thanks to Church members

Thank you, President Kimball, for your counsel, and particularly for your testimony of God our Eternal

Father and his Beloved Son, our Savior and Redeemer. We add our witness to yours that we too know that God lives and that he is the Ruler of the universe, our Father in Heaven; that Jesus Christ, his Only Begotten in the flesh, was born in Bethlehem of Judea as the promised Messiah; that he was the Man of miracles, the one perfect Man who has lived upon the earth; that he was crucified and gave his life as a sacrifice for the sins of all men; that through that great act of atonement, he became the Redeemer of all mankind; that he arose from the grave the third day, thus becoming "the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Corinthians 15:20); that he was seen by many in and about Jerusalem, and in this hemisphere also, who testified that they saw and felt and were instructed by the risen Lord. By the power of the Holy Spirit, which has borne witness to us, we can and do testify of these great, transcendent truths. And we add our witness that this, "the dispensation of the fulness of times" (D&C 112:30), spoken of in the scripture, was ushered in by a glorious visitation of the Father and the Son for the blessing of all who will seek and learn.

President Kimball, we assure you that the prayers of this people across the world ascend to our Father in Heaven in your behalf. We sing anew the beautiful hymn of Evan Stephens, written for Wilford Woodruff's ninetieth birthday:

We ever pray for thee, our Prophet dear,
That God will give to thee comfort and cheer;
As the advancing years furrow thy brow,
Still may the light within shine bright as now.

(*Hymns*, no. 386.)

While speaking of prayers, may I express appreciation to the mem-

bers of the Church throughout the world for your prayers in behalf of all of the General Authorities. We recognize the great and sacred trust reposed in us. We are aware of our inadequacies and of the need for divine help in carrying forward the great work that must be done if this cause is to roll on to its promised destiny.

We thank you for your demonstrated faith and devotion, for the immeasurable service you give in behalf of others, for the virtue of your lives, for the goodness of your families, and for your personal integrity. Of course, there are some who do not measure up, but even with many of them, there is a desire and an effort. May the blessings of the Lord be with all of you who strive to walk according to his teachings.

What this work is all about

Now, I should like to read portions of a letter that came to my desk. I have changed the names to preserve anonymity and have somewhat abbreviated it, paraphrasing a few words in the process. The letter reads:

"Dear President Hinckley,

"When I met you in the elevator at the hospital I had the urge to write you and tell you of some of the things that have happened to me.

"When I was sixteen or seventeen I cared nothing for the Church and would not have anything to do with it. But a bishop who was concerned about me came over to see me and asked me to help build some scenery for a road show production, and of course I told him no.

"Well, about ten days went by, and the bishop came back to ask me to build the scenery, and again I told him no. But then he went on to explain that he had asked others, and they had told him that they didn't know how. He indicated that I was

needed. I finally gave in and proceeded to build the scenery.

"When I got it done, I said, 'There is your scenery,' and decided I had done my part. But the bishop insisted that they needed me on the stage to move the scenery and make sure it got put up right and that it got moved carefully as the road show moved from ward to ward. So I finally gave in again.

"That bishop kept me busy for quite a while, and pretty soon I was involved and enjoying it. He then moved from our area and we got a new bishop, and he picked up the challenge and kept after me.

"Bishop Smith had asked me to go on a mission, but I was undecided on that, and when Bishop Sorensen was put in, he asked me also, and I finally decided that I would go.

"Well, the bishop and I went to tell Mom and Dad about my decision. They told the bishop they couldn't pay for it. Dad told the bishop that if I was really sincere about going that I should work and save, and pay for the mission myself.

"My eyesight was not the greatest, as you know, and when I went places I had to be taken. When I became sixteen, I wanted to drive a car more than anything, and Dad took me to several eye doctors, all with the same result. The vision in my right eye was 20/800, and the vision in my left eye was 20/50, and I had astigmatism. So earning enough money to go on a mission was not an easy task. I worked in the sign shop at a department store for six to eight months to save some money. The bishop finally felt it was time for me to go, and we went to talk to my parents again. I had a thousand dollars saved, and the bishop told my Dad that the elders quorum would support me for the rest. Dad sat there for a while and said if anybody was going to support his son, he would. I filled out my

papers and got my call in May of 1961.

"I went to Japan, where I loved the people and the missionary experiences that I had there. My companions and I baptized several people into the Church. After I came home, I went to work again in the sign shop. During the time I worked there, whenever I went to lunch, I would see a young lady walking up the street, who evidently worked in the same general area. I knew I had met her somewhere before but could not place her.

"Well, one of my missionary companions came home, and after some time we ran around together. Of course, he did all the chauffeuring because of my eyesight. One night he called and wanted to go out on a date, and so I frantically called around to find a date. Well, we went to a party, and guess who he took out. Right, he took out Sister Marilyn Jones who also had been in Japan, and whom I now remembered meeting briefly there on one occasion. She was the girl I had been passing on the street for several months and had not recognized.

"After this party, I went to California with my family for two weeks, and when I got home I found that my missionary friend had been dating the girl I had taken to the party. I thought I'd fix him, so I called Marilyn to go out on a date. You have to realize that it's not easy to do that when you don't drive, so my younger sister drove, and we had eight other youngsters accompany us to a ball game. That should have been enough to discourage any young lady from ever dating me again, but I tried again when my family went to the canyon to pick chokecherries.

"Finally came our date alone, and Dad had to drive me to pick up Marilyn, and then we drove him home, and went out on our date, and then back to our house to pick up

Dad, who drove us back to her house, and then we went home. On the next date I asked her to marry me, and she told me no. Well, I went out with her some more, and asked her to marry me a couple more times, and I finally got a maybe. I thought that was a step in the right direction, and persisted. Six months after we started going together you performed our marriage in the Salt Lake Temple.

"President Hinckley, I thought that I loved this young lady at that time, but seventeen years later I find that I love her more than I could ever imagine. We now have five wonderful children.

"I have held many positions in the Church: chorister, senior Aaronic adviser, everything in the elders quorum, assistant ward clerk, seventies president, executive secretary, and now I am a counselor in the bishopric.

"I am still working in the sign shop at the department store. I bought a small house about thirteen years ago, and as my family got larger, my house got smaller. I had to do something, so I added on to my house and made it twice the size. I started this a little over three years ago and have been working on it ever since. It is coming along really well.

"Now for the most amazing piece of news ever. Two years ago in June, I went to a new eye doctor who examined my eyes and asked me what restrictions I had on my driver's license. I told him that I didn't have a license. He said that my eyesight was probably acceptable.

"I sat there in shock, and my wife said, 'Does this mean he could get a driver's license?' The doctor said, 'I don't see why not.' The next day my wife had me signed up for a driver education course, and after I finished it I went to get my license and they checked my eyes. The

doctor had written a note explaining my eye problem, and that maybe I should not drive at night. The examiner put the letters up and I read them right off. He went to talk to his supervisor, and came back and approved my license with only a minor restriction.

"President Hinckley, the Lord has blessed me more than I can ever deserve. People say how lucky I am that my eyes have improved so much, but I know that it is the Lord's doing. I feel it is because I have tried to serve the Lord and do what I can to build up his kingdom here on the earth. I am sure there are times he is disappointed in me, and I'm sure he should be. But I will try to do my best and be worthy of his blessings upon me and my family."

He concludes with appreciation and testimony and signs his name. I have taken your time to read this somewhat lengthy letter because I feel it tells so simply and yet so eloquently what this work is all about.

Work of redemption, of lifting, of saving

Under the sacred and compelling trust we have as members of the Church of Jesus Christ, ours is a work of redemption, of lifting and saving those who need help. Ours is a task of raising the sights of those of our people who fail to realize the great potential that lies within them. Ours is the responsibility of building self-reliance, of encouraging and cultivating happy homes where fathers and mothers love and respect one another and children grow in an atmosphere of peace and affection and appreciation.

If you will recall what I have just read, this man, when he was a boy of sixteen or seventeen, was drifting aimlessly and dangerously as so many young men do at that age. He was walking the broad way which

leads to destruction. Noting the course he was taking, his bishop, a prayerful and dedicated man, recognized his creative talent as an artist and found a way to challenge him to use that talent in the service of the Church. That bishop was wise enough to know that most young men will respond to a challenge when they know they are needed. No one else in the ward was quite capable of building the kind of scenery the bishop wanted. This inactive boy was capable of this, and the bishop complimented and challenged him with a request that his service was needed.

Here is a great key to reactivation of many of those who have fallen by the wayside. Each has a talent that can be employed. It is the task of leaders to match those talents with needs, and then to offer a challenge. The boy of this letter, whom I shall call Jack, responded, and he soon found himself moving in the direction of the Church rather than away from it.

Then came the challenge to go on a mission. Jack, who was now accustomed to saying yes rather than no, responded affirmatively. The father was not fully converted, and responded that his son would have to earn his own funds. That was not all bad. There was something of good in the requirement that he develop self-reliance. He went to work, he provided much of what he needed, he saved his money, and when he had a thousand dollars, the bishop, again under inspiration, felt the time had come when he should go. Jack's brethren in the elders quorum would assist, and that is proper. But the father, with an awakened sense of pride and of responsibility toward his own son, rose to the occasion, as men usually do when properly confronted.

I first met Jack in Japan when he was serving as a missionary there. I interviewed him on two or three

occasions. That was before we had the Language Training Mission. Young men and women were then sent with no language training and simply plunged in to work at the task when they arrived there. I marveled that this young man, with serious eyesight deficiencies, was able to grasp that difficult language and speak it with power. Behind that was a great effort and a great sense of devotion, and above all, a certain humility and reliance on the Lord with anxious, prayerful pleadings for help.

I can tell you, for I witnessed it, that it was a miracle in his case as it was in the case of many others.

I also first met in Japan and interviewed on a number of occasions the young lady he was later to marry. She had a wonderful spirit, a deep faith, and a moving sense of duty. Their acquaintance in the field was nothing more than having seen one another on one occasion. They worked in widely separated areas. But out of their experiences had come a common touchstone—a new language in which each had learned to share testimony with others while laboring in the great and selfless cause of service to our Father's children.

As he indicated in his letter, they asked me to perform their marriage. It was done in the Salt Lake Temple. Each knew that only in the Lord's house under the authority of the holy priesthood could they be joined in marriage for time and for all eternity under a covenant which death could not break and time could not destroy. They wanted the very best for themselves; they would not be satisfied with anything else. Be it said to their credit that each has remained true to the sacred covenants they made in the house of the Lord.

Five beautiful and handsome children have graced that marriage. They are a family with love and appreciation and respect one for another. They have lived in a spirit of

self-reliance. A small home which has been enlarged is a home in which father and mother and children gather together and counsel and learn one from another. It is a home in which there is a reading of the scripture. It is a home in which there is prayer: family prayer and individual prayer. It is a home in which service is taught and exemplified. It is a simple home; it is an unostentatious family. There is not much of wealth, but there is much of peace and goodness and love. The children who are growing up there are growing in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). The father is faithful in his service to the Church. For these many years he has responded to every call made upon him. The mother likewise, in the organizations for women and children. They are good citizens of the community and the nation. They are at peace with their neighbors. They love the Lord. They love life. They love one another.

Now they have witnessed a miracle in the improvement of his eyesight. To a kind and gracious God goes the credit. This, too, is of the essence of the gospel, the power of healing and restoration, followed by acknowledgment and thanksgiving.

Increased reactivation is needed

Is not this what the work is all about? Did the Savior, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). Without great abundance of the things of the world, these, my friends, live abundantly. Such as they are the strength of the Church. In their hearts is a quiet and solid conviction that God lives and that we are accountable to him; that Jesus is the Christ, the Way, the Truth, the Life (see John 14:6); that this work is their work; that it is true; and that gladness and peace and

healing come in walking in obedience to the commandments of God (see D&C 89:18), as set forth in the teachings of the Church.

I do not know whether the two men who served as Jack's bishops know what has become of him. If they know where he is, there must be sweet satisfaction in their hearts. There are thousands of bishops like them, who serve night and day in this great work of reactivation. And there are tens of thousands of Jacks in this Church whose hearts are touched and who are brought back into activity by a great sense of concern, a quiet expression of love, and a challenge to serve from bishops and others. But there are many, many more who need similar attention.

This work of ours is a great work of redemption. All of us must do more because the consequences can be so remarkable and everlasting. This is our Father's work, and he has laid upon us a divine injunction to seek out and strengthen those in need and those who are weak. As we do so, the homes of our people will be filled with an increased measure of love; the nation, whatever nation it be, will be strengthened by reason of the virtue of such people; and the Church and kingdom of God will roll forward in majesty and power on its divinely appointed mission. Of this I testify and for this I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "Jesus, Mighty King in Zion" without announcement.

President Romney

President Gordon B. Hinckley, Counselor in the First Presidency, has just spoken to us, followed by

the Tabernacle Choir singing "Jesus, Mighty King in Zion." The Choir will now continue by singing "Faith of Our Fathers, Living Still," following which the congregation will join the Choir in singing "High on the Mountain Top."

The Choir sang "Faith of Our Fathers, Living Still."

The Choir and congregation sang "High on the Mountain Top."

President Romney

We welcome those who have just joined us on radio and television. We are gathered in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, in the first session of the 152nd Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Elder David B. Haight, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us, and he will be followed by Bishop J. Richard Clarke, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric.

Elder David B. Haight

I pray for a heavenly blessing as I stand at this historic pulpit to give expression to direction received for this conference.

We testify of Christ. Our hope is in Christ. Our salvation is in Christ. Our efforts, hopes, and desires to build up the kingdom of God on earth are centered in and through His holy name.

We proclaim, as did John the Baptist upon seeing Jesus approaching the River Jordan, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

He taught the doctrines of His gospel, that every soul may have the opportunity to gain the blessings of eternal life.

A special ingredient

As we strive to fulfill our divine responsibility to spread His gospel, we need the full measure of every promised blessing for His people: a belief, a testimony, patience, obedience, charity, wisdom, and faith in His word.

I believe our Father planted into the soul of man a special ingredient which, if used, will influence him

toward heavenly things. Families or individuals wondering how to better share the gospel or to show deeper concern for new members, or missionaries wanting to touch the hearts of those they are teaching, have available to them this heavenly influence. That special ingredient instilled in each of us may bring to us our greatest joy. It will overcome fear, peer pressure, hatred, selfishness, evil, and even sin. This special ingredient must be nurtured as the tiny mustard seed; it is powerful beyond words and was taught by the Savior himself when asked which was the great commandment of the Law. He said:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

"This is the first and great commandment.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

"On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matthew 22:37-40.)

Love—a divine ingredient

Love is this divine ingredient. It

alone describes what can be our perfect relationship to our Heavenly Father and our family and neighbors, and the means by which we accomplish His work.

The two commandments—to love God and to love man—had been taught separately by Jewish teachers, but Jesus brought them together and made the second “like” the first; and by the example of His own life, He made love of God and love of mankind the heart of the gospel. “By this,” He said, “shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35).

Besides loving God, we are commanded to do what to many is a more difficult commandment—to love all, even enemies, and to go beyond the barriers of race or class or family relationships. It is easier, of course, to be kind to those who are kind to us—the usual standard of friendly reciprocity.

Then are we not commanded to cultivate genuine fellowship and even a kinship with every human being on earth? Whom would you bar from your circle? We might deny ourselves a nearness to our Savior because of our prejudices of neighborhood or possessions or race—attitudes that Christ would surely condemn. Love has no boundary, no limitation of good will.

To the lawyer who asked, “Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” and the lawyer’s subsequent reciting of the commandments to “love . . . God . . . and thy neighbour as thyself,” Jesus replied, “This do, and thou shalt live.” Then the lawyer pressed further, “And who is my neighbour?” (See Luke 10:25–29.) The Savior’s parable that followed is the pure essence of love:

“A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

“And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

“And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

“But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

“And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

“And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

“Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

“And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.” (Luke 10:30–37.)

The essential difference between the Samaritan and the other two men was that one had a compassionate heart and the others had selfish hearts. Though Samaritans were looked down upon by the Jews, the priest and the Levite—both of whom were Jews—should have come to the aid of the unfortunate man, but did not.

“The full and essential nature of love we may not understand,” wrote Elder John A. Widtsoe. “But there are tests by which it may be recognized.

“Love is always founded in truth. . . . Lies and deceit, or any other violation of the moral law, are proofs of love’s absence. Love perishes in the midst of untruth. . . . Thus, . . . [he] who falsifies to his loved one, or offers her any act contrary to truth, does not really love her.

"Further, love does not offend or hurt or injure the loved one. . . . Cruelty is as absent from love . . . as truth is from untruth. . . .

"Love is a positive active force. It helps the loved one. If there is need, love tries to supply it. If there is weakness, love supplants it with strength. . . . Love that does not help is a faked or transient love.

"Good as these tests are, there is a greater one. True love sacrifices for the loved one. . . . That is the final test. Christ gave of Himself, gave His life, for us, and thereby proclaimed the reality of his love for his mortal brethren and sisters." (*An Understandable Religion*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1944, p. 72.)

Love can neutralize negatives

Knowing that we should love is not enough. But when knowledge is applied through service, love can secure for us the blessings of heaven. Jesus taught:

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

A commercial airplane plunged into the Potomac River near Washington, D.C., earlier this year, and an unidentified passenger gave his life for his "unknown friends." Bystanders watched in amazement as he caught the life preserver lowered from the helicopter to rescue those in the water. Rather than save himself, he passed the life preserver over to another person; the helicopter returned and he again passed the life preserver to another. "Why doesn't he hold on and save himself?" someone shouted. After others near him were saved, people on the shore watched in anguish as he slowly sank and disappeared into the frozen waters.

"If a single man achieves the highest kind of love," wrote Mahatma Gandhi, "it will be

sufficient to neutralize the hate of millions" (Hermann Hagedorn, *Prophet in the Wilderness: The Story of Albert Schweitzer*, New York: MacMillan Co., 1948, title page).

God does not love us because we are lovable, have a pleasing personality or a good sense of humor, or at rare times show exceptional kindness. In spite of who we are and what we have done, God wants to pour out His love on us, for the unlovable are also precious unto Him.

At a recent university ceremony honoring Mother Teresa—who has spent her life working for the poor, the lepers, and abandoned children around the world—she said, "Love each other with a clean heart. . . . [The poor] are not hungry for bread; they are hungry for love." (*The Salt Lake Tribune*, 31 May 1982, p. 4-A.)

"A man filled with the love of God," wrote the Prophet Joseph Smith, "is not content with blessing his family alone, but ranges through the whole world, anxious to bless the whole human race" (*History of the Church*, 4:227).

How can we earn God's love? The Savior taught:

"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love" (John 15:10).

Love unlocks divine powers

Love is a gift of God, and as we obey His laws and genuinely learn to serve others, we develop God's love in our lives.

Love of God is the means of unlocking divine powers which help us to live worthily and to overcome the world.

The worldly methods of promoting great causes were discarded by the Savior. Money to buy influence—He had none. Publications—He never used. The sword

was contrary to his purposes. The people of His own nation disowned Him. He planted His ideals in the hearts of only a few. They were mostly poor; but they met, listened, prayed, and believed in His words. As taught by the Master, they went among other men and by act and word passed on the new ideals, by love unfeigned and by friendship, not by force; and so the work spread.

God accomplishes His purposes heart to heart. The prophet Nephi helps us to understand this: "It is the love of God, which sheddeth itself abroad in the hearts of the children of men; wherefore, it is the most desirable above all things" (1 Nephi 11:22).

The depth and magnitude of God's love for all of His children is emphasized in the writings of John: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

"Love is a verb"

Brother and Sister Willes Cheney were called as missionaries to the Canada Halifax Mission and assigned to the far north, to Canbrook, Newfoundland. The instructions from their mission president were: "Go up there and strengthen the branch. Find some housing so the people will have their own place to meet in. And be ambassadors of good will."

This faithful couple touched many lives. Brother Cheney reported of their numerous successes with people and concluded with this tribute to his lovely companion:

"Aside from the many examples, the major contribution to our success was Sister Cheney. Her whole mission was a labor of love—teaching how to make a garden, can, sew, quilt, and give compassionate

service. She was loved by all because of her excellent example as a wife, a mother, and as a friend."

He went on to say, "We helped the branch acquire a chapel and saw twenty-seven new members come into the Church, and many who were inactive return."

This lovely couple had shown their love for the Lord and for their newly found neighbors, though they were far away from home.

Someone has written, "Love is a verb." It requires doing—not just saying and thinking. The test is in what one does, how one acts, for love is conveyed in word and deed.

John the Beloved, who had a special closeness to our Lord, wrote:

"Herein is love, not that we love God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

"Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." (1 John 4:10–11.)

By his paying the debt of sin for each of us, Jesus brings us, if we desire, to his Father. We sing these expressive words, which truly convey our feelings:

I stand all amazed at the love

Jesus offers me,

Confused at the grace that so fully
he proffers me;

I tremble to know that for me he
was crucified,

That for me, a sinner, he suffered,
he bled and died.

I marvel that he would descend
from his throne divine

To rescue a soul so rebellious and
proud as mine;

That he should extend his great
love unto such as I,

Sufficient to own, to redeem, and
to justify.

I think of his hands pierced and
bleeding to pay the debt!

Such mercy, such love, and
devotion can I forget?

No, no, I will praise and adore at
the mercy seat,
Until at the glorified throne I kneel
at his feet.

(Hymns, no. 80.)

May each of us adequately play our role in the final accomplishment of God's declared work and glory, "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39), by striving for perfection and by being obedient to all the laws and ordinances of the gospel—all of us strengthened by our compliance with

the great commandments to love God and our neighbors, I pray as I bear witness that this is His work, that He loves us all. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

Elder David B. Haight, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

Bishop J. Richard Clarke, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, will now speak to us.

Bishop J. Richard Clarke

My soul delighteth in the scriptures

One of the most beautiful and inspiring passages in the Book of Mormon is often referred to as "The Psalm of Nephi." It begins with these stirring words: "My soul delighteth in the scriptures, and my heart pondereth them, and writeth them for the learning and the profit of my children.

"Behold, my soul delighteth in the things of the Lord." (2 Nephi 4:15–16.)

These words have special meaning to me. I grew up in a small Mormon community. I was raised in a fine Latter-day Saint home. I was taught to love the Lord, to reverence His name, and to communicate with Him in prayer. I was very young when I learned that the Father and the Son had appeared to Joseph Smith. I believed as a boy and I have never doubted as a man.

However, until I enlisted in the navy, I had not experienced the shock of meeting so many people who had never seen a Mormon or who had never heard of Mormonism. I soon realized how limited was my knowledge of the gospel. I was asked some pretty tough questions about the Church that I had difficulty an-

swering. I was the only Mormon in our outfit and so there was no one with whom I could counsel. The only scripture I had was a small military copy of the Book of Mormon. I am ashamed to confess that I left Lehi and his family somewhere in the wilderness on a number of occasions.

While I had grown up as an active member of the Church, I had felt no special need or urgency to study the scriptures and the writings of the prophets. When asked a question or when strong ridicule was directed at me and the Church, I could only state the personal beliefs I had learned from my family and teachers. I tried to compensate for my knowledge deficiency by being a good example of the principles I professed.

To know eternal truths

After leaving the navy, I received a mission call. I still had not developed a real appetite for gospel knowledge. I had not equated understanding the holy scriptures with being a good Latter-day Saint. Following some brief training in the old mission home in Salt Lake, my companions and I were exposed to a few weeks of tracting in Texas while waiting for the ship that would take

us to South Africa. That exposure expanded my vision of what I was going to be doing for the next two years. I gained a lot of humility in a hurry.

A quirk of fate

An unusual quirk of fate changed my whole life as we sailed toward Cape Town. It was to be a twenty-eight-day voyage, but our ship developed boiler problems crossing the equator. Limping into the port of Recife, Brazil, we hit the rocks, gashing the ship's hull. A tugboat rescued us; but before we finally arrived in Cape Town, we had spent eighty-four days on board ship. I was fortunate enough to share quarters with a fine companion, Roy Stevens, who was a dedicated student of the gospel. His father had also been a missionary and had sent a large box of Church books with his son. It was during this confinement that a whole new world of gospel knowledge opened up to me.

It was a time to study, to ponder, to pray. I read all the standard works from cover to cover, as well as *Jesus the Christ* and several other Church books. On this voyage I received my witness from the Lord that the Book of Mormon is the word of God. It was here that I came to know that Jesus is the Christ. It was here I developed an insatiable appetite to know the eternal truths. What a pity I had waited so long. I had wasted so much time during military service. What a priceless treasure I had ignored! I am persuaded that we will be held accountable for how we use our discretionary time.

Examples of Joseph Smith and Spencer W. Kimball

There is so much we can learn from the example of the young Prophet Joseph Smith, whose per-

sistent, prayerful study of the Holy Bible compelled him to seek the God of Heaven for divine guidance. This brought him to the threshold of the greatest revelation ever given to man since the mortal ministry of the Savior Himself. Throughout the Prophet's life, he continued to probe and ponder until he gained a mastery of the scriptures.

President Kimball labored to gain insights

Another young man, Spencer W. Kimball, was about fourteen when Susa Gates spoke at their stake conference. He recalls: "She gave a rousing talk on the reading of the scriptures; . . . then she stopped . . . to ask . . . us, 'How many of you have read the Bible through?'"

" . . . My accusing heart said to me, 'You, Spencer Kimball, you have never read that holy book. Why?' I looked around me . . . to see if I was alone in my failure to read the sacred book. Of the thousand people, there were perhaps a half dozen who proudly raised their hands. . . . When the meeting closed, I . . . rushed home . . . gritting my teeth and saying to myself, 'I will. I will.' "

He went home, got a coal-oil lamp, and climbed the stairs to his attic room. "There," he said, "I opened my Bible and began [with] Genesis . . . and I read well into the night with Adam and Eve . . . and through the flood even to Abraham." (*President Kimball Speaks Out*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981, pp. 92-93.)

He continued to read a little each night. Although he didn't always understand what he was reading, he had made a commitment to himself. At the end of a year, he had finished. This achievement set a pattern for his life. The sermons and the writings of President Kimball convince us that he has labored long

hours to gain his profound insights into the holy scriptures.

Examples of Bruce R. McConkie and Marion G. Romney

I am convinced that families, even young children, can learn to love the scriptures. A few years ago when I was in Colorado Springs for a conference, I called on Mark McConkie, son of Elder and Sister Bruce R. McConkie, to address the question: "How did you develop a love for the scriptures?"

As I recall, he said: "I first developed a love for the scriptures from my mother. I remember she would teach me while she did her ironing. I felt how she loved the scriptures by the way she would speak about the prophets. How much she loved them! As I grew older, I would listen to the recordings of the scriptures. I wanted to know the scriptures like my father. Sometimes he would enter the room while I was listening and it would take him just a moment to identify the exact scripture I was listening to. I wanted to be able to do that."

You may remember the sweet experience shared by President Romney, who had been reading the Book of Mormon with his son. He related: "I remember reading it with one of my lads when he was very young. . . . We were each reading aloud alternate paragraphs of those last three marvelous chapters of Second Nephi. I heard his voice breaking and thought he had a cold, but we went on to the end of the three chapters. As we finished he said to me, 'Daddy, do you ever cry when you read the Book of Mormon?'"

"Yes, son," I answered. "Sometimes the spirit of the Lord so witnesses to my soul that the Book of Mormon is true that I do cry."

"Well," he said, "that is what happened to me tonight." (In Conference Report, Apr. 1949, p. 41.)

Some time later, I was reading a Jack London book with our youngest son Brandon, before going to bed. I recalled President Romney's story and thought, What an experience we're missing by not reading the standard works together. Before he leaves on his mission, I want him to become intimately acquainted with the great heroes of sacred literature and to pattern his life after them. We began to read just fifteen minutes or one chapter each day. What a choice experience! I commend it to you.

Search the scriptures

All of our sacred records have come to us at high cost. When we consider the fiery furnace of conquest and persecution through which the Bible has passed, the great wonder is not whether it is complete or translated correctly, but a miracle that it has survived at all! Surely the Lord has preserved it for the salvation of his children.

Laban's life was taken by divine command that the Nephite nation not "dwindle . . . in unbelief." (See 1 Nephi 4:13.) Think of the travail of the Nephite prophets who kept the records of their people so future generations might profit from their experiences. Think of the millions of people who have lived at a time when there was no printing or translating capability or who, because of political oppression or illiteracy, have been denied access to the scriptures. Think about the blessings of living in this dispensation, when the holy scriptures are available to us. In 1981, the United Bible Societies distributed 444,000,000 complete copies or portions of the Bible throughout the world. By the end of 1982, the Book of Mormon or selected portions will be available in fifty-seven languages.

We are the beneficiaries of great sacrifice. What excuse do we have for not taking advantage of this?

Brothers and sisters, you don't have to be a natural student to read the scriptures; you just need to love the Lord.

The value of sacred records was indelibly taught by the Savior as he ministered among the Nephites. He declared: "A commandment I give unto you that ye search these things diligently; . . .

"Give heed to my words; write the things which I have told you; . . .

"Search the prophets, for many there be that testify of these things.

"And now . . . after [Jesus] had expounded all the scriptures unto them which they had received, he said unto them: Behold, other scriptures I would that ye should write, that ye have not. . . .

"How be it that ye have not written this thing, that many saints did arise and appear unto many and did minister unto them?

"And . . . Nephi remembered that this thing had not been written.

"And . . . Jesus commanded that it should be written; . . .

"Now . . . when Jesus had expounded all the scriptures in one, which they had written, he commanded them that they should teach the things which he had expounded unto them." (3 Nephi 23:1, 4-6, 11-14.)

I concur with the strong counsel of President Romney, given to a group of seminary and institute coordinators in 1973. He told them, and I quote: "I don't know much about the gospel other than what I've learned from the standard works. When I drink from a spring I like to get the water where it comes out of the ground, not down the stream after the cattle have waded in it. . . . I appreciate other people's interpretation, but when it comes to the gospel we ought to be acquainted with what the Lord says. . . . You ought to read the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants;

and . . . all the scriptures with the idea of finding out what's in them and what the meaning is and not to prove some idea of your own. Just read them and plead with the Lord to let you understand what he had in mind when he wrote them." (Address delivered at Coordinators' Convention, Seminaries and Institutes of Religion, 13 Apr. 1973.)

Admonition of Joseph Smith

I fear there are far too many Latter-day Saints who do not have a testimony of the gospel from their own diligent efforts. Is it possible that you are living on the reflected light of others who have prayed and pondered the revelations of God? A testimony comes from personal endeavor. The Lord has provided us the means of salvation, but our success is dependent upon individual effort.

I conclude with this admonition of the Prophet Joseph Smith, given in 1832:

"Search the scriptures—search the revelations which we publish and ask your Heavenly Father, in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, to manifest the truth unto you, and if you do it with an eye single to His glory nothing doubting, He will answer you by the power of His Holy Spirit. You will then know for yourselves and not for another. You will not then be dependent on man for the knowledge of God; nor will there be any room for speculation. . . . For when men receive their instruction from Him that made them, they know how He will save them. . . . Again we say: Search the Scriptures, search the Prophets and learn what portion of them belongs to you." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938, pp. 11-12.)

To this I add my witness. The holy scriptures are the word of God. If we are to know God, we must

read His words, for therein He stands revealed to the honest in heart. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "Arise, Shine, Thy Light Is Come" without announcement.

President Romney

The Tabernacle Choir has sung "Arise, Shine, Thy Light Is Come."

We welcome those who have just joined us on television or radio for this, the first session of the 152nd Semiannual General Conference of the Church.

We are grateful to the managers and operators of the many television and radio stations and cable systems for offering their facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this conference to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

Elder Mark E. Petersen, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our concluding speaker, following which the Tabernacle Choir will sing "The Lord Is My Shepherd."

The benediction will then be given by Elder Richard G. Scott, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, after which this conference will be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

Elder Mark E. Petersen

Christ—our dearest friend

We are thankful for this, another opportunity to bear testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ and of His divine Sonship, for truly He is the well-beloved and Only Begotten Son of our Heavenly Father.

Again we testify that He is our Savior and our Redeemer. He is our Creator, the Maker of heaven and earth.

But He also is our Friend—our dearest Friend. He died for us. Is not that the ultimate measure of friendship?

And He provided for us a resurrection from death, which is given freely to every person who has lived on the earth or ever will.

What a gift! What a Friend! What a mighty Personage He is!

But marvelous as will be our resurrection, joyfully as we will welcome our victory over death, salvation in His kingdom is quite another matter. It comes only to those who faithfully obey His commandments and accept all of His ordinances.

Measure of complete salvation

Have you ever thought of the process by which the gospel saves people? Faith, repentance, and baptism come first, of course. But there is more, much more.

The meaning of complete salvation is that we become like the Savior in word and thought and deed. We can measure our progress toward salvation merely by determining how Christlike we are. If we are not becoming more like Him in our everyday living, we are not advancing toward salvation as we should.

Becoming Christlike is a matter of daily spiritual growth. As a flower develops from a seed, as a mature adult develops from a tiny child, so we can grow spiritually day by day, eventually into Christlike personalities.

As one of our poets described it:

Heaven is not reached at a single bound;

But we build the ladder by which we rise

From the lowly earth to the
vaulted skies,
And we mount to its summit round
by round.

(Josiah Gilbert Holland,
"Gradatim," in *Masterpieces of
Religious Verse*, ed. James Dalton
Morrison, N.Y.: Harper and
Brothers, 1948, p. 443.)

Jesus the Savior is the supreme
example of how we should build our
souls.

"What manner of men ought ye
to be?" He asked, and then replied,
"Even as I am." (3 Nephi 27:27.)

Becoming like Him is not some-
thing we can achieve overnight. It is
a lifelong and an eternal process,
nothing less. In every hour and every
day we must strive to become like
Him.

Become believers and doers

Then what is the process by
which this is done? It is by
developing within our own selves the
very traits of character which make
Him what He is.

This does not come by studying
the gospel alone, nor is it only by
being baptized or receiving the
priesthood, nor even by becoming
temple workers. All of these are nec-
essary, of course, but none alone is
enough.

In it all, and above all, we need
to develop Christlike hearts. We
must have a change deep within us.
As the prophet Alma taught:

"All mankind, yea, men and
women, all nations, kindreds,
tongues and people, must be born
again; yea, born of God, changed
from their carnal and fallen state, to
a state of righteousness, being re-
deemed of God, becoming his sons
and daughters;

"And thus," Alma said, "they
become new creatures; and unless
they do this, they can in nowise in-

herit the kingdom of God" (Mosiah
27:25-26).

Note this last sentence: "Unless
they do this, they can in nowise in-
herit the kingdom of God." This is a
direct warning to us all.

How to live a Christlike life

Unless we have this change of
heart, unless we follow the Savior's
teachings, our sins may cancel out all
the benefits we otherwise might re-
ceive through the ordinances of the
Church.

The scriptures are very clear in
telling us how to live a Christlike
life. That is why we are to read them
so constantly.

For example, we are taught to
be *poor in spirit*, that is, humble.
We are taught to be *meek*. (See
Matthew 5:3, 5.) It is not Christlike
to be egotistical or proud or arrogant.

We are told to love Him so
much that we will *hunger and thirst
after righteousness*. (See Matthew
5:6.) Can we understand what that
means? He is completely righteous.
We wish to become like Him. But is
our desire so deep that we actually
hunger and thirst for it?

As a matter of fact, how great is
our desire to walk in His paths? That
alone can measure the depth of our
conversion. Desire! That word—
desire! How deep is it within our
souls—for righteousness?

To be Christlike also is to be
kind. Was He ever unkind? If we
lack in kindness and mercy, can we
say that we resemble Him?

Another great law we must
understand if we are to become like
Him is the Golden Rule. We must
learn to do unto others as we would
be done by.

How many of us truly live that
commandment? And yet, is there any
salvation without it? Read the
twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew for
an answer.

Just what does it mean to do

unto others as we would be done by?

Would we like other people to be cruel to us? Of course not. Would we like them to cheat us? Would we appreciate being lied to or robbed? Then will we deceive others or steal from anyone? Dishonesty in all its forms is despicable and degrading. Is it Christlike in any sense? We hardly dare mention it in the same breath, for it really is anti-Christ!

The Lord teaches us to be *peacemakers*, and to avoid offenses, unpleasantness, and disputations. (See Matthew 5:9.) Should we not make a conscientious effort to get along well with other people, and more especially with members of our own families?

No man should quarrel with his wife or give her any cause to quarrel in return. The scriptures command us also to *avoid provoking our children to wrath*. (See Ephesians 6:4.) If irritations arise in the home, they should be removed in a genuine Christian spirit.

To be like the Savior we can hardly be without true charity, either. How did the Apostle Paul express it?

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels. . . .

"And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge. . . .

"And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and *though I give my body to be burned*, and have not charity [and have not the love of Christ toward my family and other people], it profiteth me nothing." (1 Corinthians 13:1-3; italics added.)

In fact, he says we would be *as* nothing, except of course that we would resemble sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. (See 1 Corinthians 13:1.)

To come into God's presence

The Savior said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8).

Will any others see Him—or come into His presence? Can anything that is impure?

What did He say about impurity?

"Touch not that which is unclean; . . . be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord" (3 Nephi 20:41). That is what He said, and that is what He meant.

It is a divine commandment. If you believe in Christ, touch not the unclean thing!

Lust and covetousness are completely destructive. Sex sin is deadly. Intoxication is vicious. Greed is of the devil. So is selfishness, as it leads to all forms of dishonesty. They contaminate and demoralize our very souls. They are completely opposite to the Christlike life.

But what did He say about purity?

He prayed that those who follow Him will be so purified by righteous living that they will be pure as He is pure, so that, as He said, "I may be in them as thou, Father, art in me, that we may be one, that I may be glorified in them" (3 Nephi 19:29). Think of it! If we are pure, our righteousness will add glory to His name!

And He taught something else. If we have offended others, we are to seek a reconciliation with them and not allow ill feelings to persist.

Have you ever thought of these words as a commandment?

"If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

"Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matthew 5:23-24).

With this in mind can we assume that our worship is acceptable to God if we have ill feelings toward others or if we have dealt unfairly with anyone?

Sometimes I have wondered if

leaving our gift at the altar while seeking this reconciliation could refer to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Can we partake of those holy emblems with a clear conscience if we have done an injustice to another person?

The Lord also taught:

"If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

"But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matthew 6:14-15.)

Can we presume that we shall enter His sacred presence if we are still stained by unremitted sins?

And then He warned against hypocrisy. Christlike people are not two-faced or double-dealing. The divine word is: "Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24).

Requirements for perfection

Can we see how our day-by-day acts—little though they may seem to be—mold our souls?

Do His simple laws seem overly strict? Are they too difficult for us to live? But if we ignore them, do we realize what we do to ourselves?

It is inspiring to read the Lord's own description of the traits which make up His own character. He lists them this way:

"Faith, hope, charity and love, with an eye single to the glory of God. . . .

"... virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, diligence." (D&C 4:5-6.)

These are the traits of character of the Lord Jesus Christ. How earnestly do we try to build them into our own souls?

He commands us to become perfect, even as His Father in Heaven is perfect. (See Matthew 5:48.)

Can perfection arise out of careless living? Can we achieve per-

fection by imperfect means? It is plain to see why the Lord is strict and why we must serve Him with all our heart, might, mind, and strength. (See D&C 4:2.)

It is no easy matter to live the gospel as we should. But unless we do, we cannot receive the blessings. It is no easy matter to become perfect in anything. Perfection requires devotion, long-suffering, persistence, willingness to sacrifice, and constant concentration. Imperfection can produce only further imperfection.

Could you good sisters bake a good cake if you did not follow the recipe? Could you brethren build a house or a highway, or make a clock, or send a man to the moon if you ignored the formula provided for such achievements? Could you become a doctor if you did not follow the prescribed course in a medical school? Could you become an engineer if you ignored the principles of engineering?

Follow the course

Then can we expect to achieve perfection like that of Almighty God if we fail to follow the course He lays out for us?

The gospel will do us little good if we do not live it.

Membership in the Church will not save us unless we keep the commandments.

A half-hearted effort will not save us either. Instead, it will bring condemnation. The Lord has so declared in section 58 of the Doctrine and Covenants. (See D&C 58:29.)

One of the great prophets of ancient times was Samuel the Lamanite. I like the way he taught. He was plain and straightforward in his manner of speech. He did not mince words, nor did he leave the people wondering what he meant.

As he spoke from the walls of Zarahemla, calling the Nephites to repentance, he told them bluntly that

if they refused to live the gospel condemnation would come upon them, and he made it clear that they would have no one to blame but themselves.

"Remember, remember," he said, "that whosoever perisheth, perisheth unto himself; and whosoever doeth iniquity, doeth it unto himself" (Helaman 14:30).

Then he said that, since we have free agency, we can choose the good or the evil, life or death; but he declared that in the end we shall most certainly receive exactly what we ourselves have chosen.

Should we not determine how well we are really living the gospel?

And should we not remind ourselves that now—in our mortal lives—is the time of our probation, and that now is the time of planting for whatever kind of harvest we hope to receive?

Isn't it time for each of us to learn the lesson of Gethsemane and say with Him: "Not my will, but thine, be done"? (Luke 22:42.) In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "The Lord Is My Shepherd."

The benediction was given by Elder Richard G. Scott.

FIRST DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

SECOND SESSION

The second general session of the 152nd Semiannual General Conference began at 2:00 P.M. on Saturday, October 2, 1982.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

Music for this session was provided by the Mormon Youth Chorus under the direction of Robert C. Bowden with Roy M. Darley at the organ.

At the beginning of the meeting, President Hinckley made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

President Spencer W. Kimball is watching the proceedings of this session on television. He was with us all morning. I have been assigned to conduct this session.

We welcome all assembled in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on Temple Square in this, the second general session of the 152nd Semi-

annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We also welcome the many members and friends of the Church tuned to these proceedings by radio or television, or by direct wire or satellite transmission. You will be interested to know that four hundred and four stake centers are receiving the proceedings of this conference through the Church's satellite link and their own facilities in the stake centers; and additionally we estimate there are some fifty stake centers equipped with down links which have been rented for this occasion. There are overflow congregations in the Assembly Hall, where Elders Robert D. Hales and Ronald E. Poelman preside, and in the Salt Palace, where Elders Royden G. Derrick and William R. Bradford preside.

We are pleased to acknowledge especially our guests who are present this afternoon, along with general and local Church leaders and members from many parts of the world.

We express our appreciation to

the owners and operators of the many radio and television stations and to the owners and operators of cable systems for their cooperation in making these proceedings available to members and friends of the Church in many lands.

The music this afternoon will be provided by the Mormon Youth Chorus under the direction of Robert Bowden with Roy Darley at the organ.

The chorus will begin this service by singing "Onward Christian Soldiers," following which the invocation will be offered by Elder Dean L. Larsen, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The chorus sang "Onward Christian Soldiers."

Elder Dean L. Larsen offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

We miss very much this afternoon, as we did this morning, the presence of Elder LeGrand Richards of the Council of the Twelve, who

because of circumstances of his health has asked to be excused. We send him our love and express our prayers in his behalf.

There have been no changes among the General Authorities since the last general conference. It is therefore proposed that we sustain all of the General Authorities and general officers of the Church as at present constituted.

Those in favor may manifest it by the uplifted hand. Any opposed may manifest it by the uplifted hand.

The Mormon Youth Chorus will now sing "O My Father," following which Elder Thomas S. Monson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will speak to us.

The chorus sang "O My Father."

President Hinckley

Elder Thomas S. Monson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our first speaker. He will be followed by Elder Franklin D. Richards of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Thomas S. Monson

Tuesday, June 8, 1982, dawned bright and clear in London, England. It was destined to be an historic day. A spirit of excitement permeated the very air and filled expectant hearts with keen anticipation. The President of the United States of America had arrived in Great Britain and soon would be addressing Parliament. Crowds gathered for the occasion, filled the streets and overflowed the nearby park. Uniformed policemen maintained order while famous Big Ben chimed its proud and clarion call which marked the appointed hour.

Through Westminster Abbey

My wife, Frances, and I stood midst the milling crowd. Then, suddenly, Parliament's doors swung open, the Prime Minister and the President greeted the throng, entered their limousines, and the motorcade drove slowly away. The crowd gave a mighty cheer, then began to disperse. Frances and I walked from the sunbathed street into the semi-dark, yet welcome, refuge of Westminster Abbey.

A reverence filled this world-fa-

mous edifice, as it should. For here, kings are crowned, royalty wedded, and rulers, whose mission of mortality has ended, are honored then buried. We walked along the aiseways, thoughtfully reading the inscriptions which marked the tombs of the famous. We remembered their achievements, recalled their deeds of valor, and marked their well-earned places in the world's history. Then we paused before the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, one of many who fell in France during the Great War. From an unmarked grave, the body of this fallen youth had been brought to London to forever lie in honor. I read aloud the inscriptions: "They buried him among the kings because he had done good toward God and toward His house." "In Christ shall all be made alive."

Toward the doorway we walked. Still visible in the park beyond were the remnants of the crowd. The immortal words of Rudyard Kipling coursed through my mind and spoke to my soul:

The tumult and the shouting dies,
The captains and the kings depart;
Still stands thine ancient sacrifice:
An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget, lest we forget.

("Recessional"; see also
Hymns, no. 77.)

Baden-Powell, builder of boys

One final marker to see, one more inscription to read. As a Scouter, I had come from America to view the plaque of honor dedicated to the memory of Scouting's founder, Lord Baden-Powell. We stood before the magnificent marble memorial and noted the words:

Robert Baden-Powell, 1857-1941

Founder of the Boy Scouts

Friend of all the World

On that day during this year
which commemorates the 75th

anniversary of Scouting and the 125th anniversary of its founder, I pondered the thought, "How many boys have had their lives blessed—even saved—by the Scout movement begun by Baden-Powell?" Unlike others memorialized within the walls of Westminster Abbey, Baden-Powell had neither sailed the stormy seas of glory, conquered in conflict the armies of men, nor founded empires of worldly wealth. Rather, he was a builder of boys, one who taught them well how to run and win the race of life.

Boys do become men.

Nobody knows what a boy is
worth;

We'll have to wait and see.

But every man in a noble place

A boy once used to be.

(Quoted by Spencer W. Kimball,
in *Conference Report*, Apr.
1977, p. 50.)

A boy spared

The reality of this thought is delightfully portrayed in the closing lines of the well-known musical *Camelot*. King Arthur's Round Table has been destroyed by the jealousies of men, the infidelity of a queen, and the appearance in the present of a mistake from the past, even Mordred. Deprived of his dream, King Arthur and his forces prepare to meet the armies of Lancelot. All he held dear is gone; disillusionment has darkened into despair.

Suddenly, however, there appears a stowaway—the young boy Tom of Warwick. Filled with the hope of youth, he tells the king he has come to help him fight the mighty battle. He reveals his intention to become a knight. Under the questioning of Arthur, Tom declares his knowledge of the Round Table. He repeats the familiar goals: "Might for right! Right for right! Justice for all!"

A look of renewed confidence spreads across King Arthur's face. All is not lost. To the boy he repeats the goals and glory of Camelot. Then he formally knights him "Sir Tom of Warwick." Thus commissioned to depart the battlefield, to return to England, to renew the dream of Camelot, to grow up and to grow old, Sir Tom places aside the weapons of war; and armed with the tenets of truth, he hears his monarch command, "Run, boy, run!" A boy had been spared, an idea safeguarded, a hope renewed. (Alan J. Lerner, *Camelot*, New York: Random House, 1961, p. 115.)

Scouting and the Church

Every boy blessed by Scouting learns in his youth far more than that envisioned by Sir Tom of Warwick. He adopts the motto "Be Prepared." He subscribes to the code "Do a Good Turn Daily." Scouting provides proficiency badges to encourage skills and personal endeavor. Scouting teaches boys how to live, not merely how to make a living. How pleased I am that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1913 became the first partner to sponsor Scouting in the United States.

I love the inspired words of President Spencer W. Kimball when he spoke to Church members everywhere: "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints affirms the continued support of Scouting and will seek to provide leadership which will help boys keep close to their families and close to the Church as they develop the qualities of citizenship and character and fitness which Scouting represents. . . . We've remained strong and firm in our support of this great movement for boys and of the Oath and the Law which are at its center." (In Conference Report, April 1977, pp. 50-51.)

Duty to God and country

What is the Scout Oath of which President Kimball spoke?

"On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times and to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake and morally straight." (*Boy Scout Handbook*, North Brunswick, New Jersey: Boy Scouts of America, 1972, p. 34.)

A hero from war's battlefield, General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, emphasized this same commitment when, in the twilight of his illustrious career, when the daylight of youth had departed and the shadows of age had descended, he declared in a message to young men: "In my dreams I hear again the crash of guns, the rattle of musketry, the strange, mournful mutter of the battlefield. But in the evening of my memory, I always come back to West Point. Always there echoes and re-echoes in my ears—Duty, Honor, Country." (Address accepting Sylvanus Thayer Award, West Point, 12 May 1962.)

The Protestant minister Harry Emerson Fosdick phrased differently the same commitment: "Men will work hard for money. They will work harder for other men. But men will work hardest of all when they are dedicated to a cause. Until willingness overflows obligation, men fight as conscripts, rather than following the flag as patriots. Duty is never worthily performed until it is performed by one who would gladly do more, if only he could." (*Vital Quotations*, comp. Emerson Roy West, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1968, p. 38.)

And from the Confederate general, Robert E. Lee: "Duty is the sublimest word in the English language. Do your duty in all things. You cannot do more. You should never wish to do less." (Inscription

beneath his bust in the Hall of Fame).

Scout Law and laws of God

Let us consider the Scout Law referred to by President Kimball. When I think of the Scout Law, I reflect upon the life of one who knew the laws of God and who kept them—even the Lord, Jesus Christ. The twelve points of the Scout Law have their counterpart in the message of the Master.

1. *A Scout is trustworthy.* What did the Lord say? "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4).

2. *A Scout is loyal.* "Get thee behind me, Satan" (Luke 4:8).

3. *A Scout is helpful.* "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk" (John 5:8).

4. *A Scout is friendly.* "Ye are my friends" (John 15:14).

5. *A Scout is courteous.* "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" (Matthew 7:12).

6. *A Scout is kind.* "Suffer the little children to come unto me. . . . And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." (Mark 10:14, 16.)

7. *A Scout is obedient.* "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38).

8. *A Scout is cheerful.* "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

9. *A Scout is thrifty.* "Sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me" (Luke 18:22).

10. *A Scout is brave.* "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39).

11. *A Scout is clean.* "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord" (D&C 38:42).

12. *A Scout is reverent.* "Our Father

which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name" (Matthew 6:9).

Such inspired teachings, when taught by devoted leaders to precious boys of promise, influence not only the lives of the boys; they also affect eternity. "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days" (Ecclesiastes 11:1). Such is Scouting.

"Run, boy, run!"

Several years ago a group of men, leaders of Scouts, assembled in the mountains near Sacramento for Wood Badge training. This experience, where men camp out and live as do the Scouts they teach, is a most interesting one. They cook and then eat—burned eggs! They hike the rugged trails which age invariably makes more steep. They sleep on rocky ground. They gaze again at heaven's galaxies.

This group provided its own reward. After days of being deprived, they feasted on a delicious meal prepared by a professional chef who joined them at the end of their endurance trail. Tired, hungry, a bit bruised after their renewal experience, one asked the chef why he was always smiling and why each year he returned at his own expense to cook the traditional meal for Scouting's leaders in that area. He placed aside the skillet, wiped his hands on the white apron which graced his rotund figure, and told the men this experience. Dimitrius began:

"I was born and grew to boyhood in a small village in Greece. My life was a happy one until World War II. Then came the invasion and occupation of my country by the Nazis. The freedom-loving men of the village resented the invaders and engaged in acts of sabotage to show their resentment.

"One night, after the men had destroyed a hydroelectric dam, the villagers celebrated the achievement

and then retired to their homes.”

Dimitrious continued: “Very early in the morning, as I lay upon my bed, I was awakened by the noise of many trucks entering the village. I heard the sound of soldier’s boots, the rap at the door, and the command for every boy and man to assemble at once on the village square. I had time only to slip into my trousers, buckle my belt, and join the others. There, under the glaring lights of a dozen trucks, and before the muzzles of a hundred guns, we stood. The Nazis vented their wrath, told of the destruction of the dam, and announced a drastic penalty: every fifth man or boy was to be summarily shot. A sergeant made the fateful count, and the first group was designated and executed.”

Dimitrious spoke more deliberately to the Scouters as he said: “Then came the row in which I was standing. To my horror, I could see that I would be the final person designated for execution. The soldier stood before me, the angry headlights dimming my vision. He gazed intently at the buckle of my belt. It carried on it the Scout insignia. I had earned the belt buckle as a Boy Scout for knowing the Oath and the Law of Scouting. The tall soldier pointed at the belt buckle, then raised

his right hand in the Scout sign. I shall never forget the words he spoke to me: ‘Run, boy, run!’ I ran. I lived. Today I serve Scouting, that boys may still dream dreams and live to fulfill them.” (As told by Peter W. Hummel.)

Dimitrious reached into his pocket and produced that same belt buckle. The emblem of Scouting still shone brightly. Not a word was spoken. Every man wept. A commitment to Scouting was renewed.

It has been said, “The greatest gift a man can give a boy is his willingness to share a part of his life with him.” To leaders who build bridges to the hearts of boys, to parents of Scouts, and to Scouts everywhere, on this our 75th anniversary, I salute you and pray our Heavenly Father’s blessings upon you. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Thomas S. Monson has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder Franklin D. Richards of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He will be followed by Elder Rex D. Pinegar of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Franklin D. Richards

My dear brothers and sisters, I rejoice with you in the spirit of this great conference and pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as I speak to you.

Worshipping with song

According to scripture, after the Savior instituted the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper with the Apostles, they sang a hymn and “went out into the mount of Olives” (Matthew 26:30). From this scripture it is evident that the singing of hymns

was a part of the religious services at that time.

Today, one of the important parts of our worship services is the congregational singing of hymns, in addition to the beautiful choir music. As each of our religious services is opened by a hymn and a prayer, the spirit of worship is established and a beautiful feeling of fellowship is felt. Today I would like to emphasize the importance and value of participating in congregational singing.

In our Latter-day Saint hymns, we sing praises to the Lord, pray

unto the Lord, recite great religious truths—in effect sermons—and our minds and spirits are elevated and spiritually stimulated.

President Heber J. Grant, in discussing the matter, said: “No individual singer, or organization of singers, in the Church, should ever render a selection unless the words are in full harmony with the truths of the gospel, and can be given from the heart of the singer. In other words, our songs should be in very deed ‘Prayers unto the Lord.’” (*Improvement Era*, July 1912, pp. 786–87.)

President Spencer W. Kimball, in referring to our singing of hymns, said: “Some of the greatest sermons that have ever been preached were preached by the singing of a song. There are many wonderful songs. . . . Sing them through.” (*New Zealand Area Conference Report*, 20–22 Feb. 1976, p. 27.)

Doctrine, prophecy, and inspiration

In July of 1830, just three months after the organization of the Church, a revelation from the Lord was given to Emma Smith through her husband, the Prophet Joseph Smith, in which the Lord stated: “For my soul delighteth in the song of the heart; yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads” (D&C 25:12).

In this revelation, Emma Smith was charged with the responsibility of compiling a hymnbook for the use of the Church. Brother W. W. Phelps, one of the great hymn writers of this dispensation, was appointed to assist and arrange for the printing. Ninety hymns were compiled, and in 1835 the first edition was published.

To illustrate the doctrine, prophecy, and great inspiration contained in our hymns, let me quote from a few.

“I Know That My Redeemer Lives” was selected as one of the ninety hymns in the first hymnbook, and the words were written by Samuel Medley. In this hymn, we sing:

I know that my Redeemer lives;
What comfort this sweet sentence gives!

He lives, he lives, who once was dead.

He lives, my everliving head.

He lives to bless me with his love.

He lives to plead for me above.

He lives my hungry soul to feed.

He lives to bless in time of need.

O sweet the joy this sentence gives:

“I know that my Redeemer lives.”

(*Hymns*, no. 95.)

J. Spencer Cornwall, commenting on this song, wrote: “To hear this loved song rendered by an assembly of devoted Latter-day Saints is a spiritual baptism” (*Stories of Our Mormon Hymns*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1968, p. 108). How true this is! This is one of our most popular hymns in which we express thanks for the atoning sacrifice of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Background of two great songs

“Praise to the Man,” (*Hymns*, no. 147), one of W. W. Phelps’ inspiring hymns, is a magnificent tribute to the Prophet Joseph Smith. This beautiful hymn not only incorporates the elements of rejoicing and prophecy, but also contains basic doctrine, as is evidenced by the statement, “Sacrifice brings forth the blessings of heaven.” The law of sacrifice is an important part of the gospel of Jesus Christ and contributes to the building of faith, love, and many other virtues.

Also in the same stanza with the sacrifice doctrine, we sing, “Wake

up the world for the conflict of justice. Millions shall know 'brother Joseph' again." What a prophetic utterance! At the time Brother Phelps wrote the hymn, there was figuratively a handful of Church members. Now, millions *do* know that Joseph Smith was and is a prophet of God and millions more will undoubtedly obtain this testimony. I thrill every time I sing this tremendous hymn.

"We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet" (*Hymns*, no. 196). The words to this hymn were written by William Fowler and published in 1863. This hymn basically acknowledges our thanks and gratitude to our Father in Heaven for restoring the gospel in its fulness and establishing His church with prophets to guide us in these latter days. This beautiful hymn is another of the most popular hymns as LDS congregations meet and sing in every part of the world.

"Come, Come, Ye Saints" (*Hymns*, no. 13) was composed by William Clayton on 15 April 1846, and in an edition of the *Relief Society Magazine* in 1921 (Jan., p. 58), the following story is told regarding the origin of this hymn:

"President Brigham Young, feeling great anxiety, because there were murmurings in the camp of Israel, called Elder William Clayton aside, and said, 'Brother Clayton, I want you to write a hymn that the people can sing at their camp-fires, in the evening; something that will give them succor and support, and help them to forget the many troubles and trials of the journey.'

"Elder Clayton withdrew from the camp, and in two hours returned with the hymn known as, 'Come, Come, Ye Saints.' His personal testimony is to the effect that it 'was written under the power and inspiration of the Lord.'"

In this hymn we sing:

Why should we mourn or think
our lot is hard?

'Tis not so; all is right.

Why should we think to earn a
great reward,

If we now shun the fight?

Gird up your loins; fresh courage
take;

Our God will never us forsake;

And soon we'll have this tale to
tell—

All is well! all is well!

Many pathetic pioneer stories are told with reference to how this compassionate plea touched their hearts and brought them great courage and comfort.

In a southern states mission, a young girl was walking home with a friend and began humming "Come, Come, Ye Saints." Her friend said, "My, that's a beautiful melody. What is it?" The girl told her about it, and made a date to take her to a Church service. After attending a few times, she arranged for the missionaries to teach her family. The family have all been baptized and are happy doing their part in building the kingdom.

This great hymn truly epitomizes the great faith and courage of our pioneer ancestry and today builds this faith and courage in the present generation as we approach the pioneering work of this age.

Other hymns with spiritual power

"O My Father" (*Hymns*, no. 139), written by Eliza R. Snow in Nauvoo in 1843, is another of the greatest LDS hymns. This remarkable hymn depicts our existence in the premortal existence with the Father and Mother of our spirits. Then, in the last stanza we sing:

When I leave this frail existence,
When I lay this mortal by,
Father, Mother, may I meet you
In your royal courts on high?

Then, at length, when I've
completed

All you sent me forth to do,
With your mutual approbation
Let me come and dwell with you.

This hymn truly lays out all the great drama of eternal life as revealed by the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. As one sings this beautiful hymn, he appreciates more and more the literal Fatherhood of God the Eternal Father.

"The Spirit of God Like a Fire" (*Hymns*, no. 213) was another composition of W. W. Phelps and was also published in the first LDS hymnbook. The emotional impact and spiritual power that this hymn generates as it is sung was demonstrated as it climaxed the dedicatory services of the Kirtland Temple on 27 March 1836. It is my understanding that this hymn has been sung at the dedicatory services of each of the LDS temples built since the Kirtland Temple dedication. It has, of course, been sung in many dedicatory services of ward and stake chapels.

This hymn heralds the restoration of the gospel, the bursting of the veil over the earth, and the angels coming to visit the earth. The chorus is an exclamation of great joy:

We'll sing and we'll shout with
the armies of heaven,
Hosanna, hosanna to God and the
Lamb!
Let glory to them in the highest be
given,
Henceforth and forever; Amen and
amen!

Music is inspirational

The great Tabernacle Choir and the Mormon Youth Chorus have, for many years, been an inspiration, not only to LDS members, but to millions of others as they have sung these and other hymns.

Ward and stake choirs also per-

form a most important part in our worship meetings and are participated in by thousands of members who receive great joy and spiritual growth in so doing.

Again, I would like to emphasize the value and importance of participating in congregational singing. I often wonder, when I see people in a worship service not singing, could it be that they are missing a beautiful, inspirational experience?

As I have sung the inspired messages contained in our hymns, my testimony of the Fatherhood of God and the divinity of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, has been strengthened.

Also, our LDS hymns bear witness that God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, did appear to the Prophet Joseph Smith, and that he was and is a great prophet through whom the gospel in its fulness was restored.

Gratitude for President Kimball

My gratitude for our beloved prophet Spencer W. Kimball is intensified as I sing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet." May the Lord continue to bless and sustain him.

As we sing our hymns, let us be conscious of the beauty and import of each hymn, and as we do, our singing will deeply move our souls, bring us in closer harmony with the Holy Spirit, and strengthen our testimonies. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have listened to Elder Franklin D. Richards of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Rex D. Pinegar, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now address us.

Elder Rex D. Pinegar

To those searching for strength

I would like to address my comments today to those who are searching for the strength to meet the challenges of life.

Not long ago I received a note from a daughter who was leaving home to attend college. After a sweet message of thanks and appreciation, came an expression of concern about the responsibilities she would now encounter being on her own. Up until now she felt she had lived a sheltered life and had relied on her family to give her direction and strength. She was beginning to realize life is hard!

My daughter's note made me think of the encounters I've had during the past several months with many people of the Church who seem to be asking, "How do I deal with the difficult challenges of life?"

Obstacles are part of living

Life is hard. It is a challenge. At every age life presents trials to bear and difficulties to overcome. Growing up is hard. There are often the heartaches of feeling wronged or rejected. Pursuing an education can press us to our financial, emotional, and intellectual limits. Serving a mission is not easy. It requires total dedication, spiritually and physically. The problems accompanying marriage, rearing a family, earning a living, or coping with illness, old age, and death are realities of life which we are required to meet, but with which we may be unprepared or unwilling to deal.

We will be able to face and solve these challenges more willingly and courageously when we understand that such obstacles are encountered as a natural part of living.

C. S. Lewis wrote: "The great thing, if one can, is to stop regarding

all the unpleasant things as interruptions of one's 'own,' or 'real' life. The truth is of course that what one calls the interruptions are precisely one's real life—the life God is sending one day by day." (*They Stand Together: The Letters of C. S. Lewis to Arthur Greeves*, ed. Walter Hooper, London: Collins, 1979, p. 499.)

A story

An old Asian tale describes a prince who was reared in a castle and kept sheltered from the hardships of life. He never saw anyone who was ill. He never saw anyone who was aged. He never saw anyone die.

When the prince grew to be a young man, he desired to go out into the kingdom he ruled. As he was being carried along on a litter, he saw for the first time an old man, toothless, wrinkled, and bent with age.

The prince said to his bearers, "Stop! Wait! What is this?"

The chief bearer replied, "This is a man who is bent with age. Though you are young and strong, the time will come when you too must be bent with age."

This disheartened the prince. His confrontation with aging was more than he could bear. He asked to be taken back to the castle.

After a few days in familiar surroundings he felt rejuvenated. He decided to venture forth again. This time as he passed by a group of men he noticed that one of them was on the ground, overcome with fever and convulsing in pain.

"What is this?" the prince asked.

"This is a man who is ill," said the porter. "Though you are now young and strong, you too will have to suffer the problems of sickness."

The prince was again saddened

and returned immediately to the palace. But again in a few days, he wanted to visit his kingdom once more.

They hadn't gone far from the castle when the prince saw a coffin being carried to its place of burial.

"What is this?" he asked.

When the meaning of death was explained to the inquiring young prince, he became depressed by the inevitable vision of the future. As he returned to the immediate comfort of his palace, he vowed he would never come out again.

The prince interpreted life to be an evil trick because no matter what a man did or what a man was, he had to suffer sickness, aging, and death.

An opportunity for growth

Perhaps some of us feel about life the way the young prince in this fable did. We may feel that life is cruel and unfair to us, that we would like to retreat into our own shelter and never have to venture forth into the world. To do so, however, would be to deny ourselves the opportunities for growth which life and its experiences are designed to bring to us.

The Lord has made available to us a power which will turn these challenges into opportunities, a power which will enable us to understand the Apostle Peter's declaration that such trials of our faith are indeed more precious than gold. (See 1 Peter 1:7.)

When I was teaching an early-morning seminary class a number of years ago, we paused at the end of the year to review some principles we had learned from our study of the Book of Mormon. One young lady held up an illustration in her Book of Mormon, painted by Arnold Friberg. It depicted the two thousand sons of Helaman known as the "stripling soldiers." (See Alma 53:22.) Then in all seriousness she asked, "Tell me,

Brother Pinegar, why aren't our young men built like this today?"

Now, I don't know that the young men in the days of the Book of Mormon were built the way Arnold Friberg depicts them, but her question gave me the opportunity to ask, "Where did the *strength* of these young men come from?"

Those of you who have read the Book of Mormon are familiar with the story of the sons of Helaman. (See Alma 53:56-58.) When their fathers were converted to the gospel, the fathers covenanted with the Lord that they would never again take up arms. But eventually their homes were threatened by hostile armies to the extent that the fathers would have to choose to fight or die. It was then that the two thousand young men, not bound by the same covenant, volunteered to defend their parents and their homes.

A prophet-general described these young men by saying, "They were exceedingly valiant for courage, and also for strength and activity; but behold, this was not all—they were men who were *true at all times in whatsoever thing they were entrusted*. . . .

"Yea, they had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them. . . .

"And they . . . fought as if with the strength of God; yea, never were men known to have fought with such miraculous strength; and with such mighty power." (Alma 53:20; 56:47, 56; italics added.)

Faith—the force of life

What gave the sons of Helaman their strength? Their faith in God was their "miraculous strength" and "mighty power."

Leo Tolstoy, the famous Russian writer, declared, "Faith is the force of life." Tolstoy had spent the major portion of his life seeking to understand life's purpose. He

found fame, position, fortune. He married well and had a family. He had experienced success by nearly every measure the world uses.

He sought answers to the meaning of life from his studies of science, philosophy, and other fields of knowledge. However, all the knowledge he acquired, honors he received, and personal accomplishments he achieved brought no lasting satisfaction. Life still seemed to him meaningless. At this point of deepest despair, Tolstoy asked the question, "How am I to live?" The answer came, "By the Law of God."

Tolstoy was then compelled to admit that "besides the reasoning knowledge" there is "in every living man another kind of knowledge, an unreasoning one, but which gives a possibility of living—faith. . . . Faith is the force of life." (*How I Came to Believe*, Christchurch, New Zealand: The Free Age Press, 1901, p. 40.)

Tolstoy found that one can possess about all one could desire of worldly pleasure and acclaim; but without faith in God, life will burden the heart, the mind, and even the soul.

Believe in God and live his law

It sometimes seems that the problems others face are not quite as hard as our own. Some of us may feel that life would not be so hard if we only had more wealth, or if we had a higher social station or better acceptance among our peers. Some may feel that if only they were married they could be truly happy. Others are seeking to be free from the responsibilities of marriage, thinking *that* would ease their challenges of life.

Not all challenges are related to the presence of a physical or material need. Yet the source of strength to meet all challenges remains the same: faith in God and remaining true at all

times. Believing in God and seeking to live His law provides the power to successfully overcome the testing such challenges bring.

A friend of mine from South Carolina has demonstrated that even multiple problems can be overcome when one is true to his faith in God.

Laurie Polk is a dwarf. From the time of his birth, life has been a challenge. When he became old enough to go to school, he pedaled himself on a tricycle in order to move about and keep up with the other children. When his short legs kept him from playing games and participating in athletics, he busied himself in preparing for a vocation in the business world. To obtain employment, he found it necessary to persist and to prove himself. When a job opportunity finally came to him, he found joy in life through his love for his work.

Then another challenge arose. Laurie Polk, already extremely limited in his physical mobility, lost the sight in one eye. Nearly complete loss of the use of his crippled, dwarfed legs followed shortly thereafter. Then, as if that were not enough of a trial for any man, the retina of Laurie's other eye became detached and complete blindness encompassed him.

Approach challenges patiently and with faith

Where did Laurie Polk gain his strength to overcome such darkness and despair? Through the power of faith in God, Laurie Polk has learned the meaning of life. In his thirty-four inch frame, he possesses a strength not unlike the sons of Helaman, through which he not only overcomes the personal challenges he encounters—he actually finds joy in living. He knows he can solve any problem by putting his life in harmony with God and serving his fellowman. He says, "With the help

of the Lord there are no problems, only challenges." Laurie Polk is now a high priest group leader in the Charleston South Carolina Stake.

From my own experience with life's hardships I have learned that faith in God develops a personal love for Him which is reciprocated through his blessings to us in times of need. To my daughter and to all others who are meeting new or challenging times, I say: Do not fear the challenges of life, but approach them patiently, with faith in God. He will reward your faith with power not only to endure, but also to overcome hardships, disappointments, trials, and struggles of daily living. Through diligently striving to live the law of God and with faith in Him, we will not be diverted from our eternal course either by the ways or the praise of the world.

May each of us develop faith in God sufficient to fight the battles of life victoriously "with the strength of God; yea, . . . with [His] miraculous strength; and . . . mighty power" (Alma 56:56). We will then find the

happiness we so much desire in our lives. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Brother Pinegar. Elder Rex D. Pinegar, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

The chorus and congregation will now join in singing "I Know That My Redeemer Lives," following which we shall hear from Elder Rex C. Reeve, Sr.

The chorus and congregation sang "I Know That My Redeemer Lives."

President Hinckley

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Rex C. Reeve, Sr., of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He will be followed by Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Rex C. Reeve, Sr.

Turn hearts and lives to God

As fearful as the daily news headlines are and even though there are violence and ominous uncertainty continually on almost every hand, there is no problem, national or personal, which could not be solved, and solved easily, if men and nations would turn their hearts and lives to God. It would be so simple.

He is our father, the actual father of our spirits. He is the father of all men. We are His children. He knows us; He loves us. He may not like all we do, but of one thing we can be sure—He loves His children. Yes, He is a loving Heavenly Father. And He *is* there.

How comforting and reassuring it is each day as we behold the wonders of the universe and this beautiful world on which we live. We can see His hand in the matchless order with which the heavenly bodies move and the delicate beauty of the flowers and trees and other growing things, all of them bearing silent witness of His existence.

How stimulating and edifying to approach Him in prayer each morning and evening and feel His nearness and His love as we acknowledge His hand, and in our need, seek His help. What a blessing to be able to approach the source of life and light and be strengthened and renewed by just humbly seeking and asking.

Even in tragedy He is there. When traumatic challenges come and a life hangs in the balance or is hopelessly marred and the future is dark and hope grows dim and time seems long—He is there. His reassuring feeling comes through, seemingly saying, “I am here, do not worry; this will be for your good if you endure it well. Trust in me.”

Life—time of testing

As He communed with our father Abraham He told him of the purpose of sending us to earth. He said:

“We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell;

“And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them” (Abraham 3:24–25).

Yes, this life is a time of testing. It is not the reward time. That will come later. We are here being tested. The test is going on now!

He wants us to know how we feel in our heart. He has said, “For as [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7).

“They draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me” (Joseph Smith—History 1:19).

When our hearts are not right, the Lord withholds His spirit. “They sought evil in their hearts, and I, the Lord, withheld my Spirit” (D&C 64:16).

He “granteth unto men” according to the desire of their heart. (See Alma 29:4.)

“O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with all your heart . . . that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day” (D&C 4:2).

Of offerings, the Lord has said, “Speak unto the children of Israel,

that they may bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering” (Exodus 25:2).

There was no concern as to the gift itself, but only that he give “it willingly with his heart.”

Worship of the heart

I suppose in the day of judgment the question won’t be so much what did you do or where did you serve, but rather, did you serve me with all your heart? Did you put me first in your life?

Yes, real worship is of the heart.

If men and nations did reach up to God with all their hearts, war would cease. If love of God were in the heart, a man would have no desire to destroy his brother.

There would be no dishonesty if the love of God were in the heart. If God came first in his life, a man would love his neighbor as himself, and instead of taking from him, he would feel to give to him.

In the home, if the love of God were in the heart of the father and the mother, the husband and the wife, and God came first in their lives, there would be an end to selfishness; there would be no discord. Instead, there would be a feeling of how can I help you or what can I do for you instead of demanding my rights and my desires, which often destroys homes.

Home is really only the feeling between husband and wife—how they feel about one another and God. Home isn’t the house, for the house can still be there when home is gone.

If men and nations did reach up to God with all their hearts, the Sabbath day would be a holy day. The desires of men’s hearts would be to love and serve God and honor and worship Him.

Yes, worship is really of the heart.

Put the Lord first

"But if from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and all thy soul" (Deuteronomy 4:29).

This question was asked of Jesus: "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?"

"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." (Matthew 22:36-37.)

We need to grow in respect and reverence and love of God, the Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ. This can come as we desire and seek. It will not come automatically, but we as individuals, free to choose, must desire and seek and pray and ask. It must grow from the deep feelings in our hearts.

The Lord has said, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:21).

To you wonderful young men of the Church, turn your hearts to the Lord, put Him first in your lives. The finest thing each of you can do for the Lord and for yourself and your family is to prepare yourself to serve as a missionary, to carry His gospel to the people who haven't yet heard it.

Not only would your service as a missionary bless many other lives, but it would bless your life. You would grow in love for the Lord and His children, your self-image would be enhanced, you would grow in confidence and understanding. You would grow closer to the Lord and know better how to use His holy power in your life.

When you returned from your mission you would be better prepared to serve as a priesthood leader and as a righteous father. It is the finest thing you can do to bless the lives of others as well as your own. Turn your heart to Him, put Him first in

your life, prepare to serve Him as a missionary.

You lovely young women of the Church, put the Lord first in your lives, turn your hearts to Him. He has placed such trust and confidence in you as His daughters. Prepare to marry in the temple. Work and plan to this end. It will not only bless your own lives, but the lives of many others will be blessed by your desire and example. Put the Lord first in your lives and hearts.

You fathers and mothers, put Him first in your lives and in your hearts. Teach your children of the Lord; let them feel that He comes first in your hearts. Teach them of His love and the great blessings He has for each of them as they desire and live worthy and go to His house. Help them feel how wonderful a family is, so they will desire to belong to a family forever.

Children come to know God and feel love for Him and His word and His prophets before they can read words if these sacred feelings exist in the hearts of the father and mother and they find expression in look and word and deed.

The finest thing you parents can do for your children is to love one another and put God first in your hearts and lives. It will strengthen your home and safeguard your family.

You who are single and who face many challenges, put Him first in your lives. He loves you. As you reach up and pour out your hearts to Him, you will receive strength and faith to meet the tests you struggle to face. He will not remove the challenges, but He will strengthen you so you can carry the burdens and meet the tests. He is there. He loves you.

Look to God

And you, our fine friends who do not yet enjoy the blessings of His

restored gospel, turn your hearts to Him and listen to His voice; He will whisper to you in the quiet of your hearts, as you seek Him.

God has spoken to man again in our day. The heavens are open. He does commune with man again, as in times of old, through His prophet. He has restored His priesthood authority, authorizing man to act for Him. He has restored His church which makes the saving ordinances available again to man.

You need not take our word alone for it, but He has prepared a way that you can know for yourselves.

His timeless message will bring real purpose and new meaning to your lives and a richness and peace you can enjoy in no other way. Thousands are seeking and finding each month. We invite you to seek and find too. We will be pleased to assist you, if you wish.

Yes, the answer and solution to all the challenges and needs we have, national or personal, is to turn our hearts to God, put Him first in our

lives, keep His commandments—and all things will work for our good, even those tests which seem so big and require so much. They, too, will bless our lives.

We should look to God; put Him first in our lives and especially in our hearts.

I testify that He does live! He is our Father! He loves His children! I also testify that Jesus is the Christ, and that He will be as close to us as we will let Him be by how we live and feel in our hearts.

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have heard from Elder Rex C. Reeve, Sr., of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our next speaker. He will be followed by Elder Bruce R. McConkie, also of the Council of the Twelve.

Elder L. Tom Perry

A new era

This conference marks the beginning of a new era for the Church in communications. The advent of the satellite affords us the opportunity of reaching more of the membership of the Church with general conference than we have ever had the privilege of doing before.

The office of bishop

There is a subject I have wanted to address at general conference for some time. It seems appropriate to speak on this topic at this conference because of our larger membership audience. Some years ago I was assigned to a committee responsible for

reviewing all changes in bishops. We would bring forward our recommendations for consideration at a meeting in the temple attended by the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve. I became alarmed at the number of bishops recommended for release because of health reasons, family difficulties, or employment problems. Even though the number was not large as a percentage of the total, I felt any number was too high because these great men were not having the privilege of fulfilling their assignment with the joy and satisfaction that should accompany this sacred calling.

I have always had the highest admiration for the office of a bishop. I have been associated with bishops

all my life. When I was six months old, my father was called to be the bishop of our ward. He served until after my eighteenth birthday. Within a few years of my marriage, I was called into a bishopric. I soon discovered the love which is generated within a bishopric as they serve together. An employment opportunity came to me after about three years of service, and it seemed appropriate that I accept it. It was with deep sorrow that I left the association of this bishopric. On our final night in the community in which we were living, they held a party. To avoid saying good-bye, we slipped away from the party before it was over and went to stay at a friend's home. The bishop and the other counselor I had been serving with came over when the party concluded and sat up all night while we rested, awaiting our early departure, so that we would not leave without the proper farewell. With a big lump in my throat, I said good-bye to these two brethren as I went on to other assignments.

Some years later I was called to serve in another bishopric. Again this love developed as we had opportunity to meet so often to direct the affairs of the ward. A little over a year later, a change was to be made in our stake presidency. The bishop and I were called in to be interviewed by the General Authority who was making the change. The first question the General Authority asked was, "How do you get along with your bishop? Is he a good leader?" Then I started to express in glowing terms my love and appreciation for this man and all he had done for the ward. Suddenly I realized the purpose of the interview. They could call him into the stake presidency, and we would lose our association. I immediately stopped my compliments on his great service, and after a pause, I said with a little smile on my face, "The only difficulty he has is that when he is under pressure, he

goes home and beats his wife." The General Authority leaned back in his chair and said, "Isn't that peculiar? He was in here just a minute ago and said you have leadership capabilities but you too have a fault. You like to go out behind the barn on occasion and smoke a cigar." The strategy failed: I was called into the new stake presidency.

"For a bishop must be blameless"

Even though I have never had the opportunity of serving as bishop, my two brothers have enjoyed this experience. One is presently serving in the Pacific Northwest. I also have a nephew whom I correspond with frequently, serving as a bishop in the northern plains area of the United States. So my opportunities to observe, watch, and appreciate the role of those who are called to serve as bishops in the Church have filled my heart and soul with admiration for this noble calling.

Paul, in his epistle to Titus, set forth some difficult requirements for one who is called to the office of a bishop.

"For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

"But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;

"Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" (Titus 1:7-9).

The Lord added to this burden by revelation contained in the Doctrine and Covenants, appointing him also as a judge.

"And whoso standeth in this mission is appointed to be a judge in Israel, like as it was in ancient days, to divide the lands of the heritage of God unto his children;

"And to judge his people by the testimony of the just, and by the assistance of his counselors, according to the laws of the kingdom which are given by the prophets of God" (D&C 58:17-18).

Prophets have counseled us on the importance of a bishop's role. President George Albert Smith told us:

"There is no position in the Church that will bring a greater blessing to any man than the office of a bishop, if he will honor that office and be a real father to the flock over whom he is called to preside. Do not forget that. . . . But I want to say to you that there is no bishop, nor has there been a bishop in the Church, who has given the time that the Lord expected him to give in looking after the flock and teaching his people and preparing them to do the work, that has not received one hundred percent of the blessings that he labored for, and they will extend to him throughout the ages of eternity." (In Conference Report, Oct. 1948, pp. 186-87.)

Support and sustain bishops

Now, it is not my purpose here today to spend time on the role and commission of the bishops and making them feel more burdened. Instead, let me talk to you about what we can do to support and sustain them in their great responsibility.

First, the wife of the bishop. You are carefully evaluated before your husband is approached to be called as a bishop, to determine the type of support you will give to him. We assure you that his role as bishop is secondary to his eternal callings as husband and father. In order for him to be successful, you must sustain him completely. We know this puts added burdens on you. You run a telephone answering service and a mailroom, act as a receptionist, and have to fill in at home when he is

called out on emergencies. Often, just by being there, you are exposed to confidential information, which you must keep within yourself and never discuss with anyone. Nothing would destroy the credibility of a bishop more than having his companion reveal confidential information she happened to overhear or see pertaining to ward business.

You have the obligation, along with your husband, of being a role model for the young people and the young married couples of the ward. Yours should be an ideal marriage—one they are striving to emulate by following your example. Your contribution is deeply appreciated and understood. Nothing can relieve the anxiety and load of being a bishop quite like the aid of a supportive companion.

Second, the children of a bishop. I know it is sometimes like living in a fishbowl with everyone watching you to see if you will make a wrong move or say the wrong thing. I know resentment sometimes builds up in your minds when you have a vacation or a planned activity interrupted by a ward emergency.

I learned a great lesson the night before my father was released as a bishop. It was the first time I had really ever seen my father shed tears. He called the family together to announce that his term of service as a bishop was over. Then, with tears streaming down his face, he told us how he would miss the calling, even though it had been a burden at times and had occupied a great deal of time. He taught us a real-life lesson of the true joy of Church service. It was not until then that I fully appreciated the blessings we had had in our home as a family, by having the mantle of a bishop rest on the shoulders of our father.

Children, next only to your mother, your father needs your sustaining support as he fulfills his tremendous assignment.

Third, quorums of the priesthood. Quorums are placed in a most unique position. The Lord has revealed a structure in His organization which uses his priesthood holders to watch over and strengthen the Church. Quorum leaders are to visit quorum members in their homes to give commendation where deserved, to bless and encourage where needed, to teach the gospel, and to inspire all to keep the commandments and live righteous lives. They are to see that the families of the ward, through the home teaching program, are visited at least monthly.

Home teachers, then, are called to represent the quorum president and, through the quorum president, the bishop. Thus, they are priesthood representatives called to assist the quorum leaders in watching over and strengthening the quorum members, including fathers and their families.

Priesthood home teachers are to "visit the house of each member, and exhort them to pray vocally and in secret and attend to all family duties. . . .

"To watch over the church always. . . .

"And see that there is no iniquity in the church, neither hardness with each other, neither lying, backbiting, nor evil speaking;

"And see that the church meet together often, and also see that all the members do their duty." (D&C 20:47, 53-55.)

The father is recognized and supported as the presiding leader of his family, responsible for teaching them the basic doctrines of the kingdom, seeing that they assist in building the kingdom, and for leading his family into eternal life.

When the home teaching program is functioning as outlined, problems in families are discovered and handled before they become so large they involve the judgment and time of a bishop. This relieves the bishop of a great burden, giving him

more time to spend on matters he cannot delegate to anyone else. Yes, the quorums must assume their full responsibility in taking care of the membership assigned to them.

Fourth, the general membership of the Church. I think you should understand that most bishops are not psychiatrists. Most are not social workers. Most are not trained financial advisers. But each bishop has been called under the inspiration of the Lord to serve you as members of your ward.

We need to be considerate of the time demands we make on them, so they can complete the assignments they have been given and have sufficient time to plan, to organize, to meditate, to ponder, and to be receptive to the inspiration and promptings of the Lord in their great stewardship. If we continually bring problems to their office that we could solve ourselves, it only takes their precious time which is needed in assignments they cannot delegate. Could I offer just a few rules to the membership of the Church in their dealings with their bishop?

Five rules for Church members

First, never go to your bishop before you have been on your knees asking for inspiration and for solutions. Don't just come to the bishop's office to load him with problems. I know how people go to the office only wanting to *talk* about problems, not wanting to *listen* for solutions.

Second, never involve your bishop if your home teacher or your quorum can care for your needs. However, I know that problems sometimes develop in a person's life which require the personal attention and special consideration only a bishop can provide. In matters such as this, go to him, and then he will help you.

Third, never speak ill or gossip

about your bishop or his family. Respect this great and important calling.

Fourth, live your life in harmony with the gospel so that when your bishop calls you to serve, you will be ready and worthy to accept that call. Then serve with all the enthusiasm, vigor, vitality, dedication, and commitment you can. Faithfully respond to the call to which you have been assigned.

Fifth, remember your bishop in your family prayers. Pray for his welfare and for his strength, that he may be blessed of the Lord in this tremendous responsibility which has come to him.

Improve relationship with bishop

I know of the great power there is in the office of a bishop. I know the peace, security, happiness, and contentment he can bring to a ward if we will only allow him to administer in the role to which he has been called and not keep diverting him to lesser duties. Let him have the power to organize his own time and not rob him of those precious minutes he needs. Remember, he has the same obligations as other heads of households: to, first, be a good husband; second, be a good father; and third,

discharge his responsibility to provide for his family. We should not interrupt his family time or prevent him from growing, accomplishing, and achieving in his professional pursuits. After these obligations to his family are met, then he has the opportunity to serve you in his great calling.

I promise you, my brothers and sisters, if we will sustain and support our bishops, learn to be concerned for their welfare, and pray for their success in all they have to do, it will bless our lives as we are placed under their leadership and have opportunity to follow their inspired direction, as they lead the wards of the Church.

May God bless us that this may be the beginning of a new and improved relationship with our bishops, is my humble prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Brother Perry, for those instructive remarks.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, also a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our concluding speaker.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie

The Seven Christs

May I speak of the seven Christs, or, rather, of the one Christ whose works and words are shown forth in seven ways?

We live in a day of contention and confusion, in which Christian people cry, "*Lo, here is Christ; or lo, there*" (see Matthew 24:23), meaning, "*Lo, here is the way of salvation; or lo, there.*"

We hear voices of doom and voices of glory. The doctrines and dogmas of the contending sects are at

war one with another. We are exhorted to believe in tenets of disagreement and to walk in crooked paths.

The sounds are discordant; the babble is incessant; and the messages are at variance. Surely it is clear to even the most blinded fanatic that opposing religious views cannot all be true.

In the midst of this war of words and tumult of opinions we raise a calm and reasoned voice, a voice that goes forth with the sound of a trumpet, a voice that is carried

by the power of the Spirit into the hearts of contrite souls.

It is a voice which speaks the words of eternal life here and now and prepares men to gain immortal glory in the everlasting realms that are to be.

We are the servants of the Lord, and he has sent us to invite all men to come unto Christ and be perfected in him. We are sent to testify of the true and only Christ, of the true and only gospel, of the true and only salvation.

We invite all men to hear and heed our witness. The Christ of whom we preach, and whose witness we are, is known in these seven ways:

1. Christ—the Creator

There is a God in heaven—a holy, exalted, perfected, and pure being who is the Father of us all. He is a Holy Man; he has a body of flesh and bones; and he is the Father of spirits.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Firstborn. He came forth as the heir and offspring of the Father. Along with all his spirit brethren he was endowed with agency and subject to law.

By obedience, by righteousness, through faith, over long ages and eons, this Firstborn of the Father, our Elder Brother, advanced and progressed until he became like unto God in power, in might, in dominion, and in intelligence. He became and was “the Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, who was, and is from all eternity to all eternity” (Mosiah 3:5).

Then it was that he, under the Father, became the Creator of worlds without number.

Then it was that the Father ordained and established the plan of salvation—called the gospel of God—whereby all his spirit children, Christ included, would be able to gain mortal bodies, to live in a pro-

bationary estate, to die, to be raised in immortal glory, and, if true and faithful in all things, to gain the same glorious exaltation enjoyed by the Father himself.

And then it was that the one who was beloved and chosen of the Father was foreordained to be the Savior and Redeemer, to be the one whose atoning sacrifice would put into full operation all of the terms and conditions of the Father’s great and eternal plan.

2. Christ—the God of our fathers

There is one God and Father of us all, one eternal plan of salvation, one way back to heaven. And Jesus Christ is the name given by the Father whereby men may be saved. His is the only name given under heaven—either now, or in ages past, or in eternities yet unborn—whereby salvation comes. (See D&C 18:23; Moses 6:52.)

There is one everlasting gospel, one Mediator between God and men, one alone who came to reconcile fallen men to their Maker. All men in all ages are saved by the same power, the same laws, the same Savior. And that Savior is Christ.

It is written: “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Hebrews 13:8). He is the Lord Jehovah; he is the Great I Am; and beside him there is no Savior.

He is the God of Adam and of Enoch and of Noah and of all the Saints who were before the flood.

He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and of all Israel. He is the *Holy One of Israel*, the God of all the prophets of all the ages. It was by faith in his name that they performed all their mighty works.

He was the God of the Jaredites and the Israelites and the Nephites. Moses, “esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt” (Hebrews 11:26), chose to follow him.

He is the one who parted the Red Sea at Moses' word, who stopped the sun and the moon when Joshua spoke, who raised from death the widow's son because Elijah desired it.

All of the prophets, all of the patriarchs, all of the ancient Saints worshipped the Father in his holy name and in no other way.

All true believers, all of the faithful from Adam to this hour, all those who through faith have wrought righteousness and gained salvation—all, without exception, have taken upon themselves his name and have followed him with full purpose of heart.

He is our God and he is the God of our fathers!

3. Christ—the promised Messiah

For four thousand long years—from the day Adam was cast out of Eden to the day John baptized at Bethabara—all of the prophets and all of the Saints looked forward to the coming of the Messiah.

They talked and taught of Christ; they preached and prophesied of Christ; they centered their lives and all of their hopes in the promise of his coming.

They knew that as God's Son he would be born of a virgin, that he would work out the infinite and eternal atonement, that immortality and eternal life would come by him.

All of their doctrine, all of their ordinances, all of their worship linked his name with that of the Father himself.

The whole law of Moses, with all its types and shadows, testified of the one who would come to save his people. For instance, on the Day of Atonement the high priest placed the name of Jehovah upon a goat and sacrificed it for the sins of the people in similitude of the sacrifice Jehovah himself would make when he was lifted upon the cross and slain for the sins of the world.

4. Christ—the mortal Messiah

Our Blessed Lord was born of Mary in Bethlehem of Judea. In so doing, he "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (Philippians 2:7).

As a man he lived a perfect life, conforming to the will of the Father in all things.

He taught the gospel, organized the Church, and called others to the ministry.

He healed the sick and raised the dead and performed many mighty miracles.

He was rejected of men, condemned by the evil powers that then were, and crucified upon a cruel cross.

5. Christ—the crucified yet risen one

We speak now of the Christ who came into the world to die, to die upon the cross for the sins of men. And we speak also of the Christ who came to rise again from the dead, of the Christ who, in glorious immortality, invites us to follow him in life and in death and in life again.

In Gethsemane he bowed beneath a load none other could bear. There he sweat great goutts of blood from every pore as he bore the sins of us all on conditions of repentance. (See Luke 22:44.)

Again, on Calvary, during the last three hours of his mortal passion, the sufferings of Gethsemane returned, and he drank to the full the cup which his Heavenly Father had given him.

In the garden and on the cross he paid the ransom and finished his atoning work. Early on the morning of the third day he burst the bands of death and came forth from the tomb to inherit all power on earth and in heaven.

There is no language to extol

the wonders of his works and all that he has done for us. As our Advocate and Intercessor he now dwells eternally in the heavens.

Can we not hear his voice say to us:

"Reverently and meekly now
Let thy head most humbly bow.
Think of me, thou ransomed one;
Think what I for thee have done
With my blood that dripped like
rain,
Sweet in agony of pain.
With my body on the tree
I have ransomed even thee."

(*Hymns*, no. 280.)

6. Christ—today's Messiah

We bear witness not alone of the Christ who once was, but of the Messiah who now is and who yet shall be.

We speak not alone of a dead Christ who was known to them of old, but of a living Savior who leads his people today as he did anciently.

We rejoice not alone in a people who had the gospel in ancient days and who worked miracles and gained salvation, but in a gospel that now is and in a people who glory in the same gifts of the Spirit that were poured out upon their fathers.

Thanks be to God, the day of restoration has commenced. These are the times of restitution of which all the ancient prophets spoke. (See Acts 3:21.)

Thanks be to God that the heavens have been rent, that the Father and the Son appeared to Joseph Smith, that revelation and visions and gifts and miracles abound among the true Saints.

Thanks be to God that in our day many have seen the face of his Son and that he has poured out the gift of his Spirit upon an even greater number.

This is the day when the knowledge of the true Christ and of his

everlasting gospel is being preached among men for the last time.

This is the day in which the Great God is sending forth his word to prepare a people for the second coming of the Son of Man.

This is the day in which the Church of Jesus Christ has been organized anew and given the commission to administer that holy gospel by which salvation comes.

7. Christ—the millennial Messiah

And now in words of soberness we announce that the Lord Jesus, the Everlasting Christ, the Savior who was and is and is to be, shall soon come again.

Just as surely as the son of Mary came to dwell among his fellowmen, so shall the Son of God come, in all the glory of his Father's kingdom, to rule among the sons of men.

In that dread day the world that now is shall end; wickedness will cease; every corruptible thing will be consumed. And the glory of the Lord will shine daily upon all men from the rising of the sun until it sinks in the western sky.

Those among us who abide the day of his coming shall find joy and peace everlasting. The faithful Saints shall live and reign with him on earth for a thousand years and shall then go on to their celestial rest.

The second coming of the Son of Man will be a day of vengeance and burning and sorrow for the wicked and ungodly.

For those who love the Lord and live his law it will be a day of peace and triumph and glory and honor—the day when the Lord comes to make up his jewels. (See Malachi 3:17.)

And so now, knowing whereof we speak, having a sure knowledge born of the Spirit, we raise our voices in praise and testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose witnesses we are.

Our faith is centered in the true and living Christ, who is our Friend, our Lord, our God, and our King and whom we serve in worshipful adoration.

We know he is God's almighty Son, that he has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, and that all who believe in him, as he is now revealed by living prophets, shall be saved with him in the kingdom of his Father.

We invite all men everywhere, all men of every nation and kindred and tongue and people, to come unto Christ and be perfected in him.

We invite all men to come and worship the Father in the name of the Son by the power of the Holy Ghost.

And as the Lord's agents, acting for and on his behalf, we promise all who pursue this course—working the works of righteousness—that they shall have peace in this life and eternal life in the world to come.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has been our concluding speaker.

We remind the brethren of the

general priesthood meeting which will convene here in the Tabernacle this evening at 7:00 P.M. and which will be carried by various electronic means to other houses of worship where our brethren may participate.

The nationwide CBS Radio Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those desiring to attend this broadcast must be in their seats no later than 9:15 A.M.

The singing for this afternoon's session has been furnished by the Mormon Youth Chorus. We are grateful for the presence of you young people and for the beautiful spirit your music has added to this meeting.

The chorus will now sing in closing "The Lord's Prayer." Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and this meeting will be adjourned.

The chorus sang "The Lord's Prayer."

Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi offered the benediction.

GENERAL PRIESTHOOD MEETING

THIRD SESSION

The general priesthood meeting convened in the Tabernacle at 7:00 P.M. on Saturday, October 2, 1982.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for this session was provided by a combined men's choir from the Tabernacle Choir and the Mormon Youth Chorus directed by Jerold Ottley and Robert C. Bowden with Roy M. Darley at the organ.

President Hinckley opened this session with the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Brethren, President Spencer W. Kimball is watching the proceedings of this session on television in his apartment and has asked that we go forward with the meeting.

President Tanner has asked to be excused. He feels weary. When President Romney learned that President Kimball and President Tanner

would not be here, he leaned over to me and said, "We are getting down to the kids."

For the information of the brethren in the outlying areas who are participating in this meeting by means of satellite or closed-circuit transmission or direct wire, we may say that President Kimball is improved in health and attended the opening session of the conference this morning.

He asked that we extend his love and best wishes to all of the brethren participating in this session; and we do this also in behalf of President Tanner. We regret that Elder LeGrand Richards is not with us. His health is such that his doctors feel that he should not be present. As all of you know, he is ninety-six years of age now and has been a great and remarkable exponent of the word of the Lord all of his life. Our prayers reach out to him.

These services are being relayed by closed-circuit transmission and will reach members of the priesthood gathered in the Assembly Hall, the Salt Palace, the Marriott Center on the BYU campus, and in approximately 1,770 locations in many countries around the world.

Also, and most significantly, they are being carried to approximately four hundred and fifty stake centers by satellite transmission.

We extend our greetings and blessings to all the priesthood brethren wherever they may be.

We note that Elders Theodore M. Burton and John H. Groberg are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall, Elder Adney Y. Komatsu and F. Burton Howard preside at the Salt Palace, and Elders Loren C. Dunn and Jacob de Jager are at the BYU

Marriott Center.

The singing during this session will be furnished by a combined men's choir of the Tabernacle Choir and the Mormon Youth Chorus (that is a bit of a contradiction to call the youth a men's choir) under the direction of Jerold Ottley and Robert Bowden with Roy Darley at the organ.

We shall begin this service by the men's choir singing "For the Strength of the Hills." Following the singing, Elder G. Homer Durham, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "For the Strength of the Hills."

Elder G. Homer Durham offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Brother Durham, for that beautiful and moving prayer.

The choir will now favor us with "Thou Wilt Keep Him in Perfect Peace."

The choir sang "Thou Wilt Keep Him in Perfect Peace."

President Hinckley

Bishop C. Fredrick Pingel of the Beavercreek Ward, Dayton Ohio East Stake, will be our first speaker this evening. He has been asked to speak about successful activation of Aaronic Priesthood members in his ward. Bishop Pingel will be followed by Michael Nicholas, a priest in the Beavercreek Ward.

Bishop Frederick Pingel

Brethren, I am indeed grateful for the opportunity to be with you this evening. I want to thank Heav-

enly Father for this opportunity and experience. My prayer is that my words and thoughts will be useful

and helpful in building up and strengthening young men.

Activating young men of the Aaronic Priesthood

My assignment is to discuss what we are doing in our ward to activate young men of the Aaronic Priesthood.

First, every ward needs a Sister McManaway.

Let me tell you about Sister McManaway, our Young Women president. Bishops, I hope that you have someone like her. When she read that a bishop's most important responsibility was the youth of his ward—well, she believed that. When she pointed it out to me, I told her I believed it, too. She said, "You don't act like it."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, you never do anything with the youth. You never interview them. You never come to opening exercises, and all during our meeting you interview adults."

One day Sister McManaway knocked on my door and said, "Look here, bishop, I have a book for you to read. You don't have to read it all, just the parts I've underlined." It was a book by Elder Vaughn Featherstone entitled *A Generation of Excellence*.

First I read the underlined parts, and then I read the entire book. That book had a great impact on me, and I'm grateful that Elder Featherstone took the time to write it. But equally important, I'm grateful to Sister McManaway for caring enough about the youth to say, "Bishop, you need to read this book."

I used to home teach a sweet, older sister. She had the ability to flat tell you how she felt about things. One evening I told her how much she meant to me and that I loved her. She leveled me when she replied, "Talk's cheap." Maybe in dealing with my youth I'd also been guilty of some cheap talk.

Second, use your priesthood executive committee and Relief Society.

As our bishopric has turned more of our attention to the youth, the responsibilities and the sphere of influence of our priesthood executive committee and Relief Society have increased, particularly that of our elders quorum president. Their support has been characterized by 90 percent visiting teaching for the last two years and home teaching that has steadily improved until it also is at the 90 percent level. Without such support, we would not be able to put the youth at the top of our priorities.

Use quality leaders

Third, fill your youth program with quality people.

It has been said that, as you organize a new ward, you first identify your best man and make him your Scoutmaster. Our Scoutmaster is a former bishop. Our Young Men president is a former high counselor. All of our leaders in the Young Men organization served full-time missions; all hold temple recommends. Brethren, don't sacrifice here. I don't know where to tell you to sacrifice, but don't do it here. Put truly fine people in your youth programs.

Fourth, don't overlook your Primary.

Please don't overlook your Primary. Select your Cub Scout and Blazer leaders with the same care and concern that you do for the Young Men organization.

When our young men turn twelve, they have already been introduced to the priesthood. A firm foundation in Scouting has been established through the Cub program, and eleven-year-old Scouts have already made significant progress on their way to the Eagle Award.

Fifth, encourage a tradition of Eagles.

There is nothing like a little success to breed even more success. The

tradition of Eagle Scouts in our ward goes back to when our ward was first organized. It is something I have gratefully inherited.

There is something satisfying to the soul to see teachers and priests still working on their Eagle badges. One of my first assistants in the quorum earned his Eagle just before his eighteenth birthday, but he earned it. It was great. I love to put my arm around them at their Eagle courts of honor, embarrass them a little, tell them how great they are. It's the only time they really listen to me.

Sixth, *strengthen your tradition of missionaries.*

The lists of Eagles and missionaries almost read the same. But there are additional names, such as Elder Doug Blincoe and Sister Karen Baughman. Each has been a member of the Church less than eighteen months, and both are now serving full-time missions. The spirit of missionary service can do much to strengthen your youth programs.

Hold quality interviews

Seventh, *review stewardships.*

It is important that the youth leadership have an opportunity to report on their stewardships. Personal priesthood interviews usually are accomplished by the bishopric member responsible for that class or quorum, but each quarter I like to sit down with the quorum and class presidents and review their stewardships with them. This provides me an opportunity to learn how they are doing and at the same time to strengthen, encourage, and train. I also extend the calls to the presidents and act as voice as they are set apart.

Eighth, *conduct regular interviews.*

One of the best means that a bishop has to get to know his youth is the interview. Each youth is entitled to two quality interviews each year, one by the bishop and the

other by the bishopric member responsible for that age-group. Each interview is important; it can cover their goals and their progress. Needed counsel can be given.

Don't hesitate to invite those who are inactive. I've been pleasantly surprised a number of times. In fact, several annual interviews have been an important first step in the activation process.

Ninth, *encourage participation in seminary.*

I am convinced that seminary is the single most effective tool that we have for bringing youth to the understanding that Jesus is the Christ.

Key to activation

As Brother Mike comes up in a minute to speak—and Mike, I want you to know how proud I am of you and how much I enjoy working with you—he will give you an example of the key to activation. That key is that one touches the life and heart of another who is having difficulty by exercising a spirit of love, concern, and patience—sometimes a lot of patience.

There are many elements that can go along with this great key to activation. We've discussed several this evening. But none of these things in themselves will replace the key. We've had great activities, like our bike trip from Kirtland to Dayton. As much as safety would allow, they followed the course the Saints took when some of them in 1834 moved from Kirtland to Jackson County. Each night the boys heard stories from diaries of the Saints. After peddling for some fifty miles each day, the boys had a better appreciation of the early Saints.

Because of this experience, much growth took place. The importance of teamwork was better recognized and testimonies were strengthened, but the most significant thing about this trip was the total involvement of several young men

who before had stood on the periphery of quorum activity.

Taking priesthood to the boy

We have done some unusual things, too. We had two priests who just couldn't seem to overcome the allure of bed on Sunday morning. They had great difficulty in coming to priesthood meeting. We decided that, if they wouldn't come to priesthood meeting, then we would take priesthood meeting to them. After deciding which of the two young men to visit first, we left the meetinghouse and went to the first home.

I want you to know, brethren, that I was really concerned about how the father of that home would feel about all of us being at his house at 8:00 A.M. In fact, as we were waiting at the door, I was thinking that it sure would have been wise if I had called him the night before and told him what we were going to do.

The father answered the door, and we explained our purpose. Brethren, he couldn't have been more gracious. As we climbed the stairs, we found our brother sleeping as only a young man can sleep. I will never forget how totally surprised he was when he awoke to find us all around his bed. Well, we had a great meeting, complete with business, a lesson, and some concluding

thoughts on activation.

We decided we had hit upon a rather effective activation technique. We also decided to use it next week on the other young man. During the week the word about what we were going to do got out. Next Sunday, for the first time since I had been the bishop, 100 percent of our quorum members were at priesthood meeting. I can report to you that one of these young men is presently serving a full-time mission and the other will soon be serving.

Remember the sister that I used to home teach? The one who told me that talk is cheap? Brethren, don't be guilty of cheap talk concerning your young men. Get involved, activate them, establish one-to-one relationships with them. It's a great key to activation. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

You have just heard from the president of the priests quorum of the Beavercreek Ward. Now a member of that quorum, Brother Michael Nicholas, a priest in the Beavercreek Ward, will speak on the subject "How We Are Reactivating Inactive Aaronic Priesthood Members in Our Ward." He will be followed by Elder Robert L. Backman, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Brother Michael Nicholas

When the bishop came to my house, speaking in general conference was the furthest thing from my mind. When the bishop said that he was going to speak for twelve minutes, I remarked that that would be scary. Then he asked if six minutes sounded better; I said that it would be much better. Then the bishop told me that was how long I was going to speak. My jaw dropped. I didn't know what to say. But I am grateful for the opportunity to speak tonight.

How we promote activation

I am going to tell you a little bit about myself, my bishop, my quorum adviser, and some of the things we are trying to do to promote activation in our Aaronic Priesthood quorums.

First, my bishop is a pretty busy person, but I enjoy the time he is able to spend with me, especially the interviews. He also participates in our quorum activities.

I am happy that Bishop Pingel

takes the time and effort to choose good advisers—for example, Brother Connell.

Brother Connell was a recent convert to the Church and was called to be the teachers quorum adviser. I was fourteen and a new member of the quorum. I was called as the president, even though I was having a great deal of trouble learning to control my temper.

The young men of the ward went on a cave exploration trip to a cave in Indiana, about two hundred miles from home. This trip was taken in the cool of October. I became very angry over a situation and said I was going to walk home. I started out on my long journey. After I had walked a short distance, all the cars in our party went past me and did not even slow down. My jaw dropped and I thought, "Oh, no, they're leaving me." Then I turned around and saw Brother Connell following me. I felt ashamed and embarrassed. I stopped and waited for him to catch up. He told me he would not let me walk home alone and would join me. We walked for about five miles. Brother Connell helped me understand my feelings and straighten them out. By prior arrangement, one of the cars returned and picked us up. This was the beginning of a great friendship between Brother Connell and me. During the time that Brother Connell was my adviser, he helped me to control my temper and use my energy in constructive ways. He had me come and help him put a new roof on his house. He has had me babysit his children. Brother Connell has helped me learn more about the gospel and how to care about other people.

Involving inactives and nonmembers

In one of our presidency meetings, Brother Connell brought up the fact that we had an inactive member

and asked us what we should do to activate him. We decided to invite him to our next caving trip. Mike took us up on the invitation, and we all had a great time. We also invited Mike to several other activities. He enjoyed the outdoors activities the best. Mike has since moved to California, and I hope he is now listening.

This past summer our deacons quorum brought two members into full quorum activity and introduced three nonmembers to the Church. The quorum took a 270-mile bike trip from Kirtland to Dayton, following the path of the Zion's Camp expedition. The deacons and advisers, the bishop, and many of the parents drove to Kirtland on a Saturday. They attended Church and visited Church historical sites the next day. That evening they had a fire-side. Monday they started out on their bikes. It took a week for them to pedal to Dayton. They camped overnight at campgrounds, bicycled in the rain, and contended with traffic. One of the best parts of the trip was that one of the boys who was handicapped pedaled right along with the rest of the group.

Church programs worked in my life

In our ward we have early morning seminary. I have to get up at 5:15 every morning. That means I have to get to bed early enough to avoid going to sleep in school. We also have a "consecutive reading club," which helps me to read the scriptures and learn more about the Church and its prophets. I am one of two Mormons in the junior class of about 750 people in my high school. Daily contact with the other youth in the ward at seminary helps me to maintain my standards. Being in the seminary presidency and quorum presidency helps me to learn to conduct meetings. Seminary, quorum ac-

tivities, quorum advisers, and bishops have helped me learn to control my temper and use my excess energy in constructive ways. These things will help me while I am on a mission, after I am married, and after I become a parent.

I know that the Aaronic Priesthood and Young Men program works. It has worked in my life, and I have seen it work in the lives of other young men. I say these things in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Michael. This has been a tremendous thing for all of us.

It will be our pleasure to hear from Elder Robert L. Backman, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, who has been asked to explain how to organize an Aaronic Priesthood quorum for reactivation. He will be followed by Bishop H. Burke Peterson, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric.

Elder Robert L. Backman

President Kimball has declared, "The vitalizing of the Aaronic Priesthood Quorums and awakening of the Melchizedek Priesthood Quorums will affirmatively affect all other programs in the Church."

How can we vitalize the Aaronic Priesthood quorum?

Consider the quorum

First, consider the source of the quorum itself.

Every priesthood holder has the sacred privilege of belonging to a quorum and has the right to activity in that quorum. We have no right to deny him that honor. Yet we do just that when we do not reach out to involve him.

When we contemplate the purposes for which priesthood quorums are organized—to provide a brotherhood, a service unit, and a school for learning the principles of the gospel and the responsibilities we have as priesthood bearers—we might well ask, Is our quorum properly organized and functioning?

Is the presidency in place, schooled in their duties, and aware of their responsibility to lead all of the young men in their age group? Is the presidency meeting weekly to plan and carry out a meaningful quorum activity program?

The *Aaronic Priesthood Quorum Guidebook* has been published to provide training materials for the quorum presidency and their adviser. Quorum advisers should teach the ten training sessions in the guidebook as part of the quorum presidency meetings, which should be held weekly.

As the presidency learns their duties, they will include the quorum members in planning and implementing the quorum program, including the activation of those who need special attention, using the active quorum members to apply positive peer pressure, surrounding the inactive with their protective love and concern.

To help in the activation process, the quorum presidency will assign particular quorum members to fellowship each inactive young man in a specific way and to make progress reports on the assignment. A wise quorum presidency will plan activities to appeal to all those in the quorum.

The quorum presidency will personally visit the homes of all the young men of quorum age.

Mark Peterson was ordained a deacon one Sunday last March. When the family returned from church, the telephone rang. It was the deacons president who asked for an appointment for the presidency of

the deacons quorum to visit with Mark and with his parents. The appointment was set. Promptly at the hour set, the doorbell rang. The members of the presidency stood on the porch, dressed in suits, white shirts, and ties, and each one carrying his scriptures.

Sitting down with Mark and his parents, they began with prayer, then handed an agenda to everyone there.

The president then opened the scriptures, having Mark and his father read those references which speak of the power of the Aaronic Priesthood, what it is, and the particular duties of a deacon.

The president then spoke about Mark's particular responsibilities and duties: how he should dress, how he should pass the sacrament, act as a messenger, collect fast offerings. And then they asked him if he had any questions.

At the end of the visit they welcomed him to the quorum and offered help whenever he needed it. As they left, Mark's eyes were as big as saucers. He said to his Dad: "They were awesome!"

Oh, that every Aaronic Priesthood quorum was a royal brotherhood where each member could say, "I have true brothers who care about me, who will protect me and sustain me, who think enough of me to correct me."

The right man as adviser

Second, what miracles the right man serving as an adviser can perform in the lives of the Aaronic Priesthood holders.

We have discovered that the nature and quality of a young man's relationship with his Aaronic Priesthood adviser is a potent predictor of many of the outcomes we desire in that young man's life. This relationship becomes increasingly important as young men advance through the priesthood. In fact, it is

the best predictor of the real religious feelings and experience for priest-age young men.

How vital it is to choose an adviser who can provide the hero image for our young men as they begin to assert their independence from father and family.

Our young men will respond almost overnight to a man who really shows he cares. But he must be left in his assignment long enough to build relationships, to gain the trust and confidence of the young men, to truly make them his friends.

The advisers need training to be effective.

Once again, the *Aaronic Priesthood Quorum Guidebook* provides information, material, and a timetable for such training to be given by the bishopric. Please see that this is done.

Bishop responsible for each young man

Third, the Lord has called the bishop to be the president of the Aaronic Priesthood. President Kimball has reminded the bishops that this is their first and foremost responsibility. All bearers of the Aaronic Priesthood should know that the Lord has assigned the bishop to be their champion and exemplar, that it should be safe for each of them to follow the bishop's example in every activity of his life.

As the president of the Aaronic Priesthood, the bishop has the responsibility to give his personal attention to each bearer of the Aaronic Priesthood. No young man in the ward should ever feel that he walks alone, that he is not wanted or needed. He should always know that his bishop is his fellow servant, approachable, empathetic, a confidant, his champion.

It is not enough for the bishop to meet his Aaronic Priesthood only in the confines of the Church. Our

bishops need to come out from behind the pulpit, take their ties off, and come to know their Aaronic Priesthood in real-life situations.

I have a dear friend who served as a very successful bishop. During his tenure, the stake president asked a boy and a girl from each ward to visit with him about their relationship with their bishop. During the conversation, the stake president asked, "If you had a serious problem in your life, would you take it to your bishop?" Most responded that they would not. And when he asked why, their response surprised him. They said, "Our bishop seems too righteous." To the credit of my friend, his youth replied: "Not our bishop."

The bishop's most positive impact on youth comes in informal settings, activities, Scouting, service projects, athletics—real-life settings where they get to know him as a man.

At a recent encampment planned and directed by stake and ward priesthood leaders, I asked a young man how he felt about his leaders. He responded: "I've always been scared around stake presidents and bishops. For some reason I always feel like I'm getting interviewed. But living in camp with them has helped me make friends with them. Next time I have an interview we'll have memories to talk about."

Note that the Lord called the bishop to personally serve as president of the priests quorum. By virtue of that presidency, the bishop holds the keys of that office, which may not be delegated to another. The Lord requires that the bishop become the friend of each priest, that he be sensitive to personal and group needs at all times, that there be a feeling of brotherhood and fellowship between him and his priests. No priest should ever go astray if the bishop, through the exercise of his keys of presidency, helped him hold on to the doctrines and practices of the Church.

In words carefully selected to impress upon a bishop the importance of his calling and appointment as president of the priests quorum, President David O. McKay said, "Bishop, what is your priests' quorum but an opportunity for you as president of that quorum to get these young men around you as your bodyguard, young men who crave the social atmosphere of the ward and whom you may lead in paths of honor, trustworthiness, and faith?"

Please, bishops, interview each priest at least twice a year, and each deacon and each teacher at least once a year, for worthiness and spiritual progress. Help him set goals, help teach him to understand the oath and covenant of the Melchizedek Priesthood, and help prepare him for a mission and for temple marriage. Include the inactive boys in these interviews and challenge them to participate actively in the quorum. See that your counselors interview those deacons and teachers at least once a year.

Personalize those interviews. Make them meaningful. Show you care. Those one-to-one, heart-to-heart opportunities are priceless in guiding our young men.

We are so anxious to have your great influence on the youth, and we can promise you that your mark will be on them for eternity if you demonstrate your love for them.

Plan balanced activities with a priesthood purpose

Fourth, the program of the Aaronic Priesthood quorum should not only provide opportunities for learning the doctrines of the Church in the classroom, but also for translating the doctrine into real-life experiences through balanced activities having a priesthood purpose. The *Aaronic Priesthood Quorum Guidebook* tells us how to plan effectively to have successful experiences.

All of the young men's activities should be an outgrowth of the quorum—quorum led, quorum planned.

It is important for these activities to be held regularly. Our Church handbooks request that each quorum have a weekly activity on a day other than Sunday. At least once a month a combined activity with the Young Women should be held. When these directions are followed, good habits are formed; but when activities are held sporadically or "as needed," the continuity essential for the success of the program is missing. Plan them well in advance, at least three months in advance, but preferably a year in advance. Careful calendaring and adequate planning will allow time to do things well and will be attractive to our youth.

Considering the many interests, skills, and personalities of our young men, it is imperative that you use all the resources available to reach every boy.

Among those resources, Scouting provides a tested, proven program for us to use in holding our young men close to the Church. It appeals to boys. Its trail to the Eagle rank helps a young man set worthwhile goals, then realize them. For some reason there is a direct correlation between young men who achieve the Eagle rank and those who serve missions.

In an area encampment held in Arizona this summer, an Eagle Scout banquet was held to honor 1,150 Eagle Scouts. During that banquet, every Eagle Scout committed himself to serving a mission.

Its camping, hiking, and high adventure provide marvelous opportunities for our young men to enjoy a man's experience with men, building wholesome relationships between youth and adult leaders, something that happens too seldom in our day. Becoming a man is more than chronological. It involves proving the young man's manhood, testing his

mettle, challenging the world, demonstrating he can accomplish more than he thought he was capable of. That is what builds character and manliness.

A small Scout began a fifty-mile hike in the mountains, laden down with a backpack he could hardly lift. As he struggled up the trail, he thought of giving up many times, yet carried on, successfully completing the hike. At the end of the trail, he stood in front of a framed map of the area, pointed his finger at the trail, and shouted, "I licked ya!"

How many young men have been converted to the Church through athletics, and how many more have been saved from inactivity through our sports programs? As our young men grow up, they tell us that team sports are the most popular activity in the Church. That doesn't mean unsupervised basketball on activity night. The sports program can be as broad as the interests of the young men: basketball, softball, volleyball, soccer, wrestling, boxing, cycling, swimming, tiddleywinks. Through sports we can appeal to the most inactive young men and, at the same time, build a spirit of brotherhood as quorum members learn to compete as a team.

Personalize activities to the young men

Some young men march to the beat of a different drum. Because they may not enjoy physical activity, as most do, they are often isolated from the group. I remember one young man, not much of an athlete, who excelled on the stage. In our ward plays and roadshows, we could always count on a stellar performance from Mike.

Later in his youth he directed a theater-in-the-round production in the ward. Today he teaches drama in a great university and is a faithful member of the Church. How easily

we could have lost him without that opportunity to be someone and to excel at something. Our cultural arts have been neglected in recent years, not intentionally, but when stakes and wards were given the liberty to choose their activities instead of being dictated to from Church headquarters—something made necessary by the worldwide growth of the Church—some took this as a signal that cultural arts were no longer to be promoted. The ward and stake activity committees are there to help our bishoprics, quorums, and Young Women classes carry out those cultural activities planned by the bishopric youth committee: music, drama, speech, dance. These again are as broad as the interests of the youth and a valuable resource in promoting activity and brotherhood in the Aaronic Priesthood quorums.

Service—the key to lasting happiness

Please give our young men the opportunity to stretch their souls in service. Too often we only entertain, leaving our young men in the role of spectators. They will grow as they are involved, and they will develop love for their fellowmen, at the same time forgetting their own weaknesses and frailties as they serve. The sooner our young men have experiences in meaningful service, the sooner they will understand their priesthood responsibilities and their own capacity to truly be their brother's keeper, and the sooner they will discover the key to lasting happiness. In service every quorum member will know that he is needed. Even the most inactive will respond to an invitation to bless someone's life.

All of these activities provide a wholesome environment where relationships can be cemented. Is this important? President David O. McKay reminded us, "The spirituality of a ward will be commensurate

with the activity of the youth of that ward."

Costs: use good judgment

I must say something about costs. Our presiding brethren have instructed us to be very careful how we spend the Saints' money. We who deal with the youth recognize that a good portion of stake and ward budgets, and much of the out-of-pocket Church expenses of our families, are related to youth activities such as athletics, Scouting, dances, plays, and youth conferences. They do cost money.

Yet it was never intended to do away with youth activities. If we do, we will be making a sad mistake. As President Gordon B. Hinckley spoke on the subject in general conference, he said: "We do not mean to be parsimonious. [That means stingy.] We mean to be judicious." I plead with you to weigh the worth of a young man against the dollar spent: use good judgment.

It is not necessary to spend a lot of money to meet the needs of our youth. Even a high adventure does not need to be an exotic, expensive trip. High adventures can be had close to home when well planned. Youth conferences need not be held in faraway places to serve their purposes. And what is wrong in letting our young men earn their money for Scouting, athletics, and other programs? They will learn some valuable lessons about the realities of life as they do.

Just before his death, Elder S. Dilworth Young appeared before our Young Men General Board and told us about the dangers of giving boys everything. He spread out in front of us patterns for making tents, backpacks, sleeping bags, stoves, cooking utensils; and then he talked about the pride and the growth experienced by his young men as they enjoyed building them for themselves.

As we use all the resources available to us to vitalize the Aaronic Priesthood quorums, we will be successful in reaching our young men. Further, we will be awakening the Melchizedek Priesthood quorums as these stalwart young men come of age, taking the oath and covenant of the Melchizedek Priesthood and transferring their faith, devotion, and loyalty to their elders quorums. And all the programs of the Church will be affirmatively affected.

Challenge: reactivate three quorum members

As the Presidency of the Young Men of the Church, we challenge you stake presidents, bishops, advisers and adult leaders, and quorum presidencies and quorum members: select three quorum members who are presently inactive. If the quorum is small, select three nonmembers on whom you will focus your efforts. Use every resource available to activate, convert, and involve these three young men in the next year—that's only one every four months. Three young men per quorum in the next year? That's not much from where you sit, but Churchwide we would have close to 100,000 young men active and participating in the

quorums who are now fumbling in darkness without the quorum.

As I was called to be the President of the Young Men of the Church, I was given the "challenge to provide a program which will prepare this generation of youth to meet the Savior when He comes." I pass that challenge on to all of you, adult leaders and young men, bearing my witness that this generation of youth is a royal generation with very special things to do. May God help all of us to give the time, attention, and tender, loving care we need to give, to prepare these noble young men for the rich adventures and the singular missions that lie ahead of them, I pray in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have heard from Elder Robert L. Backman, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy and President of the Young Men's organization of the Church.

Bishop H. Burke Peterson, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, will now speak to the subject of how a father's example of activity or inactivity is reflected in the lives of his sons.

Bishop H. Burke Peterson

Unforgettable lesson from taxi driver

My brethren of the priesthood, as an introduction to my thoughts tonight, I would like to tell of a great learning experience I had a few years ago while in a taxi going from downtown Washington, D.C., to the Dulles Airport. As you may know, it is not a short ride, so I engaged in a rather lengthy conversation with the driver.

I learned an unforgettable lesson

from this black man. He was a big fellow. He weighed at least 250 pounds. He said he was the father of three sons, that his oldest was fourteen. The father was a regular employee of the U.S. Postal Service, and to augment his income, he drove a taxi in the afternoon when he finished his postal shift. "But," said he, "I'm always home every evening for dinner."

I said, "Your wife must be an excellent cook."

"She is," he said. But that

wasn't the main reason he came home at that hour. He could have eaten later. "The reason I come home early is to be with my boys," he said. "My fourteen-year-old is almost as tall as I am. In a few years I'll no longer be able to handle him physically. When that time comes, I know he will only be obedient if he knows of my love and respect for him and also feels love and respect for me. So every evening we play ball or do homework together, or I just listen to him tell of his day. There are times," said he, "when time with a boy is more important than money, or the things money can buy."

Dad's example—for good or ill

Recently, I've been thinking how the example we set will be reflected in the conduct and lives of our children—for good or ill. For instance, I've been concerned about what goes through a boy's mind when he hears his dad quarrel with or speak unkindly to his mother, or abuse her in any way. I've wondered where he puts his values when dad goes hunting on Sunday, or works in the yard, or goes shopping on the Sabbath. Is there a lasting impression in a boy's heart when he hears dad criticize the bishop, the home teacher, or the Sunday School teacher—or maybe even the prophet? Though it may be ever so slight, does it have an effect?

I've been thinking: what respect will a fourteen-year-old Aaronic Priesthood holder develop for the law when his dad drives forty-five miles an hour in a twenty-five-mile zone, or seventy when it should be fifty-five? Are there acts of dishonesty that are so small they can escape the gaze of a boy? Is it possible that if a boy hears his father swear or curse he will grow up to think that that is the mark of true manhood, or of a Melchizedek Priesthood holder?

I believe that through all these acts of inconsistency in living priesthood standards, generally speaking, a son will still love his dad and think he is the greatest; and because of these feelings, he may well want to be just like him. With those thoughts, I've then wondered: what respect will the boy have for the priesthood, and for authority, and for obedience? What are his chances to develop faith, and testimony, and devotion, and an unwavering belief in his priesthood leaders and what they represent, if his father sends up the wrong kind of signals?

Sons: blessings from heaven and divine responsibilities

There is a time in almost every boy's life when dad can do no wrong, when he wants to be just like him. Therein lies the tragedy. Even when dad does set a poor example, even when he is wrong—to a son he is still great, "because he's dad."

Would it surprise you to know that in most cases faithful sons come from faithful fathers, and wavering and faithless sons come from wavering and faithless fathers? We are grateful that from among the army of faithful converts there are exceptions to the general rule, but the odds are overwhelmingly in favor of the son following his father's example.

Recognizing that it is sometimes hard to imagine that the six-year-old who dumped your favorite aftershave in his dog's bath water; or the twelve-year-old who used your three new ties as a rope to practice tying his Boy Scout knots; or the sixteen-year-old who came home from his first date with a newly dented fender and said simply, "Dad, I just don't know what happened"—recognizing that it is sometimes hard to believe that sons really are blessings from heaven—I shall attempt to help you understand that they truly are blessings and that you do have a

divine responsibility for them. I hope I can give some suggestions to help you handle it.

Prepare the heart of your son

Because faith and testimony and obedience are as important as the prophets say they are, maybe we ought to rethink the pattern we're following as we help our sons come to this conviction we so earnestly desire for them. In that regard, it would be well for us to be reminded that because free agency is so basic a gospel principle, we need to understand that we cannot force the heart of another to believe. We cannot force faith and testimony and obedience. We can *lead* another to believe, but we cannot *push* another to believe.

One of my heroes, and a great Book of Mormon missionary, understood and practiced this eternal principle. Ammon was tremendously successful. Among many others, the two thousand sons of Helaman were products of his efforts. He taught that before conversion comes—before one will believe words of truth—his heart must be prepared to receive the message. Thus, to encourage the conversion process of a son, there are many things a father can do. Attitudes are changed and father-son barriers are removed by dads who will keep in mind and practice some important principles of conduct. Let's consider some ways that we, as fathers, might prepare the hearts of our children to believe in our words.

Renew the purification process

First, remember the impact of your example, brethren. As we think of those who are watching us, let us remember that power in the priesthood, the power to bless and guide and teach, the power to forgive and forget, the power to give positive direction to a family—to a son—comes through righteousness. The laying on

of hands we all received is not enough. Priesthood power comes to those prepared to receive it as a result of the righteous pattern of their lives.

Let's begin tonight to weed out the little inconsistencies that we all have in the way we live. Let's renew the purification process—whatever that may mean—in each of our lives. If our words are not consistent with our actions, they will never be heard above the thunder of our deeds.

Give more ear and less lip

Secondly, a boy's heart is better prepared to believe if he has a listening father. If I were a boy, what would I want my dad to be like? I would probably wish he didn't preach to me so much, but rather, would listen to me more. Many dads spend too much time preaching and not enough time teaching. Sometimes great things happen inside a boy when he's listened to by his dad. He begins to think he is special—that he is not just another twelve-year-old or sixteen-year-old. His self-image improves. One of our crying needs is to have young men who have a worthy self-image. These are the effective builders of the kingdom. In a father-son visit, who talks most? One successful father said, "Dads need to give more ear and less lip to their sons."

Priority of importance

Next, a boy's heart is prepared to hear when a father gives his son time alone. I've already told you about the Washington, D.C., cab driver. Elder Richard L. Evans had a meaningful thought. Said he:

"In all things there is a priority of importance. . . . And one of our urgent opportunities is to respond to a child when he earnestly asks—remembering that they don't *always* ask, that they aren't *always* teachable, that they won't *always* listen.

And often we have to take them on *their* terms, at *their* times, and not always on *our* terms, and at *our* times. But if we respond to them with sincere attention and sincere concern, they will likely continue to come to us and ask. And if they find they can trust us with their trivial questions, they may later trust us with the more weighty ones." (*Thoughts for One Hundred Days*, 5 vols., Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1972, 5:114-15.)

Be patient

Another way to prepare the heart of a boy: let him find in his father one who does not criticize—whether it be the boy himself, or Church leaders, or teachers, or neighbors, or even his own wife. Yes, especially the boy's mother. There are few things a father can give his son that are worth quite as much as knowing he is in love with his mother. It doesn't take much of a man to criticize another. Faultfinding is easy. It takes a true disciple of the Master to look beyond the weaknesses we all have and find the threads of gold that are always there.

A boy needs a patient father—one who is slow to anger; one who is quick to forgive; one who can remember that he, too, was once a boy and does not expect his son to behave like a small-sized adult.

Recently, on a Saturday evening, a young family of four were eating at a restaurant. There were a father, mother, and two boys, ages about six and ten. The six-year-old made a mistake; the father was harsh with him and jerked him about as he reprimanded him. For the rest of the meal, though there was a holiday atmosphere at most of the tables, there was little conversation at theirs. As the young boy would take each bite, he glanced at his father to see if he had displeased him. On the boy's face there was a look of worry and

fear, and a soberness unnatural to a child.

The measure of a man

A boy needs a father who will correct him when necessary, but beyond that, one who will love him, and like him, and accept him regardless of his performance: a father who may treat a teenager like an adult, but not expect him to act like one. It takes quite a dad to look beyond the actions of boyhood and see the potential of manhood—and even more important, for him to get a glimpse of eternity.

From *Elbert Hubbard's Scrapbook* we have a classic:

"The place to take the true measure of a man is not in the darkest place or in the amen corner, nor the cornfield, but by his own fireside. There he lays aside his mask and you may learn whether he is an imp or an angel, cur or king, hero or humbug. I care not what the world says of him: whether it crowns him boss or pelts him with bad eggs. I care not a copper what his reputation or religion may be: if his babies dread his homecoming and his better half swallows her heart every time she has to ask him for a five-dollar bill, he is a fraud of the first water, even though he prays night and morning until he is black in the face. . . . But if his children rush to the front door to meet him and love's sunshine illuminates the face of his wife every time she hears his footfall, you can take it for granted that he is pure, for his home is a heaven. . . . I can forgive much in that fellow mortal who would rather make men swear than women weep; who would rather have the hate of the whole world than the contempt of his wife; who would rather call anger to the eyes of a king than fear to the face of a child." (W. C. Brann, "A Man's Real Measure," in *Elbert Hubbard's Scrapbook*, New York: Wm. H. Wise and Co., 1923, p. 16.)

Brethren, I testify to you that the priesthood is divine. We have been given it to bless the lives of others, as well as our own. May we remember the importance of preparing hearts as we teach sacred truths. May we renew the purification process in each of us so that we might be a strength and not a hindrance to those we love most, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Bishop H. Burke Peterson, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric and First Counselor in the Presidency of the Aaronic Priesthood of the

Church, has just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Come, Come, Ye Saints," following which I have been asked to speak to you.

The choir and congregation sang "Come, Come, Ye Saints."

President Hinckley

President Romney was to have spoken when I concluded, and he has asked that he be excused from doing so and that I take all the time. They really are turning it over to the kids!

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Priesthood of Aaron

"Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken again from the earth, until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness" (D&C 13).

All of you recognize these words as section 13 of the Doctrine and Covenants. They are the words of John the Baptist to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery as he laid his hands upon their heads and conferred upon them the Aaronic Priesthood on 15 May 1829.

When I was a little boy, twelve years of age, and was about to be ordained a deacon, my father challenged me to memorize those words. I did so, and they have remained with me throughout my life.

We have many boys with us tonight, and I should like all of the boys who hold the Aaronic Priest-

hood who are in the Tabernacle, and in every other hall where this meeting is heard, to stand and repeat with me these words.

"Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken again from the earth, until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness."

I want to commend those who knew and repeated these words. Some of you did not repeat them, and I urge you to open the Doctrine and Covenants when you go home and to read these words and memorize them. They are the charter of the priesthood you hold. They are evidence that this priesthood is valid and genuine in every respect.

Powers in the priesthood

Now I would like to talk with you about some of the particular

words of this statement given by John the Baptist when he restored this priesthood. I think you should be aware, if you are not already aware, of the powers you have in the priesthood you hold.

First, I should like to call your attention to the words "my fellow servants." Have you ever realized that in the holding and exercise of this priesthood you are a fellow servant with John the Baptist, the very man who, while he was alive, baptized Jesus, the Savior of the world and the Son of God, in the waters of the River Jordan? It is interesting to me that John spoke to Joseph and Oliver, when they were both young men and when they were not highly regarded by people of the world, as his fellow servants. He did not speak down to them as a king might speak to one of his subjects. He did not speak down to them as a judge might speak to an individual on trial before him. He did not speak down to them as a university president or a high school principal might speak to his students. Rather, he who was a resurrected being addressed these young men as his fellow servants. To me there is something wonderful in this. It speaks of the true spirit of the great and magnificent brotherhood of which we are all a part, the priesthood of God. We are all servants together, regardless of our position in the Church or in the world, regardless of wealth or lack of it, regardless of the color of our skin—we are all servants together, brothers one to another and sons of God as a part of this great body of sacred priesthood.

That should mean something to each of us. It does not demean us or put us down in any way. It elevates all of us as fellow servants of the Lord in the responsibility of carrying on the work of the ministry in his Church. You and I, including all of the Brethren seated on the stand in this Tabernacle, and each of you out across the Church in many places,

are all fellow servants of the Lord; we hold the holy priesthood and have the right to exercise it in the work of which we are a part. I hope you will never forget this, particularly you young men.

The next phrase to which I bring your attention denotes the authority in which John spoke. Said he, "in the name of Messiah." None of us exercises this priesthood in the power or authority which we have naturally within ourselves. Always in the exercise of the priesthood we do it in the authority of Messiah. Who was Messiah? He was Jesus Christ, the Son of God. John might have said "in the name of Jesus Christ," as we usually do. I hope you will never forget that in exercising your priesthood as young men, whether in passing the sacrament, in serving as a home teacher, in administering the sacrament, or in baptizing, you are acting as a servant of the Lord in his holy name and by his divine authority.

Boys, if you will remember this, it will have a tremendous influence upon your lives. You will know that if you are to serve in the name of Jesus Christ, as one holding the priesthood, you cannot with propriety be dishonest, you cannot abuse your bodies with drugs or alcohol or tobacco, you cannot take the name of the Lord in vain, you cannot be morally unclean. You hold the priesthood which authorizes you to act in the name of Jesus Christ. I plead with you tonight to live worthy of the exercise of this priesthood at all times and under all circumstances.

Right to guidance, protection, and blessings

Then John the Baptist, in his bestowal of this authority, spoke concerning the powers of this priesthood. He said, among other things, that it "holds the keys of the ministering of angels."

When Wilford Woodruff, a man

who had lived many years and had many experiences, was the President of the Church, he said to the boys of the Aaronic Priesthood: "I desire to impress upon you the fact that it does not make any difference whether a man is a Priest or an Apostle, if he magnifies his calling. A Priest holds the keys of the ministering of angels," said he. "Never in my life, as an Apostle, as a Seventy, or as an Elder, have I ever had more of the protection of the Lord than while holding the office of a Priest." (*Millennial Star*, 53:629.)

Think of it, my dear young brethren. This priesthood which you hold carries with it the keys of the ministering of angels. That means, as I interpret it, that if you live worthy of the priesthood, you have the right to receive and enjoy the very power of heavenly beings to guide you, to protect you, to bless you. What boy, if he is thoughtful, would not welcome this remarkable blessing?

In the same talk from which I quoted a statement from President Woodruff, he also said: "After I came to these valleys and returned to Winter Quarters, I was sent to Boston by President Brigham Young. . . . While on the road there, I drove my carriage one evening into the yard of Brother Williams. Brother Orson Hyde drove a wagon by the side of mine. I had my wife and children in the carriage. After I turned out my team and had my supper I went to bed in the carriage. I had not been there but a few minutes when the Spirit said to me, 'Get up and move that carriage.' I told my wife I had to get up and move the carriage. She said, 'What for?' I said, 'I don't know.' That is all she asked me on such occasions; when I told her I did not know, that was enough. I got up and moved my carriage four or five rods, and put the off fore wheel against the corner of the house. I then looked around me and went to bed. The same Spirit said, 'Go and move your animals

from that oak tree.' They were two hundred yards from where my carriage was. I went and moved my horses, and put them in a little hickory grove. I again went to bed.

"In thirty minutes a whirlwind came up and broke that oak tree off within two feet from the ground. It swept over three or four fences and fell square in that dooryard, near Brother Orson Hyde's wagon, and right where mine had stood. What would have been the consequences if I had not listened to that Spirit? Why, myself and wife and children doubtless would have been killed. That was the still, small voice to me—no earthquake, no thunder, no lightning—but the still, small voice of the Spirit of God. It saved my life. It was the spirit of revelation to me." (*Millennial Star*, 53:642-3.)

Such was the testimony of a great and wise and prayerful man who became the President of the Church. He told that story while talking of the blessing that is yours as one who has received the priesthood and who is eligible to have "the ministering of angels."

Of course, you know, as I know, that none of us can expect this great blessing if our lives are not as they should be as Latter-day Saints who hold the priesthood.

Teach repentance

The next words given by John to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery— "[the keys] of the gospel of repentance."

Many of you are teachers and priests and have home teaching assignments. You have the authority in this service to be teachers of repentance—that is, to encourage those Latter-day Saints for whom you have some responsibility to live the gospel principles more faithfully. A young man who is a priest comes to my home with his father as a home teacher. He has the opportunity and the responsibility to encourage me to

live more fully the principles of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

The great burden of our work in the ministry of the Lord is to teach repentance, to encourage people to resist sin and to walk uprightly before the Lord. This is the gospel of repentance, and yours is the responsibility and the authority under the priesthood which you hold to teach this gospel of repentance. You recognize, of course, that if you are to do so effectively, your own life must be an example.

And now the next statement of John the Baptist as he conferred the Aaronic Priesthood— “[the keys] of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins.”

As all of you who are priests know, you have the authority to baptize by immersion for the remission of sins. Have you ever thought of the wonder of that power?

If a man or woman has truly repented of his or her sins, then he or she may be eligible to be baptized by immersion with the understanding that those sins will be forgiven and that life can begin anew.

It is no small or unimportant thing to baptize an individual. You as a young priest, acting in the name of the Lord and under divine authority, wipe out, as it were, by the marvelous process of baptism, the sins of the past and bring about a birth into a new and better life. What a tremendous responsibility you have to live worthy of the exercise of this sacred power!

Cultivate Holy Spirit of God

Now, as I speak to you young men I wish to repeat in conclusion some other words spoken by President Wilford Woodruff.

The occasion was a Sunday afternoon, on February 28, 1897. The place was this Tabernacle. It was in commemoration of President Woodruff's ninetieth birthday. This great building was filled to capacity

with all seats occupied and the aisles packed in every part of the building, such as we are not permitted to do now. It is estimated there were more than ten thousand young people present—a vast congregation of young men your age and young women of the same age. President Woodruff, who was then weak in body and whose voice was not strong, stood at the pulpit where I stand and said, particularly to the young men present, these words:

“I have passed through the periods of boyhood, early manhood and old age. I cannot expect to tarry a great while longer with you, but I want to give you a few words of counsel. You occupy a position in the Church and Kingdom of God and have received the power of the holy priesthood. The God of heaven has appointed you and called you forth in this day and generation. I want you to look at this. Young men listen to the counsel of your brethren. Live near to God; pray while young; learn to pray; learn to cultivate the Holy Spirit of God; link it to you and it will become a spirit of revelation unto you, inasmuch as you nourish it. . . .”

He went on to say: “God in heaven has willed to spare me to see this day. He has given me power to reject every testimony and reject every example that leads to evil. I say to you . . . do not use tobacco, liquor, or any of these things that destroy the body and mind, but honor Him and you will have a mission upon your heads that the world knows not of. May God bless you. Amen.” (*Wilford Woodruff: Fourth President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, prepared for publication by Matthias F. Cowley, Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1909, pp. 602–3.)

Walk in dignity of sacred calling

I echo that great counsel of President Wilford Woodruff as I tes-

tify to you young men this night that God our Eternal Father lives and that Jesus Christ is his Beloved Son, that the priesthood of which we have spoken is verily here upon the earth, and that we are partakers of its blessings, powers, and responsibilities.

God bless the young men of the Aaronic Priesthood, that they may walk in the dignity of the sacred and marvelous calling and authority that has been conferred upon them through the mercy and goodness of the God of heaven.

Sacrament meetings—for spiritual growth

And now, at the risk involved in speaking on an entirely different subject, I should like to say a few words to you older brethren, and particularly to those of you who serve in bishoprics. I wish to speak a few thoughts concerning sacrament meetings.

We who are responsible for these meetings deny our people a great blessing if we fail to see that they are spiritual, that they become meetings in which the gospel is taught and in which testimony is borne, particularly concerning the Savior of the world.

The sacrament meeting is not a time for entertainment; it is not a time for telling stories unrelated to the gospel. Rather, it is time in which to grow spiritually and in which to increase our understanding of the marvelous revelations of the Lord concerning his eternal plan and of himself as our Savior and our Redeemer.

It is in our sacrament meetings that we should be testifying of the Lord and teaching of his life and ways, and particularly of his redeeming sacrifice.

I think the Lord had in mind our sacrament meetings when, in a revelation given to Joseph Smith August

7, 1831, he said to us and to all of the people of his Church:

"And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day; . . .

"Remember that on this, the Lord's day, thou shalt offer thine oblations and thy sacraments unto the Most High, confessing thy sins unto thy brethren, and before the Lord." (D&C 59:9, 12.)

How shall our people keep themselves unspotted from the world unless they develop within themselves the spiritual strength and capacity to resist temptation that is so rampant everywhere we go these days? And where shall they develop such discipline? I think the meaning of this revelation is clear: they shall develop such discipline of self and such desire to live above the stains of the world in their communion with the Lord as worshipers in sacrament meetings.

Spirit of reverence

Every sacrament meeting ought to be a spiritual feast. It ought to be a time for meditation and introspection, a time for singing songs of praise to the Lord, a time of renewing one's covenants with him and our Eternal Father, and a time for hearing the word of the Lord with reverence and appreciation.

I plead with you who are responsible for these meetings that you strive a little more diligently to program them in such a manner that each sacrament meeting will become a time for spiritual refreshing. I plead with all of you who participate in these meetings, and I include with some emphasis you boys, to see that there is cultivated a spirit of reverence in these sacred gatherings.

It is not easy to keep oneself unspotted from the world. Each of us needs all the help he can get. The

Lord has given us direction in how to achieve this. That direction is clear and unequivocal. I pray that we shall follow it, as I leave with you, my brethren of the holy priesthood, my testimony and witness of the divinity of this work, and invoke the blessings of the Lord upon you. In

the name of him whom we serve, even the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

President Romney will now speak to us.

President Marion G. Romney

I have enjoyed being here with you in this meeting and have enjoyed the talks that have been given. I feel that the Spirit of the Lord has been with us.

The power of the priesthood

It is a great thing to hold the priesthood of God, and that is what this is tonight—a priesthood meeting. The priesthood of God is power. It is an endowment, which the Lord has given to us who hold the priesthood, to perform sacred ordinances that have effect in this world and in the world to come. It is the greatest power in the world—the priesthood—and I am very happy that I have had the privilege through the years to bear the priesthood and to receive offices in the priesthood from deacon up to the offices of the Melchizedek Priesthood which I have had assignments to work in. I know that it is the priesthood that will save this world. It is not a man-made organization; it is not a man-prepared organization—it embodies a power revealed from heaven and sent here to us to help us prepare our lives for eternal life in the presence of our Father in Heaven.

It is a great thing to see this building completely filled with bearers of the priesthood, both men who bear the Melchizedek Priesthood—old men like myself—and young men who bear the Aaronic Priesthood. I hope that we appreciate the authority that the Lord has given us to act in

his service in the respective offices in the priesthood that we hold.

The priesthood is sacred

I have held the priesthood for three-quarters of a century, from the time I was a deacon until I now hold the Melchizedek Priesthood, and I have enjoyed it all through the years. It has been sacred to me, and it is sacred to me now. I hope that you have the same feeling about the priesthood. Don't ever do anything that you would be ashamed of, that you would be ashamed to talk to the Lord about, because we will meet him some day if we live the gospel well enough to have that privilege. We will be very grateful then, if we know, as he will know, that our lives have been in harmony with the teachings of the gospel and the responsibility that is placed upon us who hold the priesthood.

Blessing

I have enjoyed this meeting. I am glad I came, and I am glad I have heard what I have heard here tonight. I pray the Lord will bless each boy and man, old and young, that is here tonight with the feeling and determination that he will live the teachings of the gospel and magnify the priesthood which the Lord has given him. It will be a great day for us individually when we are called to give an account of our deeds down here on the earth, if

we can be assured that the Lord will approve our actions and we can go on to the eternities beyond this life to experience the growth that comes to men and boys who hold the priesthood, faithfully do their duties, and seek the Lord.

As I said before I have enjoyed this meeting tonight and I am happy that you have been here. I hope you will all come tomorrow to the conference.

I leave my blessings with you and pray that you will be given an understanding that priesthood power is the power of God. Never do anything to disappoint yourselves or your loved ones or the Lord, or that would diminish your right to blessings that will come to you through obedience to the priesthood as long as you live. I leave my blessings with you and my testimony, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, President Romney, for those wonderful words and that moving wonderful testimony.

We call to your attention that the nationwide CBS Radio Taber-

nacle Choir broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 tomorrow morning and those desiring to attend in the Tabernacle must be in their seats before 9:15 A.M.

As you leave tonight, we remind you to obey traffic rules, to use caution, and to be courteous in driving.

The beautiful music for this priesthood session has been furnished by the combined men's choir of the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth Chorus.

We are grateful to you men for your inspiring music and express thanks for the service you have given here tonight, as well as the tremendous service you give in many other capacities. The choir will now sing "I Need Thee Every Hour," following which Elder Ted E. Brewerton, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the benediction.

The choir sang "I Need Thee Every Hour."

Elder Ted E. Brewerton offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY MORNING MEETING

FOURTH SESSION

The fourth general session of the conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, October 3, 1982. President Gordon B. Hinckley, Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music for this session with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger directing and Robert Cundick at the organ.

Prior to the beginning of the

session, the Choir sang "Praise the Lord with Heart and Voice" without announcement.

President Hinckley then made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

President Spencer W. Kimball is watching the proceedings of this session on television and has asked that I conduct it. We miss this morn-

ing Elder LeGrand Richards of the Council of the Twelve, and ask the Lord's blessings upon him.

This beautiful morning we welcome all who are present in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on Temple Square in this fourth session of the 152nd Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus of Latter-day Saints.

We acknowledge the many tuned to this conference by radio, television, cable TV, and our special satellite network which is carrying these proceedings to approximately four hundred and fifty stake centers, and all those who are seated in the overflow congregations in the Assembly Hall where Elders Hartman Rector, Jr. and James M. Paramore preside and in the Salt Palace where Elder Joseph Wirthlin and Bishop J. Richard Clarke preside.

We acknowledge the presence of government, education, and civic leaders, and officers and members of the Church from many lands who have assembled to worship and to counsel together in this conference.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Jerold Ottley and Donald

Ripplinger with Robert Cundick at the organ, is providing the music for this session.

The Choir opened these services by singing "Praise the Lord with Heart and Voice" and will now sing "To God Be Praise and Glory," following which Elder Marion D. Hanks, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The Choir sang "To God Be Praise and Glory."

Elder Marion D. Hanks offered the invocation.

The Choir sang "God Is in His Holy Temple" without announcement.

President Hinckley

The Tabernacle Choir has sung "God Is in His Holy Temple." It will now be our privilege to hear from President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency.

President Marion G. Romney

I am sorry, brethren and sisters, I cannot see you, but it looks like somebody is in front of me. Even a blind man can feel that gratitude. I have in mind talking to you a few minutes about gratitude and thanksgiving. The virtues of gratitude have been widely extolled and the sinfulness of ingratitude has been just as widely condemned.

Only one gave thanks

It has been said that "an ungrateful man is like a hog under a tree eating acorns, but never looking up to see where they come from" (Timothy Dexter, *The New*

Dictionary of Thoughts, Garden City, N.Y.: Standard Book Co., p. 308).

Jesus revealed his feeling about ingratitude when only one of ten lepers who had been healed turned back and gave thanks. Luke tells us that "it came to pass, as [Jesus] went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

"And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:

"And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

"And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves

unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

"And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

"And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

"And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?

"There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger." (Luke 17:11-18.)

Occasions of thanksgiving

Christ set an example in giving thanks when, at the Last Supper, "as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body.

"And he took the cup, and *when he had given thanks*, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it." (Mark 14:22-23; italics added.)

Both ancient and modern scriptures are replete with references to occasions of supplication, praise, and thanksgiving to the Lord.

The Psalmist sang, "Know ye that the Lord he is God: . . . Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name." (Psalm 100:3-4.)

King Benjamin (as recorded in Mosiah in the Book of Mormon) admonished his people:

"O how you ought to thank your heavenly King!

"I say unto you, my brethren, that if you should render all the thanks and praise which your whole soul has power to possess, to that God who has created you, and has kept and preserved you, and has caused that ye should rejoice, and has granted that ye should live in peace one with another—

"I say unto you that if ye should serve him who has created

you from the beginning, and is preserving you from day to day, by lending you breath, that ye may live and move and do according to your own will, and even supporting you from one moment to another—I say, if ye should serve him with all your whole souls yet ye would be unprofitable servants.'" (Moses 2:19-21.)

Sin of ingratitude

"I believe," said President Joseph F. Smith many years ago, "that one of the greatest sins of which the inhabitants of the earth are guilty today is the sin of ingratitude, the want of acknowledgment, on their part, of God and his right to govern and control. We see a man raised up with extraordinary gifts, or with great intelligence, and he is instrumental in developing some great principle. He and the world ascribe this great genius and wisdom to himself. He attributes his success to his own energies, labor and mental capacity. He does not acknowledge the hand of God in anything connected with his success, but ignores him altogether and takes the honor to himself; this will apply to almost all the world. In all great modern discoveries in science, in the arts, in mechanics, and in all the material advancement of our age, the world says, 'We have done it.' The individual says, 'I have done it,' and he gives no honor and credit to God. Now, I read in the revelations through Joseph Smith, the prophet, that because of this, God is not pleased with the inhabitants of the earth but is angry with them because they will not acknowledge his hand in all things." (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939, pp. 270-71.)

Comments and blessings

[President Romney read the text up to this point. He then made the

following comments:] Well, now, I have a fine talk prepared that I can't read. I will have it printed, and you can get the message plainly from what the Lord has revealed that we must give him credit for our gifts and our accomplishments, and be grateful for all things that he confers upon us. I am grateful to him for the privilege of being in his service. I appreciate the opportunities that I have and hope that I can serve him some way and show my gratitude the rest of my life. I leave my blessings with all of you in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Gratitude and thanksgiving

[The following is the rest of his prepared talk.]

Great men have always recognized the greatness of God and their dependence upon him, and they have with regularity rendered to him gratitude and thanksgiving.

Consider these words written by Abraham Lincoln as part of a resolution in 1863:

"We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven; we have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity; we have grown in number, wealth, and power as no other Nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of *redeeming and preserving grace*, too proud to pray to the God who made us.

"It behooves us, then, to humble ourselves before the offended power, to confess our . . . sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness." (John Wesley Hill, *Abraham*

Lincoln, Man of God, 4th ed., New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, p. 391.)

Note also how the Prophet Joseph Smith responded to the receipt of some letters during the time he was languishing in Liberty Jail. "We received some letters last evening [and] we were much gratified with their contents," he wrote. "We had been a long time without information; and when we read those letters they were to our souls as the gentle air is refreshing." (*History of the Church*, 3:293.)

You and I are, of course, moved by these quotations. They are not, however, the source of our most powerful motivation to develop greater gratitude and more fervent thanksgiving. *We have been commanded by the Lord to be thankful.*

In March of 1831, before the Church had been organized a year, the Lord said to the Saints in Kirtland:

"Ye are commanded in all things to ask of God, who giveth liberally; and that which the Spirit testifies unto you even so I would that ye should do in all holiness of heart, walking uprightly before me, considering the end of your salvation, doing all things with prayer and *thanksgiving*, that ye may not be seduced by evil spirits, or doctrines of devils, or the commandments of men; for some are of men, and others of devils. . . .

"And ye must *give thanks unto God* in the Spirit for whatsoever blessing ye are blessed with." (D&C 46:7, 32; italics added.)

Five months later he gave unto the Church in Zion—that is Jackson County, Missouri—this commandment. Now notice how the Lord puts the commandment to be thankful along with other strong commandments. He said:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy might, mind, and strength; and in the name of Jesus Christ thou shalt serve him.

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Thou shalt not steal; neither commit adultery, nor kill, nor do anything like unto it.

"*Thou shalt thank the Lord thy God in all things.*" (D&C 59:5-7; italics added.)

Give thanks—a commandment

It is perfectly evident from this scripture that to thank the Lord in all things is not merely a courtesy, it is a *commandment* as binding upon us as any other commandment.

In a later revelation the Lord said:

"And he who receiveth all things with *thankfulness* shall be made glorious; and the things of this earth shall be added unto him, even an hundred fold, yea, more" (D&C 78:19; italics added).

"Verily I say unto you my friends"—that always moves me, to think of the Lord calling you and me his friends—"Verily I say unto you my friends, fear not, let your hearts be comforted; yea, rejoice evermore, and in everything give *thanks*" (D&C 98:1; italics added).

"If thou art merry, praise the Lord with singing, with music, with dancing, and with a prayer of praise and *thanksgiving*" (D&C 136:28; italics added).

This last commandment that I have just read came through the prophet Brigham Young at Winter Quarters when the Saints were on their way across the plains. At that time the Saints were suffering the greatest of hardships, but the Lord was commanding them to be full of praise and thanksgiving.

These commandments that I have read put us under a solemn obligation to develop gratitude and the spirit of thanksgiving. We should be thankful and express appreciation for all of our blessings.

To the Lord Jesus, who bought us with a great price, we owe an

undying debt of gratitude. It is impossible for us, weak mortals as we are, to fully comprehend and appreciate the suffering he endured on the cross so that he might gain for us victory over death. And even less can we understand the suffering he endured in Gethsemane so that we might obtain forgiveness of our sins. "Which suffering," he said, "caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink" (D&C 19:18).

But nevertheless, he endured it for our sake. None of us could have endured that suffering. No mortal man nor any number of men together could have endured it. All people who understand what Jesus did for us ought to love him and demonstrate that love by rendering to him, in a realistic manner, thanks and gratitude.

Elder Richard L. Evans once said, "Gratefully we acknowledge the infinite mind of our Maker, and gratefully ought to offer our tithes and offerings, and earnestly consistent service, in thanks for all that God has given, and keep his commandments in remembrance of the love and providence and purpose of the Creator, the God and Father of us all, the organizer and operator of heaven and earth, without whom all these things would not be so. Thank God for all this: for life and what sustains it, for loved ones that make it meaningful, for faith and purpose and continuance, always and forever. Thank God for all of this—and much, much more." ("Thanks: for the Organization and Operation of the Earth," *Improvement Era*, Feb. 1968, p. 74; KSL "The Spoken Word" broadcast, 19 Nov. 1967.)

Now, brethren and sisters, I bear my testimony to you that the Lord wants us to be grateful and thankful unto him. And if we do

these things which he has advised us to do, we will be the happiest people who dwell upon the earth, for this is the way to the presence and society of our Father in Heaven. I so testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, President Romney. We shall look forward to reading that. We appreciate what you have said and what you have done, and express to you our great love for the wisdom which you have shown as a valiant and wonderful servant of the Lord.

The Choir will now sing "Praise to the Man."

The Choir sang "Praise to the Man."

President Hinckley

Thank you for that marvelous presentation of that great and moving hymn "Praise to the Man who communed with Jehovah," written by one who knew the Prophet Joseph Smith, who walked with him, and who carried in his heart the testimony and conviction of his divine calling as a Prophet of God.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Boyd K. Packer

Fulfillment of a prophecy

I must tell you of a work that has moved quietly forward in the Church virtually unnoticed. It had its beginning in Old Testament times and is the fulfillment of a prophecy by Ezekiel, who wrote:

"The word of the Lord came . . . unto me, saying, Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions: And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand" (Ezekiel 37:15-17).

The sticks, of course, are records or books. In ancient Israel records were written upon tablets of wood or scrolls rolled upon sticks. The record of Judah and the record of Ephraim, according to the prophecy, were to become one in our hands. Two events connected with the fulfillment of the prophecy were centered in print shops.

Publication of Book of Mormon

The first began on the second floor of a building on Main Street in the village of Palmyra, New York. In June of 1829 Joseph Smith and Martin Harris called upon Mr. Egbert B. Grandin, the proprietor, to discuss the publication of a new book of scripture. Mr. Grandin, then twenty-three, was three months younger than Joseph Smith. Only three months earlier he had advertised his intention to print books, a very ambitious undertaking for so small a shop with only a hand-operated, cast-iron press.

Others had refused to print the book, and young Mr. Grandin, a religious man, was very skeptical himself. But as the contract was secured by a mortgage on the farm of Martin Harris, it was signed and printing commenced in August of 1829.

No sooner had the project begun than one Obediah Dogberry, Jr., began to steal pages of the work and print them with accompanying ridicule in his weekly paper, *The Reflector*.

In March of 1830, the Book of Mormon came from the press and was advertised for sale. It met such a bitter and destructive response that it did not sell, and Martin Harris lost his farm.

An epoch of scriptural history had begun. The Prophet Joseph Smith and his successors to this day would proclaim the Book of Mormon to be another testament of Jesus Christ. Obadiah Dogberry and his successors, moved by another spirit, would, with the same methods, to this day revile it.

Latter-day Saint edition of King James Bible

One hundred forty-eight years later, in June 1977, again in a print shop, another step in the coming together of these two sticks occurred.

James Mortimer, long experienced in publishing scriptures, and Dr. Ellis T. Rasmussen, recently dean of Religious Instruction at Brigham Young University, called at the Cambridge University Press in Cambridge, England. Bibles had been printed at this prestigious press for 293 years before Egbert Grandin opened his print shop in Palmyra.

They met with Mr. Roger Coleman, director of religious publishing, to discuss the publication of a most unusual edition of the King James Bible. The printers were quite as skeptical about this proposal as Egbert Grandin had been nearly 150 years before.

The Cambridge Press had been publishing the King James Bible since the first edition in 1611, but they had never been asked to do anything like this. The text was to remain exactly as it was, no changes, not one. But all footnoting, cross-references, chapter introductions, indexes, and so on, were to be replaced. Only the chapter and verse numbering for the sixty-six books would be retained.

And that was just the beginning.

This edition of the Bible would be cross-referenced with three other books of scripture: the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. The printers had barely heard of them.

But there was more. A new, innovative system of footnoting was to be used. Instead of progressing from A to Z in each chapter, the letters would start over in every verse, for innumerable verses would have many footnotes in them.

The technical problems seemed insurmountable. Computers could help, but there was always the human factor. How could you cross-reference the Bible with any other book? To cross-reference it with the three volumes was to require tens of thousands of footnotes. Thereafter there would be hundreds of thousands of possible combinations of information. It was too big even to think about. The technical challenge alone was staggering, to say nothing of maintaining accuracy, harmony, and consistency with the biblical text itself. It could not be done!

But in that meeting also was Mr. Derek Bowen, editor, a most remarkable man. A World War II injury had left him unable to hear. Thereafter he devoted his remarkable compensating abilities to the editing, typesetting, and printing of Bibles. He was, perhaps, the one man in the world who could direct such a printing project.

All of the problems mentioned so far related only to the printing part of the project. The actual compiling and organizing of the tens of thousands of footnotes would require many hundreds of workers. This work had already been underway for several years. Without the computer it would be manifestly impossible!

That was also but a beginning. There would be a combined concordance and topical guide, listing hundreds of subjects; a Bible

dictionary; maps; and a new format. New chapter headings would be written. All in harmony with the sacred message of the Old and the New Testaments.

Several years into the project we asked for a report. How were they progressing with the tedious, laborious listing of topics in alphabetical order? They responded, "We have been through *Heaven* and *Hell*, past *Love* and *Lust*, and now we're working toward *Repentance*."

The 750 headings for the Topical Guide were painfully rendered down from a list nearly twice that long. For there was a practical consideration: the book had to be of a size for everyday use.

There was a spirit of inspiration brooding over their work, and those working with the project talked often of how it was blessed. There were humbling spiritual experiences.

After more than seven years of quiet, intensive work, the Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Bible came off the press. Already work was well under way on the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. Over the years manuscripts had come into our hands which made possible the correction of printers' errors which had crept into early editions.

The work would be seen by more than the sympathetic students and the devoted members of the Church. The cold, impartial eyes of the research scholars would study it, and the angry eyes of enemies and detractors would pore over it. It must be correct in every detail.

Another testament of Jesus Christ

Finally, after two more years, the books came from the press, the most accurate we have ever had.

Three months later, Derek Bowen, master editor of Bibles, passed away in England.

You should know also that by recent decision of the Brethren the

Book of Mormon will henceforth bear the title "The Book of Mormon," with the subtitle "Another Testament of Jesus Christ."

The stick or record of Judah—the Old Testament and the New Testament—and the stick or record of Ephraim—the Book of Mormon, which is another testament of Jesus Christ—are now woven together in such a way that as you pore over one you are drawn to the other; as you learn from one you are enlightened by the other. They are indeed one in our hands. Ezekiel's prophecy now stands fulfilled.

With the passing of years, these scriptures will produce successive generations of faithful Christians who know the Lord Jesus Christ and are disposed to obey His will.

The older generation has been raised without them, but there is another generation growing up. The revelations will be opened to them as to no other in the history of the world. Into their hands now are placed the sticks of Joseph and of Judah. They will develop a gospel scholarship beyond that which their forebears could achieve. They will have the testimony that Jesus is the Christ and be competent to proclaim Him and to defend Him.

New revelations added

Without the inspired help of hundreds of dedicated workers it would have been impossible! Among them were scholars in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Old and New Testament studies. More than this, they are worthy men and women in whose lives the gospel of Jesus Christ is the dominating influence. Their work, if they only knew it, may well be their greatest contribution in mortality.

As the generations roll on, this will be regarded, in the perspective of history, as the crowning achievement in the administration of President Spencer W. Kimball.

As a very direct outgrowth of

the scripture project, two new revelations were added to the Doctrine and Covenants. That had not occurred in over a hundred years. And before the books were closed, there came the glorious revelation on the priesthood, just in time to be bound with all else that the Lord has revealed to His Saints in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times.

Restructuring of Church curriculum

Even all of this is but a beginning, for we have it only in English. Already work is well under way in Spanish, with the other languages to follow in the years ahead.

Concurrent with this publication project, another great work was continuing. The entire curriculum of the Church was restructured. All courses of study for children, youth, and adults were revised to center on the scriptures, on Jesus Christ. A veritable army of volunteer workers—many of them experts in writing, curriculum, instruction, and other related fields—worked for years to complete it.

While we have been about the work of anchoring ourselves to the scriptures, others have been busily cutting themselves loose from them. They have been drifting downstream, interpreting and revising the scriptures to agree with the philosophies of men. We, on the other hand, have been struggling upstream against the same current. We are determined to read the headwaters of divine communication and revelation, to have it, as the Doctrine and Covenants demands, "that every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world" (D&C 1:20).

Fifty-eight categories about Jesus Christ

There are Church watchers, in and out of the Church, who show

great interest in what we do. They watch what they define as the power structure, the resources of the Church, the changes in organization, the political and social issues; and they draw conclusions from their watching. They write their observations and print them in publications and represent them to be accurate and objective reports of what is going on in the Church. In all of their watching and claiming, they have missed the most important of all the things that we have done in recent generations.

Some of them say that we have lost our way, that we are not Christians. Should they turn to that one thing in which they show the least interest and in which they have the least knowledge, the scriptures and the revelations, they would find in the Topical Guide fifty-eight categories of information about Jesus Christ; eighteen pages of small print, single-spaced, list literally thousands of scriptural references on the subject.

These references from the four volumes of scripture constitute the most comprehensive compilation of scriptural information on the mission and teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ that has ever been assembled in the history of the world.

The work affirms an acceptance of, a reverence for, and a testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ. Follow those references and you will open the door to whose church this is, what it teaches and by whose authority—all anchored to the sacred name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Messiah, the Redeemer, our Lord.

I began by quoting Ezekiel, prophet of Judah. Two of those Old Testament verses show ten footnotes. One of the ten leads to the Book of Mormon, which is another testament of Jesus Christ, where half a world away the prophet Lehi, of the lineage of Joseph, quoted this prophecy:

"Wherefore, the fruit of thy loins shall write; and the fruit of the

loins of Judah shall write; and that which shall be written by the fruit of thy loins, and also that which shall be written by the fruit of the loins of Judah, shall grow together, unto the confounding of false doctrines and laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins, and bringing them to the knowledge of their fathers in the latter days, and also to the knowledge of my covenants, saith the Lord" (2 Nephi 3:12).

Testaments of the Lord Jesus Christ

One footnote may seem a flimsy thread to tie the two together, but five of the ten footnotes lead us to headings in the Topical Guide where 611 other references broaden our knowledge of this one subject and speak as voices from the dust.

Threads are wound into cords that bind together in our hands the sticks of Judah and of Ephraim—testaments of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I say again, these references constitute the most comprehensive compilation of scripture information on the mission and teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ that has ever been

assembled in the history of the world.

Do not mistake our reverent hesitation to speak glibly or too frequently of Him to mean that we do not know Him.

Our brethren of Judah knew Him in ancient times, our brethren of Ephraim also. He is no stranger to His Saints, to His prophets and Apostles now.

He lives. He is our Savior, our Redeemer, our Lord. Of Him I bear an apostolic witness, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring" without announcement.

President Hinckley

We have just listened to Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring."

We shall now hear from Elder Derek A. Cuthbert, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Derek A. Cuthbert

Signs of maturity

"In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee" (1 Kings 3:5). Before King Solomon replied, he reflected on what was his greatest need. Was it power and influence? Was it wealth and riches? Was it fame and glory?

Let us ponder carefully Solomon's answer:

"And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. . . .

"Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad." (1 Kings 3:7, 9.)

"And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore" (1 Kings 4:29).

Wisdom, understanding, largeness of heart are signs of maturity. When Solomon acquired these qualities, he was no longer "but a little child."

However, the process of maturing is not as simple as

acquiring wisdom. Did not the Savior say: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). To mature, then, is to retain or regain some childlike qualities we need to have and to develop other qualities which children do not have. I would like to suggest to you ten aspects of maturity, five of which are childlike and five of which are developed later.

Childlike qualities

First, *innocence*. Can anyone deny the innocence of a newborn babe or a very small child? The Savior taught, "Suffer little children . . . to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19:14). In latter-day revelation the Lord has enlightened us further by proclaiming: "Every spirit of man was innocent in the beginning; and God having redeemed man from the fall, men became again, in their infant state, innocent before God" (D&C 93:38). Yes, the challenge to each one of us in these days of deceit and discord is to be innocent, to be guileless.

Second, *humility*. "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:4). How wonderful to hear the humble prayer or testimony of a child. I think of the young boy I heard relate the Joseph Smith story in great detail and bear his testimony in the Xhosa language in southern Africa as we met in a one-room African home in Cimizile.

We live in a world where men have largely turned away from righteousness and are self-seeking, gratifying their pride and vain ambition. We have the challenge to humble ourselves before God and become, in King Benjamin's words, "as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all

things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon [us], even as a child doth submit to his father" (Mosiah 3:19).

All over the world, people of different races and cultures are overcoming traditions to accept the truth and submit themselves humbly to baptism. How inspiring to see them overcome hardship and affliction. I remember interviewing a fine young Shona man, a Church member in Zimbabwe, to be the first missionary from his nation. Although permanently on crutches because of polio, Elder Peter Chaya submitted happily to the call to serve.

Third, *simplicity*. A child is uncomplicated and expresses himself without becoming devious. The Apostle Paul counseled the Saints at Corinth: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:3). I have always been impressed that, although Paul was a very learned man, after his conversion he declared: "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2). These thoughts came to mind when, on a recent visit to Ghana, I heard Dr. Emmanuel Kissi, a prominent surgeon and now the district president, teach the simple truths of the gospel in the district conference meetings.

Yes, we need to strive for the simplicity of a child, and raise our own children to have simple, unshakable testimonies of Jesus Christ. Then they will not fall prey to those temptations which would divert them from the strait and narrow way. As Elder Matthew Cowley used to say, "Life should be beautifully simple. And then it will be simply beautiful." ("Learn to Live," address delivered at Brigham Young University, 19 June 1953.)

Fourth, *faith*. It has always been

a source of happiness to my wife and me when one of our children has shown faith by asking for a blessing of health or of comfort and counsel. The occasions have been numerous, but the one that comes to mind is when one of our children was suffering from a bad earache and was very upset. I remember that after I had given her a blessing she settled down and went to sleep and experienced no further pain. It is a wonderful thing that when the Lord restored the fullness of the gospel, he made it possible for fathers to bless their families in so many ways.

Oh, for the faith of a child, to "dream the impossible dream" and "reach the unreachable star," as our beloved President Kimball has challenged us to do. His mighty faith has removed many mountains; his childlike faith has brought forth many miracles.

The fifth childlike quality is *love*, unquestioning love, freely given. What father can resist the little upturned face saying, "I love you, daddy"? What mother does not feel an inward glow on finding a little note on her pillow: "I love you, mummy"? It has been my privilege in many lands to hear the sweet voices of children echo the words of the Savior: "As I have loved you, . . . love one another" (John 13:34).

Jesus exemplified innocence, humility, simplicity, and faith. He showed his great love for us by taking upon himself our sins, by laying down his precious life, and by raising himself from the grave. "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John 4:16). Throughout the world, our missionaries are going two by two, preaching faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and repentance. There may be few who have retained all of the five qualities mentioned, but all can regain them through repentance and change.

Other qualities leading to maturity

Once we have made the necessary changes in our lives, we must add to these five basic qualities five more in order to achieve maturity in the Lord.

Sixth, then, we need to acquire *wisdom*, that which Solomon desired so that he could make righteous judgments. Many of us are not wise, for we are blinded by the material world around us. Wisdom comes from a realization of true values and priorities. It is a spiritual quality, for it is founded on discernment and an understanding heart. Great is the wisdom of the prophets, and all who heed them are blessed.

The Lord has counseled us to "seek not for riches but for wisdom" (D&C 6:7). In this general conference, pearls of wisdom have come from those who have spoken under the inspiration of the Spirit. We would all do well to study and apply the truths that have been declared.

Knowledge by itself can be dangerous, and he who seeks to acquire knowledge must also be helped to obtain wisdom. Wisdom is a sign of maturity. It is usually related to age and experience, but not necessarily so. When serving as a mission president in Scotland, I saw the Lord quicken the understanding of many young missionaries so that they developed beyond their years. Now, less than five years later, six have been called as bishops and two into stake presidencies in the British Isles, and all are giving fine leadership.

The seventh quality I shall refer to is *leadership*, not only leadership in the Church, but of every honorable kind. A child looks to parents for leadership, both by word and deed. The Lord, speaking to parents in Israel through Moses, declared: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

"And thou shalt teach them dili-

gently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

Yes, above all, parents need the maturity to lead and teach their children in righteousness. The family is the basic unit of society and the foundation of a nation. It is sobering to realize that, as parents, our children have been placed in our care as a sacred trust by the Almighty God himself. Our sons, our daughters, are his spirit children whom he expects us to love and cherish, teach and lead.

How important that both parents and children read and study the word of God regularly. How important that we live these basic principles and fulfill our Heavenly Father's expectations for us.

Thus we come to the eighth aspect of maturity—namely *accountability*. A small child does not have accountability until the age of eight, for thus the Lord has decreed, and most national laws agree. However, it is not being accountable that brings maturity. It is realizing that we are accountable, acting accordingly, and being prepared to give an accounting to those in authority over us and eventually to the Lord himself.

During the Savior's ministry he taught this principle, even as to the words we speak: "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matthew 12:36). The adversary is constantly trying to distract us and deter us from living righteously and being able to render a good accounting of our actions. We need to be consistently strong, never dropping our guard or compromising the principles given by the Lord.

Ninth, we will consider *dependability*. As children, we laugh one minute and cry the next. We

change friends quickly and change our view of the world according to circumstance and surroundings. As we mature, we become more dependable and stable. Paul the Apostle expressed the hope that "we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Ephesians 4:14).

We need to warn and teach, protect and safeguard, so that our little ones are not led away either physically or spiritually. There are so many voices, so many doctrines which are not of the Lord. However, as we "press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, . . . and endure to the end" (2 Nephi 31:20), we shall achieve the maturity of dependability, consistency, and spiritual endurance. I am very grateful for our beloved President Kimball who exemplifies these qualities. He has been a significant help to me, and I am sure to many of us, in the quest for spiritual maturity.

This has been particularly so with regard to the tenth quality, that of *self-mastery*. The Nephite prophet Alma counseled, "See that ye bridle all your passions, that ye may be filled with love" (Alma 38:12). Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became our Savior and Redeemer because he overcame the world. When Satan tempted him, he did not succumb; when he was ridiculed and reviled, he did not compromise. When death faced him, he did not waver. His maturity was full.

May we, like him, be innocent and humble, simple, and full of faith and love. May we become wise and dependable, leading others by first mastering ourselves. May we become mature enough to give an acceptable accounting before the Lord when he comes. He is the living Christ. This is his living Church. He speaks through a living prophet, of which I

bear joyful testimony, in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Elder Cuthbert, for those inspiring words. The Choir and congregation will now join in singing "Shall the Youth of Zion Falter?"

The Choir and congregation sang "Shall the Youth of Zion Falter?"

President Hinckley

To those of the television and radio audience who have just joined

us, we are convened in the historic Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, in this fourth session of the 152nd Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "God of Our Fathers, Whose Almighty Hand."

The Choir sang "God of Our Fathers, Whose Almighty Hand."

President Hinckley

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Howard W. Hunter, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Howard W. Hunter

Commitment to God

Reading and studying the scriptures make us conscious of the many conditional promises made by the Lord to encourage obedience and righteous living. Israelite history is filled with examples of covenants, which constitute one of the central themes of the Old Testament—the promises of God made in exchange for the commitments of the prophets and the people.

The Lord made a covenant with Noah, and the rainbow became the token of that eternal covenant with all mankind. (See Genesis 9:13.) The covenant made with Abraham and his seed was sealed by the ceremony of circumcision as a sacrament. (See Genesis 17:10-11.) And the token or sign of the great covenant with all Israel made at Sinai was the Sabbath. (See Exodus 31:12-17.)

Relationship between blessings and obedience

Several experiences in the life of

Joshua are instructive to us today regarding the importance placed by the Lord on keeping commitments and on being committed to following the commandments and direction he has given.

Joshua is remembered as the one who, on the death of Moses, took command and completed the task of giving leadership to the tribes of Israel. Perhaps to comfort Joshua, who now had the responsibility for the children of Israel, who didn't yet have a homeland, and perhaps to comfort that large body of people who had just lost their leader of more than forty years, the Lord spoke to Joshua and said:

"As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

"Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give them." (Joshua 1:5-6.)

The Lord then continues to speak to Joshua by way of commandment:

"Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest" (Joshua 1:7).

Then speaking about the law given to Moses, the Lord adds:

"Observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Joshua 1:8).

Finally, we have this last reiteration by the Lord of what he had previously said, to comfort and to remind Joshua of the relationship between the blessings of heaven and obedience to divine law:

"Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." (Joshua 1:9.)

Obedience brings success

Joshua would need courage for what he had to do. He would need the Lord's help at every step. Here is a commitment of the Lord to provide that help. With faith in the Lord, Joshua could now go forward, knowing that the Lord would direct him in the way he should go. Joshua knew that his obedience would bring success, and although he did not know exactly how he would succeed, he now had confidence in the result.

The record tells us that the tribes of Israel moved to the Jordan River and encamped for three days, preparing to cross at a point near the city of Jericho. At that time Joshua gave his people this interesting counsel. He said, "Sanctify yourselves: for to morrow the Lord will do wonders among you" (Joshua 3:5).

He knew the victory that would surely come would depend upon their willingness to do the will of the

Lord. Then the Lord said unto Joshua, "This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee" (Joshua 3:7).

Joshua now knew that the miracles of the Lord would continue, just as when Moses had been the leader of Israel. And so it was that when the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people touched the water of the Jordan, it dried up, "and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground" (Joshua 3:17).

Soon after, when Joshua was directed to destroy the city of Jericho that lay before them, the great walls of the city stood as an imposing and physically impossible barrier to Israel's success—or at least so it seemed. Not knowing the means, but assured as to the end, Joshua carried out the instructions he had been given by a messenger of the Lord. His commitment was to complete obedience. His concern was to do precisely as he was instructed, that the promise of the Lord would be fulfilled. The instructions no doubt seemed strange, but his faith in the outcome urged him on. The result, of course, was another in a long series of miracles experienced by the Israelites as they were led over many years by Moses, by Joshua, and by many other prophets who were committed to follow the commandments and the directives of the Lord.

As Joshua and his people approached Jericho, the instructions of the Lord were followed precisely, and according to the scriptural account, "the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city" (Joshua 6:20).

Full commitment by Joshua

The record states that after Israel had rested from the wars with their enemies, Joshua, who was now very

old, called all Israel together. In his farewell address he reminded them they had been victorious because God had fought for them, but if they now ceased to serve the Lord and keep his law they would be destroyed. He recalled how the Lord God of Israel had led Abraham throughout Canaan and had "multiplied his seed" (Joshua 24:3). He reminded them of how Jacob and his children had gone down into Egypt. He told of how the Lord had been with Moses and Aaron and had brought their fathers out of Egypt; how, in all of the battles and conquests, they had prevailed, adding this significant statement: "But not with thy sword, nor with thy bow" (Joshua 24:12). They had been led by the Lord to victory. The battles had not been won by swords and bows. He then admonished them: "Fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord" (Joshua 24:14).

This great military and spiritual leader then urged a commitment, and made one himself and for his family: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

Here was a great statement of full commitment of a man to God; of a prophet to the desires of the Lord; of Joshua the man to his God, who had many times previously blessed his obedience. He was telling the Israelites that regardless of how they decided, he would do what he knew was right. He was saying that his decision to serve the Lord was independent of whatever they decided; that their actions would not affect his; that his commitment to do the Lord's will would not be altered by anything they or anyone else would do. Joshua was firmly in control of his actions and had his eyes fixed on

the commandments of the Lord. He was committed to obedience.

Unwavering determination

Surely the Lord loves, more than anything else, an unwavering determination to obey his counsel. Surely the experiences of the great prophets of the Old Testament have been recorded to help us understand the importance of choosing the path of strict obedience. How pleased the Lord must have been with Abraham, after receiving direction to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, did as he was instructed, without question and without wavering. The record states that God said unto Abraham:

"Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of" (Genesis 22:2).

The next verse simply states:

"And Abraham rose up early in the morning . . . and took . . . Isaac his son . . . and went unto the place of which God had told him" (Genesis 22:3).

Years later, when Rebekah was asked if she would go with the servant of Abraham to become Isaac's wife, and no doubt knowing that the servant's mission had the blessing of the Lord, she simply said, "I will go" (Genesis 24:58).

A generation after that, when Jacob was instructed to return to the land of Canaan, which meant leaving all for which he had worked for many years, he called Rachel and Leah into the field where his flock was and explained what the Lord had said. The reply of Rachel was simple and straightforward and indicative of her commitment: "Whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do" (Genesis 31:16).

Evaluate with eternal perspective

We have, then, examples from

the scriptures of how we should consider and evaluate the commandments of the Lord. If we choose to react like Joshua, and Abraham, and Rebekah and Rachel, our response will be, simply, to go and do the thing that the Lord has commanded.

There is good reason to make our decision *now* to serve the Lord. On this Sunday morning, when the complications and temptations of life are somewhat removed, and when we have the time and more of an inclination to take an eternal perspective, we can more clearly evaluate what will bring us the greatest happiness in life. We should decide now, in the light of the morning, how we will act when the darkness of night and when the storms of temptation arrive.

I pray that we will have the

strength to decide now to do what we ought to do. I pray that we will decide now to serve the Lord. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "On Great Lone Hills" without announcement.

President Hinckley

We extend our appreciation to the owners and operators of the many radio and television stations and cable systems who have offered their facilities as a public service to make the proceedings of this conference available to a large audience throughout many areas of the world. Our next speaker will be President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

President Ezra Taft Benson

Family life ordained of God

Marriage is the rock foundation, the cornerstone, of civilization. No nation will ever rise above its homes.

Marriage and family life are ordained of God.

In an eternal sense, salvation is a family affair. God holds parents responsible for their stewardship in rearing their family. It is a most sacred responsibility.

Today we are aware of great problems in our society. The most obvious are sexual promiscuity, homosexuality, drug abuse, alcoholism, vandalism, pornography, and violence.

These grave problems are symptoms of failure in the home—the disregarding of principles and practices established by God in the very beginning.

Because parents have departed

from the principles the Lord gave for happiness and success, families throughout the world are undergoing great stress and trauma. Many parents have been enticed to abandon their responsibilities in the home to seek after an elusive "self-fulfillment." Some have abdicated parental responsibilities for pursuit of material things, unwilling to postpone personal gratification in the interest of their children's welfare.

It is time to awaken to the fact that there are deliberate efforts to restructure the family along the lines of humanistic values. Images of the family and of love as depicted in television and film often portray a philosophy contrary to the commandments of God.

If one doubts that the family as an institution is being restructured, consider these facts:

Nearly one out of every three marriages ends in divorce.

The traditional family—one which has a husband, a wife not working outside the home, and children—constitutes only 14 percent of American households. (Current Population Reports, 1980.)

Nearly fifty percent of the work force is now female.

About 56 percent of these female workers are mothers with preschool children, and nearly 60 percent of them have teenagers at home.

In the United States alone it is estimated that eight to ten million youngsters, six and under, are in child-care situations outside the home.

Almost one-fifth of all children in the United States live in a one-parent home.

No society will long survive without mothers who care for their young and provide that nurturing care so essential for their normal development.

Innocent sounding phrases are now used to give approval to sinful practices. Thus, the term "alternative life-style" is used to justify adultery and homosexuality, "freedom of choice" to justify abortion, "meaningful relationship" and "self-fulfillment" to justify sex outside of marriage.

If we continue with present trends, we can expect to have more emotionally disturbed young people, more divorce, more depression, and more suicide.

The family is the most effective place to instill lasting values in its members. Where family life is strong and based on principles and practices of the gospel of Jesus Christ, these problems do not as readily appear.

My message this morning is to return to the God-ordained fundamentals that will ensure love, stability, and happiness in our homes. May I offer three fundamentals to happy, enduring family relationships.

Attain righteous unity

First: A husband and wife must attain righteous unity and oneness in their goals, desires, and actions.

Marriage itself must be regarded as a sacred covenant before God. A married couple have an obligation not only to each other, but to God. He has promised blessings to those who honor that covenant.

Fidelity to one's marriage vows is absolutely essential for love, trust, and peace. Adultery is unequivocally condemned by the Lord.

Husbands and wives who love each other will find that love and loyalty are reciprocated. This love will provide a nurturing atmosphere for the emotional growth of children. Family life should be a time of happiness and joy that children can look back on with fond memories and associations.

Hear these simple admonitions from the Lord which may be applied to the marriage covenant.

First: "See that ye love one another; cease to be covetous; learn to impart one to another as the gospel requires. . . . Cease to be unclean; cease to find fault one with another" (D&C 88:123-24).

Second: "Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else. . . . Thou shalt not commit adultery." (D&C 42:22, 24.)

Third: "He that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention" (3 Nephi 11:29).

And there are many more scriptural admonitions.

Restraint and self-control must be ruling principles in the marriage relationship. Couples must learn to bridle their tongues as well as their passions.

Prayer in the home and prayer with each other will strengthen your union. Gradually thoughts,

aspirations, and ideas will merge into a oneness until you are seeking the same purposes and goals.

Rely on the Lord, the teachings of the prophets, and the scriptures for guidance and help, particularly when there may be disagreements and problems.

Spiritual growth comes by solving problems together—not by running from them. Today's inordinate emphasis on individualism brings egotism and separation. Two individuals becoming "one flesh" is still the Lord's standard. (See Genesis 2:24.)

The secret of a happy marriage is to serve God and each other. The goal of marriage is unity and oneness, as well as self-development. Paradoxically, the more we serve one another, the greater is our spiritual and emotional growth.

The first fundamental, then, is to work toward righteous unity.

Nurture children with love

Second: Nurture your children with love and the admonitions of the Lord.

Rearing happy, peaceful children is no easy challenge in today's world, but it can be done, and it is being done.

Responsible parenthood is the key.

Above all else, children need to know and feel they are loved, wanted, and appreciated. They need to be assured of that often. Obviously, this is a role parents should fill, and most often the mother can do it best.

Children need to know who they are in the eternal sense of their identity. They need to know that they have an eternal Heavenly Father on whom they can rely, to whom they can pray, and from whom they can receive guidance. They need to know whence they came so that their lives will have meaning and purpose.

Children must be taught to pray, to rely on the Lord for guidance, and to express appreciation for the blessings that are theirs. I recall kneeling at the bedsides of our young children, helping them with their prayers.

Children must be taught right from wrong. They can and must learn the commandments of God. They must be taught that it is wrong to steal, lie, cheat, or covet what others have.

Children must be taught to work at home. They should learn there that honest labor develops dignity and self-respect. They should learn the pleasure of work, of doing a job well.

The leisure time of children must be constructively directed to wholesome, positive pursuits. Too much time viewing television can be destructive, and pornography in this medium should not be tolerated. It is estimated that growing children today watch television over twenty-five hours per week.

Communities have a responsibility to assist the family in promoting wholesome entertainment. What a community tolerates will become tomorrow's standard for today's youth.

Families must spend more time together in work and recreation. Family home evenings should be scheduled once a week as a time for recreation, work projects, skits, songs around the piano, games, special refreshments, and family prayers. Like iron links in a chain, this practice will bind a family together, in love, pride, tradition, strength, and loyalty.

Family study of the scriptures should be the practice in our homes each Sabbath day.

Daily devotionals are also a commendable practice, where scripture reading, singing of hymns, and family prayer are a part of our daily routine.

Prepare children for gospel ordinances

Third: *Parents must prepare their children for the ordinances of the gospel.*

The most important teachings in the home are spiritual. Parents are commanded to prepare their sons and daughters for the ordinances of the gospel: baptism, confirmation, priesthood ordinations, and temple marriage. They are to teach them to respect and honor the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Most importantly, parents are to instill within their children a desire for eternal life and to earnestly seek that goal above all else.

Eternal life may be obtained only by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel.

When parents themselves have complied with the ordinances of salvation, when they have set the example of a temple marriage, not only is their own marriage more likely to succeed, but their children are far more likely to follow their example.

Parents who provide such a home will have, as the Lord has said, "a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, . . . a house of order, a house of God" (D&C 88:119). Regardless of how modest or humble that home may be, it will have love, happiness, peace, and joy. Children will grow up in righteousness and truth and will desire to serve the Lord.

One past Church President gave this counsel to parents:

"The home is what needs reforming. Try today, and tomorrow, to make a change in your home by praying twice a day with your family. . . . Ask a blessing upon every meal you eat. Spend ten minutes . . .

reading a chapter from the words of the Lord in the [scriptures]. . . . Let love, peace, and the Spirit of the Lord, kindness, charity, sacrifice for others, abound in your families. Banish harsh words, . . . and let the Spirit of God take possession of your hearts. Teach to your children these things, in spirit and power. . . . Not one child in a hundred would go astray, if the home environment, example and training, were in harmony with . . . the gospel of Christ." (Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939, p. 302.)

I testify that, by following these precepts and practices, serious problems with the family can and will be avoided.

Thank God for the joys of family life. I have often said there can be no genuine happiness separate and apart from a good home. The sweetest influences and associations of life are there.

God bless us to strengthen our homes with love and unity and by following his precepts, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have just heard President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. Thank you, President Benson. Our concluding speaker will be Elder J. Thomas Fyans, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy. Following his remarks the Tabernacle Choir will sing "Father in Heaven, We Do Believe." The benediction will then be pronounced by Elder Jack H. Goasland, Jr., a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. This conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

Elder J. Thomas Fyans

My dear brothers and sisters, what a privilege it is to stand before you and bear my testimony that Jesus is the Christ!

Exterior beauty

There's an ancient oriental legend that tells the story of a jeweler who had a precious pearl he wanted to sell. In order to place this pearl in the proper setting, he conceived the idea of building a special box of the finest woods to contain the pearl. He sought these woods and had them brought to him, and they were polished to a high brilliance. He then reinforced the corners of this box with elegant brass hinges and added a red velvet interior. As a final step, he scented that red velvet with perfume, then placed in that setting this precious pearl.

The pearl was then placed in the store window of the jeweler, and after a short period of time, a rich man came by. He was attracted by what he saw and sat down with the jeweler to negotiate a purchase. The jeweler soon realized that the man was negotiating for the box rather than the pearl. You see, the man was so overcome by the beauty of the exterior that he failed to see the pearl of great price.

Fellowship nonmember friends

Recently we had in our home some nonmember friends from another part of the country, and they were with us for about a week. One of them is a very well educated man. He initially prepared for the ministry, and then determined he would not continue in that vein but would become a psychologist, and he received his doctorate in that field.

Upon graduating, he established a clinic, and in that clinic today there are several psychiatrists and a number of psychologists and social

workers. This man is also an adviser to a state board of education and to a state university. He is involved in the accreditation tests of universities.

When we realized that this very well educated person was coming to our home, we wondered what we could show him and how we could tell him about the things that we believe.

First, we brought him here to this magnificent building. It was on a Sunday morning, and he was impressed with the artistic ability of this great choir. He went into the visitors' centers here on the grounds and was exposed to what is there.

I sought an interview for him with the commissioner of education. I wanted to impress him with the fact that we have people who have some background in the field of education as well. We took him to Brigham Young University and had him visit with persons there who are in his field, hoping that he would be impressed with that great university—and he was impressed.

Then I took him behind the scenes and introduced him to the curriculum planning functions of the Church as described by Elder Packer today. Because of his background in education he had been involved in curriculum planning for all different levels, but as he saw this plan, he was amazed. He said, "I've never seen anything like it. You should have the Nobel prize for curriculum planning."

He saw many things. Then, during his last evening at our home, I said, "What questions do you have?"

He said, "How do you console the bereaved?"

Consoling the bereaved

We opened up the Old Testament, and then we read from the New Testament. Then we looked in

another testament, the Book of Mormon. We studied from Alma and other parts of this testament that Jesus is the Christ. We then moved on to modern-day scriptures and studied the 76th and 138th sections of the Doctrine and Covenants. We also read from the Pearl of Great Price.

And we talked about the cross-referencing of these scriptures. They are not isolated one from another. They are one integral whole and have come from one source—the Lord God, and his Son Jesus Christ, who through prophets over the ages have inspired those thoughts and had them recorded so that they would lift us to an understanding of the pearl of great price.

We have many wonderful teachings in this Church, all of which contribute to an uplifting, wonderful life. And yet as we look through all these trappings, and down to the very center core, we find that there is the message: yes, the Lord Jesus Christ came in the meridian of time. There he called others—Apostles and sev-

enty, and others—to assist him in the task. He was placed on the cross and then in the tomb, and on the third day he arose. He lives today, and because he lives today, we will live tomorrow. That, I told my friend, is how we console the bereaved.

And I bear my witness, brothers and sisters, that I know that Jesus is the Christ, that this is the Church of Jesus Christ. There are many testaments of him—the Old Testament, the New Testament, another testament commonly known as the Book of Mormon. May we drink deeply from these testaments to bear up that testimony in our hearts. And may we share it with others so that the kingdom of God will be here upon the earth, that the kingdom of heaven may come, I pray humbly in the holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang “Father in Heaven, We Do Believe.”

The benediction was offered by Elder Jack H. Goasland, Jr.

SECOND DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

FIFTH SESSION

The fifth and final general session of the 152nd Semiannual General Conference commenced at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, October 3, 1982.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

Music was provided by the Tabernacle Choir directed by Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger with John Longhurst at the organ.

President Hinckley made the following remarks at the outset of the meeting:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

We are delighted, my brethren and sisters, to have with us on the stand and presiding at this conference, President Spencer W. Kimball. He has asked that I conduct this session. We excuse Elder LeGrand Richards who because of the condition of his health feels that he cannot be with us, and we extend our love and prayers in his behalf.

We extend a sincere welcome to all assembled this afternoon in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah in the fifth and final session of the 152nd Semiannual

General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We also welcome those seated in the Assembly Hall where Elders Robert L. Simpson and Bernard P. Brockbank preside and in the Salt Palace where Elders Gene R. Cook and Hugh W. Pinnock preside.

We send our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere who are participating in these proceedings by radio and to those who are gathered in approximately four hundred and fifty stake centers to which the proceedings of the conference are fed via satellite. A survey taken during the noon recess indicated that there were more than a quarter million members in these various stake centers this morning.

The Tabernacle Choir with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducting and John Longhurst at the organ is providing the music for this session.

The Choir will begin this service by singing "In Hymns of Praise." The invocation will be offered by

Elder A. Theodore Tuttle, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Choir sang "In Hymns of Praise."

Elder A. Theodore Tuttle offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "Turn Back O Man." Following the singing, we shall hear from Elder Marvin J. Ashton, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The Choir sang "Turn Back O Man."

President Hinckley

Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Neal A. Maxwell, also of the Council of the Twelve.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

An encounter

A few weeks ago as I approached these temple grounds where I was to meet a friend, a young woman—a stranger to me—stepped up and said, "Would you like to know what kind of people these Mormons really are?"

I responded with, "I think I already know a little bit about what they really are."

To this the heckler retorted, "They surely don't live the teachings of Jesus Christ as they should."

My concluding comment was, "Who does?"

As I continued my walk to the

visitors' center, I began to ponder the actions of those persons who are giving time and money to discredit, embarrass, ridicule, and shame those who have religious views that differ from their own. Sometimes such actions can unify and strengthen those who are attacked. However, in some few instances they plant seeds of discord, and at times righteous people are hurt by their slander.

Look for the good

I doubt that such actions can be called Christlike. At no time did Jesus Christ encourage us to spend time participating in damaging,

destructive criticism. His message was to encourage us to seek, learn, and share all that is praiseworthy and of value as we associate with our fellowmen. Only those who are vindictive and cantankerous participate in ferreting out and advertising the negative and unsavory.

I will be forever grateful for the wise counsel my mission president gave me as I arrived in England to serve as a missionary. He said, "Elder Ashton, these people in this land have been at it a long time. If you will keep your eyes, ears, and mind open, you can learn much while you are here. Look for the good and overlook that which is different from your ways."

The longer I stayed in England, the more I appreciated his advice. Day by day I grew to love and appreciate that great country and its people. For example, instead of freezing in the raw winter weather, I did as the English did—I put on another sweater rather than wasting time murmuring and complaining.

Refuse to become anti-anti-Mormon

Robert West wrote, "Nothing is easier than faultfinding; no talent, no self-denial, no brains . . . are required to set up in the grumbling business" (*Richard L. Evans' Quote Book*, Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1971, p. 221).

Whether accusations, innuendos, aspersions, or falsehoods are whispered or blatantly shouted, the gospel of Jesus Christ reminds us that we are not to retaliate nor contend. "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

"For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness to God" (James 1:19–20).

No religion, group, or individual can prosper over an extended period of time with faultfinding as their foundation. To the world, and

especially to members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we declare there is no time for contention. "If any man among you seem to be religious, and brideth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain" (James 1:26).

The poet Robert Frost once defined education as "the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper or your self-confidence." Probably we will never be free of those who are openly anti-Mormon. Therefore, we encourage all our members to refuse to become anti-anti-Mormon. In the wise words of old, can we "live and let live"? (Johann Schiller, in *The Home Book of Quotations*, New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1935, p. 1119.)

Practice pure religion

Certainly one of our God-given privileges is the right to choose what our attitude will be in any given set of circumstances. We can let the events that surround us determine our actions—or we can personally take charge and rule our lives, using as guidelines the principles of pure religion. Pure religion is learning the gospel of Jesus Christ and then putting it into action. Nothing will ever be of real benefit to us until it is incorporated into our own lives.

It seems to me there has never been a period in history when it has been more important for us to be engaged in pure religion as taught by the Savior. This religion is not to retaliate, or to exchange in kind, evil actions or unkind statements. Pure religion encompasses the ability to cherish, to build up, and to turn the other cheek in place of destroying and tearing down. Blessed are they who strive to serve Him without wasting time faulting Him or those who serve Him.

The discerning realize that it is not realistic to expect perfection in others when none of us is perfect.

"And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?"

"Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull the mote out of thine eye; and behold, a beam is in thine own eye?"

"Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." (Matthew 7:3-5.)

Meaningful progress can be made only when all of us can cast the motes out of our own eyes, leave judgment to our Father in Heaven, and lose ourselves in righteous living.

As we reflect upon actions that do not fit the definition of pure religion, perhaps we should contemplate the nature of this term: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep . . . unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

The words are simple, but a basic formula is revealed—namely, help those who are in need, build your life around the gospel of Jesus Christ, and avoid yielding to worldly temptations.

As with most simple formulas, all of us must analyze our own lives and use wisdom and free agency as we apply the basic principles. Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, this is my gospel; and ye know the things that ye must do in my church; for the works which ye have seen me do that shall ye also do; for that which ye have seen me do even that shall ye do" (3 Nephi 27:21). The doing is always more difficult than the knowing.

Assume responsibility

We were visiting some friends this past summer. A very young son with a new tricycle was disturbed

because his parents were giving us their attention and all of us were ignoring him. He rode his trike as fast as his little legs could pedal, calling, "Look at me!" The inevitable happened as he looked at us instead of where he was going. He rode directly into a lawn chair. To try to stem the tears and take his mind off the hurt, his mother said, "That naughty chair hurt you. Let's spank the chair."

I suppose her response momentarily distracted the boy, but the mother was letting her son blame something else for the accident rather than himself.

How many times do we look for something external on which to place blame for our actions? It hurts to look inward and assume responsibility for our situations.

To keep ourselves unspotted from the world requires taking charge of and ruling our lives from within, accepting responsibility for our own actions, and choosing the role of peacemaker rather than retaliator when those around us are critical or spread false propaganda. It includes being aware that God's work on earth is done by human beings, all of whom have some weaknesses. It encompasses the ability to look for the good accomplished rather than being disillusioned when human failings surface. It includes resisting the urge to proclaim such weaknesses so adamantly that the basic good is overshadowed and testimonies waver.

Extend mercy and care

Pure religion is maintaining a balance between sophisticated, intellectual information and the basic "bread and butter" principles of the gospel. Latter-day Saints are encouraged to pursue learning in all areas. However, superior knowledge and academic achievements need to be enhanced by wisdom, good judgment, and spiritual guidance in order

to use all that is learned for the benefit of the individual and his fellowman.

Some think they can learn of God only by appreciating his handiwork. Mountains, streams, flowers, birds, and animals are to be enjoyed and admired; but this is not enough. In the formal Church setting, gospel truths are shared, new concepts are internalized, and new experiences are offered—all of which can result in enriched feelings about oneself and in learning better methods of helping others.

One who practices pure religion soon discovers it is more rewarding to lift a man up than to hold him down. Happiness is bound up with helpfulness. Those who fail to protect someone's good name, who take advantage of the innocent or uninformed, who build a fortune by pretending godliness to manipulate others, are missing the joy of practicing pure religion.

Many have found joy by extending mercy and tender care to those around them. What a strength it is to witness friends visiting nursing homes to comfort patients who don't even have the capacity to express appreciation. There are some who would question God's motives when he allows many to linger in pain and hopeless physical and mental deterioration. While this process is taking place, others teach us by their compassionate service and patience. One who has served in many leadership positions in the Church, even in missions and temples, now without specific assignment, meets each month with those confined in a nursing home and often says, "What satisfaction I get each month as I visit these precious souls."

Be patient and long-suffering

Pure religion is showing concern and affection for those who, because they have lost their companions, are

experiencing feelings of loneliness and neglect. Recently I visited with a bishop who has in his ward more than sixty widows. He beamed, "I love them all!" At least once a week he and his counselors visit them, in addition to the calls made by their home teachers. "They are the joys of our lives," he repeated. He might have said, "Don't you think that is more than our share?"

Another worthy practice in pure religion is a daily telephone call to each housebound person in a neighborhood. A loving, older, widowed lady said, "If I telephone each day, it gives them a lift, and if they don't answer the phone, it lets me know they probably need a personal visit from me." One of these friends could not afford a telephone, so this same sister had a phone installed and took care of the monthly bill.

Pure religion encompasses patience and long-suffering. A father recovering from the wounds of alcoholism has often said, "I am making my way back because my family would not give up on me. Everyone had written me off except my wife and children." How sweet are those words: "I am making my way back because my family would not give up on me."

Pure religion is practiced when we lift the unfortunate and unusual children. Some of God's choicest earthly spirits are those without meaningful parental care. Many are given family relationships by foster parents on a part-or full-time basis.

Be sensitive

Pure religion is having the courage to do what is right and let the consequence follow. It is doing the right things for right reasons. To be righteous or serving or loving or obedient to God's laws just to earn praise or recognition is not pure religion. It is being able to withstand ridicule and even temporary

unpopularity with some peer groups when you know who you are and for what goals you are reaching. So many of our young people, and older ones also, have developed just such inner strength. They have a great influence for good on others with whom they associate.

Loving those around us includes being sensitive to feelings of others. As is often done, a conducting officer announced that when the deacons were through passing the sacrament, they were invited to go and sit with their families. One father noticed a boy walk out and sit in the foyer. The next week he invited that deacon to sit with his family rather than go through the embarrassment and loneliness caused by not having his own family in attendance. This parent responded to the need of the boy rather than criticizing the leaders for the policy. The actions of this father can be enlarged on and put into practice by every member.

Have sincere love for self and fellowmen

The safety and protection of each person, especially children, should be a concern for all of us. We can be instrumental in assisting in the protection of each other by being aware of potential dangers and being willing to do our part to thwart those who would injure, steal, or abuse any person, young or old.

Another example of pure religion can be practiced in today's political election processes by those who explain and debate the issues and avoid pettiness and slander. Real political winners are those who would accept defeat rather than participate in character assassination.

Examples of pure religion can be found on every hand. At a funeral about a month ago, I learned of a valiant young lady on a mission in a distant land who, after much prayer and many tears, wrote to her dying

mom just before the terminal illness took its toll, and told her that even though she would like to be at her bedside, she would follow her mother's teachings and stay in the mission field to finish her assignment and search out those who wanted to hear the gospel.

From the simple scripture that defines pure religion comes great guidelines. To be unspotted from the world, one must avoid all of Satan's evil plans for the inhabitants of the world. Retaliation, faultfinding, deceit, pettiness, hypocrisy, judging, and destroying one another do not belong in the definition of pure religion.

Empathy is sincere love for self and our fellowmen. Henry David Thoreau said, "Could a greater miracle take place than for us to look through each other's eyes for an instant?" If this were possible, I'm sure we could visit and help the widowed and fatherless and all who need our help with the pure love of Christ and thus be responsive to the needs of those around us.

May God help us to learn and live the principles of pure religion. The business of lifting each other is a full-time occupation. Pure religion can never be taught or lived by those who are petty, prejudiced, contentious, or unresponsive to the needs of their fellowmen. Pure religion is following the teachings of our Savior. Jesus Christ does live. This is his Church. To this I bear witness in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Marvin J. Ashton, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Neal A. Maxwell, also a member of the Council of the Twelve. He will be followed by Elder Robert E. Wells of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

Be of good cheer

My brothers and sisters, we are living in a time in which we shall see things both wonderful and awful. There is no way that we can be a part of the last days and have it otherwise. Even so, we are instructed by our Lord and Exemplar, Jesus Christ, to "be of good cheer" (D&C 61:36; 78:18).

Jesus has given that same instruction to others before, when the stressful circumstances in which they found themselves were anything but cheerful. For instance, he told the original Twelve to be of good cheer when, on the surface, there was nothing to be cheerful about. (John 16:33.) The indescribable agonies of Gethsemane were imminent. Judas's betrayal lay immediately ahead. Likewise, Jesus' arrest and arraignment. The Twelve would be scattered like sheep. Jesus' unjust and mocking trial and His terrible scourging were but hours away. The shrill and disappointing cry of the mob—to release Barabbas instead of Jesus—would soon echo in the air. Then would come the final, awful moments on Calvary!

Therefore, how could Jesus expect the Twelve to be of good cheer? Because, the Savior said, "*In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world*" (John 16:33; italics added).

Because Christ had overcome the world, the Atonement was about to be accomplished! Death would be irrevocably defeated! Satan would have failed to stop the unfolding plan of salvation! All mankind would be given—through the grace of God—immortality! Additionally, for those who would earn it, there would be the richness of eternal life! These were among the resplendent realities and the fundamental facts which

justified the Twelve's being of good cheer—not their grim, temporary circumstances! The precious perspectives of the gospel give to us this gospel gladness!

It was the same on another occasion when, of a night, the resurrected Jesus stood by an imprisoned Paul, instructing Paul to be of good cheer. (Acts 23:11.) Once again, the circumstances of the moment included Paul's having been struck publicly on the mouth by order of Ananias. Forty individuals were plotting his death. He faced a trial for sedition. Why, therefore, should he be of good cheer? Because, Jesus announced, though in bad circumstances, Paul would soon take the good news of the gospel to Rome!

Church members in another age were being held hostage until certain prophecies were fulfilled—with their lives being forfeit if those prophecies were not fulfilled precisely on time. They, too, were told by the Lord to be of good cheer. Why? Because, said Jesus, "On the morrow come I into the world" (3 Nephi 1:13). With His birth, the mortal ministry of the Messiah would, at last, be launched!

Trust in God's purposes

Gospel gladness was a part of the Prophet Joseph Smith's attitude. In the fall of 1842, rumors were rife of armed mobs on their way to Nauvoo. His beloved Emma was often ill, and there were concerns she would not recover. Joseph was hunted in the City of Joseph. In this same period, of Joseph's circumstance we learn that upon his return home on one occasion he found "Emma sick . . . delivered of a son, which did not survive its birth" (*History of the Church*, 5:209).

Though in a period of such anguish and affliction, the persecuted

Prophet wrote concerning temple work: "Now, what do we hear in the gospel which we have received? A voice of *gladness!* . . . a voice of *gladness* for the living and the dead; *glad tidings of great joy.* . . . Let your hearts *rejoice*, and be exceedingly *glad.*" And "Let the mountains shout for *joy*, and all ye valleys cry aloud." (D&C 128:19, 22, 23; italics added.)

What precious perspective we obtain from the gospel of Jesus Christ concerning things that really matter—against which we measure the disappointments of the day!

In the late 1820s, Brigham Young, as yet untouched by the restored gospel, was a somewhat discouraged young man. He found himself disapproving of much of what he saw in the world and wondering if he had a work yet to do. His loving brother, Phineas, gave Brigham prescient counsel: "Hang on, for I know the Lord is agoing to do some thing for us." (Sermon of Heber C. Kimball in minutes, 8 Jan. 1845, Brigham Young Papers, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.) What then happened is Moses-like history!

Thus we see, brothers and sisters, how we are justified in being of good cheer for ultimate reasons—reasons to be distinguished, however, from proximate circumstances. If our attitude, for instance, toward life depends upon the praise of men, the level of interest rates, the outcome of a particular election or athletic contest—we are too much at the mercy of men and circumstance. Nor should our gratitude for the gift of mortal life depend upon the manner in which we die, for surely none of us will rush eagerly forward to tell Jesus how we died!

Instead, Jesus calls upon us to have a deliberate trust in God's unfolding purposes, not only for all humankind but for us individually.

And we are to be of good cheer in the unfolding process.

The less love, the more fear

We must not underestimate, however, the difficulty of the last days. Joel and Zephaniah both speak of the last days as being "a day of . . . gloominess" (Joel 2:2; Zephaniah 1:15). The coming decades will be times of despair. Why? Because, as Moroni said, despair comes of iniquity. (See Moroni 10:22.) The more iniquity, the more despair. And unless there is widespread repentance, despair will both deepen and spread—except among those who have gospel gladness.

Alas, though we are asked to be peacemakers, we do live in a time when peace has been taken from the earth. (See D&C 1:35.) War has been the almost continuing experience of modern man. There have been 141 wars, large and small, just since the end of World War II in 1945. As the American Civil War was about to begin, the Lord declared there would be a succession of wars poured out upon all nations, resulting in the "death and misery of many souls" (D&C 87:1).

Moreover, that continuum of conflict will culminate in "a full end of all nations" (D&C 87:6). Meanwhile, let mortals, if they choose, put overreliance upon mortal arms. As for us, we shall "put on the whole armour of God"! (Ephesians 6:11.) And in the midst of such affliction, if we are righteous and we die, we die unto Him; and if we live, we live unto Him. (See D&C 42:44.)

Alas, brothers and sisters, we likewise live in a time when the love of many will wax cold. (See D&C 45:27; Matthew 24:12.) Fear will therefore increase. Why? Because when men fear, it is because we are not perfect in love. (See 1 John 4:18; Moroni 8:16.) The less love, the more fear—as well as the more war!

As with Paul, however, we may be perplexed, but we are not in despair. (See 2 Corinthians 4:8.) For if we are prepared spiritually, we need not fear. (See D&C 38:30.)

Trial of faith and patience

Even so, the Lord has made no secret of the fact that He intends to try the faith and the patience of His Saints. (See Mosiah 23:21.) We mortals are so quick to forget the Lord: "And thus we see that except the Lord doth chasten his people with many afflictions . . . they will not remember him" (Helaman 12:3).

However, the Lord knows our bearing capacity, both as to coping and to comprehending, and He will not give us more to bear than we can manage at the moment, though to us it may seem otherwise. (See D&C 50:40; 78:18.) Just as no temptations will come to us from which we cannot escape or which we cannot bear, we will not be given more trials than we can sustain. (See 1 Corinthians 10:13.)

Therefore, given the aforementioned grand and over-arching reasons to rejoice, can we not "be of good cheer" in spite of stress and circumstance?

President Brigham Young said of a geographical destination, "This is the place." Of God's plan of salvation, with its developmental destination, it can be said, "This is the process"!

Believing participation without full understanding

President Young, who knew something about trial and tribulation but also of man's high destiny, said that the Lord lets us pass through these experiences that we might become true friends of God. By developing our individual capacities, wisely exercising our agency, and trusting God—including when we

feel forsaken and alone—then we can, said President Young, learn to be "righteous in the dark." (Secretary's Journal, 28 Jan. 1857.) The gospel glow we see radiating from some—amid dark difficulties—comes from illuminated individuals who are "of good cheer"!

To be cheerful when others are in despair, to keep the faith when others falter, to be true even when we feel forsaken—all of these are deeply desired outcomes during the deliberate, divine tutorials which God gives to us—because He loves us. (See Mosiah 3:19.) These learning experiences must not be misread as divine indifference. Instead, such tutorials are a part of the divine unfolding.

Even as believers, however, when we are a part of encapsulating events, we can scarcely savor all that swirls about us. It is unlikely, for instance, on that night so long ago in Bethlehem, that Joseph and Mary looked at the newly born Christ child's feet with the realization that those feet would, one day, walk the length and breadth of the Holy Land. And, further, that, later on, spikes would pierce those feet.

As a loving Mary grasped those tiny hands, and, as in the months ahead those tiny hands clasped her, did she know that those hands, when grown, would ordain the original Twelve or, still later, carry the rough-hewn cross?

As she heard her Baby cry, did she hear intimations of Jesus' later weeping at the death of Lazarus or after blessing the Nephite children? (See John 11:35; 3 Nephi 17:21–22.) Did she foresee that those baby-soft knees would later be hardened by so much prayer, including those glorious but awful hours in Gethsemane? (See Matthew 26:36–56.)

As she bathed that Babe so many times to cleanse His pores, could she have been expected to

foresee that one day, years later, drops of blood would come from His every pore? (See Mosiah 3:7.)

There is such a thing as cheerful, believing participation—even without full understanding—when you and I keep certain things in our hearts and are nourished as we ponder them! (See Luke 2:29.)

Maintain right perspective

In the midst of our afflictions, reassurances will come to us from the Lord and from His prophets—as they did to the Lord's people in another age when they feared an approaching army, and the prophet reminded and reassured them, and “therefore they hushed their fears” (Mosiah 23:28). Like a young Eliza Snow in an ox wagon in the midst of tribulation, we can maintain our perspective about “things as they really are” and, in her words, be “thankful that we are so well off.” (Jacob 4:13; Kenneth W. Godfrey, *Women's Voices*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1982, p. 147.) Such reassurances and perspective will surely be needed, brothers and sisters, for the Lord has clearly indicated that His purifying and sifting judgment would begin *first* at the house of God and then proceed outward to the world. (See 1 Peter 4:17; D&C 112:25.) Just what this sifting will consist of is not now clear, what special pressures—combined with the ongoing and demanding rigors of “taking up the cross daily”—we know not. (See Luke 9:23.) We do know that the tempter's triad of tools, identified by Jesus as temptation, persecution, and tribulation, will be relentlessly used. (See Matthew 13:21; Luke 8:13.)

And if the heat from the sun of such circumstances will scorch even a green tree, this heat will be very real. (See Luke 23:31; D&C 135:6; Alma 32:38.)

Much sifting will occur because

of lapses in righteous behavior which go unrepented of. A few will give up instead of holding out to the end. A few will be deceived by defectors. Likewise, others will be offended, for sufficient unto each dispensation are the stumbling blocks thereof! A few will stumble because, in their preoccupation with the cares of the world, they do not have oil in their lamps. And, again and again, those who refuse to eat their spiritual spinach will come off second when they wrestle with the world. Some, because of the scorn of the world, will grow ashamed and let go of the iron rod. (See 1 Nephi 8:28.) A few who have not been Saints, but merely tourists passing through, will depart from the path. A few, failing to be of good cheer, will even charge God foolishly. (See Job 1:22.)

Surely, brothers and sisters, already too many Church members have broken hearts and broken homes because of broken covenants and broken promises. Society's increasing slide toward pleasure seeking brings our so-called civilization comparatively closer to Sodom than to Eden.

Forerunner of eternal riches

In our striving to be prepared, therefore, let us be careful to rely on parents, priesthood, and principles—and on scriptures, and temples, and leaders who lead—to see us through. Let us not mistake program scaffolding for substance.

If we are of good cheer, we will find no use for nostalgia for another time, even though a wistful lamentation such as this one is understandable:

“Oh, that I could have had my days in the days when my father Nephi first came out of the land of Jerusalem, . . . then were his people easy to be entreated, firm to keep the commandments of God, and slow to be led to do iniquity. . . .

"But behold, I am consigned that these are my days." (Helaman 7:7, 9.)

Brothers and sisters, these are our days. This is *our time* on earth! These are *our tasks* to be done!

And in these days, being of good cheer is part of being valiant in the testimony of Jesus. (See D&C 76:79; D&C 121:29.)

Finally, in those moments when we feel the pain which is a necessary part of the plan of happiness, we can remember that there was an ancient time when that plan was first unveiled. Then the perceptive among us voted not secretly, but audibly—by shouting for joy! (See Job 38:7.) Let us not go back on those feelings now—for we saw more clearly then what we are experiencing now!

May God help us to be of good

cheer, for this is the forerunner feeling which precedes that glorious condition when our joy will be full! (See D&C 93:34.)

Meanwhile, He who knows the path perfectly has promised, "Be of good cheer, for I will lead you along. The kingdom is yours . . . and the riches of eternity." (D&C 78:18.)

In the name of Him who waits "with open arms to receive" us—Jesus Christ, amen. (Mormon 6:17.)

President Hinckley

Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Robert E. Wells, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Robert E. Wells

Another testament of Christ

This is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We are Christians. We know additional details about the Savior's role in the premortal existence before we came here: we have new information about His part in the creation of the world under the direction of our Father; we can identify Him as Jehovah of the Old Testament, communicating with the prophets of Israel. We have the Book of Mormon, which is another testament of Jesus Christ, which has great illuminating doctrines and information about the Savior. Our modern prophets have given revealed explanations, doctrines, light, and knowledge on the Christ as the Redeemer to whom we look for the remission of our sins. We have a wealth of information of tremendous value to all Christian churches. We do not diminish or tear down the faith others have in Christ, but seek

only to share with them our additional knowledge of the Lamb, the Shepherd, the Holy One of Israel (see Psalm 71:22)—for their benefit and salvation.

Like Nephi of old, "we believe in Christ, we . . . look forward with steadfastness unto Christ. . . . We are made alive in Christ because of our faith. . . . We talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ. . . . We . . . look forward unto that life which is in Christ." (2 Nephi 25:24–27.) Can anyone doubt that we are Christians in the full sense of the word?

We are Christians

Some time ago, I was on an airplane over the Columbian jungle of South America. I had been telling my seat companion about the Church. At one point in my enthusiastic gospel conversation, my friend commented, "You Mormons

have surely built a magnificent shrine at Joseph Smith's grave site."

In surprise, I exclaimed, "*What shrine—what grave site?*"

He replied, "Why that tall building in Salt Lake City with the gold angel on top. Isn't that a mausoleum or a shrine of some kind where you worship your prophet?" He was referring to the great Salt Lake Temple.

In dismay, I recognized his misunderstanding. No telling where it came from. I proceeded to correct the error, to the best of my ability.

I said to my friend, "Please allow me to explain that we definitely *are* Christians—we *do* worship God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, and we do *not* worship any prophet or any saint—modern or of ancient times. We do not worship the Prophet Joseph Smith, although we love and honor him. But we never pray to him. In our doctrine, philosophy, and practice, he is not an intermediary of any kind, nor is any other prophet or saint. Christ alone is the advocate with the Father"—and I repeated for emphasis—"not Mary, not Joseph, not Peter, James, or John, not any of the ancient prophets like Adam, Moses, or Abraham. No modern prophet like Joseph Smith or Brigham Young is ever worshiped or prayed to."

Live so no one will doubt

I went on further to explain that the temple in Salt Lake City is not to honor the Prophet Joseph, nor is he even buried there. To make my point that we do not worship our prophets, I said, "Please believe me when I say that we never make a pilgrimage to where the Prophet Joseph is buried; as a matter of fact, I do not even know *where* he is buried!"

This explanation of my not knowing where Joseph Smith is buried seemed to be the most dramatic kind of clarification my friend could have received. He was thoroughly

astonished, but he could easily see that his understanding of our Church had been completely wrong. This turnabout then led to a conversation in which truths regarding how we *do* worship the Savior could be discussed easily and openly. The positive fact that we are practicing Christians was established.

I believe it to be the responsibility of every member of the Church to so live and teach and preach that there will never be any doubt on the part of our friends, associates, and casual acquaintances as to our being Christians, having the desire to receive redemption through Him; to be the kind of person that is a friend of the Savior, a servant of the Savior, and a son or a daughter of the Savior. Let me discuss each one of these three roles:

Be a friend of the Savior

First, Be a Friend of the Savior.

President Kimball qualifies as a friend of the Savior. When he was in the hospital ready to undergo open-heart surgery a few years ago, he was being wheeled down the hall and into the operating room by a young orderly. The young man accidentally smashed his finger between the metal door frame and the metal frame of the bed on which lay the already sedated prophet. When this mishap occurred, the young man, in pain, used an unfortunate expression in which he took in vain the name of the Savior. The prophet stirred, opened his eyes, and gently rebuked the orderly, saying, "Young man, don't say that; He's my best friend!"

Do you and I have a relationship with the Savior such that we would decry the misuse of His name? Does Jesus know that we feel about Him the way President Kimball feels about Him?

Another example of President Kimball's discipleship occurred one Christmas Eve several years ago. He called and asked if I were busy. I

quickly responded, "Not at all. What can I do for you, President Kimball?" He told me he needed a companion to go with him to the Primary Children's Hospital to give a few blessings. It turned out that he had heard of several children from South America, as well as some American Indian children, who were in the hospital. We went from floor to floor giving blessings to all the Latins and Lamanites and many others too. I was deeply affected by the love of President Kimball and his tender friendship with each child. He was a friend to the sick—a friend to those far from home. He exemplified the tender, loving friendship that the Savior would give. It was easy to see how he could say, "The Savior is my best friend."

Be a servant of the Savior

Second, Be a Servant of the Savior

King Benjamin made this clear:

"For how knoweth a man the master whom he has not served, and who is a stranger unto him, and is far from the thoughts and intents of his heart?" (Mosiah 5:13.)

How can we possibly be a servant to the Savior if we have not served Him, if we are strangers to Him, if we keep Him far from the daily thoughts and intents of our hearts?

President Harold B. Lee was the kind of person who so knew the Savior and had been a servant for such a long period of time that he knew instinctively what the Savior would say or do in any given situation.

For example, shortly after becoming President of the Church, President Lee held his first press conference as the new prophet of the Church. The reporters posed for President Lee what could have been a difficult question: "What is your position with regard to the Vietnam war?" You recall that at that time the war was underway, and there

were those who supported it and those who were against our involvement.

If President Lee said, "I am in favor of our government's position," the reporters could say, "How strange—a spiritual leader in favor of war?" If he answered, "I am against our government's involvement," the reporters could also raise doubts by saying, "How unusual—a religious leader who pretends to support his government, but does not?"

When the people of the press presented the question, President Lee responded as a servant of the Savior would, knowing how to use the very words of the Lord in an inspired manner. His answer disarmed them, impressed them. As I remember, he said, "We, together with the entire Christian world, abhor war." And he went on, "The Savior said, 'In the world ye shall have tribulations.' But He also said, 'In me ye might have peace'." (See John 16:33.) Continuing, President Lee quoted from John 14: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I [peace] unto you." (Verse 27.)

And then President Lee taught a great principle. And he said to them: "The Savior was not speaking of the kind of peace which is won with armies or navies or force; nor was He speaking of the kind of peace which can be negotiated in the halls of congresses. He was speaking of the kind of peace we each can have in our hearts only when we live His commandments to such a degree that we know He is pleased with us." President Lee, speaking as a true servant of the Prince of Peace, had answered them with inspiration.

Be a son or daughter of the Savior

Third, Be a Son or a Daughter of the Savior

Let there be no confusion—our Heavenly Father *is* the Father of our spirits. He is also the Father of the

spirit of Jesus. The Holy Trinity is not a blur, but rather three separate and distinct personages. Heavenly Father gave to His Son those of His children who would take upon themselves the name of His Son, demonstrating faith in Him by repenting of their sins and entering the holy waters of baptism and then going forth steadfastly in His kingdom forever.

King Benjamin tells us:

"And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name; therefore, ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters" (Mosiah 5:7).

I pray that the entire membership of this church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, will so live that if there are any who would accuse us falsely of not being Christians, their words would not be believed by any who know us. Let us so live that every person who has ever met a member of this Church would know that we all strive daily to be better friends of the Savior, more unselfish servants of the Sav-

ior, more like sons and daughters given by the Father to our Savior by virtue of our taking His name upon us in the holy waters of baptism.

To this I testify humbly and with love, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Master and Redeemer, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Elder Wells.

The Choir and congregation will now join in singing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

After the singing, Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will speak to us.

The Choir and congregation sang "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

President Hinckley

Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will next address us. We shall then hear from Elder George P. Lee, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone

Personal feelings about parable

My beloved brothers and sisters, I would like to share my personal feelings about a parable of great hope and compassion. The Savior said, "A certain man had two sons" (Luke 15:11). The younger of the two sons seemed always to be in the shadow of his older, more mature brother. Compliments would come freely to the older brother. His age and size were in his favor; he could work harder. The younger son, always compared to his older

brother, never quite measured up. He tired more quickly, did not get all the work done, and probably had a fairly poor self-image. He may have determined that the "system" was against him. He was not being judged on his own merits. He decided to leave home and start in a new environment.

The parable continues: "And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me" (Luke 15:12). Apparently the father had previously discussed with his sons that one day

each would receive an inheritance. The inheritance would be a free-will gift from the father. It is doubtful that either son actually earned much more than his room and board. Nevertheless, the father "divided unto him his living" (Luke 15:12). This, in essence, was approval for the younger man to strike out on his own with his inheritance. The father loved him. He may have had an idea what the younger son would do with his share. The younger brother "gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country" (Luke 15:13).

He may have intended to do something honorable. However, he found, after arriving in the distant city in a far country, people did not just automatically gather round and make him welcome. He was in a predicament, no influence and no friends. True friends must be earned, others can be bought. The younger son found that flies are attracted by honey. He began to flash his inheritance around. The flies came. Not only did he not invest or use his money wisely, he wasted it on riotous living. (See Luke 15:13.) There were evil and drunken men and vile and adulterous women whose lust for his companionship was gone when the money was spent.

"And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land" (Luke 15:14). Conditions were bad, for not only had he used up all his inheritance, but even the average citizen waxed sore. He had been taught to work at home and apparently attempted to find work. He may have gone to many who had been his friends when he was "flush."

Wells of despair

The prodigal began to be in want and "went and joined himself to a [certain] citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine" (Luke 15:15). Now he

was not only destitute, but also forced to take the most humble kind of work. In such great poverty was he that "he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him" (Luke 15:16). The Savior is undoubtedly showing us the contrast and the depths of poverty and need to which he had sunk. He had indulged with all who came when he had money. Now not even one of his supposed friends so much as gave him a husk of corn so that he might feed at least as well as the swine.

There is a great purging and humbling that comes from the wells of despair. False pride is stripped away. The light of home flickers dimly through the dark miles of distance.

In the despair of this great, humbling experience, the young man "came to himself, [and] he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

"I will arise and go to my father, and [I] will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

"And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

"And he arose, and came to his father." (Luke 15:17-20.)

The son returns

It is possible that he rehearsed the speech over and over again. The father had been faithful and had worked hard all his life, a frugal man with character and integrity. Would he turn his son away? The younger son arose and came unto his father—undoubtedly a long journey.

Now, the older son may have noticed that since the younger brother's leaving, the father seemed always preoccupied. His father had little interest in the work. He would work a bit, then leave the field to

look down the road, each time returning with a faraway look in his eyes. Not only did the older brother have to do his own work and make up for the younger brother's absence, but he also had an additional work load which was previously done by the father. It also seemed that his father paid him little attention. Before the younger brother's leaving, there was always a word of praise for the way the older son worked. Now, there was little or no fun, no singing, no dancing, and precious little talk. Both the mother and father would sit at night and stare into the open fire. Days, weeks, even months passed thus.

The Master states: "But when [the younger son] was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

"And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

"But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet." (Luke 15:20-22.) The long journey probably had been made with little or no footwear, so the robe and shoes were necessities. But the father also had a ring brought for his son's hand. This was an unexpected gift, an expression of the gratitude of the father for the son's return.

"And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:

"For this my son was dead, and is alive again . . . was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

Thy brother is found

"Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing.

"And he called one of the ser-

vants, and asked what these things meant.

"And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

"[Now the elder brother] was angry, and would not go in." (Luke 15:23-28.)

The weeks and months of doing work which his brother had previously done, compensating for his father's inattention, receiving no compliments, and the father's preoccupation settled in on him. Perhaps he thought he should have taken his inheritance also. He would not have wasted it, but increased it. In spite of these thoughts, he had stayed at home and been a dutiful son. There was no music, no dancing for his righteous life; and yet when his younger brother returned, all of these things celebrated his coming.

Word came to the father that his son was outside and would not come in, "therefore came his father out, and intreated him" (Luke 15:28). The father must have realized the oversight; he may even have apologized. The great concern for his younger son was off his mind. He remembered he had not been as complimentary to the older son as usual. He recalled the older son's more intense work to compensate—no dancing, no music, no sumptuous feasts. Hearts were too heavy for those things.

"And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

"But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf" (Luke 15:29-30).

The father, with full understanding, said, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine"

(Luke 15:31). The father had planned all along to reward the older brother by giving him everything, but this was the first time this had been mentioned.

The father said, "It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found" (Luke 15:32).

Compassion and hope for all

A minister recently read the parable of the prodigal son over the radio. He concluded with: "The younger brother stood justified before the Lord due to his repentance, and the older brother fell under the greater condemnation." When I heard this, I wept and I thought, "Oh, you foolish man. You do not understand the Lord's teachings." The older son had been hurt and neglected and, true, had not exercised love and compassion to his wayward brother; but no thinking man could ever suppose that his transgression compared to the wasteful, extravagant, riotous living with harlots of the younger brother.

I think I have an understanding of what the Lord was trying to teach in this beautiful parable which extends hope to all. The Savior is standing with open arms to receive and forgive all who come unto him. His atoning and redemptive suffering in Gethsemane and on Golgotha's hill are the greatest acts of love ever performed.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox, in her poem entitled "Gethsemane," said:

All paths that have been, or should be
Pass somewhere through
Gethsemane.
All those who journey, soon or late,
Must pass within the garden's gate;
Must kneel alone in darkness there,

And battle with some fierce despair.

God pity those who cannot say:
"Not mine, but thine"; who only pray:

"Let this cup pass," and cannot see

The purpose in Gethsemane.

(James Dalton Morrison, ed.,
Masterpieces of Religious Verse,
New York and London: Harper
and Brothers, 1948, p. 184.)

Death, divorce, transgression, loneliness, and despair drive us to Gethsemane's garden. The Master's outstretched arms are open to receive all. The parable of the prodigal son is beautiful. It demonstrates charity. His love and compassion are eternally surrounding every soul who walks the earth. Every man, woman, or youth who returns home after a prodigal journey or an inactive period will find the Savior waiting with open arms. His atoning act will satisfy justice and extend mercy to all who will "come unto him." (See D&C 18:11.)

Come home

All who are active have someone close who may be inactive, indifferent, or clothed in transgression's soiled robes. They need the sweet, abiding love of a compassionate parent or loving brother or sister. Jesus will bless every member of the Church who will go out and bring someone back.

President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., said:

"Every human being is born with the light of faith kindled in his heart as on an altar, and that light burns and the Lord sees that it burns, during the period before we are accountable. When accountability comes then each of us determines how we shall feed and care for that light. If we shall live righteously that light will glow until it suffuses the whole body, giving to it health and

strength and spiritual light as well as bodily health. If we shall live unrighteously that light will dwindle and finally almost flicker out. Yet it is my hope and my belief that the Lord never permits the light of faith wholly to be extinguished in any human heart, however faint the light may glow. The Lord has provided that there shall still be there a spark which, with teaching, with the spirit of righteousness, with love, with tenderness, with example, with living the Gospel, shall brighten and glow again, however darkened the mind may have been. And if we shall fail so to reach those among us of our own whose faith has dwindled low, we shall fail in one of the main things which the Lord expects at our hands." (In Conference Report, Oct. 1936, p. 114.)

We are the keepers of the light. We invite all who are here to reach out and bless others who are not here. Listen to the voice of a prophet. President Spencer W. Kimball said: "We extend to every listener a cordial invitation to come to the watered garden, to the shade of pleasant trees, to unchangeable truth.

"Come with us to sureness, security, consistency. Here the cooling waters flow. The spring does not go dry.

"Come listen to a prophet's voice and hear the word of God." (In Conference Report, Apr. 1971, p. 11.)

And we invite all those who are not here to come home. We gaze steadily down the road, anxious for your return. We will run with open arms, and hearts filled with compassion. There are shoes for your feet, a robe, a ring for your hand, and a fatted calf. Come home and we will rejoice together, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder George P. Lee, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, following which the Tabernacle Choir will sing "For I Am Called by Thy Name."

Elder George P. Lee

Testimony of Christ as Redeemer

In our world of skepticism, confusion, and wickedness, to know the truth, to have a deep, humble, and solemn conviction that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, is a very precious thing. I have received the witness of the divinity of my Savior through the sweet influence and power of the Holy Ghost. I have received this witness in my own heart, which exceeds all other evidences. It bears record to me, to my very soul, of the existence of my Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

This silent, sweet conviction came early in my youth, while I was

on my knees in deep supplication in our humble hogan, and at other times, after reading the Book of Mormon while tending the sheep out in the hot desert on the reservation. Just as I know that my life did not begin when I was born, just as I know that it will not end when I die, likewise I know for certain that the life of Christ did not begin at Bethlehem; neither did it end on Calvary. Of himself, the Lord Jesus Christ said:

"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work . . . thou gavest me to do.

"And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the

glory . . . I had with thee before the world was." (John 17:4-5.)

I bear testimony that Jesus Christ was the first begotten Son of God in the Spirit. Like the Father himself, he was a personage of great power and intelligence in the universe. For ages before this world was created, he lived and ruled with his Father in Heaven in the premortal existence on a spiritual basis. The Lord Jesus had much to do with our growth and training prior to our birth on earth. Under the direction of the Father, he created this earth and accepted the appointment to come here and to be its redeemer. It was he who came forth in the Grand Council in Heaven and said: "Here am I, send me" (Abraham 3:27).

"Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever" (Moses 4:2).

Of his beloved Son, our Heavenly Father has declared, "And worlds without number have I created; and I also created them for mine own purpose; and by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten" (Moses 1:33).

Was known before His birth

There was no other good enough to pay the price of sin. He was the only one that could unlock heaven's gate and let us in (see *Hymns*, no. 201), because he was and is the only one suited, eligible, worthy, able, willing, perfect, and qualified for this great supreme sacrifice.

I bear testimony that our Redeemer's birth in Bethlehem was announced by a great concourse of angels and by an angel of great authority and power who had come from the presence of God, saying, "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings" (Luke 1:19).

Ancient prophets from the time of Adam down knew of his coming.

He was known by name, character, and his good works long before his birth. Before his birth, he was a personage of spirit. After his birth, a body of flesh and bones was added. After he conquered death and after resurrection, he became a person with an indestructible glorified body, inseparably joined together with his immortal spirit. His whole mortal life was devoted to bringing peace and blessings to others. He lived a perfect life in the midst of evil and wickedness.

His excruciating agony in the Garden of Gethsemane was not only physical and mental anguish, but also a spiritual agony that only a god was capable of experiencing. In that hour of tremendous anguish the Savior took upon himself the burden of the sins of the world from Adam down to the end of the world. Then they hanged him on the cross and crucified him in the most inhumane and cruel method of execution. A spike was driven through his hands and feet as was the method at that time. Of his suffering he said:

"For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

"But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I;

"Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit" (D&C 19:16-18).

In his infinite love and mercy he prayed for the very people that crucified him. He prayed and asked Heavenly Father to bless and forgive those that ridiculed, mocked, and insulted him. In pain and anguish he cried, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

Resurrected and glorified

I bear testimony that this same crucified Christ arose on the third

day from the tomb, after having met and mingled with others in the spirit world, his spirit was reunited with his body. After being among men on earth, he ascended to his Heavenly Father as a resurrected and glorified being. An angel, speaking of Jesus, said:

"He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

"And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him." (Matthew 28:6-7.)

For thousands of years from the time of Adam up to Christ's crucifixion, millions of people had entered the dark grave and suffered death and the end of life. For thousands of years, no one had ever returned. When our Redeemer arose from the tomb with his resurrected and immortal body, he robbed death of its sting and the grave of its victory. (See 1 Corinthians 15:55; Mosiah 16:7-8; Mormon 7:8.) Man was freed from sin's dark prison. Death was conquered; Christ won the victory. (See Mosiah 15:8; Mormon 7:5; Alma 27:28.) He had opened heaven's gate.

Immediately following his resurrection many others were resurrected. In Matthew we read:

"And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,

"And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many" (Matthew 27:52-53).

Thus, our risen Lord removed the last barrier in our march toward perfection and eternal life. Just as it is said of him "He is not here: . . . he is risen" (Matthew 28:6), so it will be for each of us, because the empty tomb of the Lord Jesus is not only a symbol but also a guarantee of our own resurrection and immortality. It would be a serious mistake

and a tragedy for anyone to assume that Jesus was just a great teacher and just a great humanitarian. Because of him, life continues throughout eternity. There is no other name under heaven whereby man will be saved and exalted. (See Acts 4:12; 2 Nephi 25:20.)

I bear testimony that our resurrected Lord, clothed in glory, personally manifested himself to the Nephites and the Lamanites in ancient America as they were gathered around their temple in the land Bountiful. God our Eternal Father said unto them:

"Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name—hear ye him" (3 Nephi 11:7).

They saw the Lord Jesus Christ, clothed in a white robe, coming down out of heaven; and he descended until he stood in their midst. He said unto them:

"Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world.

"And behold, I am the light and the life of the world; and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and . . . glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world." (3 Nephi 11:10-11.)

The multitude fell at his feet and worshiped him. They then arose and came to him at his invitation to see and feel the prints of the nails in his hands and feet. They also saw and felt the spear wound in his side, and they did fall at his feet, overwhelmed and overjoyed. Their own eyes and hands were witnesses. Words cannot describe their heartfelt joy and gratitude. It was a glorious manifestation and spiritual feast for all.

I bear testimony that this, the last great dispensation of the fulness of times, was ushered in by the voice of God our Eternal Father, saying: "*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*" (Joseph Smith—History 1:17.)

The Father and the Son appear

In the spring of 1820, God our Eternal Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, revealed themselves to the boy-prophet Joseph Smith. The darkness of the long night of the apostasy was lifted. This glorious manifestation illuminated the world. Other divine visitations by heavenly messengers and personages were made to the Prophet Joseph Smith. Many revelations were given to him. The giver of these revelations was none other than our risen Lord, Jesus Christ. The gospel was restored with all of its former blessings, keys, rights, privileges, and holy priesthood with authority to minister in the name of God. The Church, bearing his name and founded upon the rock of revelation, was restored.

Seek perfection for ourselves and others

The gospel principles and laws that the Lord restored in our day are not that much different from those that he revealed in the times past. Latter-day Saints are expected, as were the Saints in the past, to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. The Savior's divine formula for success and perfection has always been the same: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

The Lord Jesus wants us to build the necessary character, righteousness, industry, and godliness into our lives first. Then we are to do the same for others. That is, to assist him in teaching, baptizing, and perfecting individuals and families throughout the world.

Even in our own day and age we can perfect ourselves in many areas. For example, we can become perfect in abstaining from the use of coffee, tea, tobacco, and liquor. We can become perfect in the paying of our tithing. We can become perfect

in our sacrament meeting attendance. We can become perfect in honesty, in morality, in charity, in punctuality, in dependability, and in many other virtues. If we can live one gospel principle perfectly today, we can live two principles perfectly tomorrow. Perfection in one thing can act as a stepping-stone to perfection in something else.

The Second Coming

I bear testimony that our risen Lord and Redeemer will return to earth a second time in his resurrected, immortal body of flesh and bones, and in celestial glory and power. When he came the first time he was misunderstood, condemned, and ridiculed and was a man acquainted with much grief. (See Isaiah 53:3.) When he came the first time, he atoned for the sins of the world. But when he comes the second time he will come as a triumphant King of Kings and a glorious Lord of Lords. (See Revelation 17:14.) He will stand in judgment of sinners who have not repented. He will come as the Almighty God to cleanse the earth and to inaugurate his glorious millennial reign. (Articles of Faith 1:10). The Lord Jesus and the resurrected Saints will reign upon the earth during the thousand years of millennium. (See D&C 29:11.) Satan will be tied and will have no power to tempt any man (See D&C 43:31.) Then after the end of the thousand years, Satan will be loosed again for a little season, and then will come the end of the earth. Satan and his forces will be banished forever and ever. Every person will be resurrected and stand before God to be judged. Our Lord, Jesus Christ, will be crowned with the crown of his glory to reign forever and ever. (See D&C 76:108.) Those that have endured until the end and have achieved eternal life will abide with him and Heavenly Father forever and ever in the celestial kingdom.

The promised Messiah

I testify that he is the creator of "all things bright and beautiful, All creatures great and small" (Cecil Frances Alexander, in *Masterpieces of Religious Verse*, ed. James Dalton Morrison, New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1948, p. 17). He is the master over ocean, earth, and skies. He is the promised Messiah. He is the victor over death and the grave. He is the Prince of Peace. (See Isaiah 9:6.) He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. (See Hebrews 13:8.) Everlasting is his name. Eternal is his name. He is Jesus the Christ. I so testify, in his holy name, amen.

The Choir sang "For I Am Called by Thy Name."

President Hinckley

That moving testimony on the Savior of the world was given by Elder George P. Lee, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Choir has just sung "For I Am Called by Thy Name."

We should like to express, on behalf of all who have listened to the singing during sessions of this general conference, appreciation and our sincere gratitude to the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth Chorus and to their conductors and accompanists.

We appreciate the attention given by local and national press representatives of radio and television in reporting the sessions of this conference.

We thank our city officials for the cooperation given us, the Relief Society and Church health unit nurses who have been on hand to render

service throughout the conference, and the ushers and interpreters.

We express appreciation to the owners and managers of the many radio and television stations and cable systems who have given public service time to carry sessions of this conference in many countries.

And to the many who have labored long and hard under difficult circumstances in setting in place the satellite transmission service which the Church is inaugurating. To all of these our very deep appreciation and gratitude and to each of you for your presence with us.

We were to have heard at this time from Elder LeGrand Richards. He is not able to be with us. We talked with him on the telephone just prior to this meeting. He had hoped that he might be here to give, as it were, his valedictory testimony of this great and sacred work, which had been so much a part of his life during the ninety-six years that he has lived.

As most of you know, he recently underwent very serious surgery which has had a traumatic effect upon his health. I am sure that each of you here today is disappointed and will miss his great voice as without hesitation he spoke out in defense of the restored gospel, and in testimony of Him who was the Restorer.

The Brethren have suggested that before President Tanner speaks to us, I perhaps should say a few words of summary. Then President N. Eldon Tanner, First Counselor in the First Presidency, will speak, after which the Choir will sing "Come, Follow Me."

The benediction will then be offered by Elder Angel Abrea, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and the conference will stand adjourned for six months.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Study conference talks

We have had a wonderful time since early yesterday morning when President Romney spoke to us on self-reliance in the welfare meeting. It was a timely message, and in the environment in which we live today, we all should be looking to greater self-sufficiency, a greater spirit of self-reliance, a greater desire to take care of ourselves and our own. His talk, along with others given at that session, should be read and reread for our blessing and benefit.

Then when we opened the conference yesterday morning, we had the marvelous and wonderful experience of hearing Brother Haycock read in behalf of President Spencer W. Kimball a stirring message. It touched our hearts. We were blessed by reason of it. And I should like to suggest that at the earliest opportunity—it will be published in the *Ensign*—all of us should read that talk. We have sung here this afternoon a hymn which is peculiar to this Church: "We thank thee, O God, for a prophet To guide us in these latter days" (*Hymns*, no. 196). Do we mean it? If so, we should read and hearken to his words. God help us to be obedient to the counsel which comes through his prophet.

And then during the subsequent sessions, we have been taught, we have been encouraged, we have been fortified in our faith, we have been strengthened in our convictions, we have gained a greater appreciation of this work and a more certain knowledge of Him who stands at its head.

I think that among all of the many wonderful and significant things which the Prophet Joseph Smith said, there are few that are of greater import than his declaration to a traveler who had asked how he governed so heterogeneous a people. "I teach them correct principles," he said, "and they govern themselves."

(See George Q. Cannon, *Life of Joseph Smith the Prophet*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1958, p. 529.) My brethren and sisters, having been taught correct principles, let us go from this conference with a determination to govern ourselves in accordance with these principles.

Use self-discipline to resist evils

There is so much of evil in the world, and so great a need for good to overcome it. Anyone who has read a newspaper or listened to a news broadcast during the past few days could not help being moved by the story of what must have been the work of a depraved individual in introducing a deadly poison in place of a beneficent medication. It is an indication of the depths to which men may sink, and of the great need in this world to overcome evil with good. We ought to do better; we ought to become as leaven; we ought to become as a light from which goodness and truth and beauty and virtue could spread across the world.

There are those among us who would succumb to evil things and to the wiles of the adversary. I would just like to say a word about pornography. It is a growing, vile, and evil thing. It is on our motion picture screens, it comes into the homes of the people on television receivers, it is on newsstands, it reaches out in other ways to entrap and beguile and destroy those who are enticed to partake of it. I am satisfied, my brethren and sisters, that no Latter-day Saint can with impunity afford to witness or read or partake of this growing evil in any way. God help us and bless us with the self-discipline to resist and abstain and flee from, if necessary, this pernicious and growing thing which would destroy us.

We have been encouraged to strengthen our homes, to fortify the

Spirit of the Lord in those homes, to cultivate appreciation and respect and affection one for another. It is a terrible thing that we hear occasionally of child abuse. This is a growing evil across the world. I opened the Doctrine and Covenants the other day while thinking of this, and read these words of the Lord given through the Prophet Joseph Smith who was then in the misery and loneliness of Liberty Jail. He spoke out concerning those who should raise their hands against the Church, but in a larger sense he spoke out against those who would abuse children. He said, "Wo unto them; because they have offended my little ones they shall be severed from the ordinances of mine house."

"Their basket shall not be full, their houses and their barns shall perish, and they themselves shall be despised by those that flattered them." (D&C 121:19-20.) What a statement that is, concerning those who would offend little children!

I feel likewise that it ill becomes any man who holds the priesthood of God to abuse his wife in any way, to demean or injure or take undue advantage of the woman who is the mother of his children, the companion of his life, and his companion for eternity if he has received that greater blessing. Let us deal in kindness and with appreciation with those for whom the Lord will hold us accountable. I never get over the depth of meaning of the words President McKay often quoted, "The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother" (Quoted in *Richard Evans' Quote Book*, Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1971, p. 11).

Counsel on politics

Now a word on politics. This is an election year, and there are many strong and strident voices incident to political campaigning. It's a whole-

some and wonderful system that we have under which people are free to express themselves in electing those who shall represent them in the councils of government. I would hope that those concerned would address themselves to issues and not to personalities. The issues ought to be discussed freely, openly, candidly, and forcefully. But, I repeat, I would hope that there would be an avoidance of demeaning personalities. Said Shakespeare in *Othello, the Moor of Venice*:

Who steals my purse steals
trash. . . .
But he that filches from me my
good name
Robs me of that which not
enriches him
And makes me poor indeed.

(Act 3, sc. 3, lines 157-61.)

Reach out with love

Let us reach out with love and kindness to those who would revile against us—and there are some, as Elder Ashton has indicated. I think frequently of the words of Edwin Markham as he put them in that little verse:

He drew a circle that shut me
out—
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But Love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in!

(In Hazel Fellman, ed., *The Best Loved Poems of the American People*, Garden City, N.Y.: Garden City Publishing Co., 1936, p. 67.)

In the spirit of the Christ who advised us to turn the other cheek, let us try to overcome evil with good.

Spread the gospel graciously

We live in a great and challenging day. General Omar

Bradley is quoted as having said, "We have grasped the mystery of the atom and rejected the Sermon on the Mount. . . . Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants. We know more about war than we know about peace, more about killing than we know about living." (As quoted in Louis Fischer, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1950, p. 349.)

We have so much to do in this world to spread the influence of this gospel. Let us go forth on our assigned mission. We feel the compulsion of the Lord's mandate to teach the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. (See D&C 133:37.) We hope that in so doing we shall not offend, but rather that we shall do so with graciousness and in that spirit of love which was of the very essence of him of whom we testify.

Continue in well-doing

We shall continue the great work of strengthening our people wherever they may be found in the

nations of the earth. We shall give encouragement to those who are weak in the faith. We shall try to teach them by example and precept. We shall work together in the spirit of charity and love one for another. We shall go on building houses of worship across the world, where our people may gather together and strengthen one another as they unitedly worship the Lord.

We shall continue the great work that goes on in our temples, an unmatched work of love reaching out even to those who have gone beyond the veil of death. Can there be a greater labor of love than this? It comes more nearly of partaking of the spirit of the Lord himself, who gave his life as a vicarious sacrifice for all of us, than any other work of which I know. It is done in the name of him whose salvation is universal.

God bless all of us to open our eyes and to unstop our ears, to look, to listen, to learn, and to come to an understanding and appreciation of the great, eternal truths of which we bear witness, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Gratitude for prayer

My brothers and sisters, this has been a grand day for me, to sit here and listen to the conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in our famous tabernacle. The prayer offered by Brother Russell Ballard has been answered, I am sure, during this conference.

Speaking of prayer, it is so important that we know to whom we are praying and that our prayers will be answered in our best interests. As we pray to the Lord, let us remember that it was prayer that brought this church to the earth, when Joseph Smith, as a boy, read:

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5).

I wonder if we realize just what a blessing it is to have our prayers answered, and to be able to ask for what we need.

Strive to follow teachings

And then that beautiful speech of President Kimball's that Arthur [Haycock] read to us in the beginning session: it in itself gave us enough to think about as we strive to follow the teachings of the Lord and Savior

while we sojourn here upon the earth. It has been a great joy for me to be associated with President Kimball as long as I have, to learn from him and to feel the influence of his spirit.

As we hear this beautiful choir we should realize how fortunate we are to have a choir that is known all over the world for good, and which has sung to so many congregations.

It has been great to mingle with you brethren and sisters and to be here and partake of the Spirit with you today. As we leave this session, I hope and pray that each of us will remember the things we have heard and realize that they can help us do better. As we leave this conference, let us go forward and do the things we have been counseled to do in the sermons in this great hall.

Appreciation for blessings

I want to thank the Lord per-

sonally for all the blessings he has bestowed upon me and my family, and on us as a church. There is no other organization in the world that can offer the sermons we have heard here today. They are the best, and as well done as any I can imagine.

I wish to thank the Lord that we can participate in this kind of service, and go away from here determined to improve our lives and to be an influence for good in the world. And I bear testimony that this is the work of the Lord. I know it is true, and if we will live according to its teachings we will have greater joy than we will find in any other way.

May the Lord bless us to this end, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "Come, Follow Me."

Elder Angel Abrea offered the benediction.

GENERAL WELFARE SESSION SATURDAY MORNING

A general welfare services session was held in connection with general conference on Saturday, October 2, 1982, at 7:00 A.M. In attendance at this meeting were General Authorities, the general Relief Society presidency, Regional Representatives, stake presidencies, high councilors involved in welfare work, bishoprics, stake and ward Relief Society presidencies, and others responsible for operating welfare production projects.

President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

President Romney opened the meeting with the following remarks:

President Marion G. Romney

Brothers and sisters, we welcome you to this general welfare services meeting.

President Kimball asked me to extend his love to you, and to reaffirm his commitment to the welfare services program and to welfare principles. It is expected that he will be in attendance at the first general session of conference at ten o'clock this morning.

As usual we urge you to take notes during this session so you can later instruct your co-workers about the matters to be discussed at this meeting.

The music for this session will be under the direction of Jerold Ottley with Clay Christiansen at the organ. Brother Christiansen was recently appointed as a Tabernacle organist and is playing at a general conference for the first time.

We shall begin this meeting by singing "Redeemer of Israel." The invocation will be offered by Elder Carlos E. Asay, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The congregation sang "Redeemer of Israel."

The invocation was given by Elder Carlos E. Asay.

President Romney

Bishop Victor L. Brown, Presiding Bishop, will be our first speaker. He will be followed by Sister Barbara B. Smith, General President of the Relief Society.

Bishop Victor L. Brown

Preparation for tomorrow

It has been suggested that I address the subject "Meeting the Challenges of Today—the Best Preparation for Tomorrow." As I have pondered this subject, I have concluded that if we meet today's problems with adequate preparation, there will be no need for panic preparation tomorrow.

The parable of the ten virgins, as recorded in Matthew, emphasizes this point:

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

"And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

"They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:

"But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

"While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

"And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

"Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

"And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

"But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

"And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

"Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

"But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

"Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." (Matthew 25:1-13.)

As we contemplate the lessons of this parable, we realize that all ten virgins had oil in their lamps. Five were wise and kept the oil replenished so they would always have sufficient. The other five were foolish and shortsighted. Consequently, they were found wanting when the bridegroom came.

We also learn from the parable that preparation necessary to help them meet the immediate circumstances was a simple, everyday task. The arrival of the bridegroom did not require unusual or elaborate preparation. Our preparation should be

deliberate and structured to meet today's problems. We should prepare ourselves one step at a time as the Lord so inspires us.

Live providently and righteously

President David O. McKay used to tell a story about a railroad engineer. Let me share it with you as recorded by President Harold B. Lee:

"The engineer pulled his train into a station one dark night, and a timid passenger inquired of the engineer if he wasn't frightened to pull his train out in the dark with 400 or 500 passengers' lives at stake. The engineer said, pointing up to the bright headlight, 'I want to tell you one thing: when I pull out of this station I won't be running in darkness one foot of the way. You see that light a thousand yards ahead? I run my engine just to the edge of the light, and when I get there it will still be on a thousand yards ahead.' Having said that, President McKay added: 'I want to tell you something. Through all this dark night of uncertainty, I want to tell you that this Welfare Program will not be running in the dark one foot of the way. You remember it. We can only see the next October as the first circle of light. We have told you what to do six months from now. By the time we get there the light will be on ahead of us, but every step of the way that light will be there. You teach your people to follow the light and they will be safe on Zion's hill when the destructive forces come in the world.' " (Welfare Agricultural Meeting, 5 Apr. 1969.)

If we will just do as the Brethren have counseled and live each day as it comes, providently and righteously, there will be no need for drastic adjustments in preparation to meet future challenges.

A troubled world

I fear that many think the wel-

fare services program was designed primarily for doomsday. This is not true. The principles of the welfare services program are designed to help us live providently each day and to cope successfully with serious problems as they come into our lives.

Just as the virgins did not know that the bridegroom would come in the night when their lamps would be needed, we do not know when serious problems such as illness or unemployment will come into our lives.

It would seem from almost everything we read and hear in the news media today that doomsday has arrived. For instance, in one local daily newspaper, over two-thirds of the headlines and stories exposed problems of the world such as murders, wars, bankruptcies, unemployment, and so on, leaving very little room for stories with a positive impact. One might be persuaded that conditions are impossible.

It is true that we live in a troubled world. There are many unemployed. Bankruptcies of individuals, of corporations, and of nations are alarming. Wars and rumors of wars are all about us. (See D&C 45:26.) Man's inhumanity to man is shocking. Moral values have deteriorated to the level of Sodom and Gomorrah. The list is long.

Counsel on problem areas

Many of these problems exist today because we did not prepare yesterday. These problems are not insurmountable to those who are prepared. Neither do they come as a surprise to those who have been listening. Here are just a few of the areas upon which we have received counsel:

In 1935, President George Albert Smith said, "This very day upon which we meet here to worship [the Sabbath] has become the play-day of this great nation—the day set

apart by thousands to violate the commandment that God gave long, long ago, and I am persuaded that much of the sorrow and distress that is afflicting and will continue to afflict mankind is traceable to the fact that they have ignored his admonition to keep the Sabbath day holy" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1935, p. 120).

In 1937, President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., said, "Let us avoid debt as we would avoid a plague; where we are now in debt let us get out of debt" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1937, p. 26).

In 1970, President Harold B. Lee said, "For thirty years the leaders of this church have been telling us to store food and to prepare for a rainy day. We have listened, many have paid no attention, and now suddenly disaster begins to strike and some of those who have been slothful are running to the banks and taking out their savings, and buying . . . foodstuffs." (Welfare Agricultural Meeting, 4 Apr. 1970.)

And, finally, in 1974 President Spencer W. Kimball said, "The earth cannot justify nor continue its life without marriage and the family. Sex without marriage, for all people, young or older, is an abomination to the Lord, and it is most unfortunate that many people have blinded their eyes to these great truths.

"Husbands and wives should love and cherish their spouses. They must not break up their homes with divorce, and especially through infidelity and immorality." (In Conference Report, Oct. 1974, p. 9.)

How many of today's problems could have been avoided or coped with more effectively if we had followed the counsel given in just these few examples?

Education and excellence

Let us now turn to an example of the things we might do to prepare for today's and tomorrow's prob-

lems. I would like to speak specifically to parents to stress the responsibility they have to teach their children how to obtain an adequate education.

The Lord is very clear in his instructions:

"And again, inasmuch as parents have children in Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized, that teach them not to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents. . . .

"And they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord." (D&C 68:25, 28.)

Walking uprightly before the Lord includes becoming a responsible individual in all aspects of life. As children attend school, particularly high school, they should be encouraged to take basic courses which may be more demanding than others but which will better prepare them for possible further schooling or for employment.

At whatever level our children complete their formal schooling, they should have learned how important excellence is in all they do. There is always room at the top in any enterprise, and it is always crowded at the bottom. It doesn't matter what the field of endeavor—plumber, doctor, teacher, lawyer, farmer, carpenter, whatever—if our children learn early in their lives that they should do their very best, they will be eminently better prepared for the responsibilities of life.

Continue to learn

We should teach our children the importance of schooling as a help in discovering how to think and to learn. They need to know, and we need to be reminded, that schooling is merely the formal part of educa-

tion. Education should never stop, but should be a continuing activity throughout life.

The world-renowned educator Mortimer Adler once indicated in an interview that his education had begun just twenty-five years earlier. The interviewer in some surprise said, "But you are famous for the many years you were associated with the University of Chicago."

Mr. Adler's response was, "Those years I was obtaining my schooling. It was only after I had finished my formal schooling that my education began."

Education is a basic tool

In the eighty-eighth section of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord instructs us:

"And I give unto you a commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom.

"Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you, that you may be instructed more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God, that are expedient for you to understand;

"Of things both in heaven and in earth, and under the earth; things which have been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home, things which are abroad; the wars and the perplexities of the nations, and the judgments which are on the land; and a knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms—

"That ye may be prepared in all things when I shall send you again to magnify the calling whereunto I have called you, and the mission with which I have commissioned you. . . .

"And as all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom;

seek learning, even by study and also by faith." (D&C 88:77-80, 118.)

If we and our children are to be responsible individuals and properly take care of our own, we must prepare ourselves to do so. Education is one of the elementary and basic tools in this preparation.

Prepare for tomorrow today

Notice that this example of education follows the same systematic course as other preparation. Second grade follows first grade, third grade follows second grade, and so on, until graduation from high school occurs and college or vocational training is finished. This takes us back to the basic premise that adequate preparation for today's problems is the best preparation for the future.

Parents should also teach their children to use financial resources wisely, to stay out of debt, to take pride in their own appearance and in the appearance of their surroundings, to be dependable, to give a full day's work for a full day's pay, and many other principles of welfare services. In none of these principles is there a hint of a "doomsday" philosophy.

Also prepare spiritually

As important as human physical needs are, the spiritual ones are much more so. It goes without saying that to sustain life we must have food, shelter, clothing, and the other necessities. However, we could have all of these in abundance and still be lacking in those things that will sustain eternal life. The Savior taught this in many ways, one of which is the parable of the rich man.

"And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

"And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

"And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

"And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

"But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou has provided?

"So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." (Luke 12:16-21.)

In April conference fourteen years ago, President David O. McKay said, "With all my soul, I plead with members of the church, and with people everywhere, to think more about the gospel; more about the development of the spirit within; to devote more time to the real things of life, and less time to those things which will perish" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1968, p. 144).

Spiritual preparedness follows the same steady course we have been alluding to: we can only build tomorrow on that which we attain today. Yet we need not wait until tomorrow to enjoy the fruits of our current spiritual development. If we consistently follow the teachings of the Savior, we need not walk in darkness; rather, we will enjoy the light of life. (See John 8:12.)

As parents, we must teach and practice both physical and spiritual preparedness. Let us make every effort to avoid the remorse which comes from not following the counsel of the Lord and his anointed. Let us follow the admonition and example of President Kimball when he says, "Do it."

As the Lord has said, "Not

every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

Follow counsel and obtain peace

Let us not look back to this day twenty or thirty years from now and ask, "How many of today's problems could have been avoided if we had only followed the counsel given in the 1980s?" Let us instead follow the Brethren and apply welfare services principles to today's problems, thereby bringing about our preparation for tomorrow. By so doing, we can move forward with happiness, cheerfulness, and confidence.

Jesus said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. . . .

"These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (John 14:23, 25-27.)

This is the peace that can give each of us an inner tranquility when all about us is confusion. It is a peace that transcends all material things. That we might meet today's challenges, thereby moving forward with confidence into tomorrow, is my humble prayer, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

Sister Barbara B. Smith

Light of the gospel

My beloved brethren and sisters, "In the beginning was the Word" (John 1:1)—or, in the words of the Joseph Smith translation, "In the beginning was the gospel preached through the Son. And the gospel was the word." (JST John 1:1.) And further, "In [the Son] was the gospel, and the gospel was the life, and the life was the light of men" (JST John 1:4).

Sadly, not all men and women enjoy the light that was intended for them. Not all who have the gospel know how to bring its radiance into their lives.

One woman felt she had little or no light in her life. Her husband spent three days of each week traveling out of town because of his work. This left her home alone to manage their house and two small children. She was just nineteen when they were married. She had almost no experience in caring for young children, and certainly felt no confidence in handling her own. She often found their demands and the pressing household duties overwhelming. In her frustration, she grew increasingly harsh with them until her abusive behavior became frightening, even to herself. Feeling alone, ashamed, and inadequate, she was often in the depths of despair. What light did the gospel offer to her?

She and her husband considered themselves good members of the Church. But what difference did that make when the children were crying, the laundry piled higher and higher, the letter from her mother remained unanswered, and the dress she was to make this week for her husband's company party lay unfinished on the sewing machine? All these frustrations spoke so loudly the discouragement of the present. They

made the blessings of the gospel seem very far away.

Love—more than a concept

Fortunately, there were those who helped her learn to apply the principles of the gospel in solving many of her problems. Her visiting teachers, responding to her anxiety over her children, brought a special toy for each child. They had carefully selected playthings that an adult could use with a child in a delightful but problem-solving way. They took time to show the mother how to relate to her children through activity. She was surprised to find how happy and responsive the children were. They began to look forward to a playtime association with their mother. She realized that she was providing for their needs through play, and that they were becoming more relaxed with her.

Because of the relationship they were establishing through their activities together, the children were more willing to do as their mother asked—to pick up their clothes, put their toys away, and take their naps. This, in turn, helped her have more time to organize her other responsibilities. She learned to be considerate of her children and sensitive to their concerns. She has continued giving the children this special attention each day. Love in this home is now more than a concept; it is the way they respond to each other's needs.

Actions and attitudes

The word of the gospel as it is preached and learned is, for each of us, the beginning. "Knowing" alone is not always sufficient to bring the promised light. We have to live by every word. We speak often in our worldwide Church about translation.

Computers are being employed to assist, and hundreds of language specialists are engaged in this important work. But the translation for which we each bear personal responsibility is converting the words of the gospel into actions, attitudes, and habits.

The gospel principle of love suggests action in the injunction to "love one another" (John 13:34). When these words are translated into a determined effort to change a behavior that brings hurt or embarrassment or sorrow to one who loves you, it becomes a key to solving a family problem. These few lines, written by a wife to her husband, underscore the need to make a principle more than a word:

"Valentine's Day 1951

"Dear Bill,

"I feel I love you more today than I have in all our twenty-three years together. Although you have always told me of your affection, nothing has so convinced me that you really care as your recent preparation to take our family to the temple.

"In spite of the exciting things we had done together, there has always been, for me, a sadness, a kind of lingering unhappiness, because we weren't really one. I am filled now with great expectation and joy when I think of the closeness we can have in studying the gospel together, in sharing the same friends, and, above all, the eternities that are now possible for us with our children and their children and theirs.

"My admiration for you has grown as I have seen you succeed in the difficult struggle to give up enslaving habits that had become so much a part of you.

"Your sons, your daughters, and I are not only extremely proud, but deeply grateful too.

"Love,
"Ellen"

Serve one another

Not all marital unhappiness stems from obvious bad habits. Some problems develop silently, almost imperceptibly, as we are involved in taxing schedules and multiple demands. Consider the couple who had spent all their married years in devotion to Church and children. The children were now grown and had left home; church callings were less demanding; and unexpectedly, they who had spent years helping others resolve difficulties, faced problems of their own. Preoccupied with serving their children, they had forgotten to serve each other. Quick to lavish affection on those about them, they had neglected sharing simple expressions of love and concern with one another. Now, in the time when they might enjoy the richness of their experiences together, they found their relationship strained. Each felt a sense of falling short which easily led to criticism and complaint. Their years of church activity, however, had taught them a better way. They had experienced the light of the gospel and longed for it now.

They found that by taking a fresh view of gospel principles, this time as a means of solving their own problems, they could relearn how to serve one another. They realized that expressing their affection in those mellowing years together brought a sweetness and satisfaction that was especially rewarding. They selected some projects on which they worked together around their home; they found meaningful church activity, prepared family records and histories, and learned how to preserve other valuable documents. Already, in the gospel, they had the principles they needed, and found them more than adequate as they brought them to bear on their own problems.

Solve problems with the materials at hand

G. K. Chesterton in an essay entitled "A Piece of Chalk" wrote of going into the countryside in the south of England to draw with his colored chalks—only to find, ruefully, that he was missing the color white. Being too far from a store to remedy the situation, he felt his expedition ruined until he suddenly realized that the rock upon which he sat was, in fact, white chalk. (In Robert K. Thomas, ed., *The Joy of Reading*, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1978, 35–40.)

There, in a Sussex meadow, he was "sitting on an immense warehouse of white chalk." For him to think he had no chalk was like a chemist in the middle of the ocean looking for salt water to perform experiments or someone in the vast Sahara searching for sand to fill an hour glass. Many times the solutions to our problems await only our discovery that we already have the key to the answer. The need is for us to learn to use it effectively.

We see this continually in people's lives. One example was the woman who had little money to spend but wanted to share a Christmas treat with her neighbors. She didn't feel that she could buy even inexpensive containers, but she was quite self-reliant. With what she had on hand, she made charming remembrances using brown lunch-size paper bags decorated with a white paper roof, a door and windows, and the words "Merry Christmas, Neighbor!" These brown-bag houses, filled with her home-dried apple slices, were welcome gifts.

This same kind of ingenuity in working out problems with what one already has can be seen in the attractive jackets a mother made for her children out of the boys' old jeans. In each case, work, service, love, and self-reliance were the keys

that opened the way for solving problems and fulfilling needs.

Strength of family and of character

Many problems are severe and debilitating. They cause fear and guilt and heartache. Often, the difference in people's finding their way or discovering solutions is the kindly, understanding friendship we can provide for them in our priesthood and Relief Society meetings or other Church settings. Many times it is the sympathetic arm around the shoulder and the encouraging smile that give to the distressed hope and to the downtrodden courage to try again. We can help them know that others wrestle with problems, too; but strength of family and of character, developed through living gospel principles, has enabled them to rise above life's difficulties.

One such family was left by the father when the youngest child was four months old. It was a traumatic time with a difficult divorce, but the courageous mother was full of faith and determined that she would do everything she could to succeed as a single parent.

She found, as many do, that the gospel, when translated into action, not only provides a key to solving many welfare problems, but it can also prevent them. Difficulties that could lead to dependency can be resolved and bring, instead, strength and happiness.

This mother gathered her children about her and explained their situation. There were back payments due on the house, current bills of every sort, and no income. They *could* turn to others for help; but if they were willing to work together as a family, she thought they could keep their house and make it, once more, a happy home. They were willing. Every child who was old enough found a way to help earn

some money. They cut lawns, delivered papers, tended babies, collected aluminum cans, did housework. One of the older children took the responsibility for the gas bill, another for the lights; the mother put her earnings toward the house payments. They limited other spending to bare necessities.

In time, the house payments were caught up. They were able to meet their other obligations and actually invest in some small, inexpensive properties they could fix up to generate income. This enabled the mother to be at home. With these ends achieved, the children no longer needed to contribute all their earnings to the family's physical requirements. With freedom from financial threat, the mother now suggested to her children that if they wanted to continue to work they could attend college, go on missions, and even travel and see the world together. The children did continue to earn and save their money. They learned the value of work and of family, and they have accompanied their mother to places others only dream of.

All this has been done while fulfilling their Church obligations. They are quick to testify that the greatest reward they have received from the experiences of the past few years has been their spiritual growth. Putting such principles as *love, work, service, self-reliance, and consecration* into practice has brought to this family the dignity of accomplishment, a unity of purpose, and a closeness to one another and to the Lord that is immediately apparent when one is in their company.

Living gospel principles

Life does present problems, and although the gospel provides a means for finding answers, the resolutions do not always come quickly. There are, however, desirable strengths we

develop by striving against difficulties. It is often when struggling to the very extremity of our power that we come to know that our Father in Heaven is close.

Sariah, the wife of Lehi, had the wrenching experience of leaving their home and their possessions to travel in the wilderness. We are not told of the trials she may have experienced; but going on foot, living in tents, and cooking over an open fire could have been devastating after their comfortable life in Jerusalem. We do read of her anguished waiting when she feared her beloved sons had perished in their return to obtain the plates. (See 1 Nephi 5:2.) But in spite of troubles, she did love and serve her family. With the return of her sons, she knew of a certainty that the Lord had commanded her husband to flee into the wilderness, and in their safe return she found the assurance that the Lord was with them. (See 1 Nephi 5:8.) Their circumstances did not change; they still slept in tents. But she had joy and comfort in the knowledge that the Lord was guiding them. In that light she could carry on and meet further difficulties as they came.

For each of us, whatever our knowledge of the gospel, can continue to learn. But learning is just the beginning. The fulness of blessings comes as we adopt the principles and live our lives by them. When we make them our way, when we live the principles, we are promised that they will be a light unto us. As we come to know that light, it will lead us through the midst of darkness, and as we begin to bring that light into our homes, it can become a beacon to our children, and to their children, and to theirs.

May we press on, with a perfect brightness of hope, overcome our problems, and enjoy the love of God and of all men, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

President Dean Jarman, president of the Salt Lake University Sec-

ond Stake and father of ten children, will now speak to us about the blessings of family work projects.

President Dean Jarman

Work—a spiritual principle

The blessings that come from family work projects are both temporal and spiritual. The commandments given to Adam were spiritual, for the the Lord himself said that he never gave to Adam a temporal commandment. (See D&C 29:35.) Work, then, as instituted in the beginning of this earth, was a spiritual principle.

There are several influences in my life that have instilled in me a desire to teach our children to work. The first are experiences I enjoyed as a child growing up in the home of wise and wonderful parents. Our first family work project began when I was around nine years old. One night dad came home with a shoe-shining kit that had an adaptable shoe tree that fastened to the wall. He encouraged my brother and me to be industrious and earn some money by charging fifteen cents for every pair of shoes we shined. Of course, my parents' shoes were always well shined, but our big opportunities came when my parents entertained. I would mingle among the guests and ask if any would like to have their shoes shined. Many a person was seen in our home sitting or visiting in his stocking feet.

A few years passed, and dad came home one night with another idea. "Why don't you boys sell Christmas wreaths?" he said. And thus we were off on another venture. We would go from door to door taking orders, and then we purchased

the wreaths from a wholesaler for our customers. For the next several years mom and dad spent many hours helping us in this project.

Philosophy of work

During my college years I began to realize that there were more values to work than simply the money one earns. Three individuals made statements that have left indelible impressions upon my mind. The first statement came while I was attending the University of Utah. The director of the Institute of Religion, Lowell L. Bennion, shared with me a philosophy of raising children. He grew a large vegetable garden, and when asked what he was growing, his reply was not the usual tomatoes, corn, or carrots, but simply, "boys."

The second statement came from a student at BYU when he offered an explanation as to why he alone among his high school friends had remained active in the Church. He said it was because of a cow. He went on to explain that while his friends had nothing to do after school and began to get into trouble, he had to go home every day to milk the cow. Although he resented it at the time, he since has been very grateful to wise parents and the cow.

The third statement was made by a returned mission president who commented that many missionaries do not know how to work when they arrive in the mission field. They lack experience in organizing their time and in being self-starters.

A philosophy of work gradually emerged in my mind. When I got married, I wanted to achieve three goals: use work as a means of "growing children"; see that they did not have too much free time; and prepare our children to effectively serve the Lord.

Following my marriage to a wonderful companion, our home was blessed with the arrival of children. In the space of a few years we found ourselves the parents of ten children—all girls but eight. We knew as our children grew older they would need to assist with family finances. This became evident when our four older children expressed a desire to learn to ski. One Christmas we bought four pairs of used wooden skis, and some poles, and we acquired some used boots. On Christmas morning our children were delighted to receive their skis, and they accepted the responsibility for most of their future expenses.

Family work projects

Since my wife and I didn't believe in the dole system in any form of finance, we kept wondering how our young family could begin to become self-sufficient. It wasn't long until we were offered an opportunity to collate and distribute advertising materials to 5,000 homes. We worked at the project after school, in the evenings, and on Saturdays. Everyone was involved in collating several pieces of advertising materials. Mom or dad assisted by driving the children to different locations and offering encouragement. The project was repeated several times. Our children were beginning to earn money, and we learned that we could have fun together while working.

After a couple of years, we graduated from advertising packets to telephone directories. During several summers, we loaded up our station

wagon with books and children. The days were hot, the hours were long, some streets were hard to find, some addresses couldn't be found, the books were heavy, some driveways were long and went uphill, some dogs were mean; but we had fun. Sometimes two children would go to a home, one to play with the dog and the other to take the books.

One summer one of the boys broke his foot while on the job. Within a few days he realized that he didn't want to be left out of the summer work; besides he loved to ski. Soon he was in the back of the station wagon unwrapping the books and giving directions to the children as to how many books were to go to each house.

At the end of a day's work, there were stories to tell, experiences to laugh at, accomplishments to brag about—and no one had any trouble sleeping. Yes, we were having fun and experiencing a sense of accomplishment.

Our next project began when our oldest son started mowing lawns the year before his mission. We bought a 1962 truck that ran most of the time, and some lawn-care equipment. That first year he did most of the work himself and occasionally took a younger brother with him. The next year dad decided to get involved, since none of the younger boys had drivers' licenses. We advertised, gave bids, received referrals, and increased the number of our customers. Then came the day when dad mowed his first lawn. First the edger didn't start, so he traveled across town to find out what to do. When he returned, one mower had broken down so he went back across town again to find out what to do. After several hours on that job, the second oldest boy looked at his dad and asked, "And is this what we are going to do all summer?"

We stuck with it and are now completing our fourth year. We have

learned to keep our sense of humor through broken sprinklers, a flooded basement, unexpected rain, a burned-out truck engine, broken equipment, dad pulling up someone's prized miniature tree, and the front wheel coming loose off the truck in busy traffic. And then there are those days when every piece of equipment is working, the truck is running, the sun is shining, we are on schedule, and someone forgets to fasten the tailgate of the truck. One by one our equipment slides out as we travel to the next customer.

Blessings of family projects

One might ask why we do all of these things. The obvious answers are: (1) all of our teenagers have sizable missionary funds; (2) all of our children over eleven know they will have a job; (3) no Sunday work is involved; (4) the children have learned valuable skills; (5) they are learning to budget their resources and to distinguish between wants and needs; and (6) as their father, I have had many wonderful teaching moments with them as we have worked side by side.

But these are not all. There are values that are often hard to describe but are real. A couple of Sundays ago the boys sat down at the direction of their mother and wrote what they felt the values were of working together as a family.

An eighteen-year-old boy writes, "Since I can remember, I have been taught the value of hard work and honoring all of your responsibilities and your family name. As I look back to my experience in family projects, I can see how they have shaped my character and personality by letting me make many important decisions. I have gained confidence by meeting new people and am better able to express myself. But the most important thing about family work projects is that your family comes

closer together in love and respect."

A thirteen-year-old who has been mowing lawns for four years writes, "Family projects have really helped me to understand how to work. The harder you work, the better you feel. I am grateful for a closer relationship with my brothers and parents."

A sixteen-year-old said, "Working on family projects has taught us the importance of being honest and dependable. It has taught us to make a lot of sacrifices in order to keep our name in good standing."

And finally, our fifteen-year-old said, "The family work projects have helped me manage my money. When I buy my clothes and other things, I take care of them because I know how much they cost and how much work it takes to buy them. When my parents bought my things, I honestly thought there was an endless supply of money, so I wouldn't take care of them. Also, work gives me a feeling of satisfaction—and a great tan."

Their mother writes, "I watch other youth with too much free time and am grateful that our boys know there are people relying on them. They sometimes have to sacrifice personal wants for the sake of their work."

May I add my own feelings. Our family work has become a big factor in bringing a higher degree of love, peace, and unity into our home. Many neighbors have commented on how much our children really enjoy each other. I am amazed as I witness our children stretching in their tender years toward self-reliance. Yes, work is a spiritual and essential principle. Our own beloved prophet has taught that "life is not wholly for fun and frolic."

I bear testimony that family work, when combined with family prayer and family scripture study, will do much to secure the blessings of heaven for families on earth. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

Brother Ottley will now lead us in singing hymn no. 98, "Let Us All Press On," following which we shall hear from Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The congregation sang "Let Us All Press On."

Elder James E. Faust

Difficult economic times

Some years ago Bishop James T. Erekson, a wise and successful member of a high council I was involved with, made a statement which impressed me greatly. He said, "There are many in our generation who have not known the blessings of economic adversity!" I wish to speak this morning about the blessings we may receive as we meet the challenges of economic stress.

Economists seem to have a hard time deciding when we are in a depression or a recession. One person said you can tell it this way: "A recession: a period in which you tighten your belt, a depression: a time in which you have no belt to tighten" (*Braude Speaker Encyclopedia*, p. 46).

Many countries of the world have moved into more difficult economic times. Some people are losing their employment and their hard-earned possessions. Others are faced with a lack of food and clothing. In a normal lifetime most people have had, or will face, difficult economic times. We read in Ecclesiastes that "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all" (Ecclesiastes 9:11).

The Savior verified this when, speaking of the Father, he said, "For he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5:45).

Some calamities become blessings

There are lessons from the dispensations of the gospel that help us understand that some calamities have ultimately been blessings. Although the following examples have far greater meaning for mankind in general, they have their lessons for us individually when we are confronted with trials in our lives.

The great suffering of the Savior in Gethsemane and his crucifixion were calamities, but man was redeemed from death and hell by his atoning sacrifice. The scattering of Israel throughout the world sprinkled the blood that believes, so that many nations may now partake of the gospel plan. The history of the Nephites is one of trial, calamities, and suffering, but through it all the experiences gained brought strength and development.

The Lord knows the values to be learned from trials and adversities.

Every year is a year for new opportunities. Charles Dickens laid the setting for his book *A Tale of Two Cities* in the following introduction:

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us" (*A Tale of Two Cities*, New York: Doubleday, n.d., p. 9).

In Leicester, England, there is an inscription on the outside wall of an old church which bears a remarkably fine thought. The inscription reads:

"In the year 1654 when all things were, throughout this nation, either demolished or profaned, Sir Robert Shirley, Baronet, founded and built this church. He it is whose singular praise it is to have done the best things in the worst times, and to have hoped them in the most calamitous."

Jewel of adversity

Aside from the economic tides which run in the affairs of nations, financial hard times can befall any of us at any time. There is no guarantee against personal hard financial times. Financial difficulty may result from several kinds of misfortunes, including all types of natural disasters such as floods, fires, and earthquakes. Accidents and illness can produce unexpected and staggering medical and hospital bills. The misfortunes of other members of our own family may require our help. Unemployment and inflation can quickly wipe away hard-earned savings.

Economic stress can involve personal challenges. Discouragement and frustration are frequent companions to misfortune. Economic problems occasionally put a strain on family relationships. They often require us to do without things we feel we want or need. What can be a calamity for one can be an opportunity for another. Shakespeare, speaking through Duke Senior, said,

Sweet are the uses of adversity;
Which, like the toad, ugly and
venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his
head.

(*As You Like It*, act 2, sc. 1,
lines 12-14.)

The lasting effects of economic challenges are often determined by our attitude toward life. One writer said, "Out of the same substances one stomach will extract nourishment, and another poison; and so the same disappointments in life will chasten and refine one man's spirit and embitter another's" (William Matthews, *Webster's Encyclopedia of Dictionaries*, New American Edition, Ottenheimer Publishers, Inc., p. 864).

Elder LeGrand Richards told this story to a young person who in a time of desperation asked what youth have to live for:

" 'You remember the story of the two buckets that went down in the well; as the one came up, it said, 'This is surely a cold and dreary world. No matter how many times I come up full, I always have to go down empty.' Then the other bucket laughed and said, 'With me it is different. No matter how many times I go down empty, I always come up full.' " ' (In Conference Report, Apr. 1951, p. 40.)

Blessings in overcoming adversity

Brother Joseph Stucki, a faithful Church member, died Christmas Eve in 1927 after a short illness, leaving his wife with seven children, the eldest son being on a mission. Two of the children and a nephew she was rearing were later taken in death. Another son was also sent on a mission. This was accomplished by much hard work—taking in sewing and living on a few dollars per month from an insurance policy.

During this difficult time, flour was being distributed to needy members of the ward. Some of the young men had been asked to deliver it. A bag of flour was brought to Sister Stucki's home. Since she felt that there were other families in the ward that needed that flour worse than she

did, she declined to keep it, telling the young man that she was trying to teach her family to be independent and self-reliant. While worthy members of the Church should feel free to accept help from the Church proffered by the bishop, Sister Stucki was trying to teach the young man who came to her door a lesson. You see, the young man delivering the flour was her own son! All the surviving children attended college and became very successful people. They lived by the motto, "Make it do, or do without."

A wise man said, "The Lord gets his best soldiers out of the highlands of affliction" (C. H. Spurgeon, *Sorrow's Discipline*, no. 9). Some of the blessings available in overcoming economic adversity are:

Eight blessings

First, and perhaps most important, our faith and testimony can be strengthened. The faithful member of the Church learns that in times of economic stress the Lord helps those who have sought him early. (See D&C 54:10.) But those members who haven't begun early in their religious life may resolve to seek the Lord more diligently. We learn to recognize the Lord's hand in helping us. In hard times we have a chance to reevaluate and reorder our priorities in life. We learn what is most important to us. The way is open to strengthen faith and testimony.

Second, we may learn the need for humility. Our dependence upon the Lord becomes a means of developing teachableness, an important aspect of humility.

Third, family members learn cooperation and love for each other by being forced to draw closer together to survive.

Fourth, personal dignity and self-respect may be achieved. Someone said, "Be glad there are big

hurdles in life, and rejoice, too, that they are higher than most people care to surmount. Be happy they are numerous." (Anonymous.)

Fifth, we can become stronger and more resilient. Edmund Burke said: "Difficulty is a severe instructor, set over us by the supreme ordinance of a parental Guardian and Legislator, who knows us better than we know ourselves, and he loves us better too. . . . He that wrestles with us strengthens our nerves, and sharpens our skill. Our antagonist is our helper." ("Reflections on the Revolution in France," in Edmund Burke, *Harvard Classics*, 50 vols., New York: P. F. Collier and Son Co., 1909, 24:299-300.)

Sixth, we learn patience. Sometimes economic adversity requires more time than we anticipate. He who learns to bear his adversities while working to overcome them increases in patience, and thus he is not overcome by his circumstances. In economic and social affliction certain people of the Book of Mormon were exhorted to bear them patiently that they might not be "led away by the temptations of the devil" (Alma 34:39).

Seventh, we rise to heights previously unobtainable by the use of talents and skills which might not have been developed otherwise. Economic necessity opens the way for profitable learning experiences.

Eighth, we can learn to trust the Lord and thus overcome fear. "If ye are prepared ye shall not fear" (D&C 38:30).

There are many ways economic hard times can be met. Sometimes we must accept less than we hope for. A speaker once stated, "I passed a small church displaying a large sign. It read: 'Annual Strawberry Festival,' and below in small letters 'On account of depression, prunes will be served.'" (*Braude Speakers Encyclopedia*, p. 51.)

Karen Nielson was born in

Aalborg, Denmark, in 1844. She was the daughter of a farm family. In her early years she was taught the skills of successful dairy farming at the knee of her father.

In 1861, Karen was baptized and was never able to return to her home because of her father's opposition to her conversion. She left Denmark and immigrated to Utah with a group of Scandinavian Saints in 1862. She lived for a few years in Utah County where she married Benjamin Franklin Barney, and then they were called to settle the Sevier Valley.

Karen bore ten children and then was left a widow with several of her children still at home. She had no close family to return to, so she drew on the knowledge she had gained on the Danish farm. She improved the dairy herd using the breeding skills she'd learned from her father. Her herd was soon recognized as one of the finest in the area, and she was able to support her family and care for their needs. Until Karen was well into her eighties, she milked her cows night and morning and cared for her farm with the help of her sons and grandsons. Her legacy was one of hard work and the knowledge that our lives are only as good as we make them. She never turned away from hardships—they seemed only to strengthen her.

Six ways to overcome

I have previously suggested eight blessings that may come as we strive to overcome economic adversities. I should like to now suggest six ways to help us from being overcome by economic stress:

1. *Seek first the kingdom of God.* (See Matthew 6:33.) This seeking includes the payment of our tithes and a generous fast offering and thus being blessed both spiritually and temporally by our obedience. Seeking first the kingdom of God

will involve striving to keep the law the Apostle James called "the royal law," which is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (James 2:8). Seeking first the kingdom of God involves the keeping of the divine commandments. Spiritual strength comes from many sources, including personal prayer, the study of the scriptures, and the willingness to "submit to all things . . . the Lord seeth fit to inflict" (Mosiah 3:19). These measures can give us a certain, peaceful stability.

2. *Solidify family strengths and resources.* Chief among a family's resources are its spiritual strengths, which are enhanced by praying together. Budgeting money together will produce a special unity, as will the holding of family councils. We should work together toward storing a year's supply of food, clothing, and other necessities. In times of stress extra acts of kindness are particularly needed and appreciated. When there is limited money available, it is easier to teach children the wise use of money, including the need to save for the future. The family can be reminded to maintain an eternal perspective rather than concentrate on worldly possessions and wealth. Family organizations are helpful to render the individual help that may be needed. It is also important to learn how to accept family help graciously.

3. *Exercise faith.* The Savior reminds us, "All things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9:23). And again, "All things shall work together for your good" (D&C 90:24). The attitude with which we submit to "all things" is important. Maintaining a positive attitude and being cheerful are helpful. A belief that "all these things shall give thee experience, and . . . be for thy good" is like a spiritual stabilizer (D&C 122:7).

4. *Be adaptable in your work.* Theodore Roosevelt said: "No man

needs sympathy because he has to work. . . . Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing." (*The Reader's Digest Treasury of Modern Quotations*, New York: Reader's Digest Press, 1975, p. 169.) In times of economic difficulty it may be necessary to work for less pay. We should be willing to learn new, marketable skills. There are a great many men who have found new joy and satisfaction in having a second career wholly unrelated to the work for which they were originally trained. Family members need to find ways to supplement income through appropriate work opportunities. Being flexible in our approach to our work opportunities may just make it possible to keep afloat financially. Giving a full day's work for a full day's pay has saved many jobs. It will also help us avoid accepting government doles which rob us of our dignity and our self-respect.

David Grayson said, "Happiness, I have discovered, is nearly always a rebound from hard work" (*The Reader's Digest Treasury of Modern Quotations*, p. 171).

5. *Avoid Debt.* President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., taught us to "avoid debt as we would a plague" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1937, p. 26). This is particularly sound counsel in these times of exorbitantly high interest rates. Debt and its ever-present offspring, interest, are merciless taskmasters. A year and a half ago in this Tabernacle, President Clark's voice, on a tape, was heard to say, "Whoever borrows should understand what interest is; it is with them every minute of the day and night" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1938, p. 103).

6. *Reduce expense.* When asked how some people in a small farming community in southern Utah got by on their meager cash income, George Lyman said, "They lived on the

absence of expense." On another occasion, someone observed: "Generations of great thinkers have dreamed of a moneyless society somewhere in the future. As far as some of us are concerned, we're already ahead of our time." (Sam Levenson, "You Don't Have to Be in Who's Who to Know What's What," Simon and Schuster, 1979, p. 184.) Economic wealth does not endow eternal blessings, and financial difficulty does not revoke eternal covenants.

Eternal blessings can result

Elder Neal A. Maxwell said: "An economic depression would be grim, but it would not change the reality of immortality. The inevitability of the second coming is not affected by the unpredictability of the stock market. . . . A case of cancer does not cancel the promises of the temple endowment. . . .

"All that matters is gloriously intact. The promises are in place. It is up to us to perform." (*Notwithstanding My Weakness*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981, p. 57.)

Before teaching the parable of the rich man whose ground brought forth plentifully, Jesus said, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15).

The Lord has said: "Trouble me no more concerning this matter.

"But learn that he who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come." (D&C 59:22-23.)

From the refiner's fire of economic difficulty may come eternal blessings which can help save families and exalt their members by their being united and strengthened—to which I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Marion G. Romney

Brothers and sisters, I have been asked to speak in so many of these welfare meetings that I'm beginning to feel that I ought to respond in a manner similar to a grandfather I once knew who was getting along in years and some people thought he didn't know when to quit talking. At a ward gathering they thought they shouldn't call on him because he would speak too long. Their final decision was, however, that they couldn't pass him by, so they called on him and asked him to stand and tell them in just a word how they could live to be as old as he was and still be of service. So he got up and said, "Keep breathing." I won't be that brief, but I will attempt to be to the point.

Self-reliance and freedom

I love the simple truths contained in the welfare principles as taught by all the holy prophets since the world began, and I never tire of speaking about them. Today I shall speak to you about the principle of self-reliance and its impact upon our spiritual development.

Since the beginning of time man has been counseled to earn his own way, thereby becoming self-reliant. It is easy to understand the reason why the Lord places so much emphasis on this principle when we come to understand that it is tied very closely to freedom itself.

On this subject, Elder Albert E. Bowen said, "The Lord must want and intend that His people shall be free of constraint whether enforceable or only arising out of the bindings of conscience. . . . That is why the Church is not satisfied with any system which leaves able people permanently dependent, and insists, on the contrary, that the true function and office of giving, is to help people [get] into a position where

they can help themselves and thus be free." (*The Church Welfare Plan, Gospel Doctrine manual, 1946, p. 77.*)

Many programs have been set up by well-meaning individuals to aid those who are in need. However, many of these programs are designed with the shortsighted objective of "helping people," as opposed to "helping people help themselves." Our efforts must always be directed toward making able-bodied people self-reliant.

Gullible gulls

I clipped the following article from the *Reader's Digest* some time ago and have told it before, but it bears repeating. It reads:

"In our friendly neighbor city of St. Augustine great flocks of sea gulls are starving amid plenty. Fishing is still good, but the gulls don't know how to fish. For generations they have depended on the shrimp fleet to toss them scraps from the nets. Now the fleet has moved. . . .

"The shrimpers had created a Welfare State for the . . . sea gulls. The big birds never bothered to learn how to fish for themselves and they never taught their children to fish. Instead they led their little ones to the shrimp nets.

"Now the sea gulls, the fine free birds that almost symbolize liberty itself, are starving to death because they gave in to the 'something for nothing' lure! They sacrificed their independence for a hand-out.

"A lot of people are like that, too. They see nothing wrong in picking delectable scraps from the tax nets of the U.S. Government's 'shrimp fleet.' But what will happen when the Government runs out of goods? What about our children of generations to come?

"Let's not be gullible gulls. We . . . must preserve our talents of self-sufficiency, our genius for creating things for ourselves, our sense of thrift and our true love of independence." ("Fable of the Gullible Gull," Reader's Digest, Oct. 1950, p. 32.)

Don't sacrifice self-respect and independence

The practice of coveting and receiving unearned benefits has now become so fixed in our society that even men of wealth, possessing the means to produce more wealth, are expecting the government to guarantee them a profit. Elections often turn on what the candidates promise to do for voters from government funds. This practice, if universally accepted and implemented in any society, will make slaves of its citizens.

We cannot afford to become wards of the government, even if we have a legal right to do so. It requires too great a sacrifice of self-respect and in political, temporal, and spiritual independence.

In some countries it is extremely difficult to separate earned from unearned benefits. However, the principle is the same in all countries: We should strive to become self-reliant and not depend on others for our existence.

Caution to parents and priesthood leaders

Governments are not the only guilty parties. We fear many parents in the Church are making "gullible gulls" out of their children with their permissiveness and their doling out of family resources. Parents who place their children on the dole are just as guilty as a government which places its citizens on the dole. In fact, the actions of parents in this area can be more devastating than

any government program.

Bishops and other priesthood leaders can be guilty of making "gullible gulls" out of their ward members. Some members become financially or emotionally dependent on their bishops. A dole is a dole whatever its source. All of our Church and family actions should be directed toward making our children and members self-reliant. We can't always control government programs, but we can control our own homes and congregations. If we will teach these principles and live them, we can do much to counter the negative effects which may exist in government programs in any country.

We know there are some who for no reason of their own cannot become self-reliant. President Henry D. Moyle had these people in mind when he said:

"This great principle does not deny to the needy nor to the poor the assistance they should have. The wholly incapacitated, the aged, the sickly are cared for with all tenderness, but every able-bodied person is enjoined to do his utmost for himself to avoid dependence, if his own efforts can make such a course possible; to look upon adversity as temporary; to combine his faith in his own ability with honest toil; to rehabilitate himself and his family to a position of independence; in every case to minimize the need for help and to supplement any help given with his own best efforts.

"We believe [that] seldom [do circumstances arise in which] men of rigorous faith, genuine courage, and unfaltering determination, with the love of independence burning in their hearts, and pride in their own accomplishments, cannot surmount the obstacles that lie in their paths.

"We know that through humble, prayerful, industrious, God-fearing lives, a faith can be developed within us by the strength of which we can

call down the blessings of a kind and merciful Heavenly Father and literally see our handicaps vanish and our independence and freedom established and maintained." (In Conference Report, Apr. 1948, p. 5.)

Welfare program is spiritual

Self-reliance is not the end, but a means to an end. It is very possible for a person to be completely independent and lack every other desirable attribute. One may become wealthy and never have to ask anyone for anything, but unless there is some spiritual goal attached to this independence, it can canker his soul.

The welfare program is spiritual. In 1936, when the program was introduced, President David O. McKay made this astute observation:

"The development of our spiritual nature should concern us most. Spirituality is the highest acquisition of the soul, the divine in man; 'the supreme, crowning gift that makes him king of all created things.' It is the consciousness of victory over self and of communion with the infinite. It is spirituality alone which really gives one the best in life.

"It is something to supply clothing to the scantily clad, to furnish ample food to those whose table is thinly spread, to give activity to those who are fighting desperately the despair that comes from enforced idleness, but after all is said and done, the greatest blessings that will accrue from the Church [welfare program] are spiritual. Outwardly, every act seems to be directed toward the physical: re-making of dresses and suits of clothes, canning fruits and vegetables, storing foodstuffs, choosing of fertile fields for settlement—all seem strictly temporal, but permeating all these acts, inspiring and sanctifying them, is the element of spirituality." (In Conference Report, Oct. 1936, p. 103.)

Seek the kingdom of God

In the Doctrine and Covenants we read:

"Wherefore, verily I say unto you that all things unto me are spiritual, and not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal; neither any man, nor the children of men; neither Adam, your father, whom I created.

"Behold, I gave unto him that he should be an agent unto himself; and I gave unto him commandment, but no temporal commandment gave I unto him, for my commandments are spiritual." (D&C 29:34-35.)

This scripture tells us there is no such thing as a temporal commandment. It also tells us that man is to be "an agent unto himself." Man cannot be an agent unto himself if he is not self-reliant. Herein we see that independence and self-reliance are critical keys to our spiritual growth. Whenever we get into a situation which threatens our self-reliance, we will find our freedom threatened as well. If we increase our dependence, we will find an immediate decrease in our freedom to act.

Thus far, we should have learned that self-reliance is a prerequisite to the complete freedom to act. We have also learned, however, that there is nothing spiritual in self-reliance unless we make the right choices with that freedom. What then should we do once we have become self-reliant in order to grow spiritually?

The key to making self-reliance spiritual is in using the freedom to comply with God's commandments. The scriptures are very clear in their command that it is the duty of those who *have* to *give* to those who are in need.

Jacob, speaking to the people of Nephi, said:

"Think of your brethren like unto yourselves, and be familiar with all and free with your substance, that

they may be rich like unto you.

"But before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God.

"And after ye have obtained a hope in Christ ye shall obtain riches, if ye seek them; and ye will seek them for the intent to do good—to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick and the afflicted." (Jacob 2:17-19.)

Service is exalted life

In our own dispensation, when the Church was only nine months old, the Lord said:

"And for your salvation I give unto you a commandment, for I have heard your prayers, and the poor have complained before me, and the rich have I made, and all flesh is mine, and I am no respecter of persons" (D&C 38:16).

This revelation was given on the second day of January 1831. The next month, in another revelation, the Lord said:

"If thou lovest me thou shalt serve me and keep all my commandments.

"And behold, thou wilt remember the poor, and consecrate of thy properties for their support." (D&C 42:29-30.)

The same month, the Lord referred to this subject again. Evidently the Brethren had been a little remiss. They had not moved fast enough.

"Behold, I say unto you, that ye must visit the poor and the needy and administer to their relief" (D&C 44:6).

The scriptures are full of commandments regarding our obligation to care for the poor; therefore, I will not elaborate further. It has always seemed somewhat paradoxical to me that we must constantly have the Lord *command* us to do those things which are for our own good. The Lord has said,

"He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 10:39).

We lose our life by serving and lifting others. By so doing we experience the only true and lasting happiness. Service is not something we endure on this earth so we can earn the right to live in the celestial kingdom. Service is the very fiber of which an exalted life in the celestial kingdom is made.

Knowing that service is what gives our Father in Heaven fulfillment, and knowing that we want to be where He is and as He is, why must we be commanded to serve one another? Oh, for the glorious day when these things all come naturally because of the purity of our hearts. In that day there will be no need for a commandment because we will have experienced for ourselves that we are truly happy only when we are engaged in unselfish service. Let us use the freedom which comes from self-reliance in giving and serving.

Giving sanctifies

Can we see how critical self-reliance becomes when looked upon as the prerequisite to service, when we also know service is what Godhood is all about? Without self-reliance one cannot exercise these innate desires to serve. How can we give if there is nothing there? Food for the hungry cannot come from empty shelves. Money to assist the needy cannot come from an empty purse. Support and understanding cannot come from the emotionally starved. Teaching cannot come from the unlearned. And most important of all, spiritual guidance cannot come from the spiritually weak.

There is an interdependence between those who have and those who have not. The process of giving exalts the poor and humbles the rich. In the process, both are sanctified.

The poor, released from the bondage and limitations of poverty, are enabled as free men to rise to their full potential, both temporally and spiritually. The rich, by imparting of their surplus, participate in the eternal principle of giving. Once a person has been made whole or self-reliant, he reaches out to aid others, and the cycle repeats itself.

We are all self-reliant in some areas and dependent in others. Therefore, each of us should strive to help others in areas where we have strengths. At the same time, pride should not prevent us from graciously accepting the helping hand of another when we have a real need. To do so denies another person the opportunity to participate in a sanctifying experience.

Again, I say the principle of self-reliance is spiritual, as are all the principles of the welfare program. This is not a doomsday program, but a program for today. One of the three areas of emphasis recently out-

lined in the statement on the mission of the Church is to perfect the Saints, and this is the purpose of the welfare program. Today is the time for us to perfect our lives. May we continue to hold fast to these truths, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

The first general session of the 152nd Semiannual General Conference of the Church will convene in the Tabernacle at ten o'clock this morning.

We shall sing in closing hymn no. 27, "Do What Is Right," following which the benediction will be offered by Elder Paul H. Dunn, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The congregation sang "Do What Is Right."

The benediction was offered by Elder Paul H. Dunn.

SALT LAKE TABERNACLE CHOIR AND ORGAN BROADCAST

The following broadcast, announced by J. Spencer Kinard and originating with KSL Radio and Television, Salt Lake City, Utah, was presented from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, October 3, 1982, through the courtesy of the Columbia Broadcasting System's network throughout the United States, parts of Canada, and through other facilities to several points overseas:

Announcer: Once more we welcome you within these walls with Music and the Spoken Word from the crossroads of the West.

CBS and its affiliated stations bring you at this hour the Mormon

Tabernacle Choir from Temple Square in Salt Lake City, with Jerold Ottley conducting the Choir, Robert Cundick, Tabernacle Organist, and the Spoken Word given by Spencer Kinard.

(Choir without announcement: "All Breathing Life, Sing and Praise Ye the Lord"—Bach)

Announcer: "All breathing life, sing and praise ye the Lord." The Tabernacle Choir opened today's broadcast of Music and the Spoken Word with these words of rejoicing set to music by Bach.

We now hear the music of Howard Hanson with a text from the book

of Psalms as the psalmist worships the Lord, "O Lord our Lord, how excellent thy name."

(Choir: "How Excellent Thy Name"—Hanson)

Announcer: We again hear a text from Psalms with music by Thomas Matthews, "The Lord is my shepherd, . . . he restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake."

(Choir: "The Lord Is My Shepherd"—Matthews)

Announcer: Tabernacle Organist Robert Cundick now plays "Sketch in D Flat" by Robert Schumann.

(Organ: "Sketch in D Flat"—Schumann)

Announcer: We live in a busy world. There are so many things to do, so many responsibilities pulling for our attention. Even our technologies do not seem able to make our lives less crowded; as soon as we invent a system to simplify one task, another responsibility moves in to consume whatever time we have saved.

True, that may mean that we get more things done by making more efficient use of our time. But it may also mean that as our lives become full, more complex, more detailed, some of the more important aspects of living receive less attention or are forgotten altogether.

For instance, how many times have we justified the amount of time spent away from families, justified the neglect families suffer, because of careers or other distractions. "I'm doing these things for you," neglected families are often told. And in fact, while that may be true, it does not make the neglect any less real.

Recently, when a boy received such an explanation from the father who never had time to play ball with him, the boy responded, "The trouble, Dad, is that I'm not in your book."

"Book?" the father asked. "What book?"

"You know," the boy replied, "the book you write your appointments in; the one where you keep track of meetings with important people. I'm not in there."

Jesus spoke about this problem—the problem of mismanaged priorities. The occasion was when he visited the home of Martha, sister to Lazarus and Mary.

While Mary sat at the feet of Christ, learning of salvation, Martha worked in the kitchen and was annoyed that Mary did not help her. Finally, Martha complained to Jesus, who answered: "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: And Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:41-42).

Too often, we do not recognize what is "needful," what is most full of need. Too often, perhaps we allow what is important in our lives to be displaced by the details and activity that we think we're doing for our families.

Someone needs to do the dishes; the details must be taken care of. But sometimes the details can wait, so that the words of the Savior may be heard, so that a father has time to play ball with his son, so that a mother has time to talk to her daughter; so that what is important receives the most attention in our lives.

(Choir without announcement: "My Lord, What a Mornin'"—arr. Burleigh)

Announcer: The Tabernacle Choir has sung a spiritual harmonized by H. T. Burleigh with a text from the writings of the Apostle John, "My Lord, What a Mornin'."

We next hear a traditional Hebrew melody with text by Daniel Ben Judah, "The God of Abraham praise, all praised be his name."

(Choir: "The God of Abraham Praise"—Hebrew Melody)

Announcer: The Tabernacle Choir concludes this broadcast of Music and the Spoken Word singing music by John Rutter with a text adapted from an old Gaelic tune, "(May the) deep peace of Christ (be) to you."

(Choir: "A Gaelic Blessing"—Rutter)

Announcer: Again we leave you from within the shadows of the everlasting hills. May peace be with you this day . . . and always.

Announcer (on radio): This concludes the two-thousand, seven-hun-

dred, seventy-second performance continuing the fifty-fourth year of this traditional broadcast from the Mormon Tabernacle on Temple Square, brought to you by CBS and its affiliated stations, originating with Station KSL in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Jerold Ottley conducted the Choir, Robert Cundick was at the organ, the Spoken Word was given by Spencer Kinard.

In another seven days at this same hour, Music and the Spoken Word will be heard again from the crossroads of the West.

This is the CBS Radio Network.

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE MUSIC

The Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir furnished the choral numbers for the Saturday morning, Sunday morning, and Sunday afternoon sessions of the conference with Jerold Ottley and Donald H. Ripplinger conducting.

The music for the Saturday afternoon session was provided by the Mormon Youth Chorus with Robert Bowden conducting.

At the general priesthood meeting, a combined men's choir from the Tabernacle Choir and the

Mormon Youth Chorus directed by Jerold Ottley and Robert C. Bowden furnished the music.

Prelude, postlude, and interlude music and accompaniments on the Tabernacle organ throughout the conference sessions were played by Robert Cundick, Roy M. Darley, John Longhurst, and Clay Christiansen, Tabernacle organists.

Francis M. Gibbons
Clerk of the Conference

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THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY
SAINTS

Official Report of the
One Hundred Fifty-third
Annual General

CONFERENCE

of The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints

held in the Tabernacle
Salt Lake City, Utah

April 2 and 3, 1983

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THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-THIRD ANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The 153rd Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 2, 1983, at 10:00 A.M.

The general sessions of the conference were held at 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday, April 2 and 3, 1983. The general welfare session was not held during this conference. The general priesthood meeting was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, April 2, 1983 at 6:00 P.M. The change from 7:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. for the priesthood meeting was made for the convenience of the brethren in the eastern time zone.

President Spencer W. Kimball watched the conference on television in his apartment in the Hotel Utah due to ill health. President Marion G. Romney, First Counselor in the First Presidency, watched the conference on television in his home because of ill health. President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday afternoon, general priesthood, and Sunday morning sessions. President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve, conducted the Saturday morning and Sunday afternoon sessions.

Television and radio stations carried portions or all of some of the conference sessions to large audiences throughout the world. The general sessions and the priesthood session were also carried via satellite transmission to more than 550 stake centers. The general priesthood session was also carried by closed-circuit transmission to approximately 1,388 locations in many countries.

General Authorities present

The following General Authorities of the Church attended one or more of the general sessions:

*The First Presidency:*¹ Gordon B. Hinckley.

The Council of the Twelve: Ezra Taft Benson, Mark E. Petersen, Howard W. Hunter, Thomas S. Monson, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, Bruce R. McConkie, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, and Neal A. Maxwell.

The First Quorum of the Seventy:
Presidents: Franklin D. Richards, J. Thomas Fyans, Carlos E. Asay, M. Russell Ballard, Dean L. Larsen, Royden G. Derrick, and G. Homer Durham. *Additional Members:* Marion D. Hanks, A. Theodore Tuttle, Theodore M. Burton, Paul H. Dunn, Hartman Rector, Jr., Loren C. Dunn, Robert L. Simpson, Rex D. Pinegar, Wm. Grant Bangerter, Robert D. Hales, Adney Y. Komatsu, Joseph B. Wirthlin, Gene R. Cook, Charles Didier, William R. Bradford, George P. Lee, John H. Groberg, Jacob de Jager, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Robert E. Wells, James M. Paramore, Richard G. Scott, Hugh W. Pinnock, F. Enzo Busche, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Ronald E. Poelman, Derek A. Cuthbert, Robert L. Backman, Rex C. Reeve, Sr., F. Burton Howard, Ted E. Brewerton, Jack H. Goaslind, Jr., and Angel Abrea.

The Presiding Bishopric: Victor L. Brown, H. Burke Peterson, and J. Richard Clarke.

Emeritus General Authorities: Eldred G. Smith, Sterling W. Sill, Henry D. Taylor, Bernard P. Brockbank, James A. Cullimore, Joseph Anderson, John H. Vandenberg, and O. Leslie Stone.

¹President Spencer W. Kimball and President Marion G. Romney were excused due to ill health.

Other authorities present

Other authorities of the Church in attendance included Regional Representatives, presidents of stakes and their counselors, presidents of temples,

bishops of wards, and presidencies and members of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood quorums.

Many general, stake, and ward auxiliary officers also attended.

FIRST DAY MORNING MEETING

FIRST SESSION

The first general session of the conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 2, 1983, at 10:00 A.M. President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve, conducted this session.

The music for the opening session was provided by the Tabernacle Choir with Jerold Ottley conducting and Robert Cundick at the organ.

Before the commencement of the meeting, the Tabernacle Choir sang "Lead Me into Life Eternal" without announcement.

President Hinckley then made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

We regret that President Spencer W. Kimball is unable to be with us this morning. He is in his apartment in the Hotel Utah, where he will watch the conference on television.

We regret also that President Romney is not well this morning and asked to be excused. He will watch the conference proceedings on television at his home.

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will conduct this general session of the conference and will also conduct the concluding general session of the conference tomorrow afternoon.

President Ezra Taft Benson

My beloved brethren and sisters, we are pleased to welcome those who are gathered here in the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City for this, the first general session of the 153rd Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We also welcome those who are participating by means of television or radio, and also the many who are watching these proceedings in over five hundred and fifty stake centers throughout the United States to which the conference is being carried by satellite transmission.

We deeply regret the absence this morning of our beloved prophet and leader, President Spencer W. Kimball. In behalf of all the General Authorities and the leaders and members of the Church participating in this conference, we extend to him and to his dear wife, Camilla, our love and blessings.

There is an overflow congregation in the newly renovated Assembly Hall on Temple Square, where Elders Franklin D. Richards and Paul H. Dunn preside.

We extend a special welcome to government, education, and civic leaders who are present.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Jerold Ottley with Robert Cundick at the organ, is providing the music for this session.

The Choir opened this session by singing "Lead Me into Life Eternal."

The Choir will now sing "Oh Lord, I Would Hear Thy Word." Fol-

lowing the singing, the invocation will be offered by Elder Robert L. Simpson, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Choir sang "Oh Lord, I Would Hear Thy Word."

Elder Robert L. Simpson offered the invocation.

President Benson

We note with regret the passing of President N. Eldon Tanner, who at the time of his death was serving as First Counselor in the First Presidency. Following President Tanner's death, President Spencer W. Kimball designated President Marion G. Romney as his First Counselor and President Gordon B. Hinckley as his Second Counselor. And this action was later approved by the Council of the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve. In view of this, it is proposed that we sustain President Marion G. Romney as First Counselor in the First Presidency and President Gordon B.

Hinckley as Second Counselor in the First Presidency.

All in favor please manifest it. Any opposed may so manifest it.

With the exception of these Brethren we have just sustained, and noting the passing of our dear friend and brother, Elder LeGrand Richards of the Council of the Twelve, there have been no changes in the General Authorities since the last conference. It is proposed, therefore, that we sustain all of the General Authorities and general officers of the Church as at present constituted.

Those in favor please manifest it. Those opposed by the same sign.

President Benson

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "He, Watching over Israel."

President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will then address us.

The Tabernacle Choir sang "He, Watching over Israel."

President Gordon B. Hinckley

I hope you enjoyed that magnificent anthem presented by the Choir—"He, watching over Israel, slumbers not, nor sleeps." It is from Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, and the words are adapted from the Psalms. (See Psalm 121:4.)

As we unite in this great world conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I should like to use those wonderful, reassuring words as something of a theme. I pray for the direction of the Holy Spirit.

President Spencer W. Kimball

President Kimball is unable to be with us in person. However, he pre-

sides and is in his hotel apartment across the street where he joins with us as the proceedings are carried to him by closed-circuit television. He is not in the hospital, as rumor would have it, nor has he been for many months. He is not in a coma, as some have said. He dresses each day. But he is weak, and his body is tired. He recently commemorated his eighty-eighth birthday and is feeling the effects of his advanced age and the cumulative effects of the surgical procedures he has undergone in the past. What a magnificent example he has been for all of us. He has given impetus to this work in a remarkable way. The whole Church has quickened its pace and lengthened

its stride in response to his clarion call. He has been a prophet to us, a prophet whose vision and revelation have reached out to the people of the entire earth, regardless of nation, or color, or station in life, freely offering the matchless blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ to all who will accept. He sends his love and blessing to all of you. I was with him yesterday, and he did so. We love him and we pray for him. Our hearts incline toward him with affection, and our pleadings in his behalf ascend to our Father in Heaven.

Presidents Romney and Tanner

President Romney is likewise experiencing difficulties. He too is feeling the effects of age and the natural wearing process of scores of years of vigorous and unrelenting activity in furthering the work of the Lord. He has asked that he be excused from speaking. We shall hear a message from him which he prepared earlier and which will be read by his son, Bishop George J. Romney.

We greatly miss President N. Eldon Tanner, who served as a Counselor to four Presidents of the Church. He passed away last November 27. During months previous to this, notwithstanding illness, he continued to give from his great store of experience, wisdom, and inspiration.

We likewise shall miss in this conference the stirring testimony of Elder LeGrand Richards of the Council of the Twelve. For forty-five years he stood at the pulpit in this Tabernacle bearing witness to the truth of this "marvellous work and a wonder" (Isaiah 29:14). Millions were touched by the eloquence and sincerity of his testimony.

Divine genius of Church organization

We feel deeply the absence of these great leaders. Their absence has

placed upon others of us an awesome responsibility. I thank the Lord for his sustaining blessings. I thank my brethren of the Council of the Twelve for their great kindness and their strength and wisdom. For twenty years I was a member of that unique and wonderful quorum of able and devoted men, each called of God and endowed with the holy apostleship. I love them as my brethren. Each holds the keys of this dispensation in latent reserve. Inherent in that divine residual is the assured ongoing leadership of the Church.

I am grateful for my brethren of the First Quorum of the Seventy and of the Presiding Bishopric. Brethren and sisters, there is unity in the leadership of the Church. I think that unity has never been stronger.

The divine genius of the organization of this work and of calls to leadership is evident. The General Authorities are all individuals, each with his own personality. Each brings to his responsibilities a wide variety of experience and background. When matters come up for discussion in the leading councils of the Church, each is free to express his views. As one observes that interesting process at work, it is fascinating to witness the power of the Holy Spirit influence these men. Initial differences, never sharp but nonetheless perceptible, soften and meld into an expression of unity. "My house is a house of order," said the Lord. (See D&C 132:8.) In witnessing this process at work, I experience a constant renewal of faith.

I express sincere appreciation also to my brethren and sisters across the world, members of the Church, wherever you may be. I pray that you will be sustained and blessed, that there will be peace in your homes and in your hearts, and that "the pure love of Christ" will be felt in your lives. (See Moroni 7:47.)

"Be still and know that I am God"

Recently while wrestling in my mind with a problem I thought to be of

serious consequence I went to my knees in prayer. There came into my mind a feeling of peace and the words of the Lord, "Be still and know that I am God." I turned to the scripture and read this reassuring statement spoken to the Prophet Joseph Smith 150 years ago: "Let your hearts be comforted concerning Zion; for all flesh is in mine hands; be still and know that I am God" (D&C 101:16).

God is weaving his tapestry according to his own grand design. All flesh is in his hands. It is not our prerogative to counsel him. It is our responsibility and our opportunity to be at peace in our minds and in our hearts, and to know that he is God, that this is his work, and that he will not permit it to fail.

We have no need to fear. We have no need to worry. We have no need to speculate. Our imperative need is to be found doing our duty individually in the callings which have come to us. And because, for the most part, the Latter-day Saints are walking in faith and working with conviction, the Church is consistently growing ever stronger.

Church moving forward

I take occasion now to say to all that the Church is moving forward with great strength and power. I give you my assurance that the work in the office of the First Presidency is current and up to date. Nothing is being neglected, and action is not being postponed. We are operating under direct assignment and authorization from the President of the Church, with whom we frequently meet. It is so also with the work of the Twelve, the Seventy, the Bishopric, and the auxiliary organizations.

We thank the Lord, whose cause this is, for the marvelous growth now

being experienced. The strengthening faith of the people is evident in increased sacrament meeting attendance, in temple attendance, and in the payment of tithes and offerings, which becomes an expression of their love for the Lord and of his generous blessings even in these times of economic distress.

Speaking in this Tabernacle an even hundred years ago, at the April 1883 general conference, President Joseph F. Smith said, "Now, so long as the Latter-day Saints are content to obey the commandments of God, to appreciate the privileges and blessings which they enjoy in the Church, and will use their time, their talents, their substance, in honor to the name of God, to build up Zion, and to establish truth and righteousness in the earth, so long our heavenly Father is bound by His oath and covenant to protect them from every opposing foe, and to help them to overcome every obstacle that can possibly be arrayed against them or thrown in their pathway" (*Journal of Discourses*, 24:176). Those words are as pertinent today as they were when spoken a century ago.

The Almighty is blessing his church and his people. He is watching over them. He neither slumbers nor sleeps as he guides, directs, and moves in his own "mysterious way His wonders to perform" (*Hymns*, no. 48).

Loyalty to our leader

Some express concern that the President of the Church is likely always to be a rather elderly man, to which my response is, "What a blessing!" The work in this dispensation was first put in place through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph Smith. He was at the time young and vigorous, one whose mind was not set in the traditions of his day. His was a youthful mind which the Lord could mold as fresh, moist clay as he initiated his work.

Joseph's successor was relatively young when he was faced with the ter-

rible responsibility of leading an entire people across the wilderness to pioneer a new land.

But the basics of our doctrine are now well in place, and we are firmly established as a people, at least until the Lord should mandate another move. We do not need innovation. We need devotion in adherence to divinely spoken principles. We need loyalty to our leader, whom God has appointed. He is our prophet, our seer and revelator. We shall never be left without a prophet if we will live worthy of one. He does not need to be youthful. He has and will continue to have younger men to travel over the earth in the work of the ministry. He is the presiding high priest, the repository of all of the keys of the holy priesthood, and the voice of revelation from God to his people.

There is an old proverb which says, "Youth for action. Age for wisdom."

To my mind there is something tremendously reassuring in knowing that for the foreseeable future we shall have a President who has been disciplined and schooled, tried and tested, whose fidelity to the work and whose integrity in the cause have been tempered in the forge of service, whose faith has matured, and whose nearness to God has been cultivated over a period of many years.

I do not worry. I am honored in the opportunity to serve with him who now stands as the prophet to this people. And when there comes the time for change, whenever that might be according to the will of the Lord, I shall sustain without reservation him whom the Lord appoints under the process he has established for succession in his kingdom, for I know that this is God's work and that he is watching over it now as he has through the years that have gone before. He makes no mistakes.

I have had some opportunity to observe this remarkable process at work.

Growth during last twenty-five years

Today is an anniversary for me. It was at the April general conference twenty-five years ago that I was first sustained a General Authority, an Assistant to the Twelve. Great and impressive to me have been my opportunities during this past quarter of a century. My assigned ministry has taken me over the earth to many lands, to various places where I have seen with my own eyes both peace and war, both prosperity and terrible poverty, both liberty and oppression. I have witnessed the miracles that come with faith. I have seen the evidence of true goodness and greatness in men and women living under a great variety of circumstances. I have observed in a very intimate and wonderful way the workings of the power of the Almighty among his children. I have noted the factors which lead to success or otherwise in the growth of the Church and the development of its members.

When I became a General Authority twenty-five years ago, there were 251 stakes in the Church. Today there are 1,402. Then there were 2,362 wards and independent branches. We now have 13,616. The statistics read in that 1958 conference indicated a membership on December 31, 1957, of 1,488,000. The comparable figure for December 31, 1982, was 5,165,000. Marvelous has been the growth. To use the vernacular, "We must be doing something right." No, we have not done it. It is the Lord who has engineered and directed those forces which have brought about so great a harvest.

Follow a steady and uncompromising course

There is a continuity and consistency in this work that is remarkable to

witness and experience. Its strength and power lie in the ability of every member and every earnest investigator to know for himself or herself by the power of the Holy Spirit that it is true. Critics may wear out their lives in trying to deny or demean or cast doubt, but all who ask of God in faith have the assurance that by the voice of the Spirit will come the certainty that this work is divine.

We need not fear the future if we hold fast to revealed principles. On one occasion the Prophet Joseph Smith said: "Go in all meekness, in sobriety, and preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified; not to contend with others on account of their faith, or systems of religion, but pursue a steady course" (*History of the Church*, 2:431).

I like those words, "pursue a steady course." I hope that we shall never forget them. The Church has grown consistently stronger because those who have gone before us have pursued a steady course. There are those who would fracture our strength by leading us in the pursuit of objectives which are not pertinent to the central mission of the Church. We are constantly invited, yes, even strongly urged, to get out and march with others for this cause or that cause. There are some causes with which we properly should be involved, which are directly related to the Church, its mission, and the well-being of its people. The determination of these must be left to those who have been called to leadership. Such causes will be few, since we must husband our strength and resources for the far greater obligation to pursue a steady course in building the kingdom of God in the earth.

Our great, basic message to the world is that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God; that he gave his life as a sacrifice for all mankind; that he rose from the grave that first Easter morning, "the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Corinthians 15:20); that "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians

15:22); that he lives, our resurrected Lord and Master.

As has been said before from this pulpit, he has given us a threefold mission: first, the teaching of the restored gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people; second, the building of the Saints in their faith and encouraging them in all of their activities to walk in obedience to the commandments of the Lord; and third, the great work of salvation for the dead. This vast mission contemplates all generations of mankind—those who have gone before, all who live upon the earth, and those who will yet be born. It is larger than any race or nation or generation. It encompasses all mankind. It is a cause without parallel. The fruits of its labors are everlasting in their consequences. In the pursuit of that mission we must follow a steady and uncompromising course and never be enticed therefrom.

Accelerate missionary work

We must enhance and enlarge our missionary endeavor. President Kimball has repeatedly called for an acceleration of this work.

I know that our young men are under a great obligation to qualify themselves through education to fill positions of responsibility in the world. Their time is precious. But I do not hesitate to promise that the time spent in faithful and devoted service as a missionary declaring the Master will only add to their qualifications for positions of responsibility in the future. Regardless of the vocation they choose to pursue, they will be better qualified in their powers of expression, in their habits of industry, in the value they place on training, in the integrity of their lives, and in their recognition of a higher source of strength and power than that which lies within their native capacity.

Gauge perfecting of Saints by love

We must be more diligent and effective as we pursue a steady course in instructing and perfecting the lives of our own people. We must hold to first principles. We must prioritize our teachings to emphasize that which is of the greatest worth.

"Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,

"Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

"This is the first and great commandment.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

"On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:35-40).

This must be the foundation of our instruction: love of God and love for and service to others—neighbors, family, and all with whom we have association. That which we teach must be constantly gauged against these two standards established by the Lord. If we shall do so, this work will continue to roll forward. We shall become as a city set upon a hill whose light cannot be hid. (See Matthew 5:14.)

He slumbers not, nor sleeps

Then, in a spirit of love and consecration, we must extend ourselves in the work of redemption of the dead through service in the temples of the

Lord. This service more nearly approaches the divine work of the Son of God, who gave his life for others, than does any other work of which I know.

My brothers and sisters, if we will pursue a steady course in carrying out this great triad of responsibility, then we shall be participants with our Father in Heaven in the accomplishment of his eternal purposes. You and I may fail as individuals and miss the blessing. But his work cannot fail. There will always be those he will raise up to accomplish it. He has declared: "Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand" (Isaiah 14:24).

I bear witness to you this morning that he, watching over Israel, slumbers not nor sleeps. God help us to be faithful to the great trust he has placed in us, I humbly pray as I invoke the blessings of the Lord upon you, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Tabernacle Choir sang "God of Power, God of Right" without announcement.

President Benson

President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has just addressed us, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "God of Power, God of Right."

We shall now be pleased to listen to Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Council of Twelve Apostles. Following Elder Maxwell's address, the Choir and congregation will join in singing "Hope of Israel."

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

Hopelessness—a modern problem

For many years now—in literature, film, and music—we have wit-

nessed increasing expressions of a profound sense of what has come to be called existential despair, a hopelessness beyond hope. Granted, the

human scene also includes many individuals who go happily about life's labors untouched by these feelings. But the holocausts and the wars have taken their terrible toll of hope among twentieth-century man. Said one eminent scientist, "The most poignant problem of modern life is probably man's feeling that life has lost its significance, . . . [a] view . . . no longer limited to the philosophical or literary *avant garde*. It is spreading to all social and economic groups and affects all manifestations of life" (Rene Dubos, *So Human an Animal* [New York: Scribners, 1968], pp. 14-15).

One need not question either the reluctance or the sincerity with which some despairing individuals have come to such wrong conclusions. In fact, one feels compassion and desires to reach out to them in genuine entreaty!

One recent television drama, in its closing scene in a cemetery, conveyed well this confusion and purposelessness, as one character lamented poignantly:

"Are all men's lives . . . broken, tumultuous, agonized and unromantic, punctuated by screams, imbecilities, agonies and death? Who knows? . . . I don't know. . . . Why can't people have what they want? The things were all there to content everybody, yet everybody got the wrong thing. I don't know. It's beyond me. It's all a darkness" ("The Good Soldier," a dramatization of the novel by Ford Madox Ford).

Lamentations, revelations, fears, and reassurances

But such poignancy of view is no guarantee of the accuracy of the view. Moreover, in human affairs, erroneous and unchallenged assertions sometimes assume an undeserved aura of truth. While a response to this hopelessness may not create conviction in disbelievers, it can bolster believers against the silent erosion of their own convictions.

Besides, as an ancient prophet correctly observed, sadness and badness are mutually reinforcing, for "despair cometh because of iniquity" (Moroni 10:22).

Let us, therefore, place several such lamentations beside the revelations of God. The expressions of despair beside the divine annunciations of hope. The fears of extinction alongside the reassurances of the Resurrection. The provincialism beside the universalism of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Then we shall see how myopic some mortals are, like absorbed children in a tree house pretending they are brave and alone!

The lamentations: Man lives in "an unsponsored universe," a universe "without a master," which "cares nothing for [man's] hopes and fears," an "empire of chance" in which man falls victim to "the trampling march of unconscious power" (Bertrand Russell, "A Free Man's Worship," in *Mysticism and Logic and Other Essays* [London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1950], p. 57).

The revelations: "God himself that formed the earth . . . created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited" (Isaiah 45:18).

"For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand" (Psalm 95:7).

"For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39).

"Men are, that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25).

"But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." (See Matthew 10:29-30.)

Not only are the hairs of our heads numbered, but the planets also: "But only an account of this earth, and the inhabitants thereof, give I unto you. For behold, there are many worlds that have passed away by the word of my power. And there are many that now stand, and innumerable are they unto man; but all things are numbered unto

me, for they are mine and I know them" (Moses 1:35).

The fears: Mankind is destined to extinction . . . there is nothing we can do. We have no personal life beyond the grave; there is no God. "Fate knows nor wrath nor ruth" (James Thomson, *The City of Dreadful Night and Other Poems* [London: Bertram Dobell, 1899], pp. 29–30, 35–36).

The reassurances: "And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,

"And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many" (Matthew 27:52–53; see also 3 Nephi 23:9–11).

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Corinthians 15:55).

"O how great the plan of our God!" (2 Nephi 9:13).

Immortality and accountability are intertwined

Some despair who are, as Peter said, willingly ignorant (see 2 Peter 3:5) or, as Nephi said, who will not search or understand great knowledge (see 2 Nephi 32:7). For these, a pessimistic philosophy is "pleasing unto the carnal mind" (Alma 30:53). Why? Because behavioral permissiveness flourishes amid a sense of hopelessness. Because if human appetites are mistakenly viewed as the only authentic reality and "now" as the only moment which matters, why should one check-rein any impulse or defer any gratification? Hence, immortality and accountability are intertwined!

Yes, there are some who live without hope who, though having reached such a wrong conclusion, nevertheless maintain right conduct. In such decent individuals, the light of Christ, though unacknowledged, burns still. (See D&C 84:46.) If it were not so, we would despise a Gandhi and admire a Hitler, instead of feeling just the opposite!

Such spreading pessimism does not necessarily mean "back to the catacombs" for Christians, or that secular Caesars will soon reopen the Colosseum. But, already, there are would-be Caesars who will refuse to settle for citizens who render to Caesar only that which is his—and unto God all that is His. (See Matthew 22:21.)

This sense of despair is further intensified by the demonstrated emptiness of materialism. Increased goods will not suffice if men display decreased goodness. Likewise, the mere accumulation of knowledge without purpose and of information without wisdom constitutes ever learning but never coming to a knowledge of the truth. (See 2 Timothy 3:7.)

Afflicted with anguish, some wander to and fro upon the earth in search of truth without knowing where to find it. (See Amos 8:11–12; D&C 123:12.) One such prominent wanderer was described by a colleague: "It is strange how he persists . . . in wandering to-and-fro. . . . He can neither believe, nor be comfortable in his unbelief" (Nathaniel Hawthorne, 20 Nov. 1856 in *English Notebooks*, ed. Randall Stewart [New York: MLA], pp. 432–33).

Life is a test

Such is the scene, therefore, of which we are a part. Many reject the scriptures, the moral memory of mankind, and then declare absolutely the absence of absolutes. Others reject the light of the gospel and then grump over the growing darkness. Still others cut themselves off from God and lament the loneliness of the universe. Some pursue the paths of him who openly desires mankind's misery (see 2 Nephi 2:27), and then bemoan their discontent.

The true Christian, of course, does not see life as an easy passage: "The cross comes before the crown and tomorrow is a Monday morning!" (C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory* [Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B.

Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965], p. 14). With ultimate hope, however, we can live cheerfully amid proximate insecurity. Life is a test in which man must overcome by faith, walking on the strait and narrow path—which is surely no escalator—but the path is there!

And death is not the permanent annihilation of the human personality and individuality! President Brigham Young wisely declared that the preservation of human intelligence and individuality through the Atonement and resurrection “is the greatest gift that ever was bestowed on mankind” (*Journal of Discourses*, 5:53).

Custodians of a gospel of hope

Just as in translating, the Prophet Joseph Smith processed truths more profound than even he then knew—we are custodians and possessors of a gospel of bright and realistic hope. It is a hope for which many hunger more deeply than we can possibly imagine. We poorly serve the cause of the Lord, at times, with programmatic superficiality and by our lack of empathy for those who drift in despair.

Truly, we live and walk on “a streetful of splendid strangers,” whom we are to love and serve even if they are uninterested in us!

Therefore, seen through the eye of faith, the sweep of history is not evidence of a purposeless world. Instead, we see successive waves of humans, as the cast on this mortal stage changes, again and again.

And, however articulate some of those despairing actors are in this human drama, without the gospel light they view only a tiny portion of one scene, not even a whole act. And certainly not the whole play. Such are invited to understand the purposes and instructions of the Author of this drama. But when He finally “comes on the stage, the play is over!”

“And we will prove them herewith”

Meanwhile, we should not impute man’s failures to God! “Remember, remember that it is not the work of God that is frustrated, but the work of men” (D&C 3:3).

Indeed, man’s successes and failures were known from the beginning by the Lord and were taken into account by Him in the unfolding of His plan of salvation. (See 1 Nephi 9:6.) His purposes will be fully achieved.

Justice, love, mercy, and truth will finally prevail in a universe presided over by a Lord who is a determined as well as a loving Tutor. This mortal school is one of which the Father and the Son have solemnly declared, “And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them” (Abraham 3:25).

The Lord knows how true individual development requires a setting of agency and opportunity. There is no other way.

“Shine as lights in the world”

No wonder Apostles and prophets have told us not to be moved away from the hope of the gospel, for hope is “an anchor of the soul” (Hebrews 6:19) to “make them sure and steadfast, always abounding in good works” (Ether 12:4; see also Colossians 1:23).

The need, therefore, is for devoted disciples to do as Paul said, to “shine as lights in the world” (Philippians 2:15), illuminating that latter-day valley foreseen by Joel: “Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision” (Joel 3:14; see also Revelation 16:16; Zechariah 14:2).

The very way in which these illuminated individuals “take up [the] cross daily” is a sermon in itself. (See Luke 9:23.) They lead lives not of quiet desperation but of quiet inspiration, constituting what Paul would call

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their "defence and confirmation of the gospel" (Philippians 1:7).

Theirs represents a tinier and quieter history within the larger and noisier human history, a joyful and reassuring drama within the more despairing drama being played out on this planet.

The first scene: A mission president is called on very short notice to replace a mission president who has died. The faithful wife, in one case, brings her husband's body home, while the other sister, just out of surgery, willingly responds to the call to join her husband far from home. Each sister handles her stern challenge trustingly, sweetly, and without murmuring. They understand that sin is the only real tragedy!

A second snapshot: A young mission president, his wife, and five children in spartan circumstances. Water must be boiled and placed in their van as they drive for hours under a scorching sun to be with scattered missionaries and Saints. Adopted children from another culture are now in a home which is developing a celestial culture, where the mother is the children's only school teacher. Uncomplainingly, this family goes effectively about their labors—quite innocent of how special they are! They know they are included in this reassuring declaration: "all flesh is in mine hands; be still and know that I am God" (D&C 101:16).

Next, in Germany a serviceman solicitously rounds up his military friends in his van to go to a special Young Adult conference. One friend cannot be found in time, and this special serviceman left some of his meager and precious savings for an airplane ticket so that individual could then fly to the needed nourishment of that conference. Intrinsically, this benefactor follows the second great commandment and rejects the despairing declaration that "hell is other people."

Another portrait is of a youthful disciple, a woman gymnast paralyzed because of a tumble. She fell not into

paralysis but into saintliness. She becomes a witness in a wheelchair. How tall she stands, and how much she stretches the souls of others! Her deprivation is like an excavation, the readying of a reservoir into which a generous God, one day, will pour the Malachi measure of compensatory blessings, "that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Malachi 3:10).

Another montage: Widows and widowers, waiting patiently and trustingly for the time of their release, when they can rejoin their eternal companions. Meanwhile, they go about their duties. Like Alma and Paul, they have learned to be content in their allotted circumstances. (See Alma 29:3, 6; Philippians 4:11.)

Likewise, one deeply admires those wronged who, nevertheless, go on doing that which is right, refusing to become offended or bitter. Let others charge God foolishly (see Job 1:22); these faithful souls are magnanimous and forgiving, as was a generous Joseph in Egypt to his erring brothers: "Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life" (Genesis 45:6). Such Saints fashion forgiveness where others would revel in resentment!

One is humbled by the spiritual submissiveness of the dying young mother of twenty-six, understandably anguished at the prospect of not rearing her two children, one of whom she so recently made ready to lay down her life for, if necessary. The baby arrived safely, but, alas, the gallant mother could not tarry. With childlike faith this young sister touchingly inquired, "If I am to die, then how can I help my husband and my parents as they watch me die?" Surely she (and others similarly situated) faithfully conforms to King Benjamin's portrait of a Saint as one being "willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father" (Mosiah 3:19).

Let others falter

Such individuals give to us a continuing sermon in sainthood. The gospel light has “infused such joy” into their souls, that any cloud of darkness has been dispelled (Alma 19:6).

“By the patience of hope and the labor of love” these are finishing the work the Lord has given them to do. (See “Come, Let Us Anew,” *Hymns*, no. 17.)

Let the winds and the storms beat and pound upon such faithful Saints; they will overcome the world—not vice versa. Let others falter; these will not! Let others pout and doubt; these will not! Let some noisily mock the temple; these will quietly flock to the temple, to do the work of Him whose house it is!

God bless you faithful brothers and sisters for shining “as lights in the world” (Philippians 2:15), as beacons to dispel despair. To a world spiritually illiterate, you give great lessons in the

grammar of the gospel, including this one: death is a mere comma, not an exclamation point!

In the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir and congregation sang
“Hoe of Israel.”

President Benson

We welcome those who have just joined us on radio and television. We are gathered in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, in the first session of the 153rd Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Elder David B. Haight, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Howard W. Hunter, also a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder David B. Haight

Boyhood memories

I wish everyone could grow up in a small town. I have so many happy memories of my boyhood. During those delightful summer and winter evenings we created most of our own activities and amusement. They were wonderful days.

The most important building in our town in addition to the schoolhouse was our ward meetinghouse. The chapel had an imposing, two-tiered, elevated stand. The stand was quite large, and the first raised portion had a table for the ward clerk at one end and a piano at the other end, and right in the center of this elevated area was the sacrament table. On the highest level of the stand was the pulpit with its red plush cover and beautifully carved chairs with red plush seats for the bish-

opric or visiting authorities. On the rear wall of the chapel were two impressive oil paintings, one of the Kirtland Temple and the other of the Salt Lake Temple. Everyone in attendance had a clear view of the stately pulpit and, of course, the sacrament table.

Sacrament meetings were special

Sacrament meetings were very special occasions. The Lord instructed that “it is expedient that the church meet together often to partake of bread and wine in the remembrance of the Lord Jesus” (D&C 20:75). We of the Aaronic Priesthood knew it was special. We were well trained. We knew exactly what we should do. We had been taught at home and in our quorum meetings of the high honor placed on

us as holders of God's holy priesthood, which authorized us to perform sacred ordinances of the gospel.

As a deacon, I vividly recall how we admired the two priests seated up on the first level of the raised platform who would administer the blessing on the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Everyone in the meetinghouse could see them. I'm sure they felt the importance of the occasion. They were neatly dressed in their best clothes and well prepared.

The bishopric, seated in their special chairs, were on the stand above the priests. Everyone could see them. The priests acted and looked as dignified as the bishopric.

As deacons and teachers we sat on the first row, prepared to pass the sacrament. I recall how shiny the bread trays appeared, and the individual glass cups for the water sparkled. Everything about the sacrament table, including the linen, was immaculate and ready on time.

Sacrament hymns

Everyone was expected to sing the special sacrament hymn. Everyone did sing. Children were trained not only to be reverent but to know some of the words to the most familiar sacrament songs. I can still see Sister Ella Jack, who led the music, standing in full view between the sacrament table and piano, as she would pause and look over the congregation to be sure everyone had a songbook and was ready to sing. She gave special attention to see that the Aaronic Priesthood boys had songbooks. We would all sing. We were learning in our youth that to feel of the Spirit we must experience a change in our hearts, and to be in harmony on this sacred occasion required our singing the sacrament hymns. As we personally sang the words, our souls were better prepared to understand this sacred ordinance. At the Last Supper the early Apostles joined with the Savior in singing. Matthew records, "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives" (Matthew 26:30).

And as we would sing in that sacrament meeting . . .

In humility, our Savior,
Grant thy Spirit here, we pray;
As we bless the bread and water
In thy name, this holy day.
Let me not forget, O Savior,
Thou didst bleed and die for me
When thy heart was stilled and
broken
On the cross at Calvary.

Fill our hearts with sweet
forgiving;
Teach us tolerance and love;
Let our prayers find access to thee
In thy holy courts above.
Then, when we have proven
worthy
Of thy sacrifice divine,
Lord, let us regain thy presence;
Let thy glory round us shine.
(Hymns, no. 49.)

These words would be impressed upon our hearts because we had actually sung them. There comes to one's soul heavenly thoughts as he joins in heavenly expressions coupled with heavenly melody.

Preparation for sacrament service

After the sacrament song had been sung, the priests knelt on a little red velvet bench as they offered the blessing on the bread and the water. We didn't have printed cards, but the twentieth section of the Doctrine and Covenants was open if needed. There were no microphones or speakers. The priests were taught to read slowly and distinctly and to enunciate clearly that everyone might hear and understand the words of this sacred prayer, every word of which was given to us by the Savior Himself.

Our quorum advisers schooled us in our priesthood meeting on the sacredness of the ordinance of the sacrament—how our thoughts should be about the Savior, of His sacrifice for

us—the importance of our dress and appearance, and of this quiet opportunity to resolve in our own minds to do better in keeping all of the commandments. We carefully watched our own priests officiate in a sacred procedure somewhat similar to the very first such occasion and heard them recite a divinely directed blessing upon the bread and water in remembrance of the flesh and blood of our Savior. As the priest publicly addresses our Eternal Father in Heaven, he might, if spiritually in tune, visualize in his mind a loving Heavenly Father listening to his humble plea,

“O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to the souls of all those who partake of it, that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given them; that they may always have his Spirit to be with them” (D&C 20:77).

Lord's Supper introduced by the Savior

I wish the Aaronic Priesthood boys throughout the Church could have the same opportunity of hearing Elder Howard W. Hunter bless the sacrament as we have had in the temple. He is a special witness of Christ. As I have listened to him ask our Heavenly Father to bless the sacrament, I have felt of the deep spirituality in his soul. Every word was clear and meaningful. He was not in a hurry, not rushed. He was the spokesman for all of the Apostles in addressing our Heavenly Father. Every word in the sacrament ordinance is vital. Everyone in the sacrament meeting should clearly hear each word and reflect upon the covenant just made and on their own personal worthiness.

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper was introduced by the Savior Him-

self as recorded by the Gospel writers. Elder James E. Talmage comments:

“While Jesus with the Twelve still sat at table, He took a loaf or cake of bread, and having reverently given thanks and by blessing sanctified it, He gave a portion to each of the apostles, saying: ‘Take, eat; this is my body.’ . . . Then, taking a cup of wine, He gave thanks and blessed it, and gave it unto them with the command: ‘Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. . . .’ In this simple but impressive manner was instituted the ordinance, since known as the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The bread and wine, duly consecrated by prayer, become emblems of the Lord's body and blood, to be eaten and drunk reverently, and in remembrance of Him” (*Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saint, 1916], pp. 596–97).

This holy ordinance was later taught by the Savior to the Nephites on the Western Hemisphere. After teaching and healing their sick, “Jesus commanded his disciples that they should bring forth some bread and wine unto him. . . .

“He took of the bread and brake and blessed it; and he gave unto the disciples and commanded that they should eat.

“And when they had eaten . . . , he commanded that they should give unto the multitude” (3 Nephi 18:1, 3–4).

The Savior instructed, “Give it unto the people of my church, unto all those who shall believe and be baptized in my name.

“And this shall ye always observe to do, even as I have done, even as I have broken bread and blessed it and given it unto you. . . .

“And this shall ye always do to those who repent and are baptized in my name; and ye shall do it in remembrance of my blood, which I have shed for you, that ye may witness unto the Father that ye do always remember

me. And if ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you.

"And I give unto you a commandment that ye shall do these things. And if ye shall always do these things blessed are ye, for ye are built upon my rock" (3 Nephi 18:5-6, 11-12).

Opportunity for spiritual growth

The weekly opportunity of partaking of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is one of the most sacred ordinances of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and is further indication of His love for all of us. Associated with the partaking of the sacrament are principles that are fundamental to man's advancement and exaltation in the kingdom of God and the shaping of one's spiritual character. We should reflect in our own weekday conduct the spiritual renewal and commitments made on Sunday. We may fail to recognize the deep spiritual significance this ordinance offers to each of us personally. Is it possible that a casual attitude on our part of routine formality of this sacred occasion might deaden our opportunity for spiritual growth?

We all have regrets for words or deeds or thoughts from Sabbath to Sabbath that we would like to erase from our souls. Perhaps we have erred against someone or injured them; or, if there is ill feeling in our heart, we should repent, obtain forgiveness from those affected or transgressed against, then humbly, with a contrite spirit, prepare ourselves to be worthy to partake of the sacrament. If we have sincerely repented, we can be forgiven, and spiritual healing can come to our souls. You and I have felt it.

By revelation the Lord instructed that "the members shall manifest before the church, and also before the elders, by a godly walk and conversation, that they are worthy . . . walking in holiness before the Lord" (D&C 20:69).

The Savior also taught: "Ye shall not suffer any one knowingly to partake of my flesh and blood unworthily" (3 Nephi 18:28).

Some years ago Elder Melvin J. Ballard wrote:

"I am a witness that there is a spirit attending the administration of the sacrament that warms the soul from head to foot; you feel the wounds of the spirit being healed, and the load being lifted. Comfort and happiness come to the soul that is worthy and truly desirous of partaking of this spiritual food" (*Crusader for Righteousness* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966], p. 133).

During the administration and passing of the sacrament those present have the opportunity to think of the precious gifts available through His sacrifice for each of us, for the sacrament is blessed and sanctified that each may partake of it in remembrance of the Son of God. (See D&C 20:77.)

Commit to keep the commandments

Usually once a week, for a little more than an hour, we have the opportunity to attend sacrament meeting and reflect on the life of our Savior; to recall with deep gratitude and reverence His life of purity, kindness, and love; to reflect upon the great atoning sacrifice; and to partake of the broken bread, symbolic of His torn flesh, and drink of the cup, symbolic of His blood that was shed on the cross.

The Savior taught the Nephites that "I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me.

"And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; . . . that I might draw all men unto me" (3 Nephi 27:13-14).

As we partake of the sacrament and reflect upon His sacrifice for each of us, we make a solemn commitment to keep the commandments which He has given us, that by so doing we might always have His spirit to be with us. By partaking of the sacrament each

Sunday we receive the encouragement and strength to keep the commandments of God, to live uprightly, virtuously, and honestly. Did not Jesus Himself sum them all up as follows: "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and will all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself" (Luke 10:27).

This is what every person who partakes of the sacrament is committed to do. Living God's commandments obligates a person to a life of goodness—goodness to society and a genuine helpfulness to humanity, and excluding from one's life hatred, enmity, immorality, selfishness, drunkenness, jealousy, and dishonesty.

May we experience the joy of regular attendance at sacrament meeting and feel the blessings of eternal progression in our personal lives through wholehearted compliance, in spirit and actions, with the sacred words of the sacrament.

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: "Reading the experience of others, . . . can never give us a comprehensive view of our condition and true relation to God. Knowledge of these things can only be obtained by experi-

ence through the ordinances of God set forth for that purpose. Could you gaze into heaven five minutes, you would know more than you would by reading all that ever was written on the subject" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Co.], 1938, p. 324).

Blessings of eternal progression

The sacrament is one ordinance that allows us to experience a personal relationship to God and enlarges our knowledge and understanding of Him and His Only Begotten Son.

Our personal reward for compliance with the covenants and obligations in the ordinance of the sacrament becomes the companionship of God's Holy Spirit. This is the light that leads to eternal life. The divine virtues associated with the partaking of the Lord's Supper are to keep His divine life ever in mind; to love the Lord with all our heart, might, mind, and strength; and to labor to bring to pass His ultimate purpose—the eternal life of man.

I bear you my humble testimony and witness that this is true, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Howard W. Hunter

Message to every living person

The message I bring to this conference today and to those listening to these proceedings is important to every living person. It is not a new message. If you are a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints you have heard it many times. If you are not a member, you may have heard the words before, but perhaps today, because of additional evidence, you may be more impressed by its truthfulness and more inclined to make it a motivating belief.

The message I speak of has been part of all the addresses you have heard previously today. It is simple and beautiful and magnificent. I may not present it in a perfect way, and there may be many who will not completely understand it. We may have difficulty responding to it in an appropriate manner, but the message itself has been referred to as the greatest, the most exciting, the most significant and important that we will ever hear. It has to do with the "good news"—the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Specifically, it is that Jesus of Nazareth, the same who was born of

Mary in Bethlehem some two thousand years ago, is the Savior of all mankind. We know, and testify to the world, that he lived a truly perfect and exemplary life, that he suffered for our sins in the Garden of Gethsemane, that he gave his life for us by being crucified on a cross, and that he was resurrected after three days—as he said he would be. The final part of this good news is that he will return at some future time to gather in his own.

This is also the message of the Apostle Paul, conveyed in his letter to the Saints at Corinth, that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again on the third day. These are the words he wrote:

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

“By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

“And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:1–4).

“He is risen”

At this Easter season our thoughts turn to the events that comprise what is perhaps the most exciting part of the good news that we bear. I’m speaking of those events which followed the crucifixion of the Savior. The Gospel writers described the hurried burial of the Lord because of the onset of the Sabbath day; the early-morning discovery of the empty tomb by Mary and other faithful women; the announcement of the angel, “He is not here: for he is risen, as he said” (Matthew 28:6); the message, delivered by Mary to Peter and John, that the body had been removed from the sepulcher; the realization on the part of Peter and John that the tomb truly was empty;

and finally, the two brief conversations Mary had—first, with the two personages in white in the sepulcher, and second, with the one whom she thought was the caretaker of the garden, but soon realized when he spoke to her that he was in fact the Master himself.

“Other sheep I have”

These are events that confirm the messiahship of Jesus. It is to these events that Christians look for support of the hope that there is life after death. In our modern world, where life is so different and so far removed from the events of that first Easter morning, many have a difficult time believing and identifying with these things. For those who are struggling, we have additional good news. There is a way to know of a surety, and there are many evidences that can help those seeking truth to know and understand. May I briefly share with you, first, some of the evidences, and then, second, a course of action that, if followed, can bring about a knowledge of the truthfulness of these things.

While in Jerusalem, Jesus gave one of his most impressive discourses when he spoke about shepherds and sheep and referred to himself as the Good Shepherd who knows his sheep and is known by those of his fold. He said:

“I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

“As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

“And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd” (John 10:14–16).

Who were these “other sheep” which were not of the Jewish fold in Palestine, who would hear the voice of the Lord and be brought into the light of the gospel with the rest of his sheep? This reference was to a remnant of the house of Joseph who were living on the

American continent, whose ancestors had left the Jerusalem area some six centuries prior to that time and traveled to the New World.

After his crucifixion and subsequent resurrection, the Lord did visit them, as he had said he would; and to those other sheep here in the Americas the resurrected Christ said:

"Ye are they of whom I said: Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

"And they understood me not, for they supposed it had been the Gentiles" (3 Nephi 15:21-22).

Another witness for Christ

Those who are familiar with the life and teachings of the Master from their knowledge of the books of the Bible will be interested to know there is also a record of his appearance to the people of the Western Hemisphere—the other sheep to whom he made reference. It is titled the Book of Mormon after the prophet who compiled and abridged the records of the peoples of the American continents. The Book of Mormon is another witness for Christ and records his teachings to the other flock in the New World. It is also a record of the historical events covering more than one thousand years of the travels and struggles of these people and the prophets who led and taught them.

We are already aware of the strength and the power of the many testimonies of the prophets who have lived in the world, as recorded in the Bible. Our good news is that the words of the prophets who lived in the New World give us not only additional insight regarding spiritual things, but also a confirming testimony that supports and is in harmony with what we already understand from our reading of the Bible.

Moroni's counsel

To those who may not be familiar with the Book of Mormon but are sincerely seeking truth, reading it will have a profound effect on your life. It will expand your knowledge of the way God deals with man and will give you a greater desire to live in harmony with his gospel teachings. It will also provide for you a powerful testimony of Jesus.

In answer to the questions, "How can I know of the truthfulness of these things?" and "How can I know of a surety that the Savior lives today?" Moroni, one of the great prophets in the Book of Mormon, has provided the answer. He gives us guidance regarding how one can determine the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon, and this same procedure will lead us into all truth and can surely assist one who desires to know about the reality of the resurrection of Jesus. He wrote this statement:

"And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

"And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things" (Moroni 10:4-5).

If you have a sincere desire to know, and if you are willing to live in accordance with all of the commandments He has given, this counsel of Moroni will result in a spiritual confirmation of gospel truths.

Soon the Savior will return

At this Easter season, I feel strongly the importance of my commission to testify of the reality of the Savior's resurrection. My brothers and sisters, there is a God in the heavens who loves and cares about you and me. We have a Father in Heaven, who sent

his Firstborn of spirit children, his Only Begotten in the flesh, to be an earthly example for us, to take upon himself the sins of the world, and subsequently to be crucified for the sins of the world and be resurrected. It was he who said:

"For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

"But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I;

"Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—

"Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men" (D&C 19:16–19).

And again he said: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

"And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" (John 11:25–26).

It is truly a beautiful message—there will be life after death; we can return to live with our Father in Heaven once again, because of the sacrifice the Savior has made for us, and because of our own repentance and obedience to the commandments.

In the glorious dawn of Easter morning, when the thoughts of the Christian world are turned to the resurrection of Jesus for a few fleeting moments, let us express appreciation to our Heavenly Father for the great plan of salvation that has been provided for us. We should turn toward unselfishness and careful adherence to the principles of righteousness. In doing so, let us remember that the time of preparation is growing short, that soon the Savior will return. As the Apostle Paul has said: "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come" (Hebrews 10:37).

That we may be found worthy at his coming is my prayer in his name, amen.

The Choir sang "All Glory, Laud and Honor" without further announcement.

President Benson

Elder Howard W. Hunter, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has spoken to us, following which the Tabernacle Choir sang "All Glory, Laud and Honor."

President Marion G. Romney has prepared a message to be delivered at this time and has requested that it be read by his son, Bishop George J. Romney.

President Marion G. Romney

(Read by his son, George J. Romney)

Unity, oneness, equality

One of the central themes of the gospel of Jesus Christ is unity. The scriptures teach that equality and oneness should prevail among members of the Church.

You will recall that on the night of the Last Supper, as the Savior met with

his Apostles, he prayed that they might be one with him, as he was one with the Father. He prayed not for them alone, "but for them also which [should] believe on [him] through their word;

"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the

world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:20-21).

Always the aim has been unity, oneness, and equality among the members of the Church of Christ. As an example, I call your attention to the record of Enoch, how he and his people reached a state of unity when the rest of the world was at war.

"And there went forth a curse upon all people that fought against God;

"And from that time forth there were wars and bloodshed among them; but the Lord came and dwelt with his people, and they dwelt in righteousness.

"The fear of the Lord was upon all nations, so great was the glory of the Lord, which was upon his people. And the Lord blessed the land. . . .

"And the Lord called his people Zion." Why? *"Because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them"* (Moses 7:15-18; italics added).

During his mortal ministry Jesus taught his disciples the same doctrine. After his ascension, "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

"Of one heart and of one soul"

"And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common" (Acts 4:31-32).

After the resurrected Savior's ministry among the Nephites, they "were all converted unto the Lord, upon all the face of the land, both Nephites and Lamanites, and there were no contentions and disputations among them, and every man did deal justly one with another.

"And they had all things common among them; therefore there were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free, and partakers of

the heavenly gift" (4 Nephi 2-3; italics added).

Out of harmony with leaders—an indefensible position

Today we are the Church of Christ, and the Lord expects us to come to this same unity. He has said to us: "Be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine" (D&C 38:27).

Some members assume that one can be in full harmony with the spirit of the gospel, enjoy full fellowship in the Church, and at the same time be out of harmony with the leaders of the Church and the counsel and direction they give. Such a position is wholly inconsistent, because the guidance of this Church comes not alone from the written word but also from continuous revelation, and the Lord gives that revelation to the Church through his chosen prophet. It follows, therefore, that those who profess to accept the gospel and who at the same time criticize and refuse to follow the counsel of the prophet are assuming an indefensible position. Such a spirit leads to apostasy. It is not new. It was prevalent in the days of Jesus and in the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

It is good to remember the great lesson the Savior taught the Nephites on this subject as he began his ministry among them. Said he:

"There shall be no disputations among you, as there have hitherto been; neither shall there be disputations among you concerning the points of my doctrine, as there have hitherto been.

"For verily, verily I say unto you, he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another" (3 Nephi 11:28-29).

Seek the Lord's will—then do it

There is but one way that we can be united, and that way is to seek the

Lord and his righteousness. (See 3 Nephi 13:33.) Unity comes by following the light from above. It does not come out of the confusions below. While men depend upon their own wisdom and walk in their own way, without the guidance of the Lord they cannot live in unity. Neither can they come to unity by following uninspired men.

The way to unity is for us to learn the will of the Lord and then to do it. Until this basic principle is understood and observed, there will be no unity and peace on the earth. The power of the Church for good in the world depends upon the extent to which we, the members thereof, observe this principle.

The major reason for the world's troubles today is that men are not seeking to know the will of the Lord and then to do it. Rather do they seek to solve their problems in their own wisdom and in their own way. The Lord, in the first section of the Doctrine and Covenants, which he revealed as the preface to the book of his commandments, pointed this out and marked it as one of the causes of the calamities which he foresaw coming upon the inhabitants of the earth. Listen to this ringing declaration:

"They have strayed from mine ordinances, and have broken mine everlasting covenant;

"They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way" (D&C 1:15-16).

Unity through scriptures and the prophet

Brethren and sisters, do not rely upon the counsel of men nor trust in the arm of flesh (see D&C 1:19), but seek the Lord to establish his righteousness (see D&C 1:16).

We of this Church can come to a unity and a oneness which will give us strength beyond anything we have yet enjoyed if we will obtain a sounder understanding of the principles of the

gospel and come to a unity in our interpretations of present world conditions and trends. This we can do by prayerful study of the Lord's word, including that given to us through the living prophet.

This is the way to come to a unity. If we will study the word of the Lord as it comes to us through the standard works and through the instructions of the living prophet and not harden our hearts, but humble ourselves and develop a real desire to understand its application to us in our own peculiar circumstances, and then ask the Lord in faith, believing that we shall receive (see D&C 18:18), all the while being diligent in keeping the commandments of the Lord, surely the path we should follow will be made known unto us, and we will be able to face the world as a solid unit.

Opportunity to rise heavenward

Surely we need this unity and this strength in this day in which we live. We have a great opportunity, the opportunity to rise heavenward, to gain the spirit of the gospel as we have never enjoyed it before. This we can do by developing among us that unity required by the laws of the celestial kingdom.

If, in the expediency of the moment, we set God aside to follow the teachings of men, we disown him.

Only a united people, keeping God's commands, can expect the protection which he alone can give when the floods come, and the rains descend, and the winds blow, and beat upon our house. (See Matthew 7:25.)

It is my conviction that, since we are engaged in the Lord's work, we can accomplish everything he requires us to do if we will but be united. That we may so be, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Bishop, would you carry to your father our deep appreciation for this

very timely message and convey to him our love and blessings?

The remarks of President Marion G. Romney, First Counselor in the First Presidency, have just been read by his son, Bishop George J. Romney.

We are grateful to the managers and operators of the many television and radio stations and cable systems for offering their facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this conference to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "Sweet Is the Work, My God, My

King." The benediction will then be given by Elder John H. Groberg, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, after which this conference will be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The Choir sang "Sweet Is the Work, My God, My King."

Elder John H. Groberg offered the benediction.

FIRST DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

SECOND SESSION

The second general session of the 153rd Annual General Conference began at 2:00 P. M. on Saturday, April 2, 1983. President Gordon B. Hinckley conducted.

Music for this session was provided by a Young Men-Young Women choir from the Ensign, Granite, Pioneer, Rose Park, Liberty, and Monument Park regions directed by Margaret C. Richards with Clay Christiansen at the organ.

At the beginning of the meeting, President Hinckley made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

President Spencer W. Kimball is watching the proceedings of this session on television. President Marion G. Romney is also excused and is participating with us by means of television. They have asked that I conduct this service.

We welcome all assembled in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on Temple Square in this, the second general session of the 153rd Annual General Con-

ference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We also welcome the many members and friends of the Church tuned to these proceedings by radio and television, or by direct wire or satellite transmission. There is an overflow congregation in the adjacent Assembly Hall where Elders J. Thomas Fyans and Rex D. Pinegar preside.

We are pleased to acknowledge especially our guests who are present this afternoon, along with general and local Church leaders and members from many parts of the world.

We express appreciation to the owners and operators of many radio and television stations and to the owners and operators of cable systems for their generous cooperation in making these proceedings available to members and friends of the Church in many countries.

These proceedings are also being carried to over five hundred and fifty stake centers by satellite transmission.

The music for this session will be provided by a Young Men-Young Women choir from the Ensign, Granite, Pioneer, Rose Park, Liberty, and Monument Park regions under the di-

rection of Margaret C. Richards, with Clay Christiansen at the organ.

We will open this service with the choir singing "There Is a Green Hill Far Away." The invocation will be offered by Elder William Grant Bangerter, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "There Is a Green Hill Far Away."

The invocation was offered by Elder William Grant Bangerter.

President Hinckley

The choir will now sing "Come, Ye Children of the Lord."

The choir sang "Come, Ye Children of the Lord."

President Hinckley

Brother Wilford G. Edling will now read the auditor's report, following which Brother Francis M. Gibbons will present the statistical report of the Church for the year 1982.

Auditor's Report 1982

Wilford G. Edling

We have reviewed the annual financial report of the Church as of 31 December 1982 and operations for the year then ended. The financial statements and operations reviewed by the committee include the general funds of the Church and of other controlled organizations, the accounts of which are maintained by the Finance and Records Department of the Church. We have also examined the budgeting, accounting, and auditing procedures employed and the manner in which funds are received and expenditures are controlled. We determined that expenditures of general Church funds were authorized by the First Presidency and by budgetary procedures. The budget is authorized by the Council on Disposition of Tithes, comprised of the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, and the Presiding Bishopric. The Budget and Appropriations Committee, in weekly meetings, administers the expenditure of funds under the budget.

Modern accounting technology and equipment are employed by the Finance and Records and other depart-

ments in keeping abreast of rapid Church expansion and changing methods of electronic data processing.

The Auditing Department, which is independent of all other departments, functions in the threefold capacity of performing financial audits, operational audits, and audits of computer systems employed by the Church. These services are conducted on a continuous basis and include all Church departments, other Church-controlled organizations (the accounts of which are maintained in the Finance and Records Department), and worldwide operations, including missions, financial centers, and departmental activities conducted in foreign countries. The extent and scope of the Auditing Department in safeguarding the resources of the Church are increasing commensurate with the growth and widening activities of the Church. The audit of local funds of wards and stakes is assigned to stake auditors. Incorporated businesses owned or controlled by the Church, for which accounts are not maintained in the Finance and Records Department, are audited by professional auditing firms or by governmental regulatory agencies.

Based on our review of the annual financial report and other accounting data, and our study of the accounting and auditing methods by which financial operations are controlled, together with continuing discussions with personnel of the Finance and Records Department, the Auditing Department, and Church legal representatives, we are of the opinion that the general funds of the Church received and expended during the year 1982 have been

properly accounted for in accordance with the established procedures outlined herein.

Respectfully submitted,
Church Audit Committee
Wilford G. Edling
David M. Kennedy
Warren E. Pugh
Merrill J. Bateman
Ted E. Davis

Statistical Report 1982

Francis M. Gibbons

For the information of the members of the Church, the First Presidency has issued the following statistical report concerning the growth and status of the Church as of 31 December 1982. (Membership figures include estimates based on 1982 reports available prior to conference.)

Church Units

Number of stakes	1,392
Number of districts	336
Number of missions	180
Number of wards	8,888
Number of branches	
in stakes	2,699
Number of branches	
in missions	2,029
(These statistics reflect an increase of 71 stakes and 523 wards and branches during 1982.)	
Number of sovereign countries with organized wards or branches	89
Number of territories, colonies, and possessions with organized wards or branches	16

Church Membership

Total membership at the close of 1982	5,165,000
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Church Growth during 1982

Increase in children	
of record	124,000
Children of record	
baptized	67,000
Converts baptized	207,000

Social Statistics

Birthrate per thousand	28.1
Number of persons married	
per thousand	12.2
Death rate per thousand	3.9

Priesthood

Deacons	227,000
Teachers	168,000
Priests	325,000
Elders	436,000
Seventies	32,000
High priests	180,000

Missionaries

Full-time missionaries	26,300
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Genealogical

Names cleared in 1982 for temple endowments	2,462,700
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Temples

Number of endowments performed during 1982	
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For the living	48,800
For the dead	4,418,000
Temples in operation	19
Temples planned or under construction	22
Temples closed during the year	1

Church Educational System

Total enrollment during 1981-82 school year:	
Seminaries and Institutes ..	320,500
Church schools, colleges, universities	70,100

Welfare Services

Persons assisted by LDS Social Services	83,700
Persons placed in gainful employment	22,300
Man-days of labor donated to welfare services	393,500
Commodities distributed from storehouses in pounds	21,099,000

Prominent Members Who Passed Away Since Last April

President N. Eldon Tanner, First Counselor in the First Presidency; Elder LeGrand Richards, member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles;

John G. Lahaderne, president of the Italy Catania Mission; Charles R. Hansen, president of the California Oakland Mission; Terry Lavelle Crapo, Regional Representative; Lavere Arnold Ricks, Regional Representative; James David King, president of the Paradise Valley Arizona Stake; J. Spencer Cornwall, former conductor of the Tabernacle Choir; Bertha Reeder Richards, former general president of the Young Women's MIA from 1948 to 1961; Percy K. Fetzner, patriarch and former temple, stake, and mission president; Monte L. Bean, prominent Church leader and philanthropist; Dr. Albert Ray Olpin, former president of the University of Utah; Clare Middlemiss, personal secretary to President David O. McKay for thirty-five years; W. Creed Haymond, noted athlete and Church leader; Dr. Barney Clark, recipient of the first artificial heart.

President Hinckley

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our first speaker. He will be followed by Elder Royden G. Derrick, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie

I shall tell you how the keys of the kingdom operate, including from whence they came, where they now vest, and what their future is.

The divine account begins in the spring of 1829. It is the ides of the memorable month of May. The Lord's prophet is now in the twenty-fourth year of his mortal probation. He is dictating holy scripture to his amanuensis. The holy word speaks of baptism, without which a man can neither see nor enter the kingdom of heaven.

Baptism

The Spirit of the Lord rests upon the seer and upon his scribe. They desire baptism as starving souls cry out for food. A divine Providence guides them to a secluded place on the banks of the Susquehanna River near Harmony, Pennsylvania. There they pour out their souls to that God who commanded his own stainless Son to be baptized as a pattern for all men.

Then comes the miracle. The heavens are rent. An angel comes down from celestial heights to com-

mune with his fellow servants in mortality.

It is the resurrected John, whom Antipas beheaded more than 1800 years before in the foul dungeons of Machaerus.

It is that John, the only child of a priestly Zacharias and a sainted Elisabeth, who had himself been ordained by an angel, when but eight days of age, to overthrow the kingdom of the Jews.

It is that John to whom the Judean hosts came at Bethabara, seeking the cleansing power of his baptism. Then it was that the Beloved Baptist, "to fulfil all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15), immersed the very Son of God himself in the murky waters of a miserable Palestinian river.

It is that John for whom the heavens opened and who saw the Holy Ghost descend in bodily form, in quiet serenity like a dove, and rest upon the One of whom the Divine Voice then said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17).

Aaronic Priesthood

Now in resurrected glory, speaking in the name of that Messiah for whom he had died a martyr's death, he confers upon his mortal friends the Priesthood of Aaron and the keys of the ministering of angels and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins. (See D&C 13.)

Now, for the first time in nearly 1700 years, there are mortal men on earth who can stand in the place of the Lord Jesus in ministering for the salvation of men. The hour is at hand when the gloom of sullen darkness will be pierced and the light of heaven again shine forth on our benighted planet.

Melchizedek Priesthood

But this is only the beginning of the grand design. Messengers come again from the realms of light and glory. Peter, James, and John, who

held in their day that priesthood and those keys which always appertain to the Presidency of the earthly kingdom, come to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery.

These ancient Apostles, the friends and confidants of the Lord Jesus in mortality; these saintly souls who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead; these living witnesses of the One who died that all might live—then do a wondrous thing.

They confer upon the modern prophet and his associate the priesthood which is after the order of the Son of God, who abideth a priest forever. This Priesthood of Melchizedek is the highest and holiest order given to mortals now or ever. It includes now, and has always included, the power and authority of the holy apostleship.

Keys of the kingdom

With it the struggling mortals who will soon, by divine command, organize anew the Church and kingdom of God on earth, receive certain keys of almost infinite import.

They receive the keys of the kingdom by virtue of which they are empowered to organize, preside over, govern, and regulate the kingdom of God on earth, which is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

They also receive the keys of the dispensation of the fulness of times, that glorious age of restoration and refreshment in which God designs to gather all things in one in Christ; that age of revelation and gifts and miracles in which he will bring to pass the restitution of all things spoken by the mouths of all the holy prophets since the world began. (See D&C 27:12-13; 81:2.)

Being thus commissioned, and having thus the gospel of salvation, mortal men can set up anew God's kingdom on earth and can preach again the gospel in all the world and to every people. The kingdom is then established on the sixth day of April in 1830, since which time every faithful

member has devoted his time, talents, and means to spread the truth to our Father's other children.

But even this is not all. Yet other keys must be forthcoming. On a wondrous day in April of 1836, Moses and Elijah and Elias each come, bringing from their dispensations the keys and powers they had exercised as mortals. It is a day akin to that wondrous day 1800 years before on the Mount of Transfiguration. (See Matthew 17:1-13.)

Keys of gathering

Then it was, on the snowy mountain heights, after the Father had spoken from the cloud, that Moses and Elijah, both taken to heaven without tasting death, had come in their corporeal bodies to a temple not made with hands, and given for that day and time their keys and powers to Peter, James, and John.

And so it is now with those same ancient worthies. They come again in our day. This time, in a temple built by the tithing and the sacrifice of the Saints, those same ancient prophets, now ministering in resurrected glory, restore their keys and powers.

Moses, who in the majesty of the Melchizedek Priesthood led enslaved Israel out of Egyptian bondage into their promised Palestine, brings back those very keys. These keys empower mortals to gather the lost sheep of Israel from the Egypt of the world, and bring them to their promised Zion, where the scales of enslaving darkness will drop from their eyes.

These keys empower those who hold them to lead all Israel, the ten tribes included, from all the nations of the earth, coming as the prophetic word affirms, one by one and two by two, to the mountains of the Lord's houses, there to be endowed with power from on high.

Gospel of Abraham

The man Elias brings back "the gospel of Abraham," the great Abrahamic covenant whereby the faithful receive promises of eternal increase, promises that through celestial marriage their eternal posterity shall be as numerous as the sands upon the seashore or as the stars in heaven for multitude. Elias gives the promise—received of old by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—that in modern men and in their seed all generations shall be blessed. And we are now offering the blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to all who will receive them.

Elijah brings back the keys of the sealing power, the power that enables men now living, as it was with Peter of old, to bind on the earth below and have their acts sealed everlastingly in the heavens above. (See D&C 110:11-16.)

Because Elijah came, the baptisms we perform on earth will have efficacy, virtue, and force in eternity. In literal reality they give us membership in the earthly kingdom which is the Church, and in the heavenly kingdom which is the celestial realm where God and Christ are.

And so, in process of time, there is "a whole and complete and perfect union, and welding together of dispensations, and keys, and powers, and glories . . . from the days of Adam even to the present time" (D&C 128:18).

In the meridian of time Jesus ordained the Twelve in the coasts of Capernaum; he gave the keys of the kingdom to Peter, James, and John on the holy mount; and later he gave these same keys to all of the Twelve. (See Matthew 18:18.)

In our dispensation the Melchizedek Priesthood came in 1829; men were ordained to the holy apostleship in February of 1835; various keys were given at divers times, chiefly on April 3, 1836; and this continued until all the rivers of the past had flown into the ocean of the present, and mortal

men possessed all of the keys and powers ever vested in men in any age from Adam to the present.

All keys and powers given to the Twelve

By way of climax, all of the keys of the kingdom are given to the Twelve in the winter of 1844. They then receive what the revelations call the fulness of the priesthood, together with the power to confer that eternal fulness upon others.

After they are thus endowed and empowered, the Prophet says to the Twelve: "I have sealed upon your heads all the keys of the kingdom of God. I have sealed upon you every key, power, [and] principle that the God of heaven has revealed to me. Now, no matter where I may go or what I may do, the kingdom rests upon you. But, ye apostles of the Lamb of God, my brethren, upon your shoulders this kingdom rests; now you have got to round up your shoulders and bear off the kingdom. If you do not do it you will be damned." (See the *Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, sel. G. Homer Durham [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1946], p. 72.)

And thus is fulfilled the divine word in which the Lord had said aforetime to the Twelve: "For unto you, the Twelve, and those, the First Presidency, who are appointed with you to be your counselors and your leaders, is the power of this priesthood given, for the last days and for the last time, in the which is the dispensation of the fulness of times.

"Which power you hold, in connection with all those who have received a dispensation at any time from the beginning of the creation;

"For verily I say unto you, the keys of the dispensation, which ye have received, have come down from the fathers, and last of all, being sent down from heaven unto you" (D&C 112:30-32).

Keys exercised in fulness by only one man at a time

And thus also is established the Lord's system for succession in the Presidency. The keys of the kingdom of God—the right and power of eternal presidency by which the earthly kingdom is governed—these keys, having first been revealed from heaven, are given by the spirit of revelation to each man who is both ordained an Apostle and set apart as a member of the Council of the Twelve.

But since keys are the right of presidency, they can only be exercised in their fulness by one man on earth at a time. He is always the senior Apostle, the presiding Apostle, the presiding high priest, the presiding elder. He alone can give direction to all others, direction from which none is exempt.

Thus, the keys, though vested in all of the Twelve, are used by any one of them to a limited degree only, unless and until one of them attains that seniority which makes him the Lord's anointed on earth.

Divine succession until Christ comes again

It follows that when Joseph Smith—sent to a martyr's death by evil and murderous men—gasps his last breath, Brigham Young, being the next senior officer in the earthly kingdom, automatically becomes its presiding officer.

The next breath drawn by Brother Brigham is the breath of power filling the lungs of the Lord's previously anointed servant. There is not so long as the twinkling of an eye when the Church is without a presiding officer.

When President Kimball is called home to report the labors of an oh, so grand and successful ministry, the keys will pass in an instant suddenly to another Apostle of the Lord's own choosing. And thus this system of divine succession will continue until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in the

clouds of glory to reign personally upon the earth.

We need not fear for the future. This is the Lord's work; it is his kingdom; and he governs its affairs as he chooses. The keys, having been committed to man on earth, are now vested in those of his own choosing.

And as the Lord lives, and as Christ is true, and as truth will prevail, I testify that this work shall roll forward until it fills the whole earth, and until the knowledge of God covers the earth as the waters cover the sea.

Now, this testimony I bear for myself and for all the faithful elders of the kingdom, and for all the sainted

sisters who stand so valiantly at their sides, and above all I do it in the sacred and holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Even so, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder Royden G. Derrick, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He will be followed by Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Royden G. Derrick

Facts in the drama of life

William Shakespeare was insightful when he wrote: "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players" (*As You Like It*, act 2, sc. 7, line 139). Let me set the stage for a drama that is not fiction, but is reality. The drama is founded upon certain facts.

It is a fact that God lives. It is a fact that Jesus Christ was and is a divine being. It is a fact that the Father and the Son appeared to Joseph Smith in the Sacred Grove. It is a fact that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. It is a fact that God revealed his will through his prophets in biblical days, and that he does so today.

Script for the drama of life

The script for this drama was written before the world began. The script writer has revealed clues about future scenes to individuals who have shared them with all who would listen.

For example, twenty-six hundred years ago, one of the important characters in the drama was shown some scenes of "what shall be in the latter

days" (Daniel 2:28). Daniel the prophet was shown the interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream, from which he related, "And in the days of these kings," referring to the latter-day scenes, "shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Daniel 2:44).

The scenes relating to these clues are now on stage, front-center.

Joseph Smith's scene

At fourteen and one-half years of age, Joseph Smith went into the woods and prayed to our Heavenly Father, wanting to know which church of all the churches was true. There appeared before him God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. The Father said, "*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*" (Joseph Smith—History 1:17). Then Jesus Christ told that fourteen-year-old boy that the true church of God was not on the earth, and that he had been selected to be an instrument in the hands of God in restoring the church of Jesus Christ

and the true principles of Jesus Christ. In the scenes following, "the God of heaven set up a kingdom" about which Daniel the prophet said, "[it] shall never be destroyed."

Joseph Smith permitted manuscript pages of the translation of the Book of Mormon to fall into the hands of others, and they were lost. This was displeasing to the Lord, who said to him, "The works, and the designs, and the purposes of God cannot be frustrated, neither can they come to naught" (D&C 3:1).

"Remember. . . that it is not the work of God that is frustrated, but the work of men" (D&C 3:3).

"Behold, thou art Joseph, and thou wast chosen to do the work of the Lord, but because of transgression, if thou art not aware thou wilt fall" (D&C 3:9).

Had Joseph not measured up, the Lord would have made a change in the cast by appointing another to take his place. But he did measure up, as attested by further revelations from God which commended him for his faithfulness.

The Lord said that this kingdom, which would be established in the latter days, "shall never be destroyed." We needn't question whether this church that God has set up is going to fail. It will not! For God has so decreed!

Daniel further prophesied that "the kingdom shall not be left to other people" (Daniel 2:44). We cannot join any ecumenical movement, for if we do so, we will be required to compromise principles. We cannot do that, for the Lord has established the principles upon which his church is built, and we have no right to change them.

Eighteen months after the Church was organized, and following heavenly visitations during which the authority to act in the name of God was given to Joseph Smith, the Lord declared that "the keys of the kingdom of God are committed unto man on the earth," and that the kingdom "shall roll forth, until it has filled the whole earth" (D&C 65:2).

Jesus Christ is the star

Clues to other scenes in the drama have been given to other prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and John the Revelator, as well as others from biblical history; and Nephi, Alma, Helaman, Mormon, Moroni, and others from Book of Mormon history.

The star of the cast is Jesus Christ, the Savior of mankind. Many events in his life were the fulfillment of scenes previously shown to former-day prophets. Tomorrow, we commemorate the most important scene of all—the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who suffered and died to atone for the sins of men and women.

Cast—"inviteth them all to come unto him"

The number of people in the cast is unlimited. "If ye have desires to serve God," the Lord said, "ye are called to the work" (D&C 4:3). To pass the screen test, one must repent, be baptized, and keep God's commandments. Anyone is welcome to participate, for the prophet Nephi said, "He inviteth them all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile" (2 Nephi 26:33).

The acceptance of the gospel of Jesus Christ is affected by attitude. William James, a famous author and psychologist, wrote, "The greatest discovery of my age is that men can change their circumstances by changing the attitude of their minds" (Richard L. Evans, *Richard Evan's Quote Book* [Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1971], p. 161).

In the book of Proverbs we read, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). Henry David Thoreau sustained that concept when he said that a man becomes what he thinks about all day long. (See *Familiar Quotations*, ed. John Bartlett, 14th

ed. [Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1968], p. 682.)

We have our agency. It is the decision of each of us as to the character we play in this drama—as to what kind of person we are or will become.

When President David O. McKay was a young missionary in Scotland, he was homesick, discouraged, and low in spirit. As he walked down the street with his companion, he noticed an inscription chiseled in a stone lintel of an unfinished building which read, "Whate'er Thou Art, Act Well Thy Part." From that moment, he began to act the part of a good missionary and became a great one. This was a learning experience that helped him in numerous important callings he received later in life. (See *Cherished Experiences from the Writings of President David O. McKay*, comp. Clare Middlemiss [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1955], p. 174.)

Strive to become like Christ

If we want to be a person of integrity, we act as if we have integrity and we will be a person of integrity. If we want to be a person of charity and love, we act as if we have that characteristic and we will be that person.

The Savior alluded to this principle when he asked, "What manner of men ought ye to be?" Then he answered his own question, "Even as I am" (3 Nephi 27:27).

We should strive to become like him by acting as he would act.

God does not select the type of life we live. We make that selection by what we think. If you want to play the part, just act the part. What role are you playing now? Are you a valiant supporter? Are you a half-hearted member lacking conviction? Are you a bystander? Or are you one who fights against the Church of God.

Valiance equals eternal family, priesthood leadership, missions

There is a reward for valiance in this drama of life. The Savior said, "And . . . you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God" (D&C 14:7). It is difficult to conceive of eternal life being a place of joy and happiness without those we love in this life. Based upon our valiance, our future life will include our wife or husband, our children, our parents—yes, our posterity as well as our progenitors.

What can I do for my children to help them qualify for eternal life? Several years ago, the Missionary Department made a professional survey to determine what happens to returned missionaries. The survey included those missionaries who had returned from one to ten years previous and was claimed to be accurate within 3 percent. It disclosed that their faithfulness was most exemplary and praiseworthy. It was a revealing report that was much more favorable than one could expect.

A few weeks ago, I visited a stake consisting of young families. I asked the priesthood leaders how many of them had filled a mission. I was surprised when every man raised his hand. The next week I visited a more mature stake which was one of the outstanding stakes of the Church, and asked the same question. Every man in the meeting, but two, raised his hand.

The conclusion? Not that every man has to be a returned missionary to be a priesthood leader, but that those who fulfill an honorable mission develop an understanding of the gospel and a self-discipline that results in dedication and commitment to what they know to be true.

We should organize our family plans to result in a mission for each of our sons, and temple marriage for each of our sons and daughters. Planning missions for our sons might begin at birth when we start their own missionary savings program which will assist significantly in their being financially,

morally, physically, and mentally prepared when they reach mission age. However, we should, above all else, teach our children "to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord" (D&C 68:28).

Preparations for Second Coming

What can I do for my progenitors to help them qualify for eternal life? I can help my parents and grandparents to understand the gospel, to be baptized, and to receive these saving ordinances in the temple of God. I can make certain that my deceased parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, and as far as I can go in my genealogical research, have received in person or vicariously the temple saving ordinances necessary for them to gain eternal life. By doing these things for our posterity and for our progenitors, a forever family can be established, resulting in a dynasty of righteous lives that will bring joy and happiness "in this world, and eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory" (Moses 6:59).

The final scene of this great drama is near at hand. The kingdom of God is going forth preparatory to the second coming of Christ when the curtain will fall and the Savior will say to each of the valiant, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew 25:21). And thus the kingdom of God will continue forever through the eternities to come. As the prophet Daniel said, "And it shall stand forever" (Daniel 2:44), with you and I having received judgment and reward according to the role to which we have been faithful in this life—to which I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have just listened to Elder Royden G. Derrick, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now address us.

Elder Hartman Rector, Jr.

"Will a man rob God?" (Malachi 3:8). This must be one of the most pointed questions ever asked in the holy scriptures. The implications are that an affirmative answer would mean that those who rob God will be cursed by God and burned as stubble at the Lord's second coming. (See Malachi 3:9; 4:1.)

Tithing—critical judgment criterion

This query was made of ancient Israel through the prophet Malachi, but it didn't apply only to ancient Israel. It quite obviously applied to the Nephites and Lamanites on this continent, too, for the resurrected Lord repeated it to

them when he visited them in about A. D. 34. (See 3 Nephi 24:8–9.) I presume modern Israel is also included under the same injunction, for surely the Lord used almost the same words when he warned of the burning that would precede his second coming, and tithing seems to be the critical judgment criterion. (See D&C 64:23–24.)

On the other hand, those who do pay tithing (give the Lord *his* tenth) are promised that the windows of heaven will be opened to them and their blessings will exceed their ability to receive. (See Malachi 3:10.) Further, the Lord "will rebuke the devourer for [their] sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of [their] ground" (Malachi 3:11). This is a blessing of great magnitude.

Perfect timing

Obedience to the commandments of the Lord, including the important commandment of tithing, brings many blessings. We do not always know how the Lord will bless us. For example, possibly the following experience common to most of us may serve to illustrate.

Have you ever been following a slowpoke car that is doddering along with the driver looking at everything along the way, and you know that if he doesn't speed up you are never going to get through on that green light? But then he does speed up—just enough to get through on the yellow light—and you have to stop. This has a great tendency to test the patience. Sometimes we even start thinking rather derogatorily about him as he drives away. However, it just may be that the Lord is protecting us from an accident two miles down the road because we stopped at that light, even though we did it reluctantly. If you entertain these kinds of thoughts, it may have a tendency to make you thankful instead of irate or angry, which is much better for your digestion.

I had this principle vividly impressed upon me one day a long time ago. I was living back in Virginia at the time, and one beautiful fall day I drove out into the country to pick up some walnuts. There were sixteen Stop signs between my home and the very, very heavily wooded lane where I turned in to get those walnuts. I stopped fifteen times. The last Stop sign was way out in the country. I could see in both directions. There were no other cars in sight. I thought to myself, "Why should I stop? Stop signs are to protect people, but I am the only one around. So why stop?" *So I didn't!* I wasn't speeding. I just went through at the speed limit. When I reached the heavily wooded lane, I found I couldn't see around the corner. It's that way back there in Virginia. So I slowed down and turned in. Just as I did, there was another car coming out

of the lane, and because we couldn't see each other, we ran together at about five miles per hour. It wasn't a hard impact, and the cars weren't severely damaged. As I recall, it only cost me \$168 to replace my grill and headlights.

Now, that accident had to be perfectly timed. Of course, if I had stopped at the last Stop sign, it would never have happened. I said, "Lord, I get the message. You really didn't have to go this far, but I do understand." In fact, I stopped sixteen times on the way home with the front end of my car beat up.

Blessings from obedience

It does seem that the Lord requires obedience in order for us to receive his blessings, which include rebuking the devourer. "There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which *all* blessings are predicated." When we receive a blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated. (See D&C 130:20-21; italics added.) This could reach even to a Stop sign, too, I suppose.

"Let no man break the laws of the land," says the Lord. "For he that keepeth the laws of God hath no need to break the laws of the land" (D&C 58:21).

Malachi continues, "Neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field." (We will avoid waste.) "And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightful-some land, saith the Lord of hosts" (Malachi 3:11-12).

It is a fact that we even look better when we pay tithing. There is a happiness that comes into the heart of the tithe payer that even reflects in his countenance.

Then the Lord seems to lament somewhat: "Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee?" (When did we ever say anything against the Lord?)

The Lord answers, "Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?"

"And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered" (Malachi 3:13-15).

A record is kept

Did you ever look at the boat in the driveway of the nonmember next door and think: "He doesn't pay tithing, or perhaps attend church on Sunday. He gets to watch the Super Bowl and the World Series and so forth on Sunday. He doesn't seem to do any of the things I have to do, and yet he seems to be getting along as well as I am, maybe even better than I am." Did you ever have any such thoughts? Well, if so, I would imagine that is what the Lord is referring to in these passages. Then the Lord drops the bombshell:

"Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another." (Like we are doing now. Did you ever notice that those who love the Lord are always talking to each other? One meeting after another.) "And the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name" (Malachi 3:16 and 3 Nephi 24:16).

Ah! the light breaks. There is a record kept—and surely there is one. One group is receiving its reward now; the other is laying it up in heaven; and out of the books which are written and shall be written shall the dead be judged. (See Revelation 20:12.) Then the Lord gives his word, which he cannot break, for surely "I, the Lord, am bound *when ye do what I say*" (D&C 82:10; italics added). And here is the Lord's promise: "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him" (Malachi

3:17). Surely, it is very difficult not to be partial to your own son who is working for you, if he does a good job. I presume there is nothing wrong in feeling that way about your own son. The Lord seems to think not.

The Lord continues: "Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not" (Malachi 3:18). This will be quite easy to tell by looking at the record.

Roots and branches

Now comes the crux of the whole matter of tithing: "For, behold, the day cometh [saith the Lord], that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be as stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch" (Malachi 4:1).

In other words, those who pay tithing will have roots and branches at the last day and those who do not will have neither roots nor branches. Now what are our roots? Alex Haley wrote a book about roots. Obviously our roots are our ancestors. And what are our branches? They are our children. Then those who walk in holiness before the Lord, which includes the payment of tithing, will have an eternal family at the last day. And those who do not pay tithing will have none.

Tithing is necessary in order to receive the blessings of the temple. If a man were to keep all of the Lord's commandments with the exception of tithing, he still could never be married for time and all eternity in the temple; thus, he would have neither roots nor branches at the last day.

Then this becomes really serious, since there is no exaltation without your family. Without tithing there is no exaltation. As we think about it, we know this is true.

Tithing—a principle of exaltation

Tithing, then, is one of the bedrock foundation principles of exaltation. And, as it turns out, when a man pays tithing, the Lord opens the windows of heaven and rebukes the devourer so that it doesn't cost him anything, but really puts him far more ahead than he ever could have been if he had not paid it. It is a principle of great promise and brings eternal joy and happiness.

Who, then, can afford not to give the Lord his tenth? Surely neither you nor I; which witness I bear. For surely the Lord God has spoken it. And in the words of King Benjamin, "He never doth vary from that which he hath said" (Mosiah 2:22). In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Now Let Us Rejoice." We shall all stand for this. Then following the singing, Elder James M. Paramore, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will speak to us.

The choir and congregation sang "Now Let Us Rejoice."

President Hinckley

When you see a group like this, you never worry about the future of the Church.

We shall now hear from Elder James M. Paramore of the First Quorum of the Seventy, who will be followed by Elder Loren C. Dunn of that same quorum.

Elder James M. Paramore

Signs and silent voices

My beloved and wonderful brothers and sisters, I seek an interest in your faith and prayers these few minutes that I stand before you. A few years ago, just before our departure for a mission to Belgium, our family went on a vacation. Upon arriving at a motel, our children were out of their clothes and into swimming suits before we could unload the car. As I passed the swimming pool, the sign struck me forcefully: "Do Not Leave Children Unattended." Though I had read similar signs and ignored them many times before, I felt compelled to stay and watch my young children. (My wife wasn't very happy; she was unloading the car.) In minutes, one of my daughters was in deep water, and deep trouble, and struggling for help. I dove

into the pool, clothes and all, and with all the energy I had, I reached her just in time. I recognized that frantic yet unspoken call for help that day, and I will never forget it.

There are basic needs of people that are not always so obvious as this experience; but they are there, and their nearly inaudible voices are there if we can and will hear—signs and silent voices everywhere that say, "I feel that there is something, somewhere, that I need, that will give me peace, that will comfort me and let me know that my life has purpose and importance, that I belong."

Gospel, great influence

A few years ago a psychiatrist, Dr. Henry Link, after going through

years of study and thousands of cases, found—though he had not been a Christian—that the gospel of Jesus Christ was the single greatest influence to make people happier, healthier, and more successful. So impressed was he by what he learned that he became a devout follower of Jesus Christ and wrote a book entitled *The Return to Religion*. As I have thought about this, I think of the statement of the Savior: “By every word which proceeded forth out of the mouth of God, men began to exercise faith in Christ; and thus by faith, they did lay hold upon every good thing” (Moroni 7:25).

Brothers and sisters, it is by this knowledge from heaven contained in the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and our total, implicit faith and adherence to it that we meet the basic needs of people.

Everyone has need to belong

Everyone has a need to belong. A new little puppy at our home barked endlessly for the first week because it missed its mother, and when any one of us would pick it up, it felt secure and wanted, that it belonged—and it stopped barking.

As a fifth grader years ago, I felt a desperate need to belong; and just being on a baseball team with a uniform created that security, that belonging, for me. The gospel of Jesus Christ can answer this great need for every man, woman, and child upon this earth—for every family, every single person. Everyone who joins His church immediately belongs, no matter who he is or where he is. There is a brotherhood that goes beyond national and linguistic borders, and it ties all men together. The truths of the gospel, the brotherhood and the sisterhood of the gospel, and active participation in it, satisfies these longings and can overcome all barriers.

“No more strangers and foreigners”

I remember a story recounted during World War II, when a German Latter-day Saint soldier was struck by an American bullet and lay perilously ill. He told his leader, “Please take a white flag and go to the other side and see if there is a Mormon elder who could administer to me.” What a bizarre request in a war of two mortal enemies. But seeing his condition, and anxious to satisfy what appeared to be a last request, the leader took the white flag, went across the enemy line, and asked for a Mormon elder. One was found and he, with the German, crossed the enemy line, laid his hands upon that brother’s head, and commanded in the name of the Lord that he remain alive until help could be had. There is a sense of belonging that is fulfilled by the gospel of Jesus Christ—first to our Father in Heaven; then to our family, which can be an eternal unit; and then to members everywhere upon this earth.

A few years ago, a retired couple (the Krugers) moved West to spend their last years. They went by bus and stopped in Provo, Utah, for a while. They had no particular destination in mind, and they took a cab and rode around the Provo area. They liked what they saw and felt, and the very next day bought a home there. They came from a large city in the Midwest and, though they had lived in the same home for forty-two years, they knew nearly no one. When they moved into our ward area, it wasn’t hours until food, help, and friendship were offered. They could not believe what was happening. They now belonged to other warm, compassionate beings—beings who truly loved them and brought security, warmth, and the true love of Christ into their lives. They were never the same again. They belonged to a larger family and were truly happier than they had ever been in their lives.

The Apostle Paul, himself a convert to Christ and His truths, personally learned not only of the great eternal truths which edified his whole being and changed his life, but also that he belonged to the body of Christ—the people of the kingdom of God on earth who loved and served each other with an open heart and spirit because of the love they felt. Listen to his words as he described how it was: “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God” (Ephesians 2:19).

Members say they have never been a stranger anywhere they have gone—Italy, Oslo, Mexico City, Portland—or Orem, Utah. They belonged the minute it was known they were members of the church of Jesus Christ. Everyone who lives upon this earth needs this feeling of acceptance, and the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and His church bring it about. Even though a member lives alone, he is never alone. He belongs; he contributes; he is never forgotten.

Recently, in Holland, the mission president was stricken with a massive heart attack and lay near death's door for a while. Though he was an American foreigner, so to speak, he belonged to the household of God, and literally thousands of people in Holland and other lands, and the Apostles of the Lord, knelt and prayed for his life—if it was the will of God that he should live. Think of it—and it happens hundreds of times every day upon this earth. He belonged to the family of God; he felt their fasting and prayers and love. And what about his wife? She belonged as she had never known possible. I was there. I was a witness, and there were so many calls from those who belong to the household of God that she actually became weary.

As the president improved and I left, my heart was so full. Yes, for the preservation of his life, but also for the privilege of belonging to the church of Jesus Christ, here upon the earth.

Be a light to others

In reality, in His church we are always home—home in the things we believe, the standards we hold dear, the spirit we need, and the help, security, and belonging that are there. As I speak these words, I think of the elders quorum in Geneva, Switzerland, that has undertaken the project of moving all ward members when they relocate within the ward, without any cost. (They can't even get away from us in a move!) Latter-day Saints everywhere open their hearts, their homes, their purses, their lives, in service and love to others. This is not done by constraint, but by the love and joy they feel from God and for each other. Indeed, this is the essence of the gospel as the Savior lived and taught it. Remember his words: “Be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine” (D&C 38:27). “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:40).

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, . . . [and] goodness” (Galatians 5:22). Everyone who belongs to His church *wants* to reach out—not because he is directed in an institutional or organizational way—to serve, love, aid, succor, and care for others with kindness and genuine concern. In humble, selfless ways each of us can be a light to others who may secretly or silently be longing or even praying to find that sense of belonging. My brothers and sisters, this type of caring, of nurturing, can never be accomplished by mandate or calendar, but comes because one has within himself that sense of belonging—feels its power, joy, goodness, and becomes concerned about all of God's children.

I remember a few years ago an inactive member of the priesthood who, in a moment of prayer, interview, and invitation to serve, felt the love and real concern of his leaders and wept openly for the opportunity to mend his ways and belong to the spirit and the brotherhood he felt. We belong

to these truths, this brotherhood, and these promises—but also we belong to the organization of the church of Jesus Christ. We are really needed, and we learn in His service. We grow in compassion, in wisdom, in character, in appreciation, and in strength as we become “anxiously engaged in [His] cause” (D&C 58:27). We become more like Him. We begin—if we serve with purity of heart and selflessly—to learn the ways of the Lord. We become more responsive to the needs of others.

Reach out

Leaders, let us follow the counsel of Moroni, the prophet. He said: “And after they had been received unto baptism, . . . they were numbered among the people of the church of Christ; and their names were taken, that they might be remembered and nourished by the good word of God. . . . [And they did] speak one with another concerning the

welfare of their souls” (Moroni 6:4–5). Let us reach out to every member, that he might belong to the household of God.

And members, may we reach out with all the energy and love we have, first to help every member of our family, and then to help members—every one of them—and finally everyone everywhere, so that all might have the great privilege and honor and blessing of belonging to the kingdom of God. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Brother James M. Paramore of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

We shall now hear from Elder Loren C. Dunn, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and he will be followed by Elder Marvin J. Ashton, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Loren C. Dunn

Uphold the prophet God sends

My brothers and sisters, I'm very grateful to be here this afternoon, and I want to begin my talk by bearing testimony to you of the truthfulness of this work. I know that God lives and that Jesus is the Christ and that this is their work. I know that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, and that Spencer W. Kimball is a prophet of God today.

I would like to share an experience or two with you. When I was growing up, Heber J. Grant was the President of the Church. My father always prayed for President Grant. And he had great personal feeling for him because President Grant at one time was president of the Tooele Stake, and my father at that time was president of the Tooele Stake. President Grant became ill and passed away, and I can remember after the funeral kneeling in

family prayer as a young boy and hearing my father praying with the same love and devotion and feeling for the next prophet, the next President of the Church, George Albert Smith.

As a youth, I was surprised because I had never heard anybody pray for any prophet other than Heber J. Grant. And I felt almost cheated—like my father was turning away from a good friend. But as time went on, through that experience and other experiences, he taught me a very valuable lesson—you see, he had great love and appreciation for President Grant, and that would never change, but in his heart I realized that he had saved his greatest love and his greatest loyalty for his God, and whomever God would send he would sustain and uphold and pray for and embrace.

Lengthening our stride in Australia

Not very long ago, my family and I had the opportunity to preside over the Australia Sydney Mission. I had come out of the Missionary Department, and I suppose my missionary views were very conservative. At any rate, as we began our work in the Australia Sydney Mission, we had some modest, but good, successes, and I felt comfortable about what we were doing—until President Kimball spoke to us. In his own manner and in his own way, he said, “Brother Dunn, Loren, we must all lengthen our stride.” And I got the message.

The message was that although we had made progress, yet before the Lord and before the prophet, it wasn’t enough. We went back, we redoubled our efforts; we found increased growth, but also we found increased strength and new stakes evolved because of those efforts. I don’t think the progress was so much because of us, but because of our desire to follow the prophet.

Blessings of receiving a prophet

I was talking to a priesthood leader just last weekend. We had finished our Saturday night leadership meeting, which was on missionary work, and he said to me, “You know, you are really a missionary General Authority.” And I said, “No, I don’t consider myself a missionary General Authority. If I can be remembered for anything (and I hope that somehow,

somewhere I can), I would settle for that which my father taught me and for which I feel he was known, and that is one who is willing to give allegiance to and follow a prophet of God. And if that can be my lot, then I feel I will have accomplished the thing the Lord has sent me to do.”

It’s not the program, it’s not the activities, but in the final analysis it is our loyalty to him whom God has called and the offering of our prayers on his behalf.

There is a scripture that goes this way: “He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward” (Matthew 10:41). I have come to realize the literalness of that promise. I have seen those blessings in the life of my father because of his loyalty. I would like those blessings for my family and myself, and I would like to see those blessings in the life of every Latter-day Saint.

May I end where I began. God does live. Jesus is the Christ. Joseph Smith is a true prophet, and we are led by a prophet of God today. The prophet has my loyalty and he has my love, because how can I uphold the Lord unless I uphold him? In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Loren C. Dunn, a member of the Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our concluding speaker.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

Straightway—without hesitation

A few weeks ago I was visiting in a faraway country with a discouraged missionary. When I asked, “How long has it been since you wrote a letter to your mother?” he said, “Oh, about

three or four weeks, I guess.” When I suggested he write her a letter straightway, he responded with, “What does *straightway* mean?”

Straightway is a power word. *Straightway* is an action word. It means immediately, without delay or

hesitation. It means at once. Also, it is associated with having no curve or turn—a straight course, track, or path. *Procrastination* would be the very opposite of *straightway*. To procrastinate is to put off intentionally and habitually something that should be done. Procrastination is unproductive delay. Someone has wisely said, “Procrastination is a silly thing, it only makes me sorrow; but I can change at any time—I think I will tomorrow!”

“Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

“And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

“And they *straightway* left their nets, and followed him.

“And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.

“And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him” (Matthew 4:18–22; italics added).

Make decisions, then act

My remarks today are going to be centered around this key word, *straightway*. “And they *straightway* left their nets, and followed him.” How descriptive, how powerful, how rewarding when properly applied in human conduct.

We invite all to serve the Savior and walk in His paths *straightway*. There is an urgency for all of us who have this knowledge of His divinity to act upon it without hesitation or delay. The time is now.

Joshua reminds us of the importance of making decisions promptly: “Choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15). Not tomorrow, not when we get ready, not when it is convenient—

but “this day,” *straightway*, choose whom you will serve. He who invites us to follow will always be out in front of us with His Spirit and influence setting the pace. He has charted and marked the course, opened the gates, and shown the way. He has invited us to come unto Him, and the best time to enjoy His companionship is *straightway*. We can best get on the course and stay on the course by doing as Jesus did—make a total commitment to do the will of His Father.

Taking the first step

To *straightway* follow our Savior requires effort on our part. No longer does He personally walk the earth with us, but He has not left us alone. His guidelines and commandments are always with us if we will study the scriptures. We must learn His will before we can do His will.

A prerequisite for “doing” is goal setting. Actions are preceded by thoughts and planning. All of us must take charge of our own lives. We must evaluate the choices that are open to us, and then we must act positively on our own decision. An old proverb states, “A journey of one thousand miles begins with the first step.”

The word *straightway* suggests the urgency to take that first step toward any worthy goal.

“If you will that I give unto you a place in the celestial world, you must prepare yourselves by doing the things which I have commanded you and required of you,” said the Lord (D&C 78:7). To take that first step may require great courage, but somehow possibilities and potential strengths begin to appear once the decision to act positively is made. Unsuspected courage and strength will be given to those who start forward in the right decision.

Peter, a lowly, rough fisherman, took that first step and *straightway* followed Jesus. Strength upon strength was added to him. He grew from the disciple who denied his Master thrice, to the man who could be intimidated by

no man. When he and John were set in the midst of "Annas the high priest, . . . and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kingdom of the high priest" (Acts 4:6), Peter boldly declared that salvation comes because of Christ.

"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13).

The high priest could have brought great harm to these brethren, but he only dared to command them "not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus."

"But Peter and John answered and said . . . , Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye" (Acts 4:18-19). In the face of threats, these Apostles were given added courage: "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all" (Acts 4:33).

By taking that first step straightway, Peter learned to be a fisher of men. He identified his goals, and as he moved toward them, he grew in strength, power, and conviction.

"To every man is given a gift"

How wise and blessed we would be if we eliminated procrastination and made a decision to serve the Lord and accept His invitation to "Come, follow me" (Luke 18:22). Then when we have identified our goal, may we have the courage to act upon our decision, confident that added strength and power will be given according to our needs as we follow the Good Shepherd.

As we plan to follow the Savior straightway, Satan may try to dissuade us by making the task look impossible, by making us doubt our worthiness or ability. Each is different; each has his own strengths.

Peter and Andrew were fishermen. Hence, in speaking in terms of their trade, the Savior said, "I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). To the carpenter, He would say, "I will make you builders of men." To the teachers, "I will make you teachers of men." No person has all the talents.

"For all have not every gift given unto them; for there are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God."

"To some is given one, and to some is given another, that all may be profited thereby" (D&C 46:11-12).

Don't procrastinate action

Wishing things were different in our lives, or waiting for a roadblock to be removed or an attitude altered, can cause us to mark time rather than to move forward straightway. William Shakespeare wrote, "Our doubts are traitors, And make us lose the good we oft might win By fearing to attempt" (*Measure for Measure*, act 1, sc. 4, lines 77-79).

Use your specific talents. Don't procrastinate action while wishing for missing abilities. To those who are inclined to respond with "Not now" or "Not yet" to the invitation to "come, follow me," may we suggest, with all the love and sincerity we possess, He wants you. He will welcome you straightway regardless of where you have been, where you are now, who you are, or what talents you possess or lack.

Some weeks ago following a stake conference meeting, a man who has been totally inactive for many years approached me with great hesitation and said, "I guess I really don't belong here. My life is a mess." To this I responded, "What difference does that make? Of course you belong here."

Be servants rather than critics

Those who continually prefer to stir up waters find that they create

only a whirlpool and are carried around in circles rather than progressing straightway.

Can we be servants of our Master rather than critics of those who are trying to serve Him? A servant will look for solutions to problems while procrastinators excuse their inactivity by concentrating on the futility of the problem.

Those whose goal it is to follow the Savior straightway not only look for answers to their own problems, but also help others find solutions to life's difficulties. They open their hearts and minds to those who are troubled, ignored, or weary.

Just by listening empathetically, we often can help others find their own solutions. Recently a stake president told me that one of the most sincere thank-yous he had ever received came from a young mother with two children who, under very difficult conditions, was trying diligently to succeed as a single parent. After a lengthy interview, her words of appreciation were simply, "Thank you for listening to me. I think I can face my problems much better now."

Our own progress can be enhanced if we can look for solutions instead of being critical of those around us and blaming external conditions for our lack of progress.

Can we be honest with ourselves and examine the reasons we are not following the Savior straightway? Are we being delayed by criticism of another person's actions or attitude toward us? Has our pride been hurt or our ego bruised? Have we jumped to conclusions without accurate facts?

The Savior admonished, "Have peace one with another" (Mark 9:50). Peace must first come from within. It flows from the individual to the home, to the community, to the nations, and to the world. This peace can only come as we resist the damaging pastime of passing judgment. In the scriptures we are warned to judge not, that we be not judged. (See 3 Nephi 14:1; Matthew 7:1.) Somehow there seems to be

something enticing and intriguing about being a self-appointed judge.

Put aside hurts and delays

Many years ago I heard a story which I've always remembered. Perhaps I heard it when I was running around as a young barefoot boy.

A poor, old French woman was walking along the banks of the Seine River. On her stooped shoulders was draped a threadbare shawl. Suddenly she stopped, leaned down, picked up something that sparkled brightly in the sunlight, and put it under her shawl. A policeman observed her actions and hurried over to her. In a very gruff voice he said, "Let me see what you are hiding under your shawl!" The old woman drew out from the folds in the shawl a broken piece of glass, saying, "It is only a sharp piece of broken glass. I picked it up so some barefoot boy might not step on it and cut his foot."

The policeman was doing his duty, but he was more than willing to convict the woman of a misdeed before he could learn that she had acted with the nobility of a caring soul.

Yes, erroneous judgments of the actions of our fellowmen may be responsible for our delay in straightway heeding the call of our Savior.

By pursuing the teachings of Jesus Christ and living gospel principles, we can put aside the hurts and delays that may have been caused by people around us.

Self-discipline and self-restraint

Finally, to move and act straightway in the right direction requires self-discipline and self-restraint.

Many live by the motto Play Now and Pay Later. Some think that if they wait long enough, their problems will go away. But they don't. They must be worked through. Before we can solve our problems and put our lives in order, we must accept full responsibility for our problems.

We often avoid taking action because we tell ourselves that our problem was caused by circumstances or people beyond our control. Therefore, we think we can abdicate our responsibility, and we find ourselves hoping that other people or a change of conditions will solve our difficulties. Rather, it is our responsibility to repent—to change, and to move forward without delay. “Do not procrastinate the day of your repentance” (Alma 34:33).

How comfortable some of us become as we nestle in the web of procrastination. It is a false haven of rest for those who are content to live without purpose, commitment, or self-discipline.

We must heed the words in Alma: “Behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors” (Alma 34:32).

Avoid procrastination. We can say with great accuracy procrastination is an unwholesome blend of doubt and delay. Oft-used words of the Savior such as *ask, seek, knock, go, thrust*, are action words. He would have us use action as we teach and live His principles.

“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

“Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:13–14).

Do not doubt your abilities. Do not delay your worthy impressions. With God’s help, you cannot fail. He will give you the courage to participate in meaningful change and purposeful living. We need to repent, straightway, and trust in His reality and capacity to assist us in knowing the abundant life. He will help us learn to be sensitive to our own needs and to those of others. Those who fear, procrastinate. Those who change for the better show progress straightway and become wiser

and stronger. We need to develop the courage to straightway take the first step. We need to remember that children learn to walk only because someone encourages them to take the first step.

Straightway embrace His truths

May we launch straightway toward setting goals that are gospel oriented, knowing that if we use the talents that are ours—that if we help others, strive for peace, avoid being overly sensitive or overly critical—strength upon strength will be added unto our own abilities and we will move straightway toward greater growth, happiness, and eternal joys. Our Master and Savior invites us to straightway embrace His truths and enjoy the warmth of His constant companionship.

A man must rise by his own efforts and walk by faith. One of our greatest resources for success and happiness is doing the right thing now. All of us as God’s children must be taught that meaningful growth must come from within and not from without. By so doing, we will walk in His paths, lift the arms of the weary and oppressed, give encouragement to our associates, develop individual initiative in governing ourselves, carry our crosses with dignity and purpose, and help all to become fishers of men straightway.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is true. Jesus Christ is our Redeemer and Savior. Happiness and eternal life are available to those who will follow Him straightway. To these truths I leave my witness and testimony in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

That was Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, and he has been our concluding speaker.

We remind the brethren of the general priesthood meeting which will

convene here in the Tabernacle this evening at 6:00 P.M., instead of the usual time of 7:00 P.M. We re-emphasize that the meeting will begin at 6:00 P.M. The reason for the earlier hour is to make it more convenient for those in eastern time zones, so that the priesthood meeting will begin for them at eight o'clock and conclude at ten o'clock instead of starting at nine o'clock and concluding at eleven o'clock as it has done in the past. Many of them have long distances to travel from their stake centers at the conclusion of that meeting. Six o'clock tonight for that meeting.

The nationwide CBS Radio Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those who desire to attend this broadcast here in the Tabernacle must be in their seats no later than 9:15 A.M.

The singing for this session has been furnished by a great group of young men and young women. They

are beautiful and they sing beautifully. We are grateful for your presence this afternoon and for the beautiful spirit your music has added to this meeting. This group probably will never have another opportunity to sing in the Tabernacle, and we are a little ahead of time today, so I am going to take the liberty of asking that they sing again "Come, Ye Children of the Lord." Then they will sing their regularly scheduled closing song, "With a Voice of Singing." Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Come, Ye Children of the Lord" and "With a Voice of Singing."

Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone offered the benediction.

GENERAL PRIESTHOOD MEETING

THIRD SESSION

The general priesthood meeting convened in the Tabernacle at 6:00 P.M. on Saturday, April 2, 1983.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for this session was provided by the Ricks College men's choir from Rexburg, Idaho, directed by Richard Robison and Noel Brown with Roy M. Darley at the organ.

President Hinckley opened this session with the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Brethren, we welcome you to this great priesthood meeting of men and boys of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We very much re-

gret that President Kimball is not able to meet with us. He is watching the proceeding of this session on television in his apartment. President Romney will not be able to meet with us either because of some health problems. We very much regret their absence. President Kimball asked that we extend his love and best wishes to all of the brethren participating in this session.

These services are being relayed by closed-circuit transmission and will reach members of the priesthood gathered in the Assembly Hall, the Marriott Center on the BYU campus, and in approximately 1,388 locations in many countries around the world. Also, they are being carried to over five hundred and fifty stake centers by satellite transmission.

We extend our greetings and blessings to all the priesthood brethren wherever they may be.

We note that Elder G. Homer Durham and Bishop J. Richard Clarke are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall, and Elders Carlos E. Asay and Angel Abrea preside at the BYU Marriott Center. We hope they were able to get there through the storm.

The singing during this session will be furnished by the Ricks College men's choir under the direction of Richard Robison and Noel Brown with Roy Darley at the organ.

We shall begin this service by the choir singing "See, the Mighty Angel Flying!" Following the singing, Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "See, the Mighty Angel Flying!"

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

The choir will now favor us with "Come, Serve the Lord." Elder Dean L. Larsen, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will then address us.

The choir sang "Come, Serve the Lord."

President Hinckley

Elder Dean L. Larsen, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will be our first speaker this evening. He has been asked to speak about the importance of families and fathers in the lives of Aaronic Priesthood young men and young women. Elder Larsen will be followed by President Jeffrey R. Holland of Brigham Young University.

Elder Dean L. Larsen

Influence of the home

Tonight in this meeting of the priesthood, we will be talking about the importance of families. Other matters of importance will also be discussed, but special attention will be given to families. The more we learn about the power of the influence exerted in families, the more we can appreciate the counsel given to us by our leaders from the earliest days of the Church to make certain that the circumstances in our homes are what they should be. We have said much over the years about the responsibility of parents to provide a wholesome home life for their children. We will receive ad-

ditional encouragement of that kind tonight. It is vital that we do.

We have recently completed some very comprehensive studies that confirm the power of the influence that we work upon one another in our families and in our homes. The influence of the family has a greater effect upon what we think, how we feel, and what we do about our lives than all of the other sources of influence combined. The patterns we set in our homes and the values we develop there, whether they be good or bad, almost cannot be overcome.

All of us have a responsibility to contribute to the quality of our home life. Parents make a great contribution, but so do the children.

Challenge to young men

Tonight I would like to talk principally to the young men of the Aaronic Priesthood about the responsibility you have to live in such a way that you can be a good influence in your homes, whatever the conditions there may be, and so that you can qualify to do all that the Lord expects of you during your lifetime.

Young men, I do not believe that you are here upon the earth at this time by accident. I believe you qualified in the premortal life to come into mortality at a time when great things would be required of you. I believe you demonstrated before you came here that you were capable of being trusted under unusually difficult circumstances—that you could measure up to the most difficult challenges. Don't misunderstand me. I don't suggest that you are inherently better than or superior to any of the other generations that have come to the earth. You do not automatically qualify for any more blessings or advantages than anyone else who has lived since the earth was created. You can go astray, become involved in transgression, and incur the judgments of God as readily as any who have preceded you here. In fact, you live in an environment in which it is probably as easy to disqualify yourselves in this way as any generation has ever experienced. But God trusts that you will not. He relies upon you to keep yourselves eligible to accomplish the monumental tasks that he expects you to achieve.

Period of final great effort

You are growing to maturity in a period of the earth's history that all of the great prophets of all the ages have looked forward to with anticipation. It is a time of final preparation before the earth and its inhabitants undergo a remarkable transformation. It is properly referred to as the "fulness of times" (D&C 112:30). It is the period during which the Lord and his servants will

make the final great effort to take the message of truth to all the peoples of the earth and to reclaim the descendants of ancient Israel who have lost their true identity.

The prophet Zenos, whom Jacob quotes in the Book of Mormon, compares this effort to the work of the laborers who prune and nurture a vineyard and gather its fruit for the last time. Zenos likens the Savior to the master of the vineyard, who says to those who are his helpers, "Wherefore, let us go to and labor with our might this last time, for behold the end draweth nigh, and this is the last time that I shall prune my vineyard" (Jacob 5:62).

You have come to the earth when the foundation has been laid for this great work. The gospel has been restored for the last time. The Church has been established in almost every part of the world. The stage is set for the final dramatic scenes to be enacted. You will be the principal players. You are among the last laborers in the vineyard. This is the yoke that is set upon your necks. This is the service for which you are chosen.

Battleground for the souls of men

Let me now describe the setting within which you will perform your labors. The Savior himself said that conditions toward the end of this dispensation would very much resemble those that existed just before the Flood. "As the days of Noe were," he said, "so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:37).

Joel saw the period of time in which we live as a great battleground for the souls of men, "Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles [he said]; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up:

"Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong" (Joel 3:9-10).

Joel saw that this great battle would not be regarded in a casual way. It would be no time for weakness nor weaklings.

The Apostle Paul wrote to his young missionary companion, Timothy, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come" (2 Timothy 3:1).

Not safe to move in direction of wicked world

The challenging conditions we find in the world today should be no surprise to us. As we approach the time of the Savior's return, wickedness will increase. There will be more temptations in our daily lives, and they will become more intense. It will become more acceptable in the world to break the laws of God or to disregard them altogether. The stigma attached to immoral, dishonest behavior will disappear.

In this difficult environment we will be expected to steer our own course in an upward direction. As President Kimball has warned us, it will neither be acceptable nor safe to remain on the plateaus where our present conduct has kept us. Abrupt downward forces, represented by increasing wickedness in the world, can only be offset by forces that move correspondingly upward. Our lives must be better than they have ever been before. This simply means that we will become increasingly different from those around us whose lives follow the world's way. It is not easy to be different. There are intense pressures that work against us. But we must clearly understand that it is not safe to move in the same direction the world is moving, even though we remain slightly behind the pace they set. Such a course will eventually lead us to the same problems and heartaches. It will not permit us to perform the work the Lord has chosen us to do. It would disqualify us from his blessing and his protecting care.

The Lord has said that the time will come when there will be "an entire separation of the righteous and the wicked" (D&C 63:54). Nephi, in the Book of Mormon, said, "For the time speedily cometh that the Lord God shall cause a great division among the people, and the wicked will he destroy" (2 Nephi 30:10).

Must qualify for blessings

As we consider these promises, we should not forget the warning given by the Lord to the Latter-day Saints. "Nevertheless, Zion shall escape if she observe to do all things whatsoever I have commanded her.

"But if she observe not to do whatsoever I have commanded her, I will visit her according to all her works, with sore affliction, with pestilence, with plague, with sword, with vengeance, with devouring fire" (D&C 97:25-26).

We must recognize from this warning that it is not enough to be a Latter-day Saint in name only. It is not enough to simply declare that we are a chosen people of the Lord. We must keep the trust he has given us. We must qualify for his blessing by the way we remain different from the world in our obedience to his laws. Otherwise, we have no promise, and our fate will be the fate of the world.

Avoid the worldly trends

One of the reasons I feel such a deep concern for you young men is that we see some evidences today of an inclination among our young people to follow the trends of the world. We do not always keep up with the pace-setters, but in some ways we follow not too far behind them. I know there are many who are exceptions to this pattern and who faithfully keep the commandments of God and whose lives remain pure and unspotted from the things of the world, even in the face of great temptation and challenge. (See D&C 59:9.) You who are faithful in

this way have our profound respect and our great confidence. You are living up to the trust the Lord has placed with you.

But there are too many whose lives are being contaminated by the worldly trends. This is not a light matter. The judgments of God will not be withheld from those who willfully, knowing who they are and what is expected of them, allow themselves to be drawn along the precarious paths of worldly conduct. To such as there are who are within the sound of my voice tonight, I say: Take the upward path. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

Willful move off proper course

Several years ago I expressed the following thoughts in an article that was printed in an issue of the *New Era* magazine. They are appropriate to my subject tonight.

"Not long ago I interviewed a young man who desired to fill a mission, but he had been guilty of some very serious transgressions during his teen years. He was a member of an active Latter-day Saint family, and he himself had been an actively participating member of the Church, even during the time of his transgressions. Ultimately he had gone to his bishop and confessed his wrongdoings. Now, for more than a year, his life had been free of the earlier difficulties, and he was anxious to serve a mission.

"As we talked about his situation and the decisions he had made earlier in his life that led to his questionable standing in the Church, he said, 'Oh, I knew that what I was doing was wrong, and I was sure that one day I would put things back in order and go on a mission.'

"While I was pleased with this young man's desire to reorder his life and serve the Lord as a missionary, I was troubled by the apparent premeditated, calculated way in which he had allowed himself to move off the proper

course to engage in some destructive, immoral behavior, and then, almost as if he were following a timetable set by himself, he had begun to reconstruct his resolve to be obedient.

Tendency to sample forbidden

"If my experience with this young man had been an isolated one, it would not be worthy of note here; unfortunately, however, it is not unique. There appears to be an increasing tendency and temptation for young people to sample the forbidden things of the world, not with the intent to embrace them permanently, but with the knowing decision to indulge in them momentarily as though they held a value of some kind too important or exciting to pass by. It is one of the great tests of our time.

"While many recover from these excursions into forbidden territory, an increasing number of tragedies are occurring that reach out to bring a blight and a despair to many lives and that have long-lasting consequences. There is no such thing as private sin. Although its commission can be calculated . . . , its effects cannot be regulated by the person guilty of the misbehavior. To believe otherwise is to become gullible to one of the most insidious lies ever perpetrated by the father of lies.

A plea for the here and now

"[Not long ago] I attended a graduation ceremony at a local high school. The students who had been invited to speak for their classmates expressed themselves in terms of the grand and noble challenges that lay before them as they stepped across the threshold into adult life. The adult speakers extolled the virtues and potential of today's youth and spoke of the horizons to be conquered in future years, the new scientific frontiers to be opened by members of the graduating class, the dread diseases for which cures would be found, and the break-

throughs in diplomacy and human relations that would bring lasting peace to the earth. It was a stimulating, inspiring service.

"As I listened to the impressive addresses on this occasion, I found myself framing in my own mind the things I would have liked to say to this group of young people. I knew that most of them were Latter-day Saints. I knew they came from families where high expectations were held for them, where there was a shared pride in their accomplishments. I also knew about the experiences some of these young people had planned for themselves in the hours and days immediately following the graduation service. I found myself wanting to plead with this graduating class, not about the glorious, obscure years of the dim future when they would hopefully accomplish so much for mankind, but about the here and now. I wanted to say to them, 'I am not so much concerned about what you do next year or in the next generation; I am worried about what you are going to do tonight and tomorrow when you have handed in your cap and gown. What have you planned? Where will you go? What will you do tonight?'"

"I know now, as I record these thoughts, that there were those in that graduating class, as well as some others in similar groups, who willfully, with calculated premeditation, placed themselves in circumstances following their graduation services where they dishonored themselves, their families, their Church, and their Heavenly Father. Their behavior was not intended to become a permanent fixture in their lives. It was done as a lark, a momentary thrill, a dare. But its cumulative effect is devastating. The reverberations will [affect] their lives, and the lives of those who loved and trusted them, in unfortunate and unforeseen ways for indefinite periods of time. Humanity will have slipped inexorably to a lower level. Some will never completely recover, and all mankind will

inevitably feel the loss" (*New Era*, June 1980, pp. 4-5).

Contribute to spiritual environment of your home

Young men, remember who you are. Remember the purpose for which you have come to the earth—the service you have been chosen to give. Stay true to the divine trust that our Heavenly Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, have placed upon you. You can contribute as much to the spiritual environment of your homes as any member of your family, and you have an obligation to do so. Study the scriptures and encourage the other members of your family to do so. Say your prayers and do all you can to influence other members of your family to pray. Pay your tithes. Obey the Word of Wisdom. Be chaste. You may have a greater influence than you have thought possible, if you will do your own part.

Remember these words of Edward W. Bok: "Once we are convinced . . . that we are put here for a purpose: that the seed of divine energy has been given us and that it is for us to cultivate it to its fullest bloom, the way will be shown us. It is our part to make the effort and to put the fullest force and integrity into that effort. It is the young man of little faith who says, 'I am nothing.' It is the young man of true conception who says, 'I am everything,' and then goes out to prove it."

Young men, let us prove by the way we live and serve that we are everything the Lord expects us to be, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Dean L. Larsen, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us.

President Jeffrey R. Holland and his son, Matthew Holland, will now share suggestions and experiences for a

successful father-son relationship. Matt, why don't you come right up

here so you can catch your father when he leans backwards.

President Jeffrey R. Holland

Brethren, it is impossible to express the overwhelming sense of responsibility I feel tonight. Like the mule who entered the Kentucky Derby, I know I probably shouldn't be here, but I surely like the company it lets me keep. Tonight I include in that special company my son Matt, whom I love with all my heart. I pray earnestly for the Spirit of the Lord to be with us in our assignment.

Companionship with son

Brethren, a recent study conducted by the Church has forcefully confirmed statistically what we have been told again and again. That is, if loving, inspired instruction and example are not provided at home, then our related efforts for success in and around Church programs are severely limited. It is increasingly clear that we must teach the gospel to our families personally, live those teachings in our homes, or run the risk of discovering too late that a Primary teacher or priesthood adviser or seminary instructor *could* not do for our children what we *would* not do for them.

May I offer just this much encouragement regarding such a great responsibility? What I cherish in my relationship with Matt is that he is, along with his mother and sister and brother, my closest, dearest friend. I would rather be here at this priesthood meeting tonight with my son than with any other male companion in this world. I love to be with him. We talk a lot. We laugh a lot. We play one-on-one basketball; we play tennis and racquetball, though I do refuse to play golf with him (that's a private joke). We discuss problems. I am the president of a small university, and he is the

president of a large high school class. We compare notes and offer suggestions and share each other's challenges. I pray for him and have cried with him, and I'm immensely proud of him. We've talked long into the night lying on his water bed, a twentieth-century aberration which I know, as part of the punishment of the last days, will one day burst and wash the Hollands helplessly into the streets of Provo (that's another private joke).

I feel I can talk to Matt about how he is enjoying seminary because I try to talk to him about all of his classes at school. We often imagine together what his mission will be like because he knows how much my mission meant to me. And he asks me about temple marriage because he knows I am absolutely crazy about his mother. He wants his future wife to be like her and for them to have what we have.

Never give up

Now, even as I speak, I know that there are fathers and sons in this meeting tonight who feel they do not have any portion of what is here described. I know there are fathers who would give virtually their very lives to be close again to a struggling son. I know there are sons in our meeting who wish their dads were at their side, tonight or any night. I have wondered how to speak on this assigned topic without sounding self-righteous on the one hand or offending already tender hearts on the other. In answer to that, I simply say to us all, young and old, never give up. Keep trying, keep reaching, keep talking, keep praying—but never give up. Above all, never pull away from each other.

*Saturday, April 2, 1983**First Day*

The whole load of bricks!

May I share a brief but painful moment from my own inadequate efforts as a father?

Early in our married life my young family and I were laboring through graduate school at a university in New England. Pat was the Relief Society president in our ward, and I was serving in our stake presidency. I was going to school full-time and teaching half-time. We had two small children then, with little money and lots of pressures. In fact, our life was about like yours.

One evening I came home from long hours at school, feeling the proverbial weight of the world on my shoulders. Everything seemed to be especially demanding and discouraging and dark. I wondered if the dawn would ever come. Then, as I walked into our small student apartment, there was an unusual silence in the room.

"What's the trouble?" I asked.

"Matthew has something he wants to tell you," Pat said.

"Matt, what do you have to tell me?" He was quietly playing with his toys in the corner of the room, trying very hard not to hear me. "Matt," I said a little louder, "do you have something to tell me?"

He stopped playing, but for a moment didn't look up. Then these two enormous, tear-filled brown eyes turned toward me, and with the pain only a five-year-old can know, he said, "I didn't mind Mommy tonight, and I spoke back to her." With that he burst into tears, and his entire little body shook with grief. A childish indiscretion had been noted, a painful confession had been offered, the growth of a five-year-old was continuing, and loving reconciliation could have been wonderfully underway.

Everything might have been just terrific—except for me. If you can imagine such an idiotic thing, I lost my temper. It wasn't that I lost it with Matt—it was with a hundred and one other things on my mind; but he didn't

know that, and I wasn't disciplined enough to admit it. He got the whole load of bricks.

I told him how disappointed I was and how much more I thought I could have expected from him. I sounded like the parental pygmy I was. Then I did what I had never done before in his life—I told him that he was to go straight to bed and that I would not be in to say his prayers with him or to tell him a bedtime story. Muffling his sobs, he obediently went to his bedside, where he knelt—alone—to say his prayers. Then he stained his little pillow with tears his father should have been wiping away.

If you think the silence upon my arrival was heavy, you should have felt it now. Pat did not say a word. She didn't have to. I felt terrible!

Never withhold affection or forgiveness

Later, as we knelt by our own bed, my feeble prayer for blessings upon my family fell back on my ears with a horrible, hollow ring. I wanted to get up off my knees right then and go to Matt and ask his forgiveness, but he was long since peacefully asleep.

My relief was not so soon coming; but finally I fell asleep and began to dream, which I seldom do. I dreamed Matt and I were packing two cars for a move. For some reason his mother and baby sister were not present. As we finished I turned to him and said, "Okay, Matt, you drive one car and I'll drive the other."

This five-year-old very obediently crawled up on the seat and tried to grasp the massive steering wheel. I walked over to the other car and started the motor. As I began to pull away, I looked to see how my son was doing. He was trying—oh, how he was trying. He tried to reach the pedals, but he couldn't. He was also turning knobs and pushing buttons, trying to start the motor. He could scarcely be seen over the dashboard, but there staring out at me again were those same immense,

tear-filled, beautiful brown eyes. As I pulled away, he cried out, "Daddy, don't leave me. I don't know how to do it. I am too little." And I drove away.

A short time later, driving down that desert road in my dream, I suddenly realized in one stark, horrifying moment what I had done. I slammed my car to a stop, threw open the door, and started to run as fast as I could. I left car, keys, belongings, and all—and I ran. The pavement was so hot it burned my feet, and tears blinded my straining effort to see this child somewhere on the horizon. I kept running, praying, pleading to be forgiven and to find my boy safe and secure.

As I rounded a curve nearly ready to drop from physical and emotional exhaustion, I saw the unfamiliar car I had left Matt to drive. It was pulled carefully off to the side of the road, and he was laughing and playing nearby. An older man was with him, playing and responding to his games. Matt saw me and cried out something like, "Hi, Dad. We're having fun." Obviously he had already forgiven and forgotten my terrible transgression against him.

But I dreaded the older man's gaze, which followed my every move. I tried to say "Thank you," but his eyes were filled with sorrow and disappointment. I muttered an awkward apology and the stranger said simply, "You should not have left him alone to do this difficult thing. It would not have been asked of you."

With that, the dream ended, and I shot upright in bed. My pillow was now stained, whether with perspiration or tears I do not know. I threw off the covers and ran to the little metal camp cot that was my son's bed. There on my knees and through my tears I cradled him in my arms and spoke to him while he slept. I told him that every dad makes mistakes but that they don't mean to. I told him it wasn't his fault I had had a bad day. I told him that when boys are five or fifteen, dads sometimes forget and think they are fifty. I told him that I wanted him to be a small boy for a long, long time, be-

cause all too soon he would grow up and be a man and wouldn't be playing on the floor with his toys when I came home. I told him that I loved him and his mother and his sister more than anything in the world and that whatever challenges we had in life we would face them together. I told him that never again would I withhold my affection or my forgiveness from him, and never, I prayed, would he withhold them from me. I told him I was honored to be his father and that I would try with all my heart to be worthy of such a great responsibility.

Within the clasp of your arms

Well, I have not proven to be the perfect father I vowed to be that night and a thousand nights before and since. But I still want to be, and I believe this wise counsel from President Joseph F. Smith:

"Brethren, . . . If you will keep your [children] close to your heart, within the clasp of your arms; if you will make them . . . feel that you love them . . . and keep them near to you, they will not go very far from you, and they will not commit any very great sin. But it is when you turn them out of the home, turn them out of your affection . . . that [is what] drives them from you. . . .

"Fathers, if you wish your children to be taught in the principles of the gospel, if you wish them to love the truth and understand it, if you wish them to be obedient to and united with you, love them! and prove . . . that you do love them by your every word and act to[ward] them" (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1966], pp. 282, 316).

Brethren, we all know fatherhood is not an easy assignment, but it ranks among the most imperative ever given, in time or eternity. We must not pull away from our children. We must keep trying, keep reaching, keep praying,

keep listening. We must keep them "within the clasp of our arms." That is

what friends are for. Of this I bear witness in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Brother Matthew S. Holland

When I first found out that I was going to be speaking to you tonight, I was sitting on the edge of my parents' bed, visiting with them after I had arrived home late that night. My parents' bed now tilts downward at a 45-degree angle, and my mom still carries a bruise on her left leg. Well, now that I've recovered, my dad says that I'm grateful to be here.

Influence of parents and family

Actually, I *am* very grateful to be here tonight to share a few words with you about the influence parents and the family have upon the youth of our Church. I would like to use my own family to illustrate this point. My parents and younger sister and brother show me love and give me support every day of my life. They care for my needs, both temporal and spiritual. These things are very important to me, and my family does them better than anyone else could, including the other organizations within the Church.

I love the Church's programs very much. But there seems to be an idea among many Latter-day Saints that the Church has the responsibility for spiritually raising the youth. Parents who hold this belief are robbing their children of one of the richest experiences we can have here in mortality.

The Primary, Sunday School, and seminary have taught us all lessons we will never forget. The Aaronic Priesthood and Young Men's programs have helped us honor our priesthood more fully. The Young Women's programs have taught spiritual, social, and domestic skills which are very important. The Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society programs keep the older, more rebellious generation in line. But

these programs will not be successful unless the same lessons are being taught in the home.

Mom's example of repentance and forgiveness

A lot will be said tonight about fathers. I would also like to mention mothers. One summer morning, in that same student apartment my dad just described, I told my mom I was going out to the playground. She said okay, but told me not to come running back in with muddy feet because she was in the middle of washing and waxing the floor. She repeated the statement again for emphasis as I scampered out the door in a pair of cutoffs, barefoot and shirtless. I must have played for an hour, and at least half of that time was spent in the mud. Then, knowing my mom would probably be finished with the floor and would read to me, I ran home full of boyish excitement and vigor. That same vigor kept me and my mud-covered feet going right up the steps, through the door, and halfway onto the nearly finished wash-and-wax job my mother was still stooped over.

Not waiting for a reaction and not wanting to leave my sin half finished, I ran across the rest of the floor, into my parents' room, and slammed the door shut. Not knowing if I should jump out the second-story window or if just hiding under the bed would do, I burst into tears and hurled my small body onto the bed and prepared myself for the possibility of meeting my great-great-grandfather sooner than I had expected.

I heard the door open quietly and looked over. Oh, good, I thought. She wasn't carrying a heated poker (paddle; switch; anything). Before she

could say anything, I cried out, "Mom, you don't love me." To which she replied, "I *do* love you, and I'll do anything to prove it." She then picked up my filthy, muddy feet and kissed them. Needless to say, that experience taught me a great deal about the meaning of repentance and forgiveness, which lessons the Church would later reinforce.

By small and simple things

Of course, it doesn't have to be a great single experience to influence a child. Alma the Younger, who had his own youthful problems, said to his son, Helaman, "Now ye may suppose that this is foolishness in me; but behold I say unto you, that by small and simple things are great things brought to pass" (Alma 37:6). As fathers and sons, we should realize what great things we can accomplish by actions which might seem unimportant or insignificant at the time.

For example, my dad and I have gone for ice cream after every general priesthood meeting since I became a deacon. We are going again tonight. Now, ice cream isn't absolutely necessary to enjoy priesthood meeting—but it helps. I also remember my father telling me a few weeks before I was ordained a deacon that he hoped whenever I prepared, blessed, or passed the sacrament I would always wear a white shirt and a tie. I'm sure I had heard the same advice from a Sunday School teacher or had read it in some manual, but it wasn't until my father said it that I intended to do it. By responding to my father's suggestion I have shown respect for the sacred ordinance of the sacrament. And that small word of advice also helped me understand that priesthood ordinances are not just work or assignments, but they are priceless privileges that I'm grateful to take part in.

Home—a place to learn, grow, ask, and express yourself freely

I recently learned another significant lesson from my father about his love for me. A few weeks ago the state 3-A basketball championship was being played on a Saturday night in Ogden. I was on Provo High's team, which was to play Mountain View High School for the championship. After the first quarter the team met for a huddle. As I got up off the nice soft chair I had become accustomed to, my eye caught sight of my mom and dad sitting on the front row. This might seem insignificant to you, but I was thrilled because in Provo that same night was one of the most important events of the year. It wasn't my father's inauguration or the annual commencement exercises. It was the BYU-University of Utah basketball game. But Dad left that game, as well as several General Authorities and other dignitaries he was hosting, to come to my game. That demonstration of love meant so much to me, not because my *game* was more important, but because *I* was more important. Is it any wonder I want to show that love in return? We do have a bond, not just as father to son—but friend to friend as well.

So, fathers, I plead with you not to think that the only important priesthood or spiritual lessons are taught by Church programs. Make your homes like heaven. Let them be a place where sons and daughters can learn, grow, ask, and express themselves free of criticism and to an open ear and heart.

Responsible to teach and edify our families

Elder Marvin J. Ashton said, "Home should be an anchor, a port in a storm, a refuge, a happy place in which to dwell. . . . Home should be where life's greatest lessons are taught and learned. Home can be the center of one's earthly faith where love and mutual responsibility are appropriately

blended" (*Ye Are My Friends* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982], p. 44).

I want to bear my testimony of the responsibility we, the priesthood brethren of this Church, have to spiritually teach and edify our families. I would also like to publicly thank my dad for the great example he has been in my life, for the way in which he has always honored his priesthood. I love him very much. I can honestly say we are the best of friends, and it is my

fervent hope and prayer that everyone can have such a father-son relationship. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, President Holland and Matt.

We shall now hear from Elder James E. Faust, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder James E. Faust

Brethren, I come humbly to this pulpit. As a young man I recall President J. Reuben Clark pleading time after time in general priesthood meetings that there be unity in the priesthood. He would quote frequently the message of the Lord, "I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine" (D&C 38:27).

Prepare for attacks on faith

Unity in the priesthood should reflect unity in our homes. One wonders why so many more homes are now being weakened and why so many families are disintegrating. The reasons are complex. No doubt it has much to do with the social disorders of the day. We are all subjected to sparking, enticing false advertising. Violence is powerfully portrayed everywhere. Our society is permeated with the suggestion that selfishness and instant gratification are acceptable or even respectable conduct. The evils of alcoholism have exploded and been magnified by other forms of drug abuse. The sexual revolution has been crippling to the spiritual, mental, and physical health of families.

Among the assaults on families are the attacks on our faith, for which parents should prepare their children. Some of it is coming from apostates

who had testimonies and now seem unable to leave the Church alone. One, complaining of Church policy, was heard to say: "I am so mad: if I had been paying my tithing I would quit." Persecution is not new to the devoted followers of Christ. More recently, however, the anger and venom of our enemies seem to be increasing. Brigham Young said, "We never began to build a temple without the bells of hell beginning to ring" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1973], p. 410). With twenty-two temples under construction or in the planning stage, there seems to be a lot of bells to be rung.

Why one family strong, another weak

When I hear of a family breaking up, I question if family home evening and family prayers have been regularly held in that home and if the law of tithing has been observed. Has that family revered the Sabbath day? Have the parents murmured against Church teachings and leaders? I wonder what could possibly justify the forsaking of eternal promises made in the temple, or what could warrant the breaking up of a family with children of tender years.

Why is one family strong, yet another family weak? The problems are infinitely complex. Yet, there are answers. Abundant evidence shows that the presence of a firm, loving father in the home is far more likely to produce responsible, law-abiding children than if the father is not there, or if he does not function as a father at home. In either case it throws a double burden on the mother.

Malachi said the whole world would be smitten with a curse if the hearts of the fathers were not turned to the children, and if the hearts of the children were not turned to their fathers. (See Malachi 4:6.)

Deep religious commitment under wise parental supervision

The presence of the father in the home, coupled with one or both of the parents being active in Church, and with discipline in the home, seems to produce stable, strong families.

Surely, the most important ingredient in producing family happiness for members of this Church is a deep religious commitment under wise, mature parental supervision. Devotion to God in the home seems to forge the spiritual moorings and stability that can help the family cope. Some may say this is an oversimplification of a very complex problem, yet I believe the answers lie within the framework of the restored gospel of Christ.

Enrich family life

One of the reasons for weakened families is the lack of absolutes. An absolute has no restriction, exception, or qualification. It is fixed and certain. There must be some things which family members should always try to do, and some activities that family members should scrupulously avoid. Truthfulness should be an absolute in every family.

How can parents and family members introduce and build familial strength? One of my closest boyhood

friends recently died of cancer. His family decided he would be happier spending his last days in his own home, so they took him out of the veterans hospital, where the cancer was diagnosed, and cared for him within the familiar walls of his own house. His eighty-one-year-old mother left her home in another state and moved in to supervise the tender, loving care. A sister and a brother left their homes far away several times to help in the emergencies. His children, some of whom also lived away, came and set up a twenty-four-hour vigil so that he would never be alone.

After a few months he passed away, wasted and emaciated, but contented and happy. He had been loved into death. The family could have left his care to the government and the veterans hospital, with no expense and little personal inconvenience being involved.

May I suggest other ways to enrich family life:

Family prayer

1. *Hold family prayer night and morning.* The source of our enormous individual strength and potential is no mystery. It is an endowment from God. We need not consume addicting chemicals found in drugs, including alcohol, to make us capable of meeting life's problems. We need only to draw constantly from the power source through humble prayer. It often takes a superhuman effort for parents of a busy family to get everyone out of bed and together for family prayer and scripture study. You may not always feel like praying when you finally get together, but it will pay great dividends if you persevere.

Study the scriptures

2. *Study the scriptures.* All of us need the strength that comes from daily reading of the scriptures. Parents must have a knowledge of the standard works to teach them to their children.

A child who has been taught from the scriptures has a priceless legacy. Children are fortified when they become acquainted with the heroic figures and stories of the scriptures such as Daniel in the lions' den, David and Goliath, Nephi, Helaman and the stripping warriors, and all the others.

Having prayer, scripture study, and meals together gives incredibly important time to talk and listen as parents and children, brothers and sisters.

Teach children to work, to be disciplined, and to be obedient

3. *Teach children to work.* Every household has routine daily chores that children can be responsible for.

4. *Teach discipline and obedience.* If parents do not discipline their children and teach them to obey, society may discipline them in a way neither the parents nor the children will like. Dr. Lee Salk, child psychologist, said: "The 'do your own thing' trend has interfered with people developing close and trusting family relationships. It tells people that they are neurotic if they feel a sense of responsibility for the feelings of other family members. People are also told to let all their feelings out, even if it is very hurtful to someone else" (Special Section: Families, *U.S. News and World Report, Inc.*, 16 June 1980, p. 60). As Dr. Salk states, this is, of course, patently wrong. Without discipline and obedience in the home, the unity of the family collapses.

Loyalty, self-worth, and self-reliance

5. *Place a high priority on loyalty to each other.* The dictionary defines the word *loyal* as being "constant and faithful in any relation implying trust or confidence; bearing true allegiance to the constituted authority" (*Britannica World Language Dictionary*, s.v. "loyalty"). If family members are not loyal to each other, they cannot be loyal to themselves.

6. *Teach principles of self-worth and self-reliance.* One of the main problems in families today is that we spend less and less time together. Some spend an extraordinary amount of time, when they are together, in front of the television, which robs them of personal time for reinforcing feelings of self-worth. Time together is precious time—time needed to talk, to listen, to encourage, and to show how to do things. Less time together can result in loneliness, which may produce inner feelings of being unsupported, untreasured, and inadequate. Self-worth is reinforced in many ways. When parents say to a son or daughter, leaving the home for some activity, the simple but meaningful words, "Remember who you are," they have helped that child feel important.

Develop family traditions

7. *Develop family traditions.* Some of the great strengths of families can be found in their own traditions, which may consist of many things: making special occasions of the blessing of children, baptisms, ordinations to the priesthood, birthdays, fishing trips, skits on Christmas Eve, family home evening, and so forth. The traditions of each family are unique and are provided in large measure by the mother's imprint.

Cultivate spirit of love

8. *Do everything in the spirit of love.* Elder LeGrand Richards shared with us the tender relationship he had with his father. Said he, "I walked into my father's apartment when he was just about ninety, . . . and as I opened the door, he stood up and walked toward me and took me in his arms and hugged me and kissed me. He always did that. . . . Taking me in his arms and calling me by my kid name, he said, 'Grandy, my boy, I love you'" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1967, pp. 111-12).

Some parents have difficulty expressing their love physically or vocally. I do not ever recall my own father using the words, "Son, I love you," but he showed it in a thousand ways which were more eloquent than words. He rarely missed a practice, a game, a race, or any activity in which his sons participated.

The touch and time of the mother in the home makes it warm, comfortable, and pleasant. Our wives and mothers deserve special support. President George Albert Smith, addressing husbands and fathers, said:

"Some seem to think that the woman's responsibility is to take care of the home and everything else while the man goes to meetings. I want to tell you that your chief responsibility is in your own home" (Seventies and Stake Missionary Conference, 4 Oct. 1941, p. 8).

This was confirmed by President Harold B. Lee: "The greatest of the Lord's work you brethren will ever do as fathers will be within the walls of your own home" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1973, p. 130).

Let there be no ill will or anger between parents and children, brothers and sisters, and kinsmen. Lingering feelings of hurt or disagreement should be settled quickly. Why wait until one party is dying or dead? May the rich humanness of warm, loving family life be restored and prevail in all our kinship.

Converting and strengthening parents

How can our priesthood leaders, already administratively burdened, be helpful to parents in order to help their children? I believe the answer is basic. In the last days of the Savior's ministry he said to Peter: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:

"But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art

converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:31-32).

There needs to be a converting and a strengthening of parents. This comes about by the teaching, the understanding, and the applying of gospel principles. It is a great challenge to the priesthood leaders to have every one in our wards, branches, and quorums be strengthened in their understanding of the gospel. Priesthood leaders are clothed with great authority. When bishops and other priesthood leaders are needed for specific family or personal reasons, their availability is a great strength and comfort. Their genuine interest and concern for us as individuals is a vital support mechanism.

Ministering in Church and in families

Now, brethren, in conclusion may I say something to promote better understanding in our work. Let us not perceive that just because we are holding our meetings, making our home teaching visits, and are involved in other activities that we are necessarily fully serving the membership of the Church. All of the Spirit, the goodness, and the mercy of Christ should be found in our ministering in the Church and in our families.

Religion in the distant past has often been cloaked with rigorous fanaticism, bigotry, and intolerance. With the restoration of the gospel came the holy priesthood of God, to be exercised not in the spirit of coercion and compulsion but in the spirit of free agency, resting on a foundation of "gentleness and meekness, and . . . love unfeigned" (D&C 121:41). This is the sweet spirit of the Christ himself.

Reach for those who have lost their way

Now, these exalted concepts must be implemented by wise men. As direction is given in the Church and in our homes, there should be no spirit of dictatorship and no *unrighteous domin-*

ion. The keys and powers of the priesthood can be "handled only upon the principles of righteousness" (D&C 121:36).

God, through his prophets, has given the priesthood in recent times the great challenge to advance worldwide the holy work in which we are engaged. All worthy men may now be given the priesthood. With the coming of these inspired changes, I wonder if there has been an enlarging of attitude based upon the exalted principles the Savior taught. Has the extended responsibility of the priesthood caused us to have a better understanding of our work? Are some of us unsuccessful in differentiating between the sin and the sinner?

Many of us have sat in ward councils, priesthood executive councils, and other meetings on the ward levels. We took the time to identify the names of those who had lost their way. But our efforts to reach them could have been more effective. At times we were too judgmental. Sometimes we lost track of the individual in our focus on the program. I do not criticize the programs and activities. I am grateful for them. They are necessary. They are inspired and great. I only ask for greater concern for the individual and the family, which after all is the purpose of God's holy work. "This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39).

May we put our lives and homes in order. We must stay true to the great absolutes of the restored gospel: namely, Christ and him crucified, the divine restoration of the gospel in our time, the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith's divine calling as a prophet of God, and continuing revelation to his successors, according to the needs of the Church and its members.

If we are united and go forward under the leadership of those who have the keys to the kingdom of God on earth, our homes will be enriched, our lives purified, and the gates of hell will not prevail against us. May we follow the counsel of Alma, and "stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death" (Mosiah 18:9). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just addressed us.

We shall now stand and sing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet," following which President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will speak to us.

The choir and congregation sang "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

President Ezra Taft Benson

My beloved brethren, this is a glorious sight! How we appreciate the service you so willingly give to the Lord. We know God will bless you for it.

To all you young men—Aaronic Priesthood holders—we love and appreciate you. We are so grateful for your dedication and faithfulness. With all my soul, I encourage you to resolve now that you will be clean and worthy

to serve the Lord all the days of your life. Therein is true happiness.

A call to the priesthood

Tonight, I speak to all priesthood holders, you who have responsibility for our Father's children. My message is "A Call to the Priesthood: 'Feed My Sheep.'"

Most of you are familiar with the Savior's description of members of the Church and their leaders. True followers He called sheep, and priesthood leaders He called shepherds.

We remember His unforgettable example of a true shepherd's concern for his sheep:

"If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, . . . and seeketh that which is gone astray?

"And if it so be that he find it, . . . he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray" (Matthew 18:12-13).

A true shepherd would give his life for his sheep

In Jesus' time, the Palestinian shepherd was noted for his protection of his sheep. Unlike modern shepherders, the shepherd always walked ahead of his flock. He led them. The shepherd knew each of the sheep and usually had a name for each. The sheep knew his voice and trusted him and would not follow a stranger. Thus, when called, the sheep would come to him. (See John 10:14, 16.)

At night shepherds would bring their sheep to a corral called a sheepfold. High walls surrounded the sheepfold, and thorns were placed on top of these walls to prevent wild animals and thieves from climbing over.

Sometimes, however, a wild animal driven by hunger would leap over the walls into the midst of the sheep, frightening them. Such a situation separated the true shepherd—one who

loved his sheep—from the hireling—one who worked only for pay and duty.

The true shepherd was willing to give his life for the sheep. He would go in amongst the sheep and fight for their welfare. The hireling, on the other hand, valued his own personal safety above the sheep and would usually flee from the danger.

Christ, the True Shepherd

Jesus used this common illustration of his day to declare that He was the Good Shepherd, the True Shepherd. Because of His love for His brothers and sisters, He would willingly and voluntarily lay down His life for them. (See John 10:17-18.)

Eventually, the Good Shepherd did give His life for the sheep—for you and me, for all of us.

"Feed my sheep"

Later, after His resurrection, Jesus directed Peter to "feed my lambs. . . . Feed my sheep. . . . Feed my sheep." (See John 21:15-17.)

Three times this charge was repeated to the newly designated head shepherd.

Do you think that Peter recalled the parable of the good shepherd?

Do you think that Peter could remember what a good shepherd was to be, what he was to do?

Do you think he ever questioned his Lord's example as being too idealistic?

It must have impressed Peter deeply, for tradition has it that he also willingly gave his life for the cause.

Sheep need care in Church today

The expressive symbolism of the Good Shepherd is not without significant parallel in the Church today. The sheep need to be led by watchful shepherds. Too many are wandering, some are being enticed away by momentary distractions, and others have become completely lost.

Saturday, April 2, 1983

First Day

Ponder carefully these representative samples from several stakes which illustrate the magnitude of our problem.

—A stake in the eastern part of the United States has slightly over 300 Melchizedek Priesthood holders and an equivalent number of prospective elders—lost sheep!

—A stake in Salt Lake City has 1,100 Melchizedek Priesthood holders, but also 1,100 prospective elders. Where, we ask, are the shepherds?

—A stake in England has 360 Melchizedek Priesthood holders, but over 800 prospective elders, a very small percentage of whom attend their meetings. We ask, How will the sheep survive without the safety of the sheepfold and watch-care of a loving shepherd?

Loving care can bring results

We know great results can take place when the shepherds make a concerted effort and show concern.

In one stake in southern Utah, concerted efforts have been made to reactivate prospective elders. In a period of two years, over 100 men were ordained elders in the Melchizedek Priesthood. Their ordinations raised sacrament meeting attendance in the stake by 14 percent.

A stake in Arizona advanced 47 prospective elders to the Melchizedek Priesthood; another in the state of Washington advanced the same number. Both continue to use the temple preparation seminars.

The districts of one mission in Great Britain have reactivated more than 600 members with the help of full-time and stake missionaries.

A stake in South America, through prayerful and earnest efforts, reactivated 146 prospective elders in less than one year. Forty-five more are now ready for ordination to offices in the Melchizedek Priesthood.

We realize, as in times past, some of the sheep will rebel and "are as a wild flock which fleeth from the shep-

herd" (Mosiah 8:21). But most of our problems stem from lack of loving and attentive shepherding.

With a shepherd's care, many of our new members, those newly born into the gospel, would be nurtured by gospel knowledge and new standards. Such attention would ensure that there would be no returning to old habits and old friends.

With a shepherd's loving care, many of our young people, our young lambs, would not be wandering. And if they were, the crook of the shepherd's staff, a loving arm, would retrieve them.

With a shepherd's care, many of those who are now independent of the flock can still be reclaimed. Many have married outside the Church and assumed the life-styles of their marriage partners.

Priesthood watch-care

The problem, I repeat, is serious and considerable in its magnitude.

We offer no *new* solutions to this *old* problem. The charge Jesus gave to Peter, which He emphasized by repeating it three times, is the proven solution: "Feed my lambs. . . . Feed my sheep. . . . Feed my sheep."

The answer, then, is found in shepherding the flock. In other words, priesthood watch-care. It is real concern by a true shepherd, not just the feigned concern a hireling might show.

Here are some questions every true shepherd should ask:

Shepherds—home teachers:

Are you watching over your families as you should?

Are you ministering to their needs?

Do you care enough about your families' welfare that you find out their interests, that you remember birthdays and special events, and that you continually pray for them?

Are you the first one to the home when the family needs assistance?

Does the head of the household call on you first?

Are you attentive to the needs of each member of the family?

When one of your assigned families moves, do you know where they have moved? Do you make an effort to obtain their new address? Have you checked with neighbors, friends, and relatives?

Shepherds—stake presidents, bishops, quorum leaders:

Are you welcoming into your ranks new converts?

Do they *feel* your love and concern?

Are new converts invited into your homes?

Do they know what family home evening is and how to use it?

Does the family feel welcome and comfortable in your midst?

Do you ordain worthy male members to offices of the priesthood following baptism?

Do you give them meaningful Church assignments?

Shepherds—stake presidents, bishops, quorum leaders:

Do you leave the ninety and nine and search after the lost one?

Do you call and appoint advisers and others who can reach impressionable youth and visit them on their "own ground"?

Have you fully implemented the youth program, and are you using this program to meet the individual needs of the youth?

Are you watchful over the young singles, the divorced, and those with special needs?

Do you carefully and spiritually prepare those who enter military service?

Are you especially attentive to young men between the transition period from Aaronic Priesthood to Melchizedek Priesthood?

Bishops, do you make sure they come under the care of their new shepherd, the quorum president?

Do you provide significant Church-service opportunities for our returned missionaries so these young

men and women do not drift into inactivity because they do not have occasion to serve as they have been doing for eighteen months?

Do you use visiting teachers to augment home teaching?

Are you teaching fathers their duties?

Do you have temple preparation seminars to encourage prospective elders to prepare for the Melchizedek Priesthood and the temple?

Do you have older prospective elders assigned to the high priests and invited to join those with whom they would feel most comfortable?

Are younger prospective elders invited to participate with the elders quorums?

Some leaders say that some men are past hope, but, as the angel told Abraham, nothing is impossible with the Lord! (See Genesis 18:14.) One brother who was regarded by some as a hopeless case tearfully exclaimed to the temple worker at the sealing altar, "I don't know why I waited so long for this blessing!"

In a recent Saturday evening meeting of leaders I heard a determined brother state, "I've sure had a time with the devil since I started to become active. Prior to that time, I just went along with him."

Are we helping the one who needs help because he has started on the way back to full activity?

Shepherds—stake presidents, bishops, quorum leaders:

Are you attentive to the records of Church members under your charge—especially those who are not participating with you in meetings?

Do you obtain forwarding addresses from home teachers when members leave your midst, or are you just relieved to get them off your records and send their records to the "address unknown" file?

Shepherds—fathers in Israel:

Are you holding family prayer with your family, morning and evening?

Do you hold a regular, consistent, inspiring family home evening once a week?

Do you lead out in spiritual matters?

Is your example what it should be before those whom you lead?

Do you ask and pray for the welfare of your own?

Do you love them?

Would you give your life for them?

Shepherds—all who hold the priesthood:

We ask you solemnly to evaluate your performance in relation to these matters.

We call on you, as Paul did to the elders of Ephesus:

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over . . . which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28; italics added).

We repeat to you the charge Jesus gave Peter. We repeat it with the same emphasis, the same repetition: “Feed my lambs. . . . Feed my Sheep. . . . Feed my sheep”!

We call on you to extend yourselves with renewed dedication. We want you to do something you have not been doing. We want you to watch, to feed, to tend, and to care for the flock and, in the event that some are temporarily lost, we challenge you to find them.

No greater work than saving souls

Why should you do this?

Because you love your brothers and sisters. You want them to have joy in our Father’s kingdom.

There is no greater work in all the world than that of saving souls. Incom-

parable joy can be yours when you bring souls unto Him!

If you will be prayerful and earnest in your desires to tend his flock, the Lord will bless you with success.

This we promise you!

God bless you, my brethren of the priesthood, watchful shepherds all, to know your flock and to be known of them. May we carefully attend and protect them so that they may remain safe and free from harm. This is our challenge, our duty, and our joy, which joy I promise to all of you as you accept the challenge and do your duty. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, President Benson, for that great challenge.

We note that the nationwide CBS Radio Tabernacle Choir broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 o’clock Sunday morning. Those desiring to attend in the Tabernacle must be in their seats before 9:15 A.M.

We urge you to be careful and courteous in your driving as you leave the Tabernacle tonight. It has been storming and we hope that you will have no trouble.

The beautiful music for this priesthood session has been furnished by the Ricks College men’s choir. We are grateful to you young brethren for your inspiring music and express sincere thanks for the service you have given here tonight. We know that you have a long ride home, and we pray that you may travel safely.

Following my closing remarks, the choir will sing “Jesus, My Savior True,” following which Elder Ronald E. Poelman, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the benediction.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

To the boys: story of David

I appreciate the large number of boys who make so great an effort to come to these meetings. It is not easy for many of them. We are grateful to you. I should like to say some things particularly to you, and I do so by recounting a portion of a story with which you are already familiar. It is the story of David, the son of Jesse.

As you will recall, the army of Israel under the leadership of King Saul was engaged in a deadly war with the army of the Philistines. One army was poised on one hill, the other on an opposite hill, with a valley in between. Now, the Philistines had among their men a great giant of a man named Goliath of Gath. His height was six cubits and a span. If I have figured correctly, that would put him somewhere in the neighborhood of nine feet tall. What a basketball center he might have made!

Clad in his armor, he came down to the valley and called out to the army of Israel:

"Choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me.

"If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us. . . .

"I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together" (1 Samuel 17:8-10).

When Saul and the army of Israel looked at this giant and heard his chilling challenge, they were frightened because they had no one of their own of such stature.

Now, while all of this was going on, Jesse, David's father, asked his young son to take some food to his three brothers in the army. When he arrived at the battleground, Goliath came out again, issuing the same challenge, which David heard. There was fear throughout the army of Israel.

David, who was no more than a boy, said to the king, (and I paraphrase his language): "King, why are you so afraid of this giant? I will go and fight him."

Saul replied, "Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he [is] a man of war [trained] from his youth" (1 Samuel 17:33).

David armed with faith

David then persuaded Saul to let him try. He told the king of how he had fought with a lion and a bear to save his father's sheep and concluded by saying that the Lord would deliver him out of the hand of the Philistine. Saul, possibly thinking that one more life lost would not be serious among the great losses they had already sustained, said to David, "Go, and the Lord be with thee" (1 Samuel 17:37).

Saul then placed armor on David until the boy could scarcely walk. David said unto the king, "I cannot wear this," and he took the armor off.

He then "took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had . . . and his sling was in his hand" (1 Samuel 17:40).

This stripling of a boy, with only a slingshot and five stones and without any armor other than the armor of faith, went down into the valley to face Goliath.

Goliath armed with sword, spear, shield

"And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.

"And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves?"

And Goliath swore at David, saying, "Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field."

Then David spoke these great words:

"Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

"This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel" (adapted from 1 Samuel 17:42-46).

That was brave talk for a boy who stood against a nine-foot giant.

In anger Goliath came at him. Then David, running toward the giant, "put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth" (1 Samuel 17:49).

Evil giants to overpower in our lives

You know the rest of that story. I would like to bring it down into your own lives. There are Goliaths all around you, hulking giants with evil intent to destroy you. These are not nine-foot-tall men, but they are men and institutions that control attractive but evil things that may challenge and weaken and destroy you. Included in these are beer and other liquors and tobacco. Those who market these products would like to enslave you into their use. There are drugs of various kinds which, I am told, are relatively easy to obtain in many high schools. For those who peddle them, this is a multimillion-dollar industry, a giant web of evil. There is pornography, seductive and interesting and inviting. It

has become a giant industry, producing magazines, films, and other materials designed to take your money and lead you toward activities that would destroy you.

The giants who are behind these efforts are formidable and skillful. They have gained vast experience in the war they are carrying on. They would like to ensnare you.

It is almost impossible to entirely avoid exposure to their products. You see these materials on all sides. But you need not fear if you have the slingshot of truth in your hands. You have been counseled and taught and advised. You have the stones of virtue and honor and integrity to use against these enemies who would like to conquer you. Insofar as you are concerned, you can hit them "between the eyes," to use a figurative expression. You can triumph over them by disciplining yourselves to avoid them. You can say to the whole lot of them as David said to Goliath, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied."

Name temptation Goliath and do as David did

Victory will be yours. There is not a boy within the sound of my voice who needs to succumb to any of these forces. You hold the priesthood of God. You are a son of God. You have His power within you to sustain you. You have the right to ministering angels about you to protect you. Do not let Goliath frighten you. Stand your ground and hold your place, and you will be triumphant. As the years pass, you will look back with satisfaction upon the battles you have won in your individual lives.

When temptation comes your way, name that boastful, deceitful giant "Goliath!" and do with him as David did to the Philistine of Gath. God bless each of you, I humbly pray.

To older brethren: tales of unhappy people

Now for a few minutes I would like to go to another subject, speaking particularly to you older brethren.

I have a friend who built a beautiful home and furnished it with the very best of carpets, furniture, appliances, and all that money can buy. Within its walls he kept his fine automobiles and his expensive jewelry. Then, fearful of intruders who might enter and rob him, he had installed expensive dead-bolt locks so that he had to use a key to get out as well as to get in. He put bars on the windows and doors, and was like a prisoner looking out of his own home, as one might do out of a jail. He installed costly electronic surveillance devices to turn on lights and set off sirens should any unwelcome individual enter. He landscaped largely without trees or shrubbery so there would be no place for a thief to hide. And he smugly said to himself, "Now I am secure."

But what he did not realize is that neither bars nor dead-bolts, neither lights nor sirens nor anything of the kind would have the slightest effect on intruders of another variety who could destroy the lives of his children, despoil the marriage which had been the source of his happiness over many years, bind him with cords of meanness and bitterness and hate toward those he had once loved, and lock him in a dungeon cell of despair and misery.

Brethren, I spend much time listening to the tales of unhappy people. As a percentage of the entire membership of the Church, they constitute a relatively small number. But there are too many, and every case is a tragedy. With few exceptions, it would appear that the husband and the father is the chief offender, on whom the intruders of sin and selfishness take their greatest toll.

Guard homes against insidious intruders

Brethren, I know it is an old subject, and one that has been dealt with much. But I repeat it again: *Guard your homes*. How foolish it seems to install bars and bolts and electronic devices against thieves and molesters while more insidious intruders come in as invited guests.

I say to you what I said to the boys—avoid pornography as you would a plague. I recall an assignment some years back to restore the blessings of a man who had been excommunicated from the Church because of his sin. He came to my office with his wife. I spoke with them individually. I asked him how it all began. He held a responsible position in the Church. He was likewise a professional man with high responsibility in the community.

His trouble began, he said, when he picked up a pornographic magazine to read on a plane. It intrigued him. It appealed to him. He found himself buying more of these things. Then he sought out movies which titillated him and excited him. Knowing that his wife would be a party to none of this, he went alone. He found occasion to leave town and go to other cities where he could more easily indulge his desires. He then found excuses to stay late at his office and asked his secretary to stay with him. One thing led to another until he succumbed.

With tears rolling down his cheeks, he sat across the desk from me and cursed the day he had read that first magazine. He spoke of his love for the wife who had forgiven him and remained true to him. He spoke of his love for his children, who had been shamed and embarrassed by his actions. He told of the hell through which he had walked for some four years from the time of his excommunication. He spoke of his love for the Church and of his desire to again enjoy its full blessings.

In the presence of his wife, I placed my hands upon his head and in

the authority of the holy priesthood restored his priesthood, his temple endowment, his temple sealing, and all other blessings which he had formerly held. This great, strong man sobbed like a baby under my hands while his wife, holding her hand in his, wept like a child.

At the conclusion of that blessing, they embraced one another and he asked her to forgive him. She said she had forgiven him, and that she loved him and always would.

They were happy when they left, happier than they had been in years. And I was happy, too. But I thought of the terrible price he had paid and of the price he had exacted of his family through his foolishness and transgression.

Guard against unhappy ending

Unfortunately, there is not always that kind of happy ending. In many cases there is divorce with bitterness and rancor. What was once love has turned to hate. Children's lives are blighted. Hopes become as ashes. So

often there is only misery and loneliness and regret.

Brethren, keep your affections within your homes. Regard as your most precious possession in time or eternity she with whom you joined hands over the altar in the House of the Lord and to whom you pledged your love and loyalty and affection for time and all eternity. Your companion, your children, and you yourself will then know and feel a security far greater than any that can be bought with hardware and gadgetry.

God bless you, my brethren, young and old, that the watch-care of the Lord may be over you, that you may stay close to Him and be deserving of His preserving hand, I humbly ask, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Jesus, My Savior True."

Elder Ronald E. Poelman gave the benediction.

SECOND DAY MORNING MEETING

FOURTH SESSION

The fourth session of the general conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 3, 1983. President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music for this session with Jerold Ottley directing and John Longhurst at the organ.

Prior to the opening of the session, the Choir sang "Arise, O Glorious Zion" without announcement.

President Hinckley made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

We greet you this Easter morning as we with the Christian world at large celebrate the resurrection of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior and our Redeemer. How appropriate that we of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are convened in our great annual world conference on this sacred Sabbath. This is the fourth session of the 153rd Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We welcome all who are present this morning in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on Temple Square.

We also acknowledge those tuned to this conference by radio and television and those who are seated in the

overflow congregation in the Assembly Hall where Elders Marion D. Hanks and Richard G. Scott preside. We welcome likewise those who are viewing this conference through a great satellite network which will carry the proceedings to some five hundred and fifty stake centers of the Church. President Spencer W. Kimball is watching the proceedings of this session on television. He sends his love and blessings, as does President Marion G. Romney who is watching it from his home.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders, and officers and members of the Church from many lands who have assembled to worship and to counsel together in this conference.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Jerold Ottley with John Longhurst at the organ, is providing the music for this session.

The Choir opened these services by singing "Arise, O Glorious Zion"

and will now sing "Sweet Hour of Prayer," following which Elder Gene R. Cook, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The Choir sang "Sweet Hour of Prayer."

Elder Gene R. Cook offered the invocation.

The Choir sang "How Great the Wisdom and the Love" without announcement.

President Hinckley

The Tabernacle Choir has sung "How Great the Wisdom and the Love."

It will now be our privilege to hear from President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

President Ezra Taft Benson

My beloved brethren and sisters, one hundred and fifty years ago the Prophet Joseph Smith organized the School of the Prophets. The purpose of this school was to prepare selected members of the priesthood to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to all the world.

First School of the Prophets meetings

In the absence of a temple, the first School of the Prophets was held in a small room in the home of Bishop Newel K. Whitney. Brigham Young was one of the early participants in this school, and he described a scene which frequently presented itself during meetings:

"The brethren came to that place for hundreds of miles to attend school in a little room probably no larger than eleven by fourteen. When they assembled together in this room after breakfast, the first they did was to light their pipes, and, while smoking, talk about the great things of the kingdom, . . . and as soon as the pipe was out of their mouths a large chew of tobacco would then be taken. Often when the Prophet entered the room to give the school instructions he would find himself in a cloud of tobacco smoke. This, and the complaints of his wife at having to clean [the] floor, made the Prophet think upon the matter, and he inquired of the Lord relating to the conduct of the Elders in using tobacco" (*Journal of Discourses*, 12:158).

A principle with a promise

In response to this inquiry by the Prophet, the Lord gave him a revelation in the Whitney home. This revelation is known as the Word of Wisdom.

At first the revelation was not given as a commandment. It was given as "a principle with promise, adapted to the capacity of the weak and the weakest of all saints, who are or can be called saints" (D&C 89:3). This allowed time for the Saints to adjust to the principles contained in the revelation.

While I was on my first mission in Great Britain in 1922, some of the sisters had difficulty giving up their tea. I read that passage to them, and most of them quit drinking tea because they did not want to be considered the "weakest" of those who are or can be called Saints.

A binding commandment and distinctive practice

In 1851, President Brigham Young proposed to the general conference of the Church that all Saints formally covenant to keep the Word of Wisdom. This proposal was unanimously upheld by the membership of the Church. Since that day, the revelation has been a binding commandment on all Church members.

The Word of Wisdom is one of the recognized and distinctive practices of members of the Church. Generally, others not of our faith acknowledge that members in good standing abstain from tobacco, coffee, tea, and all alcoholic beverages.

Scientific studies have confirmed that Latter-day Saints have less incidence of heart problems, all forms of cancer, and other diseases because of their adherence to the Word of Wisdom.

These studies have demonstrated that not only will one live a longer life, but also that the quality of one's life will be better.

Evidence of Joseph Smith's prophetic calling

The Word of Wisdom is one of the evidences of the inspiration of Joseph Smith's prophetic calling. Let me tell you why.

Several years ago an investigator gave this testimonial about Joseph Smith. He said that the Word of Wisdom was the revelation that most attracted him to investigate the Church. "There is no possible way," he said, "that Joseph Smith could have known what we now know in the medical world about the harmful effects of tobacco, alcohol, tea, and coffee. Yet this has all been substantiated by medical science."

He said that this was the beginning of his earnest investigation of the gospel, for he reasoned that if Joseph Smith could be so accurate on a matter that medical science validated over a hundred years later, the rest of the teachings of the Church deserved investigation. He did so and is now a member of the Church.

Young people: God governs by law

One principle of the gospel that all young people of the Church should understand is this: God, our Heavenly Father, governs His children by law. He has instituted laws for our perfection. If we obey His laws, we receive the blessings pertaining to those laws. If we do not obey, we receive the consequences.

The Word of Wisdom is a law—a principle with promise. If we obey the provisions of the law, we receive the promises. If we do not, there will be both temporal and spiritual consequences.

What are the provisions of the law known as the Word of Wisdom?

Admonitions and counsels in Word of Wisdom

The revelation defines and admonishes abstinence from harmful

substances and beverages in these words:

"Strong drinks [or, in other words, alcoholic or harmful beverages] are not for the belly" (D&C 89:7).

"Tobacco is not for the body . . . and is not good for man" (D&C 89:8).

"Hot drinks [defined as tea and coffee] are not for the body" (D&C 89:9).

Those foods which are good for man are described in these words:

"All wholesome herbs God hath ordained for the constitution, nature, and use of man—

"Every herb in the season thereof, and every fruit in the season thereof;

"Flesh . . . of beasts and of the fowls of the air . . . are to be used sparingly;

"All grain is ordained for the use of man . . . to be the staff of life. . . .

"All grain is good for the food of man; as also the fruit of the vine" (D&C 89:10–12, 14, 16).

In this revelation the Lord counsels us to use meat sparingly. I have often felt that the Lord is further counseling us in this revelation against indiscriminately killing animals, for He has said elsewhere in scripture, "Wo be unto man that sheddeth blood or that wasteth flesh and hath no need" (D&C 49:21).

Obedience—the greater blessing

Wheat is particularly singled out as being good for man, as is the fruit of the vine—vegetables and all fruits. This is the wisdom of the Lord on the matter of sound nutrition and diet.

The Word of Wisdom allows us to know that the Lord is vitally concerned about the health of His Saints. He has graciously given us counsel for improving our health, endurance, and resistance to many diseases.

The temporal promise for obedience is: They "shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones; . . . [they] shall run and not be

weary and shall walk and not faint" (D&C 89:18, 20).

I have always felt, however, that the greater blessing of obedience to the Word of Wisdom and all other commandments is spiritual.

Listen to the spiritual promise: "All saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience *to the commandments*, . . . shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures" (D&C 89:18, 19; italics added).

Some have thought this promise was contingent on just keeping the provisions of the Word of Wisdom. But you will notice we must walk in obedience to *all* the commandments. Then we shall receive specific spiritual promises. This means we must obey the law of tithing, keep the Sabbath day holy, keep morally clean and chaste, and obey all other commandments.

When we do all this, the promise is: They "shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures" (D&C 89:19).

What father and mother would not want the inspiration of the Lord in rearing their children? I testify these blessings can be yours. Surely parents would not want, through disobedience, to prevent their children from receiving the Lord's blessings. All fathers and mothers in Israel should qualify themselves for this promise.

Living the commandments of God is a condition of worthiness for entrance into the House of the Lord. There wisdom and "great treasures of knowledge" are given that relate to our happiness in this life and joy throughout eternity.

Brothers and sisters and friends, learn this principle. The Lord will increase our knowledge, wisdom, and capacity to obey when we obey His fundamental laws. This is what the Prophet Joseph Smith meant when he said we could have "sudden strokes of ideas" which come into our minds as "pure intelligence." (See *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph

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Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 151.) This is revelation. We must learn to rely on the Holy Ghost so we can use it to guide our lives and the lives of those for whom we have responsibility.

I do not believe that a member of the Church can have an active, vibrant testimony of the gospel without keeping the commandments. A testimony is to have current inspiration to know the work is true, not something we receive only once. The Holy Ghost abides with those who honor, respect, and obey God's laws. And it is that Spirit which gives inspiration to the individual. Humbly I testify to the reality of this promise.

Warning to modern generation

There is another part of this revelation that constitutes a pertinent warning to this modern generation: "In consequence of evils and designs which do and will exist in the hearts of conspiring men in the last days, I have warned you, and forewarn you, by giving unto you this word of wisdom by revelation" (D&C 89:4).

The Lord foresaw the situation of today when motives for money would cause men to conspire to entice others to take noxious substances into their bodies. Advertisements which promote beer, wine, liquors, coffee, tobacco, and other harmful substances are examples of what the Lord foresaw. But the most pernicious example of an evil conspiracy in our time is those who induce young people into the use of drugs.

My young brothers and sisters, in all love, we give you warning that Satan and his emissaries will strive to entice you to use harmful substances, because they well know if you partake, your spiritual powers will be inhibited and you will be in their evil power. Stay away from those places or people which would influence you to break the

commandments of God. Keep the commandments of God and you will have the wisdom to know and discern that which is evil.

Restoration and growth in Kirtland

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the Word of Wisdom in this dispensation. Marking this anniversary, the Church is restoring the Newel K. Whitney store in Kirtland, Ohio. The store is a most ordinary structure by any modern standard, but it is the place where sacred revelations of God were received. One hundred and fifty years have scientifically confirmed the Word of Wisdom as a formula for sound health. One hundred and fifty years' experience with Saints living these laws has also confirmed that God fulfills His spiritual promises to His Saints.

May we as Saints of God keep all His commandments. May we be pure and holy so we can have the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost. Let us be distinctive as a people because of our obedience to God's laws.

A new day is dawning in Kirtland. A few years ago, I broke ground for the first meetinghouse to be built in Kirtland since the dedication of the first temple in 1836.

I recently returned and dedicated a beautiful new building. Following the dedication, we participated in a special reception attended by fifty-eight nonmembers, descendants of the early Saints in Kirtland. Some of these nonmembers have now been baptized and others are being prepared.

We anticipate that within the next year we will once again have a stake in Kirtland where the very first stake of the Church was organized.

I testify that this is the Lord's Church restored in this modern day. Jesus Christ lives. He directs the affairs of this Church and is close to His servants.

I further testify that obedience to all of God's laws brings the precious promise of peace in this life and eternal life in the world to come, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Go, Ye Messengers of Glory" without announcement.

President Hinckley

We have heard from President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "Go, Ye Messengers of Glory."

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Thomas S. Monson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Thomas S. Monson

Anonymous donor

Recently, I approached the reception desk of a large hospital to learn the room number of a patient I had come to visit. This hospital, like almost every other in the land, was undergoing a massive expansion. Behind the desk where the receptionist sat was a magnificent plaque which bore an inscription of thanks to donors who had made possible the expansion. The name of each donor who had contributed \$100,000 appeared in a flowing script, etched on an individual brass placard suspended from the main plaque by a glittering chain.

The names of the benefactors were well known. Captains of commerce, giants of industry, professors of learning—all were there. I felt gratitude for their charitable benevolence. Then my eyes rested on a brass placard which was different—it contained no name. One word, and one word only, was inscribed: "Anonymous." I smiled and wondered who the unnamed contributor could have been. Surely he or she experienced a quiet joy unknown to any other.

"Tell no man"

My thoughts turned backward in time—back to the Holy Land; back to Him whom we especially remember this Easter Sunday; back to Him who

redeemed from the grave all mankind; back to Him who on that special mountain taught His disciples the true spirit of giving when he counseled, "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them. . . .

"But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth" (Matthew 6:1, 3).

Then, as though to indelibly impress on their souls the practical application of this sacred truth, He came down from the mountain with a great multitude following Him. "And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

"And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

"And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man" (Matthew 8:2-4). The word *anonymous* had a precious meaning then. It still has.

"Shan't know who sends it"

The classics of literature, as well as the words from holy writ, teach us the endurance of anonymity. A favorite of mine is Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol." I can picture the trembling Ebenezer Scrooge seeing in vision the return of his former partner, Jacob Marley, though Jacob had been dead for seven years. The words of

Marley penetrate my very soul, as he laments, "Not to know that any Christian spirit working kindly in its little sphere, whatever it may be, will find its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness. Not to know that no space of regret can make amends for one life's opportunity misused! Yet such was I!" ("A Christmas Carol," in *The Best Short Stories of Charles Dickens* [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947], p. 435).

After a fretful night—wherein Scrooge was shown by the Ghost of Christmas Past, the Ghost of Christmas Present, and the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come the true meaning of living, loving, and giving—he awakened to discover anew the freshness of life, the power of love, and the spirit of a true gift. He remembered the plight of the Bob Cratchit family, arranged with a lad to purchase the giant turkey (the size of a boy), and sent the gift to the Cratchits. Then, with supreme joy, the reborn Ebenezer Scrooge exclaims to himself, "He shan't know who sends it" ("A Christmas Carol," p. 481). Again the word *anonymous*.

Lessons from the *Lusitania* and Potomac River accidents

The sands flow through the hourglass, the clock of history moves on; yet the divine truth prevails undiminished, undiluted, unchanged.

When the magnificent ocean liner *Lusitania* plunged to the bottom of the Atlantic, many lives were lost with the vessel. Unknown are many deeds of valor performed by those who perished. One man who went down with the *Lusitania* gave his life preserver to a woman, though he could not swim a stroke. It didn't really matter that he was Alfred Vanderbilt, the American multimillionaire. He did not give of worldly treasure; he gave his life. Said Emerson, "Rings and other jewels are not gifts, but apologies for gifts. The only gift is a portion of thyself" ("Gifts," in *The Complete Writings of*

Ralph Waldo Emerson [New York: Wm. H. Wise and Co., 1929], p. 286).

A year ago last winter, a modern jetliner faltered after takeoff and plunged into the icy Potomac River. Acts of bravery and feats of heroism were in evidence that day, the most dramatic of which was one witnessed by the pilot of a rescue helicopter. The rescue rope was lowered to a struggling survivor. Rather than grasping the lifeline to safety, the man tied the line to another, who was then lifted to safety. The rope was lowered again, and yet another was saved. Five were rescued from the icy waters. Among them was not found the anonymous hero. Unknown by name, "he left the vivid air signed with his honor" (Stephen Spender, "I think continually of those—" in *Masterpieces of Religious Verse*, ed. James Dalton Morrison [New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers], p. 291).

Three examples from daily lives

It is not only in dying that one can show forth the true gift. Opportunities abound in our daily lives to demonstrate our adherence to the Master's lesson. Let me share in capsule form just three:

1. On a winter's morn, a father quietly awakened his two sons and whispered to them, "Boys, it snowed last night. Get dressed, and we'll shovel the snow from our neighbors' walks before daylight."

The party of three, dressed warmly, and under cover of darkness, cleared the snow from the approaches to several homes. Father had given but one instruction to the boys: "Make no noise, and they will not know who helped them." Again, the word *anonymous*.

2. At a nursing home in our valley, two young men prepared the sacrament. While doing so, an elderly patient in a wheelchair spoke aloud the words, "I'm cold." Without a moment's hesitation, one of the lads walked over to her, removed his own

jacket, placed it about the patient's shoulders, gave her a loving pat on the arm, and then returned to the sacrament table. The sacred emblems were then blessed and passed to the assembled patients.

Following the meeting, I said to the young man, "What you did here today I shall long remember."

He replied, "I worried that without my jacket I would not be properly dressed to bless the sacrament."

I responded, "Never was one more properly dressed for such an occasion than were you."

I know not his name. He remains anonymous.

3. In far-off Europe, beyond a curtain of iron and a wall called "Berlin," I visited, with a handful of members, a small cemetery. It was a dark night, and a cold rain had been falling throughout the entire day.

We had come to visit the grave of a missionary who many years before had died while in the service of the Lord. A hushed silence shrouded the scene as we gathered about the grave. With a flashlight illuminating the headstone, I read the inscription:

Joseph A. Ott

Born: 12 December 1870—
Virgin, Utah

Died: 10 January 1896—
Dresden, Germany

Then the light revealed that this grave was unlike any other in the cemetery. The marble headstone had been polished, weeds such as those which covered other graves had been carefully removed, and in their place was an immaculately edged bit of lawn and some beautiful flowers that told of tender and loving care. I asked, "Who has made this grave so attractive?" My query was met by silence.

At last a twelve-year-old deacon acknowledged that he wanted to render this unheralded kindness and, without prompting from parents or leaders, had done so. He said that he just wanted to do something for a missionary who gave his life while in the service of the Lord. I thanked him; and then I asked

all there to safeguard his secret, that his gift might remain anonymous.

John Weightman's dream

Perhaps no one in my reading has portrayed this teaching of the Master quite so memorably or so beautifully as Henry Van Dyke in his never-to-be-forgotten "The Mansion." In this classic is featured one John Weightman, a man of means, a dispenser of political power, a successful citizen. His philosophy toward giving can be gained from his own statement: "Of course you have to be careful how you give, in order to secure the best results—no indiscriminate giving—no pennies in beggars' hats! . . . Try to put your gifts where they can be identified and do good all around" (*Unknown Quantity: A Book of Romance and Some Half-told Tales* [New York: Scribner's, 1918], pp. 337, 339).

One evening, John Weightman sat in his comfortable chair at his library table and perused the papers before him spread. There were descriptions and pictures of the Weightman wing of the hospital and the Weightman Chair of Political Jurisprudence, as well as an account of the opening of the Weightman Grammar School. John Weightman felt satisfied.

He picked up the family Bible which lay on the table, turned to a passage and read to himself the words: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

"But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" (Matthew 6:19–20).

The book seemed to float away from him. He leaned forward upon the table, his head resting on his folded hands. He slipped into a deep sleep.

In his dream, John Weightman was transported to the Heavenly City. A guide met him and others whom he had known in life and advised that he would conduct them to their heavenly homes.

The group paused before a beautiful mansion and heard the guide say, "This is the home for you, Dr. McLean. Go in; there is no more sickness here, no more death, nor sorrow, nor pain; for your old enemies are all conquered. But all the good that you have done for others, all the help that you have given, all the comfort that you have brought, all the strength and love that you bestowed upon the suffering, are here; for we have built them all into this mansion for you" (*Unknown Quantity: A Book of Romance and Some Half-told Tales*, pp. 361-62).

A devoted husband of an invalid wife was shown a lovely mansion, as were a mother, early widowed, who reared an outstanding family, and a paralyzed young woman who had lain for thirty years upon her bed—helpless but not hopeless—succeeding by a miracle of courage in her single aim: never to complain, but always to impart a bit of her joy and peace to everyone who came near her.

By this time, John Weightman was impatient to see what mansion awaited him. As he and the Keeper of the Gate walked on, the homes became smaller—then smaller. At last they stood in the middle of a dreary field and beheld a hut, hardly big enough for a shepherd's shelter. Said the guide, "This is your mansion, John Weightman."

In desperation, John Weightman argued, "Have you not heard that I have built a schoolhouse; a wing of a hospital; . . . three . . . churches?"

"Wait," the guide cautioned. ". . . They were not ill done. But they were all marked and used as foundations for the name and mansion of John Weightman in the world. . . . Verily, you have had your reward for them. Would you be paid twice?"

A sadder but wiser John Weightman spoke more lowly: "What is it that counts here?"

Came the reply, "Only that which is truly given. Only that good which is done for the love of doing it. Only those plans in which the welfare of oth-

ers is the master thought. Only those labors in which the sacrifice is greater than the reward. Only those gifts in which the giver forgets himself" ("The Mansion," pp. 364-68).

John Weightman was awakened by the sound of the clock chiming the hour of seven. He had slept the night through. As it turned out, he yet had a life to live, love to share, and gifts to give. Oh, may we remember that—

A bell is no bell till you ring it,
A song is no song till you sing it,
And love in your heart wasn't put
there to stay,
Love isn't love till you give it
away.

(Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein 2nd, "Sixteen Going on Seventeen.")

Service known to God

May this truth guide our lives. May we look upward as we press forward in the service of our God and our fellowmen. And may we incline an ear toward Galilee, that we might hear perhaps an echo of the Savior's teachings: "Do not your alms before men, to be seen of them" (Matthew 6:1). "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth" (Matthew 6:3). And of our good deeds: "See thou tell no man" (Matthew 8:4). Our hearts will then be lighter, our lives brighter, and our souls richer.

Loving service anonymously given may be unknown to man—but the gift and the giver are known to God. Of this truth I testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "Let Zion in Her Beauty Rise" without announcement.

President Hinckley

We have listened to Elder Thomas S. Monson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "Let Zion in Her Beauty Rise."

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Redeemer of Israel."

The Choir and congregation sang "Redeemer of Israel."

President Hinckley

To those of the television and radio audience who have just joined us,

we are convened in the historic Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, in this fourth session of the 153rd Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is a glorious Easter morning.

Elder F. Burton Howard, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now address us. He will be followed by Bishop Victor L. Brown, Presiding Bishop of the Church.

Elder F. Burton Howard

Are we like crystal goblets?

Let me ask each of you to picture two crystal goblets in your mind. They differ in size and shape. They are both of good quality and have been well used. One has been carefully kept in a china cupboard. It is clean and polished. It is warm and inviting in appearance. It sparkles in the light and is filled with clear water.

The other glass is coated with grime. It has not been in the dishpan for a long time. It has been used for purposes other than those for which it was made. Most recently it has been left outside in the weather and has served as a flowerpot. Although the flower is gone, it is still filled with dirt. It is dull and unbecoming in the light.

Is not each of us like a crystal glass? We vary in size and shape. Some of us radiate a special spirit. Some are dull and uninviting. Some fill the measure of their creation. Others do not. Each is filled with the accumulated experiences or debris of a lifetime.

Some contain mostly good things—clean thoughts, faith, and Christian service. These hold wisdom and peace. Others enclose dark and secret things. Over time they have filled with unclean thoughts, selfishness, and

sloth. They often hold doubt, contention, and unrest.

Look within to find peace

Many know they are not living up to their potential but for various reasons have procrastinated making changes in their lives. Some long for they know not what and spend their lives in a haphazard pursuit of happiness.

These, in a way, are like the crystal goblet which spent part of its existence filled with dirt. They sense that there is a higher purpose to things. They become dissatisfied and begin to search for meaning. First they look outside themselves. They sample the pleasures of the world. As they do they discover, much as did the snail who set out to look for its house, that after arriving at wherever they were going, they are no closer than before to the object of their search.

Ultimately, they look within. They have really known all the time that this was where to find peace. Sin, you see, is not just a state of mind. Wickedness never was and never will be happiness. (See Alma 41:10.) They discover that if they are not righteous they can never be happy. (See 2 Nephi 2:13.) They resolve to change. Then they are confronted, figuratively, with

the problem of how to turn a weathered flowerpot into a sparkling crystal goblet. Questions are asked: Can I ever be forgiven? Is it really worth the effort? Where do I begin?

In the case of the glass it is easy to understand what to do. We begin by recognizing a better use for the crystal. A convenient place for dumping the unwanted contents is selected. The dirt is left there. The goblet is carefully washed with high quality detergent to remove the stains and residue. It is lovingly polished and placed once again in the company of other crystal glasses in the china cupboard. It is put back into use and cared for regularly.

There is a similar process whereby men and women are purified. The misuse of their lives is forgotten, and they are renewed and changed. This principle, of course, is repentance. When accompanied by authorized baptism, it provides not only an initial cleansing but an ongoing remission of sins as well. Participating in this purifying process is perhaps the most thrilling and important thing we can ever do. It has far-reaching, even eternal, consequences. Of more immediate interest, however, the rewards of repentance are peace and forgiveness in this present life.

An illustration of repentance

Let me illustrate what all of this means. A few years ago I was asked to speak to a group of young men. I don't remember now exactly what was said, except that near the end I made the statement that no one, but no one, present had done anything for which he could not be forgiven.

After the meeting was over one of them came up to me and said, "I just have to talk to you." Inasmuch as I soon had another appointment, I asked if it could wait or if someone else could answer his question. He replied that he had already waited many years and that it was very important to him.

So taking advantage of the few minutes available, we found a little un-

used classroom, went in, and closed the door. "Did you really mean it? Did you?" he asked.

"Mean what?" I said.

"The part about how none of us had done anything that could not be forgiven," he replied.

"Of course I did," I said.

Through his tears his story came. He was of goodly parents. All of his life his mother had told him that he was going on a mission. Before he turned nineteen he was involved in serious transgression. He didn't know how to tell his parents. He knew it would break their hearts. He knew that he wasn't worthy to serve a mission. In desperation, he began to look for an excuse not to go. He decided to take up smoking. He felt that his father could understand that better and would not probe for the real reason. Smoking would hurt his parents, he rationalized, but not as deeply as the truth.

He soon found, however, that the bishop wasn't put off by his use of tobacco. The bishop told him to just stop it and go on a mission anyway. So to get away from the bishop, he entered the military service. There he fell under the influence of some good Latter-day Saints. He stopped smoking. He was able to avoid major temptations. He served his time, received an honorable discharge, and returned home.

There was only one problem. He felt guilty. He had run away from a mission. He had run from the Lord and sensed somehow that gnawing discontent which comes when men do not live up to the purpose of their creation.

"So there you have it," he said. "I have not sinned again. I have attended my meetings. I keep the Word of Wisdom. Why is it that life seems empty? Why do I feel somehow that the Lord is displeased with me? How can I know for sure I have been forgiven?"

"Tell me what you know about repentance," I said.

He had obviously done some reading on the subject. He spoke of

recognition, remorse, and restitution. He had resolved never to sin again.

"Let's see just how those principles apply to you," I said. "Let's begin with recognition. What is the best indicator that someone recognizes he has done wrong?"

"He will admit it," was his reply.

"To whom?" I asked.

He was thoughtful. "To himself, I guess."

"Men sometimes view themselves in a most favorable light," I said. "Wouldn't better evidence of awareness of wrongdoing be to tell someone else?"

"Yes, of course," he answered.

"Who else?" I insisted.

"Why, the person wronged," he said, "and . . . and maybe the bishop."

"Have you done this?" I asked.

"Not until now," he replied. "I've never told it all to anyone but you."

"Maybe that is why you have not ever felt completely forgiven," I responded.

He didn't say much.

"Let's look at the next step," I said. "What does it mean to feel remorse?"

"It means to be sorry," he answered.

"Are you sorry?" I asked.

"Oh yes," he said. "I feel as if I had wasted half my life." And his eyes filled again with tears.

"How sorry should you be?"

He looked puzzled. "What do you mean?"

I said, "Well, in order to be forgiven, a transgressor must experience godly sorrow. (See 2 Corinthians 7:10.) He must have anguish of soul and genuine regret. This sorrow must be strong enough and long enough to motivate the additional processes of repentance, or it is not deep enough. Regret must be great enough so as to bring forth a changed person. That person must demonstrate that he is different than before by doing different and

better things. Have you been sorry enough?" I asked again.

He hesitated. "I've changed," he said. "I'm not the same as I was before. I keep all the commandments now. I would like somehow to make it up to my parents. I have prayed for forgiveness. I apologized to the person I wronged. I realize the seriousness of what I have done. I would give anything if it hadn't happened. Maybe I haven't been as good as I could be, but I don't know what else to do. But I didn't ever confess to anyone."

I said, "I think after this meeting we can say you have even done that."

Forgiveness—the easy part

Then he said, "But after all of that, how can I ever know the Lord has really forgiven me?"

"That is the easy part," I replied. "When you have fully repented, you feel an inner peace. You know somehow you are forgiven because the burden you have carried for so long, all of a sudden isn't there anymore. It is *gone* and *you know* it is gone."

He seemed doubtful still.

"I wouldn't be surprised," I said, "if when you leave this room, you discover that you have left much of your concern in here. If you have fully repented, the relief and the peace you feel will be so noticeable that it will be a witness to you that the Lord has forgiven you. If not today, I think it will happen soon."

I was late for my meeting. I opened the door and we went out together. I didn't know if we would ever meet again. The following Sunday evening, I received a telephone call at my home. It was from the young man.

"Brother Howard, how did you know?"

"How did I know what?" I asked.

"How did you know I would feel good about myself for the first time in five years?"

"Because the Lord promised he would remember no more," I said. (See Hebrews 8:12.)

Then came the question: "Do you think the Church could use a twenty-four-year-old missionary? If they could, I would sure like to go."

Not a free gift

Well, that young man was like one of the glasses we spoke about. He had been out in the world and was partially filled with the wrong things. He was not content. Sin had clouded his vision and interfered with his potential. Until he could find a way to repent, he could never become what he knew he should be. It took time to change. It took prayer. It took effort, and it took help.

My young friend discovered that repentance is often a lonely, silent struggle. It is not a once-in-a-lifetime thing; rather, it lasts a lifetime. As President Stephen L. Richards once said, it is an "ever-recurring acknowledgement of weakness and error and [a] seeking and living for the higher and better" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1956, p. 91).

This young man came to know that repentance is not a free gift. Just as faith without works is dead (see James 2:17)—so repentance, too, demands much. It is not for the fainthearted or the lazy. It requires a complete turning away from wrongdoing and a set of new works or doings which produce a new heart and a different man. Repentance means work. It is not just stopping doing something. It is not just recognizing the wrong or knowing what should be done. It is not "a cycle of sinning and repenting and sinning again" (Hugh B. Brown, *Eternal Quest* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1956], p. 102).

It is not only remorse; rather, it is an eternal principle which, when properly applied over sufficient time, always results in renewal, cleansing, and change.

Repentance indispensable to free agency

The young man we have spoken about discovered that where sin is so serious as to jeopardize one's fellowship in the Church, the sinner must be willing to submit to the jurisdiction and judgment of the person who holds the custody of his Church membership and request forgiveness of him as well.

Most important of all, he learned that repentance is an indispensable counterpart to free agency. Free agency in the plan of salvation contemplates that men and women are free to choose the direction of their lives for themselves. Repentance means that as imperfect beings sometimes make imperfect decisions, they may correct their course. By following the rules of repentance, and through the atonement of Jesus Christ, mistakes don't count. The Lord agrees to "remember no more" (Hebrews 8:12). Because of the miraculous gift of forgiveness, transgressions are forgiven—and forgotten. Men can be cleansed and return to the path of purpose and progress and peace.

By repenting, my young friend became a new person. He was born again of the Spirit. He came to understand for himself, and that is the important thing, the meaning of the Savior's words: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). I so testify, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have just listened to Elder F. Burton Howard, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

We shall now hear from Bishop Victor L. Brown, Presiding Bishop of the Church.

Bishop Victor L. Brown

Finding one's identity

The other day a letter arrived from a friend of mine, a young Italian doctor specializing in thoracic surgery. I met him in Milan approximately two years ago, a few months after he had joined the Church. He is a fine, wonderful, clean-cut young man, the kind any parent would be proud of. He was living a good life. He thought he had no needs that were not being met—until he found the gospel of Jesus Christ. I should like to share from his letter a few thoughts having to do with his feelings about himself.

"Without those two elders, my life could have been happy, full of satisfaction, but lacking all the benefits of love, faith, truth, knowledge, freedom, all the things coming only from God, our Heavenly Father, through his Son, Jesus Christ.

"As a child of God, I am glad to live at this time on the earth. Aware of the plan of salvation and of the great 'blessings I can receive upon my head' (see Proverbs 10:6), I am trying to do my best to fulfill the assignments which our Father gave me before sending me here on the earth.

"I am filled with wonderful feelings now that my parents have joined the Church. Our lives are greatly changed and our hearts are willing to do what our Father in Heaven wants us to accomplish."

This wonderful young man has now achieved an awareness of his own identity which so many people, young and old, are hungering for. Finding one's own, intimate identity can be a great blessing in the life of every human being. Everyone can obtain it if he realizes it comes only through the light of truth or, as explained by the Savior, the light of life. In John 8:12 we read, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Relationship between self-worth and self-subordination

As we endeavor to understand what it means to have the light of life, which is a most important aid to discovering our identity, we must of necessity know who Jesus is. From the holy scriptures, we are told who he is—the Son of God, referred to as the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh. He was born of Mary. He is our Redeemer through whom repentance and forgiveness of sin are made possible. He it is who was condemned to die and even while hanging on the cross forgave his executioners. He is the same who rose from the tomb and by that act broke the bonds of death for all mankind, establishing the resurrection. This is the same Jesus who guides his church in these latter days, which church carries his name, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Through direct teachings during his mortal life and through instruction given to both ancient and modern prophets which are found recorded in the sacred scriptures, the Savior left all mankind sufficient teachings for each one to understand himself and to find his own, true identity. It comes only through knowledge of and obedience to the commandments. Once it does come, the thoughts, "I'm not worth anything—I'm just a nobody," will have no place in our lives. By "true identity" I mean the relationship between self-worth and self-subordination. The quest for this is explained in the words of George T. Boyd in a talk he gave some years ago.

"Scripture reading enables [man] to see life, not alone from the human point of view, but in some degree from God's.

"This perspective fills two of man's important needs—a sense of individual worth and a feeling of self-subordination. Either of these is

achievable alone. But how easy it is for a sense of personal worth to turn to an intolerable egoism and self-conceit—or a sense of self-subordination—to turn into a false humility or morbid self-depreciation.

"In the scriptures man finds that he belongs to a whole, of which God is a part. Belonging to such a whole gives him a sense of the value of his own soul, but seen in relation to God reveals his dependence and hence his subordination. . . . Thus, a devout use of the scriptures nourishes the spiritual life with a calm that displaces the doubts and anxieties which paralyze mankind" (*Views on Man and Religion*, ed. James Allen et al. [Provo, Utah: Friends of George T. Boyd, 1979], p. 207).

Unique human characteristics

In Psalm 8:4 the question is asked: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?"

The answer, beautifully and clearly stated, follows:

"Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

"Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet" (Psalm 8:5-6). Thus we come to realize that we are to have dominion over all the other creations of God. In this capacity we have been given characteristics which are unique to the human race. Among them—

1. We have an awareness of our own personality and the ability to strive for self-realization.

2. We have the ability to extend our knowledge, to become aware of the nature of humanity and the nature of things about us.

3. We have the power of abstract reasoning by which we can compare facts and determine the relationship between them and their relevance in our lives.

4. We have the ability and the right to make choices. This is one of the greatest gifts of God to us.

5. We have a will to master. By this power, we can control thoughts, emotions, appetites, and passions.

6. We have a right to worship God and can seek power from him to fulfill our destiny.

Confusion in materialistic world

With this unique capability and emphasis on the worth of souls in the sight of God also comes the opportunity for confusion. We live in a materialistic world. Some become confused and seek identity through riches or the accolades of men. The Savior makes it very clear in his teachings that it is not possible to realize the identity of which I speak through such means. In Luke 18:18-25 we read:

"And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

"And Jesus said unto him, . . .

"Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother.

"And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up.

"Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.

"And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.

"And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

"For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."

It was not that the man was rich but that he coveted his riches and would not share his wealth with the poor.

Another example is also recorded in Luke:

"And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

"And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

"And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

"And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

"But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

"So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:16-21).

Example of proper balance

Contrast these with the story of a sixteen-year-old priest who answered the telephone one day to hear the voice of a popular disc jockey on a local radio station. He was asked a question and when he answered it correctly was informed he had won an expensive sports car. It seemed like a dream come true for a teenage boy. A loving bishop was concerned about what such a car might do to the boy, thinking it might draw him away from all we hold dear. He asked him about his feelings. The bishop could hardly believe his ears when the young man indicated he was not going to take the car but would accept a cash award instead. He said, "Now my mission is paid for." What an outstanding example of proper balance in an attitude toward worldly wealth or recognition and Christlike values.

Example of struggle for self-worth

I am acquainted with another young man who struggled to achieve this balance. He had received tremen-

dous recognition as an athlete. He started swimming competitively at age thirteen and would practice upward of thirty hours every week. He became a national champion and winner of a bronze medal at the 1968 Olympic Games. He was an All-American in college for three years. After graduation he went on to medical school and did very well.

During all this time, he had excluded himself from any spiritual association and had little warmth toward people less fortunate or less talented than he. He was struggling for a real feeling of self-worth. In his own words: "I would tell myself, 'You are an Olympian. You have a good mind, you will become a doctor and have the good life.' I would tell myself this as I was contemplating suicide. I was full of false and vain pride."

Fortunately, during his senior year at medical school, he went to live with a country doctor who understood the struggles he was having. With the encouragement of his older mentor, he began to read the scriptures. At first, he did so with arrogance, confident that intellectually he could understand all he read, which he found he could not do. Again in his own words: "I was halfway through Genesis and was learning very little when I said to myself, 'There must be chapters that are written in a way that will be easier to understand.' I turned to Numbers and found that I understood even less."

Finally, he pursued his studies in the right spirit, wanting to learn and to feel. Slowly, as he prayed and studied and prayed some more, he began to realize that he was a child of a loving Father in Heaven and as such had tremendous potential as an individual. He accepted the Savior's counsel to build our lives upon a foundation of rock:

"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and

beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

"And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it" (Matthew 7:24-27).

Find identity as children of light

My brothers and sisters, I hope that we might always accept the Savior's challenge to us to build upon rock rather than sand and to "walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

"While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light" (John 12:35-36).

I bear you my testimony that we can only find individual identity and happiness as children of light, possessing the light of life as found through following the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, for it was he who said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness" (John 8:12). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "Almighty God of Our Fathers" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Bishop Victor L. Brown, Presiding Bishop of the Church, has addressed us, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "Almighty God of Our Fathers."

Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now address us. He will be our concluding speaker.

Elder Mark E. Petersen

True meaning of Easter

Springtime always brings Easter, and Easter turns our minds to Jesus Christ, our Savior.

It was He who was born in Bethlehem, the Son of God, the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6), who holds out the promise of goodwill to all mankind.

It was He who gave us the true meaning of Easter through His glorious resurrection, with the assurance of everlasting life. Think of it! Everlasting life!

When He was born, He was called Jesus because He would save His people from their sins. But He also was Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14), meaning "God with us."

How appropriate that name, for He was God, and indeed He came into

the world to be with us. "God with us"! This He was in fact. He was deity before he was born into mortality, and He was His divine self while on the earth. He did not change His identity. He forever remains the Son of God, our Redeemer and our Savior.

The Atonement

He died on the cross to atone for the sins of all who will obey Him, and He broke the bands of death to provide a resurrection for us all.

His atonement was the most important event that ever happened. The creation of this earth, the establishment of the Twelve Tribes of Israel, and the labors of the great patriarchs and prophets—all were prelude to His achievement on Calvary.

Offerings were burned on the altars of Israel throughout Old Testament times in symbolic anticipation of the great sacrifice of Him who was called the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8).

Necessity for a physical earth

As Jehovah of the premortal life, Jesus was the central figure in making the primeval arrangements for the mortal existence of the human race.

It was He who volunteered to die for us. It was He who gave all honor to our Heavenly Father. It was He who became the author of eternal salvation "unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9).

As the Apostle Peter said, "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Much advance preparation was required for His atonement, even before He was born in the flesh. For one thing, an earth was required on which we, the children of God, could live during our mortal existence.

Of necessity that earth must be physical in nature, for we who were to live on it would be physical beings, such as we now are. It had to be a physical earth also on which the Savior could live out His mortal life.

His existence in Palestine was to be physical, in a body of flesh and bones like our own. On this earth He would endure the physical suffering of crucifixion. He would die physically, and then—how glorious it was—He would bring about a physical resurrection.

Therefore, a physical earth was essential to His mission. There was nothing ethereal about His work here on earth. It was not to be accomplished in some intangible or mystical way.

His life on earth was real and physical. His death was real and physical, as was His resurrection, all taking place on this very real and physical planet. It fully demonstrated His genuine reality as a physical being.

When plans for His atonement were made in the primeval councils in heaven, a portion of that planning centered on the creation of this particular earth, for it would require an act of divine architecture, followed by a process of physical construction.

Without this earth, could Christ have been born to Mary in Bethlehem? Could He have died on the cross in Jerusalem? Could He have been resurrected from the tomb?

Without this earth, would there have been Roman soldiers to nail Him to the cross and afterward to guard His tomb?

Could He have manifested Himself physically to His disciples as proof of His resurrection?

Would "the other" Mary have been in the garden on that first Easter morning (Matthew 28:1) to hear the angel say: "*He is not here: for he is risen*"? (Matthew 28:6).

The destiny of this earth

The special creation of this earth was a vital part of the plan of salvation. It had a particular purpose. It was no afterthought. Neither was it an accident of any proportion, nor a spontaneous development of any kind.

It was the result of deliberate, advance planning and purposeful creation. The Divine Architect devised it. The Almighty Creator made it and assigned to it a particular mission.

This earth was not designed merely as a home for mortals, however. Not at all. It has a greater destiny than that. This earth will not remain in its present condition. It is to become immortal. It will pass through a refining process by which it will become a celestial globe and be like a Urim and Thummim in the skies. (See D&C 130:9.) That will require further acts of divine creation, and, of course, ordinary common sense tells us that no spontaneous accident could produce a change like that.

The Savior will reside here when the earth is celestialized, and His Fa-

ther will visit it from time to time. It then will be the eternal home of those who achieve celestial glory in the kingdom of God.

Such is the final destiny of the earth. Such was the purpose God had in mind in creating it, for He planned it so in the beginning.

The Creator of the earth

Do we appreciate what this earth really means to us? Do we see why it was made? Do we understand its purpose? Do we see that there was nothing accidental or spontaneous about its origin? Do we see that its creation was literally and truly, completely and exclusively, an act of God?

And who was the Creator?

Our Heavenly Father declares that it was His own Beloved Son who accomplished the mighty task.

"All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made," said the Apostle John (John 1:3).

"By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

"And he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Colossians 1:16-17). So said the Apostle Paul.

The Almighty also affirmed it when he told Moses: "Worlds without number have I created; and I also created them for mine own purpose; and by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten" (Moses 1:33; italics added).

Christ also taught that He Himself was the Creator. Said He to the Prophet Joseph Smith: "Behold, I am Jesus Christ . . . who created the heavens and the earth" (D&C 14:9).

Man created in God's and Christ's image

One of our most touching and impressive revelations of the Savior is

provided in the Book of Ether, where the appearance of the Lord to the brother of Jared is recorded. I quote briefly from it. Said the Savior to the brother of Jared:

"Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. . . .

"Never have I shown myself unto man whom I created, for never has man believed in me as thou hast. Seest thou that ye are created after mine own image? Yea, even all men were created in the beginning after mine own image. . . .

"This body, which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit; and *man have I created* after the body of my spirit; and even as I appear unto thee to be in the spirit will I appear unto my people in the flesh" (Ether 3:14-16; italics added).

There we have it in His own words! The glorious, irrefutable truth! Christ is the Creator! Shall we not accept His word in preference to uninspired theories of men?

The Creator and Savior

Probably the greatest challenge to belief in Christ today is the fast-spreading denial that He is the Creator, coming from men who would supplant the revealed truth with the very tenuous and fragile theory that the universe and all life came about in some mysterious, spontaneous, accidental manner.

To deny that He is the Creator is to deny also that He is the Christ.

To deny that He is the Creator is to deny that He can save us from our sins.

To deny that He is the Creator is to deny that He broke the bands of death. It is to reject the fact of the Resurrection.

To deny that He is the Creator is to deny that He wrought out an atonement on the cross at Calvary.

To deny that He is the Creator is to reject His gospel and the true Christian religion.

But He is the Creator! He is the Redeemer! He is the Savior of the world! He did accomplish His atonement on Calvary, and He did bring about the Resurrection. This we know by the revelation of God! His gospel is true and we love it, and we love Him and deem it a privilege to serve Him!

Testimony of our Heavenly Father

Can anyone ask for a plainer definition of creation and the purpose of life than is given in our scriptures?

We even have the word of our Eternal Heavenly Father. He bore testimony that Jesus Christ is His Beloved Son and in addition declared that He is very well pleased with Him. (See Matthew 3:17.)

He not only affirmed that Christ created the worlds, but, after each step in creation, did He not say that the work was well done?

When the waters and the firmament were put in position, "God saw that it was good." When life was placed on the earth, "God saw that it was good," and when creation was finished, "God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, *it was very good.*" (See Genesis 1:10-31; italics added.)

The Father is a God of truth, and He said that the Savior is "full of grace and truth" (Moses 1:6). Then dare we disbelieve Him or reject His words? The Savior did the work of creation, and the Father was well pleased with Him! Then should we not be pleased to accept Him and serve Him?

The Father repeatedly expressed His satisfaction with the ministry of His Son. Did He not so speak at the baptism of Christ? "This is my beloved Son, *in whom I am well pleased*" (Matthew 3:17; italics added).

Did He not repeat it on the Mount of Transfiguration? "This is my beloved Son, *in whom I am well pleased*" (Matthew 17:5; italics added).

Did He not introduce the Savior to the Nephites with the same expression? "Behold my Beloved Son, *in whom I am well pleased*" (3 Nephi 11:7; italics added).

And when He appeared to the boy Joseph Smith, did He not give His Beloved Son another positive endorsement?

Isn't the testimony of our Eternal Heavenly Father sufficient to erase all doubt from the human mind? It is He who declared that Jesus is His Son and that He did all things well.

Easter means Christ

Then what is our faith?

It is that God is our Heavenly Father and that through the gospel we may become like Him and live with Him.

It is that Jesus of Nazareth is His Son and our Savior.

It is that the Savior indeed was the creator of heaven and earth, and that He is the Divine Pattern after whom we should fashion our lives.

Therefore, let us follow Him and worship Him in spirit and in truth. He holds out a warm invitation, and says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

"For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

When He was born the angels sang.

When He died the heavens wept.

When He broke the bands of death, angels were there to greet Him, and so was Mary. She knew Him and recognized Him as the Christ.

But some doubted.

Shall we be like Mary and believe and accept Him? Or shall we join the doubters and shroud ourselves in the darkness of unbelief?

Jesus is a God of light and life, not a symbol of death and doubt. He

lives, and will save everyone who is willing to serve Him. He is our divine Redeemer and our eternal Creator. He is the resurrection and the life. This is our testimony to the world.

Yes, today is Easter, and to us Easter means Christ—the resurrected Christ, the Son of God, our Creator and our Redeemer. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

That stirring testimony of the risen Lord was given us by Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, who has been our concluding speaker this morning.

We appreciate the courtesies shown by the owners and operators of

the many radio and television stations and cable systems who have offered their facilities as a public service to make the proceedings of this conference available to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

The Tabernacle Choir will sing in closing "Dedication." The benediction will then be pronounced by Elder Hugh W. Pinnock, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

This conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The Choir sang "Dedication."
Elder Hugh W. Pinnock offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

FIFTH SESSION

The fifth and final general session of the 153rd Annual General Conference commenced at 2:00 P. M. on Sunday, April 3, 1983.

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve, conducted this session.

Music was provided by the Tabernacle Choir directed by Donald Ripplinger with Robert Cundick at the organ.

President Benson made the following remarks at the outset of the meeting:

President Ezra Taft Benson

President Spencer W. Kimball is watching the proceedings of this session on television and I have been assigned to conduct it.

We extend a sincere welcome to all assembled this afternoon in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah in the fifth and concluding session of the 153rd Annual General

Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We also welcome those seated in the Assembly Hall where Elders A. Theodore Tuttle and Yoshihiko Kikuchi preside.

We send our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere who are participating in these proceedings by radio and television.

The Tabernacle Choir, with Donald Ripplinger directing and Robert Cundick at the organ, is providing the music for this session.

The Choir will begin this service by singing "Awake, Ye Saints of God, Awake!" The invocation will be offered by Elder F. Enzo Busche, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Choir sang "Awake, Ye Saints of God, Awake!"

Elder F. Enzo Busche offered the invocation.

President Benson

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "The Lord Is My Shepherd." Following the singing, we shall hear from Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The Choir sang "The Lord Is My Shepherd."

President Benson

Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now speak to us.

Elder Boyd K. Packer

Control through freedom

I have a message for parents about the education of your children. Several weeks ago I had in my office a four-star general and his wife; they were very impressive people. They admire the Church because of the conduct of our youth. The general's wife mentioned her children, of whom she is justly proud. But she expressed a deep concern. "Tell me," she said, "how you are able to control your youth and build such character as we have seen in your young men?"

I was interested in her use of the word 'control'. The answer, I told them, centered in the doctrines of the gospel. They were interested; so I spoke briefly of the doctrine of agency. I said we develop *control* by teaching *freedom*. Perhaps at first they thought we start at the wrong end of the subject. A four-star general is nothing if not a disciplinarian. But when one understands the gospel, it becomes very clear that the best control is self-control.

It may seem unusual at first to foster *self-control* by centering on *freedom of choice*, but it is a very sound doctrinal approach.

While either subject may be taught separately, and though they may appear at first to be opposites, they are in fact parts of the same subject.

No true freedom without responsibility

Some who do not understand the doctrinal part do not readily see the relationship between obedience and agency. And they miss one vital connection and see obedience only as restraint. They then resist the very thing that will give them true freedom. There is no true freedom without responsibility, and there is no enduring freedom without a knowledge of the truth. The Lord said, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32).

The general quickly understood a truth that is missed even by some in the Church. Latter-day Saints are not obedient because they are compelled to be obedient. They are obedient because they know certain spiritual truths and have decided, as an expression of their own individual agency, to obey the commandments of God.

Obedient because we can see

We are the sons and daughters of God, willing followers, disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, and "under this head are [we] made free" (Mosiah 5:8).

Those who talk of blind obedience may appear to know many things, but they do not understand the doctrines of the gospel. There is an obedi-

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Second Day

ence that comes from a knowledge of the truth that transcends any external form of control. We are not obedient because we are blind, we are obedient because we can see. The best control, I repeat, is self-control.

The general knew then why we teach our children the doctrines of the gospel of Jesus Christ and where they get the resolute determination to protect individual freedom.

Responsibility for teaching the doctrines rests upon parents.

"The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth. Light and truth forsake [the] evil one. . . . I have commanded *you* to bring up *your children* in light and truth" (D&C 93:36, 37, 40; italics added).

If all your children know about the gospel is what you have taught them at home, how safe will they be? Will they reject evil because they choose to reject it?

Teach children moral and spiritual control

As a young man in the military service, I visited the ancient shrine at Nikko Kanko in Japan. There, carved into the facade of a building, are the three monkeys. One with its hands over its ears, another over its eyes, and the third over its mouth. Hear no evil; see no evil; speak no evil! That is easier said than done! It is not easy to foster self-control when the world is teaching indulgence.

Fortunately, there is very substantial help for parents. Unfortunately, some families overlook it.

Several years ago I attended a seminary graduation in Hawaii. A handsome young Hawaiian athlete was being honored. He had been blessed with a well-formed body, and he had excelled in several sports. As athletes often are, he was well known both in and out of the Church. His athletic coaches had trained him for the most part in the coordination of his physical

powers, adding a little on such virtues as determination and courage.

He said it had not been difficult for him to achieve athletically. If he practiced and kept the training rules, the muscles of his body responded as he wished and he had coordination and control.

Then he talked of a control that did not come easy and said: "I found it is easier to control the muscles in my arms and legs than to control the muscles in my tongue. I found it easier to control my eyes on the playing field than on the street. It is not easy to control what I will hear. Most of all, it is not easy to control my thoughts." He then expressed gratitude for the seminary program and paid tribute to his seminary teachers. They were the coaches who taught him control over the most permanent part of his nature.

It is not long before the ability to throw a ball or leap a barrier or lift a weight becomes incidental in life. Physical prowess fades. But moral and spiritual strength can grow stronger as the physical part of us weakens with age.

Rote learning in the gospel

If you want your children to grow spiritually, teach them the doctrines of the gospel.

If you want your son to play the piano, it is good to expose him to music. This may give him a feel for it and help greatly in his learning. But this is not enough. There is the practice and the memorization and the practice and the practice and the practice before he can play it well.

If you want your daughter to learn a language, expose her to those who speak it. She may get a feel for the language, even pick up many words. But this is not enough. She must memorize grammar and vocabulary. She must practice pronunciation. There is rote learning without which she will never speak or write the language fluently.

So it is with the gospel. One may have a feel for it. But some time one must *learn* the doctrine. Here, too, rote learning, practice, memorization, reading, listening, discussion, all become essential. There is no royal road to learning.

Church curriculum centered in scriptures and history of the Church

The Church can help parents because this kind of learning is effectively given in a classroom setting. So we have seminaries, institutes, religion classes; there are priesthood, Sunday School, and auxiliary classes. The curriculum for all of them centers in the scriptures and the history of the Church. Spiritual development is tied very closely to a knowledge of the scriptures, where the doctrines are found.

A school library may hold a world of knowledge. But unless a student knows the system of cataloging, a search for that knowledge will be discouraging; it will be an ordeal. Those systems are really not too difficult to learn. Then all of the knowledge in all of the books is opened to him. Searching becomes very simple indeed. But one must find it and read it. One must *earn* it.

It is so with the scriptures. They contain the fulness of the everlasting gospel, an eternity of knowledge. But one must learn to use them or the search will be discouraging. Again, there is a system. Learn about the concordance, the footnotes, the Topical Guide; memorize the books of the Bible and the Book of Mormon. And the scriptures will then yield their treasure. All of this is taught in the seminary and institute classes. The teachers are both worthy and well trained. But they cannot help if your students are not enrolled.

Seminary and institute classes are foundations

There is a revolution in progress. The silicone chip has changed our future. We move from the Industrial Age to the Age of Information. And schools are tooling up to meet the challenge. Graduation requirements for high schools and entrance requirements for colleges are being tightened up. Elective courses are being reduced in number, and they must be carefully selected.

Without guidance, your student may choose another elective instead of seminary, or another course instead of an institute class. That would surely be a mistake. It would be like adding one more brick to the house of knowledge when there is little mortar to hold it all together. Parents, encourage, even insist, that your students register for seminary or institute. Presidents, bishops, youth leaders, you are responsible to encourage every youngster, without exception, to enroll. Few things you do will benefit them quite as much.

Students, if your values are in place, you will not hesitate to forego an elective class that may decorate your life in favor of instruction which can hold together the very foundation of it. Then, once enrolled, attend, study, and learn. Persuade your friends to do the same. You will never regret it; this I promise you.

Support teachers

Parents, you are greatly indebted to teachers. Somehow you must show it by supporting them. Very few teachers are unworthy of support. If there is a problem, too frequently and all too quickly some parents side with their child against a teacher. As a rule of thumb, we have told our youngsters that disrespect for teachers, in public schools or in Church schools, brings trouble at home as well. This year two hundred thousand students are enrolled in seminary, and over one hundred and twenty thousand in institutes of religion in eighteen languages in sixty-

eight countries. Whether it be released-time, the early-morning, or the home-study programs, the courses are the same. They center in the scriptures; they teach the doctrine and history of the Church.

Some classes are very humble indeed. President Kimball and I once attended a seminary class in North Dakota. We did not meet in a fine room with a blackboard and projector and special school chairs. We met in the very small bedroom in a very small house.

The teacher, Sister Two Dogs, sat on the edge of the bed. The students crowded together on the floor. It was no less a class than one held in a beautiful building. The most important ingredient, the Spirit of the Lord, was there. I attended a seminary graduation in Omaha, Nebraska. The speaker, again a young man, described this experience.

"Each morning I awoke to the sweet voice of my mother calling out, 'John, John, time to get ready for seminary!' The year rolled on and the mornings grew cold and wet and dark; still the happy voice of Mother would sing out, 'John, John, time to get up for seminary!'" Then he added, "I learned to hate that sound!"

But then, choking back the tears, he thanked his mother for what she had given him. And I think only later did he realize that she had to be up first every morning.

How free? How safe?

The temptation your children will face will not come at home nor in the

seminary class. It will come later, when they are away from both teacher and parent. One day you must set them free. When that day comes, how *free* will they be, and how *safe*? It will depend on how much truth they have received. I know of a young missionary who, half a world away from his parents and teachers, faced the testing that comes to young manhood. There, beyond the control of either of them, he made a decision. Later he wrote: "I'm so glad I stayed, because during this last month I found something—I found myself."

I thank God for teachers in the Church, you who have chosen, and have been chosen for, the better part.

In those discouraging hours before immature, disinterested, and sometimes impudent students, may you hear a voice as well. That still, small voice of inspiration whispering, "Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you" (D&C 88:78).

The Lord was a teacher. I bear testimony of Him, and pray that He will bless all those who follow in His footsteps to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder M. Russell Ballard, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He will be followed by Elder Theodore M. Burton, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder M. Russell Ballard

Procedure for preparing Church teaching materials

For the past several years, I have served as Executive Director of the Church Curriculum Department. When I became fully aware of the immense effort required to prepare a

single course of study, I was overwhelmed. I now have much greater appreciation for the approved teaching materials of the Church.

Let me give you an example. The present *Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Supplement*, which was prepared to help teachers teach the New Testa-

ment, was written by a committee of faithful and knowledgeable Church-service writers, who were called and set apart for that service by one of the General Authorities. Their work commenced in the spring of 1980, following General Authority approval of the outline. Writing committee members spent thousands of hours researching, writing, and attending biweekly committee meetings, where the entire committee critiqued each lesson carefully and suggested improvements. The work of the writing committee then was reviewed by General Authority Managing Directors of the Priesthood and Curriculum departments, the General Presidency and the General Board of the Sunday School, Church Editing, and Church Correlation Review. This manual received careful scrutiny at many levels before it was approved for use in Sunday School this year. All teaching materials for the Church follow this same basic procedure in their preparation.

Teach from scriptures and approved teaching materials

Teachers would be well advised to study carefully the scriptures and their manuals before reaching out for supplemental materials. Far too many teachers seem to stray from the approved curriculum materials without fully reviewing them. If teachers feel a need to use some good supplemental resources beyond the scriptures and manuals in presenting a lesson, they should first consider the use of the Church magazines.

Teachers can stay on safe ground when they use the standard works, the approved manuals, and the writings of the General Authorities. Elder Hyrum M. Smith of the Council of the Twelve said, "There is more to be learned in five minutes reading in the Holy Scriptures, more that is worthy of retention in the memory, more that will be helpful if we remember and obey them, than we can find in reading all of the six best sellers in every month in the year" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1917, p. 38).

Strengthen quality of teaching

I believe there is no greater call in the Church than to be an effective teacher. Effective teaching by the Spirit can stir the souls of men with a desire to live the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ more completely.

In each teaching setting, whether it is a family home evening, a class, a sacrament meeting, or a general or stake conference, the teacher should strive to create a heartfelt desire in his students to live worthy of eternal life with our Heavenly Father.

Regarding the need of effective teaching in the Church, President Kimball gave this counsel: "Please take a particular interest in strengthening and improving the quality of teaching in the Church. . . . I fear at times that all too often many of our members come to church, sit through a class or meeting, and then return home having been largely uninformed. . . . We all need to be touched and nurtured by the Spirit, and effective teaching is one of the most important ways this can happen" (*Ensign*, May 1981, p. 45).

A teacher of God's children

The Apostle Paul placed the priority of teachers in the Church next only to the Apostles and the prophets when he said, "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers" (1 Corinthians 12:28).

President Brigham Young used the following story to illustrate the potential influence of teachers: "A traveller in the Eastern country overtook an old gentleman walking towards a town, and asked him, 'Who is the great man of that little town? Who is your leading man? Who is the governor and controlling spirit of that little place?' The old gentleman replied, 'I am the king of that little town.' 'Really,' says the traveller, 'are you the leading man?' 'Yes, sir, I am king in that place, and reign as king.' 'How do you make this to appear? Are you in afflu-

ent circumstances?" "No, I am poor; but in that little village there are so many children. All those children go to my school; I rule the children, and they rule their parents, and that makes me king" (Journal of Discourses, 9:39).

President David O. McKay said, "No greater responsibility can rest upon any man, than to be a teacher of God's children" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1916, p. 57).

Strengthen spirituality and foster faith

May we ask you priesthood leaders who call your members to become teachers to be prayerful and concerned when selecting those who will teach in your stakes, wards, or quorums. Be sure to provide ongoing in-service teacher training. Visit the classrooms on occasion, and express genuine interest in the great cause of teaching. Please do not leave this most important work unattended.

The Lord set the example when he sent Paul to the home of Ananias. The Lord did not leave him to flounder in his newly found faith, but rather, as recorded in the ninth chapter of Acts, Paul received specific training to become a mighty gospel teacher and Apostle.

Should not every teaching setting within the Church be a forum of faith, where the teacher strengthens spirituality and fosters faith in the lives of those being taught?

President J. Reuben Clark's instructions to a group of professional teachers apply to all teachers in the Church. He said, "Your essential and all but sole duty, is to teach the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. . . . You are to teach this Gospel using as your sources and authorities the Standard Works of the Church, and the words of those whom God has called to lead His people in these last days. You are not . . . to intrude into your work your own peculiar philosophy, no matter what its source or how pleasing or rational it seems to you to be" ("The

Charted Course of the Church in Education" [an address delivered at the Brigham Young University Summer School in Aspen Grove, Utah, 8 Aug. 1938, p. 9]).

No greater call than teaching

Jesus chided the Sadducees for their incorrect teachings. He said, "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God" (Matthew 22:29). The Lord stressed the need for prayerful preparation by teachers, as recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants: "And the Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith; and if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach" (D&C 42:14).

One of the great teachers in my life, President N. Eldon Tanner, said: "In my opinion no greater call can come to anyone than to be a teacher in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We are all teachers in one way or another, whether we have been called and set apart as such or not" ("Teaching Children of God," *Ensign*, Oct. 1980, p. 2).

Surely no teachers in the Church are more important than fathers and mothers. No classroom is more important than the home. Parents have been commanded to teach their children the gospel. (See D&C 68:25.)

Study, ponder, and pray

My brothers and sisters, I believe that every human soul is teaching something to someone nearly every minute here in mortality. May we consider with great reverence the trust that the Lord has placed in us to "teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom" (D&C 88:77).

May I urge each member of the Church, when you are serving as a teacher, to remember that every human soul is precious to our Father in Heaven, for we are all his children. God's children are entitled to be taught the truths of the gospel in clear and understandable terms so that the

Spirit can confirm the truths of the gospel to them.

My plea to the teachers of the Church is to study, ponder, and pray for guidance in your preparation. Use the scriptures and the approved curriculum materials, teaching with the objective to bless and inspire the lives of those assigned to you. Let us also remember that some of the most effective activation work in the Church is

accomplished by those teachers who reach out to the inactive, loving and teaching them until they are once again in full fellowship with the Saints.

To the Master Teacher, the Lord Jesus Christ, whose resurrection we celebrate at this Easter time, I say: I thank thee, oh Lord, for teaching us that there is no greater call than to be an effective teacher. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Theodore M. Burton

Association with disfellowshipped or excommunicated

I would like to confine my remarks today to the principle of forgiveness as it applies to a person who has been disfellowshipped or excommunicated. By applying this principle we can "succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees" (D&C 81:5). The most loving action the Church can take at times is to disfellowship or excommunicate a person. This statement may seem incongruous to someone who does not understand the true nature of repentance and forgiveness. And even within the Church, members sometimes have difficulty knowing how they should relate to such a person.

Should I limit my association to protect myself in case the sin is contagious? Should I show my disgust that he or she would commit such a serious transgression, and take my business and friendship elsewhere? Should I act as if nothing had happened, or should I show forth increased interest in that person to demonstrate my love and concern? These are important questions which deserve genuine answers.

Teach principle of forgiveness

I am concerned about this matter, for whatever actions are taken have serious consequences both for the

transgressor and for his well-meaning but sometimes ill-informed associates who may be members of the Church in good standing. I am even more concerned about the attitudes of the victims of transgressions—those who were hurt by the transgressor's actions.

For an appropriate example, I look to my own grandchildren. Occasionally they quarrel or speak harshly one to another. But I am amazed and pleased when I observe how quickly the victim of a harsh word or action forgives and forgets. I am delighted that the offender is soon welcomed back into the fold of love by his brothers and sisters. Mother and father teach the offending child not to give offense again. So the family grows in affection.

If we are going to teach our children the principle of forgiveness, we need to begin with our own lives. We must set our children a good example. In dealing with family or friends, we hurt them when we are selfish or thoughtless. But if we change our ways to avoid giving offense in the future, it is easier to receive forgiveness. Repentance is a change of behavior which invites forgiveness. If father and mother forgive each other quickly and afterward show increased love and consideration for each other, their children will quickly learn to act likewise. Repentance and forgiveness will become standards within that family.

Forgiveness begins in the home

If we learn to forgive one another within the family, we will be able to forgive more readily within the Church and within the community. Like many good things, forgiveness begins in the home. We must remember to teach our children that even if others fail to be kind and considerate, we ought to be slow to condemn and very quick to forgive. We need not be tolerant of sin, but we must become tolerant and forgiving of the sinner. Jesus Christ gave his life to reconcile us to God so that through his atonement we can repent and receive forgiveness of our sins. We owe our Savior a great debt. Part of that debt is the obligation we have to forgive one another.

When Jesus taught the Nephites, he told them: "For, if ye forgive men their trespasses your Heavenly Father will also forgive you;

"But if ye forgive not men their trespasses neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (3 Nephi 13:14-15). That forgiveness which comes from our Heavenly Father is so complete that he will not even call to mind the sins we have committed. His forgiveness is so all-inclusive that the Lord will not even remember those sins. But there is a condition attached to that forgiveness:

"By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them" (D&C 58:43).

As we plead for mercy, we need to show mercy to others. The injury people do us may appear at the moment to be very great. Yet, just as time heals the wounds of the body, so time also heals the wounds of the soul. As we apply disinfectants to aid in healing the wounds of the body, we need to apply love and understanding in disinfecting the wounds of the soul. To the extent we give forgiveness to others, we can expect to receive forgiveness for ourselves. It is all part of the process of repentance.

Church discipline—a teaching process

My special assignment as a General Authority is to assist the First Presidency in bringing people who have committed serious sins back into the Church. I receive, organize, and summarize information for the First Presidency to use in making decisions. I must read the background material to make certain that all pertinent information is available to them. As I read the heartbreak contained in letters of people pleading for forgiveness, I realize the truth of Alma's statement: "Behold, I say unto you, wickedness never was happiness" (Alma 41:10). My heart goes out to those sufferers in a spirit of forgiveness. And instead of dwelling on the wickedness and grief of those who have sinned, I rejoice to read how many have abandoned their sinful practices and are now on the road back to righteousness and happiness. People can and do change.

When people are disfellowshipped or excommunicated from the Church, it is done not to punish but to help them. Church discipline requires this action, but we should remember that the word *discipline* has the same root as the word *disciple*. A disciple is a student or follower—one who is learning. Church discipline, then, must become a teaching process. When a person is disciplined, he should not be thrust out and abandoned by his associates. It is exactly at that time that we need to show increased love for such people, to teach and show them the way back to God. It is wicked to reject a child of God simply because he made an error. We need to teach him how to start anew, to change evil practices into righteous deeds, and thus to transform his life. With repentance through service to others, he can be reinstated into fellowship or washed clean in the waters of baptism and brought back into the family of God.

An unforgiving attitude not from Christ

To teach people to overcome sin and change their lives for the better is the sum and substance of Christian service. We must do everything in our power to help sinners to change their lives for the better. Otherwise, as the scriptures warn us, we will have to shoulder their sins ourselves. Our obligation is to teach and help them, and the sinner's obligation is to listen and learn. He will have to bear the whole burden himself if he refuses. But regardless of his present attitude, we must never abandon him nor think his reformation is hopeless. There is hope for everyone, and we must never cease trying to help people understand that through the atonement of Jesus Christ not only the sins of mankind in general but also their personal sins can be forgiven.

One thing causes me great concern as I read letters from those who have been injured. I am concerned with the feeling of resentment and hatred some individuals have expressed against the spouse that betrayed or abused them and their children. Occasionally a wife, for example, in a spirit of revenge may attempt to get even with her spouse by sinning in the same manner. But all she does by that tragic action is to destroy herself. Some individuals have expressed such resentment against a former spouse that they write that nothing that spouse could ever do could right the wrong he or she committed. They insist they can *never* forgive a spouse for the pain and suffering that spouse has caused.

A person with that attitude can hardly be called a follower of Jesus Christ. Even of those who were so wicked they crucified their Savior, he said: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). So, when Peter asked the Lord how often he should forgive a person who sinned against him, "Till seven

times?" Jesus answered, "I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven" (Matthew 18:21-22). People can and do change, and our duty is to forgive them.

Rejoice in spirit of forgiveness

Many people bring troubles and difficulties upon themselves by an unforgiving attitude. Hence, in a modern revelation Jesus Christ revealed this great truth:

"Wherefore, I say unto you, that ye ought to forgive one another; for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin" (D&C 64:9). I take that to mean that it is a greater sin to refuse to forgive a person than it is to commit the sin for which that person was dis-fellowshipped or excommunicated. The Lord went on to say, "I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men" (D&C 64:10). We must be willing to forgive others and even to forgive ourselves.

As we struggle toward that perfection which Jesus Christ holds out for us, let us give emphasis to forgiveness. Let us cultivate that aspect of our character and rejoice in the spirit of forgiveness, which is the comforting message of the Atonement. I pray that we may all cultivate that spirit, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Theodore M. Burton, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Ted E. Brewerton, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. Following Elder Brewerton's address, the Choir and congregation will join in singing "Come, Come, Ye Saints."

Elder Ted E. Brewerton

Which of the Lord's Ten Commandments is probably broken the most frequently? I believe it would be taking the name of God in vain. (See Exodus 20:7.)

Profanity and swearing

Today I should like to treat the important subject of profanity and swearing.

According to *Modern Guide to Synonyms* (p. 469), *profanity, blasphemy, cursing, obscenity, swearing, and vulgarity* all refer to crude or foul language. Profanity and blasphemy usually refer to the irreverent use of the name of Deity.

Socrates said to a young man who was introduced to him, "Talk in order that I may see you" (*Communication of Ideas*, p. 72).

We reveal ourselves with our speech. Shakespeare urged in *King Lear*, "Mend your speech a little, lest it may mar your fortunes" (act 1, sc. 1, line 96). If we err, then remember the words of Confucius: "A man who has committed a mistake and doesn't correct it is committing another mistake" (*Vital Quotations*, sel. Emerson Roy West [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1968], p. 228).

I desire to read to you many of the Lord's words given through his prophets over the years so we might understand and think as he does regarding improper words.

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (Exodus 20:7).

"But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth" (Colossians 3:8).

Result of swearing

Have we ever asked ourselves what is the harm or end result of swear-

ing? Jeremiah expresses one thought about it in this way:

"For because of swearing the land mourneth; the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up" (Jeremiah 23:10).

President McKay speaks clearly regarding profane language: "No parent can consistently teach faith in Christ who profanes the name of Deity. Profanity is never heard in the well-ordered home. Swearing is a vice that bespeaks a low standard of breeding. Blasphemous exclamations drive out all spirit of reverence" (*Gospel Ideals* [Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1953], p. 420).

Judith Martin of the *Washington Post* writes the article "Miss Manners," which is syndicated in seventy-five other newspapers. She says regarding rudeness of speech:

"How does one deal with a rude person? Politely. I don't believe in answering rudeness with rudeness under any circumstances.

"How is that accomplished? With the stare or smile. I do not recommend the snappy comeback and putdown" (*People Magazine*, Aug. 1982, p. 38).

Politeness achieves much more than answering rudeness with rudeness. "Be patient in afflictions, *revile not against those that revile*" (D&C 31:9; italics added).

The Lord speaks with clarity on this subject through his prophets. President Joseph Fielding Smith states: "Profanity is filthiness. A person is known as much by his language as he is by the company he keeps. . . . Filthiness in any form is degrading and soul-destroying and should be avoided" (*Doctrines of Salvation* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft], 1:13).

If we are not most careful with our thoughts and speech, the words we use will use us. Language has its own ethics, and one who communicates truth is like a bright light in the

darkness. We must nurture language like that.

Words convey messages

How interesting it is to hear non-members of the Church express their feelings about bad language. I like very much the title and comments used by Bob Greene of the Field Newspaper Syndicate who speaks of swearing in these terms. The title he uses is "*Hear Pollution*."

"Obscenity, the open use of which used to be a mark of lower social strata, has somehow become acceptable in everyday conversation for everyday people.

"And yet, I am offended—not out of a sense of morality or of prudishness—but because foul language used casually in public comes close to the idea of a violation of privacy. I know that there are some around who feel assaulted by hearing it. I chose that word very carefully; certain language is an assault on the senses.

"Those who disagree are probably saying, 'after all, it's only words.' But words are vehicles; they convey messages. And to some people, the message of profanity is a message of ugliness and aggressiveness and a disrespect for civil behavior.

"Bathroom and sexual obscenities can now be heard in certain popular songs on the radio, and even some magazines and newspapers have begun to print language that would have been unthinkable five years ago. This practice is usually defended under the name of 'freedom.' But whose freedom is it? If the language of ugliness becomes so much a part of our society that it is impossible to escape no matter where one turns, then who is free and who isn't?"

These assaults on the senses and the messages they carry do not elevate—they pull people down.

Be incurable optimists

There is no place in this Church or in any of our families for pessimism or negativism. We should be incurable optimists.

Irrespective of the condition of a person, he who is a cynic, a pessimist, or negative has the least progress, happiness, and prosperity.

On the other hand, the Lord's way is that the optimist with faith, who is positive, elevating, and edifying, is the individual in or out of the Church who is the most progressive, happy, and prosperous. The Lord said:

"Therefore, strengthen your brethren in all your conversation, in all your prayers, in all your exhortations, and in all your doings" (D&C 108:7).

We should—

enlighten

edify

lift

motivate

elevate

build and uplift in all of our conversations and doings.

Now listen to the prophet's words as I read them, regarding encouraging, lifting, and edifying:

"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Ephesians 4:29).

"Cease to contend one with another; cease to speak evil one of another.

"... Let your words tend to edifying one another" (D&C 136:23–24).

In the magazine *Success Unlimited*, Dec. 1982, Dwight Chapin draws to our attention a crucial aspect of creating only positive emotions:

"Every time a business in the service industry creates a negative emotion in the mind of a customer or client, that individual will share his dissatisfaction with an average of ten people before the emotion dissipates.

"The same research shows that a person who is impressed with a service will share that positive emotion with an

average of only three other people at most. Given this situation it's obvious why negative news travels faster and farther than positive news."

That gives us all the more reason to be uplifting and positive. Profane words *never* edify.

Really listen to scriptures

There is some value in this expression of an unknown author: "I shall return again, for I like myself more when I am with you."

Peter and the associates of the Savior were greater because of the Savior. He built them, lifted them, and treated them as they were to become.

The associates of Joseph Smith were greater because of Joseph Smith. He raised them and strengthened them. So it has been with all the Presidents of the Church—men are greater because of them.

Church leaders do *not* spend time pulling down people or other institutions. They proclaim their own truths and allow others to express themselves.

The Brethren of the First Presidency have upon their shoulders the heaviest burden and responsibilities of any mortals—yet they are never heavy-hearted; one who enters their offices always leaves a better person than when he entered.

The Lord's counsel is very clear: "Give ye ear, and hear my voice; hearken, and hear my speech" (Isaiah 28:23).

Do we really *listen* as we read the scriptures? Do we really hear his voice, hearken, and do his will? There are many who *do* hear and follow him.

Here are some good examples of hearing and doing the Lord's counsel:

In 1974 there were only about eight or ten Brazilians serving missions. Then President Kimball asked for more missionaries. By mid-1979 Brazil had over five hundred full-time local missionaries serving, and Mexico had over seven hundred.

They heard his counsel, did they not?

When I was a mission president in Central America some years ago, two of the elders brought a Catholic Benedictine monk into my office.

He had noticed the *elevating nature* of the Church due to an in-depth study he and others had been commissioned to do of 243 different churches. This study had been ordered by the Catholic church with honorable intent; they wished to know the similarities of the 243 churches to see the possibilities of more union and brotherhood.

After researching for over five years, they came to at least these two conclusions:

1. There were only two churches that had high moral values; one was The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

2. There was only one church that followed all the prophetic utterances of old—in other words, accepted and followed all the Old and New Testament—that was the Mormons.

This monk accepted the challenge to study the Book of Mormon and prayed to have divine verification of its truthfulness. As a result, he accepted the Savior by being baptized into this, His Church.

He is now an active teacher in a high priests quorum in Central America.

He saw by investigation the edifying, lifting influence of the Church and hearkened unto the voice of the Lord.

Have mastery over tongue and words

A prominent man who had not visited a certain northern Utah high school for some two years attended a sports event and was appalled and offended by the escalation of profanity and crude language he heard.

Parents, do we wonder where our families or children are hearing obscene, crude, and foul words? Certainly *never* in our homes, for our

homes are next to the temple in sacredness. They are an uplifting refuge, in which we instruct our families as to what the Lord expects of us.

Self-control is an effective quality that lifts anyone above the crowd; a memory of a self-controlled person will always be pleasant. We should never lower our dignity by lowering our language. We don't ever repeat a profane comment made by someone else. In the text *Teaching—No Greater Call* we read this regarding self-mastery:

"The height of a man's success is gauged by his self-mastery; the depth of his failure by his self-abandonment. There is no other limitation in either direction. And this law is the expression of eternal justice.

"He who cannot establish a dominion over himself will have no dominion over others, he who masters himself shall be king" (as cited by

Spencer W. Kimball, *Improvement Era*, June 1966, p. 525).

Shouldn't we all have mastery over our tongues and words *all* of the time, and only elevate and edify?

We are in the presence of and being directed by living prophets. This is an absolute truth. The Lord himself directs this, his only true and living church, and I testify to this in the name of Jesus Christ, the Master, amen.

The Choir and congregation sang
"Come, Come, Ye Saints."

President Benson

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Jacob de Jager, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. We shall then hear from Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Jacob de Jager

I am very pleased and happy and grateful for this opportunity to speak to the Saints in this historic place and to the Saints in other places where I have been assigned to conferences recently—to Hurricane, Utah, and Wendell, Idaho. I have many friends there. It's a real privilege for me to share my testimony this afternoon and give the thoughts that are in my heart.

From balloons to spaceships

Since the beginning of recorded history, man has marveled at the mysteries of the sky and has had a desire to escape the bonds of gravity.

Yet the first recorded balloon ascent was the unmanned flight launched by the Montgolfier brothers in Lyon, France, in the year 1783, which was followed shortly thereafter by the first

known manned flight from the Bois de Boulogne in Paris.

What is the situation in 1983, two hundred years later?

Man has been to the moon and has sent spaceships to distant planets. Close to three hundred satellites have been put into an earth orbit 22,300 miles above the equator to expand television and telex communications and also to study and forecast weather conditions. Yesterday, and last night during the general priesthood meeting, we were able to reach by satellite more than half a million priesthood holders at the same time.

Let's realize that all of these innovations have their origin, however, in ballooning, which gave mankind a first new perspective on his home planet as well as a physical and spiritual uplift in silent flight.

Lessons in ballooning

I have personally experienced, though only once, the exhilaration of a real balloon flight. It was during the exciting time immediately following World War II when in Holland, my native country, many public festivities were held to celebrate the regained liberty after five years of war. There were big parades, neighborhood dance festivals, and in some cities manned balloon flights to attract large crowds for yet other festive events.

A friend taught me a lot about ballooning in preparation for a flight that I was promised to be able to make as a guest, when at some future date the weather conditions would be suitable.

I learned that we would go up in a class A gas balloon filled with coal gas and that it would ascend until its weight would be in equilibrium with the air around it.

I also learned that in the wicker basket under the balloon there were navigational instruments, maps, and ballast sandbags, which could be emptied overboard to make the balloon rise higher.

Furthermore, I discovered that if gas is released from a balloon through a valve, it descends. But this was not all! I also heard from my friend many delightful stories about previous balloon flights. On one occasion, as the story goes, clouds developed unexpectedly during a flight, and the two men in the wicker basket had not the faintest idea over which part of the country they were sailing.

They decided to lower the balloon, and all of a sudden they saw a Dutchman walking on a lonely country road. When they were able to draw his attention, one of the men in the basket shouted: "Where are we?" And the lonely walker looked up, cupped his hands around his mouth, and shouted back, "You are in a balloon."

To make their urgent request for direction more clear, the man in the balloon cried vigorously, "Where are you?" And the man called back at the

top of his voice, "I am on the ground!"

Discouraged, the balloonists unloaded some ballast and sailed again into the clouds, while one of them remarked: "The man down there must be a bureaucrat." The statements he made were perfectly true, but totally useless!

Parallel between ballooning and spiritual upward mobility

After what I have shared with you thus far, I have come to the conclusion that a strong parallel can be drawn between the steady rise of a balloon and *our* spiritual upward mobility.

Just as gas is necessary to fill a balloon to push it upward, so must the individual be filled with inner motivation in order to move upward. Just as the balloon can rise higher by throwing ballast overboard, so must a person be willing to rid himself of unnecessary ballast that limits his rise in spirituality.

When I made my balloon flight, strangely enough, I did not have the feeling that I was going up. I had the impression that I remained stationary, as it were, and the world floated silently away from me.

Later, when through the missionary effort I joined the Church, I gained as a new member that peaceful feeling of being safely placed in the environment of true gospel living and that Babylon had floated away from me. As it was expressed by an early European balloonist: "I felt as though I had left behind me, all the cares and passions that molest mankind."

I testify that we all can have that peace of mind if we are willing to rid ourselves of the ballast that prevents us from rising to greater spiritual heights. It will facilitate our ascent to a loving Father in Heaven, who will, in his due time, await our return after our journey through life.

Sandbag of impatience

Let us, therefore, get rid of our sandbag of impatience and learn to be more patient with our spouses and children, our friends and neighbors, because the Lord has counseled us to "continue in patience until ye are perfected"! (D&C 67:13).

And for those of you who do not know what the word *patience* really means, I offer a simple definition: Patience is learning to hide your impatience.

Ballast bag called criticism

And how many of us still go through life with a ballast bag called criticism? We should, instead, give more praise wherever and whenever possible because we have been told and retold, "Cease to find fault one with another" (D&C 88:124). And let us in this respect also remember that the faults and shortcomings we see in the members of our own ward or branch are of less consequence to us than one of the smallest in ourselves.

Bags of unfriendliness, pride, and greed

Furthermore, do we still have a sandbag with unfriendliness in our basket, even though the Savior asks us to be friendly and loving? As he said: "Ye are they whom my Father hath given me; ye are my friends" (D&C 84:63).

While on our spiritual flight, let us totally empty our ballast bag of pride and be more humble in all things, always remembering the Savior's glorious promise to all: "And inasmuch as you have humbled yourselves before me, the blessings of the kingdom are yours" (D&C 61:37).

And will we really ascend in our spiritual balloon if we are not prepared to dispose of our sandbag of greed? Living prophets have counseled us to pay an honest tithing and to give a generous fast offering; and, moreover, the

scriptures reveal in a very candid way: "Wo unto [them] that [do] not give [of their] substance to the poor" (D&C 56:16). And, unfortunately, some people think they are being generous because they give so much free advice!

Ballast of frustrations

Finally, we must get rid of the heavy ballast of frustrations. All of us must discover in the wicker basket of our personal spiritual balloon those frustrations against which we continually have to be on guard. It was revealed unto us, and we have already heard it twice from this pulpit in this conference: "The works, and the designs, and the purposes of God cannot be frustrated, neither can they come to naught. . . . Remember that it is not the work of God that is frustrated, but the work of men" (D&C 3:1, 3).

Cut the cords

The only way we can move upward from our present level of spirituality and performance to a higher level is by doing away with the ballast that holds us back. We have to learn to live the commandments, not only for our own good, but also for the good of other people because we reform others unconsciously when we keep the commandments of God and live the teachings of the Church. That's another way of doing missionary work and lifting the spirituality of those around us.

Therefore, let's start our flight today. If we are still at ground level, let's cut the cords; and our rise will start immediately! However, even that will not ensure our continuous spiritual mobility. Our balloon will rise only so high and then will begin to stall. At that time we have to investigate what ballast we need to get rid of in order to rise even higher. If you find it hard to cut the cords, you will find it even harder to do away with the sandbags to lighten your load.

The balloon trip of our spiritual upward mobility is a demanding and

sometimes difficult adventure, and only the person with true perseverance will make it to the highest realm!

Remove restraining weight from spiritual flight

In closing, after talking about flying, sailing, and rising, I would like to give some down-to-earth guidelines.

To those who are within the sound of my voice this day and who have already entered the wicker basket of their spiritual balloon through baptism into the kingdom of God but who are just sitting there, waiting inactively for things to happen, cut the cords that hold you back from lift-off.

To those who are quietly drifting at the same elevation with little upward mobility, take a close look at the ballast that prevents you from going to a higher level of performance. Make a decision and remove the restraining weight from your spiritual flight.

I give you a solemn promise that if you do this, you will enjoy a feeling

of spiritual euphoria because you will elevate yourself.

Follow Heavenly Father's flight plan

I testify—as one who twenty-three years ago was baptized into the kingdom of God in Toronto, Canada—that my flight since my baptism has been a magnificent one, with breathtaking scenes and spiritual panoramas and with the never-failing knowledge that my day-to-day flight plan is made available to me by an understanding, loving, forgiving Heavenly Father.

The same is true for all of us! How do I know this? Because I know with all my heart that God lives and that Jesus is the Christ. He is the Savior of mankind, the Great Mediator for the salvation and exaltation of all of our Heavenly Father's children, if they are willing to follow his outlined flight plan. Of which I testify this day, gratefully and happily, and in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder L. Tom Perry

"Train up a child in the way he should go," writes the author of Proverbs, "and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

Children need attention

My mind was drawn to this admonition recently while reading an article in one of our current news publications on "Our Neglected Kids." The article pointed out that "most of them are properly clothed and fed, but something is missing in the lives of countless children." For many of them, "it is a matter of needing more attention from their parents," who are caught up in everyday pressures.

The article says:

"In a nation that professes to take pride in its young, . . . social change is

inflicting harm—physical and psychological—on millions of children. For them, growing up in America is becoming an ordeal instead of a joy.

"As their parents struggle to cope with divorce, single parenthood, dual careers, and a troublesome economy, many of the nation's more than 47.6 million children under the age of 14 pay the price in ways that range from simple neglect to outright abuse. . . .

"Parents are caught in a crunch of conflicting values," the article points out, quoting Edward Weaver. "They value children, but they value other things as well, such as time for themselves, material goods, status and their careers. Given these conflicts, in a number of instances they neglect children or don't give them a fair shake"

(*U.S. News and World Report*, 9 Aug. 1982, p. 54).

As I travel outside the boundaries of this country, I seem to find these same problems growing elsewhere. These are danger signals for our children. We find more mothers with jobs, more single-parent homes, an enormous increase in children born out of wedlock. These growing social changes are causing increased difficulty for the children in our society today.

Pleasure of being a parent

Articles such as the one I have quoted deeply trouble me, for I had such a pleasant, happy childhood. The pleasure of being a parent has always been special to me. It is impossible to express the love I have for my children and grandchildren.

I marvel at the miracle of the birth of a child. Just recently we experienced it again in our family. You receive a phone call, and there is the anxious voice of your son-in-law on the other end, stating, "I am just on my way to the hospital with Linda Gay." Then you sit anxiously all day waiting for further news. Finally it comes: It's a boy! Then you drop everything and rush to the hospital to offer your congratulations. There you see this blessed miracle—your own child, now with a baby cradled in her arms with warmth and tender love. You see a son-in-law so excited, and he starts pointing out that the baby's nose looks like his mother's. Maybe the chin and mouth resemble his. Then he looks at the hands and says, "Surely, these must be from the Perry side of the family. Look how large they are!"

A deep love wells up within you as you witness this blessed event and realize the joy and happiness these new parents will now have as the process is repeated again in their lives.

Responsibility of being a parent

I am surely not an authority on child rearing. I have had my challenges, just as many parents have experienced. However, since reading this article, I have been directed to the words of the prophets, past and present, stressing the importance of the responsibility of a parent to train up a child.

In the Old Testament, there is an account of the Lord giving instructions to Moses just before He delivered the Ten Commandments to him. It states:

"The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,

"Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation" (Exodus 34:6-7).

In the New Testament, Paul, writing to the Ephesians, counseled them:

"And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

The Book of Mormon begins with a son giving credit to the training of goodly parents:

"I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father" (1 Nephi 1:1).

Instructions through the Prophet Joseph Smith to members of the Church in this day are explicit regarding the responsibilities of parents to children:

"And again, inasmuch as parents have children in Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized, that teach them not to understand the doctrines of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents" (D&C 68:25).

Teach children faith, obedience, and love

At the time I was a new parent, President David O. McKay presided over the Church. His counsel was clear and direct regarding our responsibilities to our children. He taught us the most precious gift a man and woman can receive is a child of God, and that the raising of a child is basically, fundamentally, and most exclusively a *spiritual* process.

He directed us to basic principles we need to teach our children. The first and most important inner quality you can instill in a child is *faith in God*. The first and most important action a child can learn is *obedience*. And the most powerful tool you have with which to teach a child is *love*. (See *Instructor*, Dec. 1949, p. 620).

Let us examine together these three basic principles. President Brigham Young instructed parents by saying:

"If each and every one of us who are parents will reflect upon the responsibilities devolving upon us, we shall come to the conclusion that we should never permit ourselves to do anything that we are not willing to see our children do. We should set them an example that we wish them to imitate" (*Journal of Discourses*, 14:192).

Instill faith in God

If we are to instill faith in our children, they must see us demonstrate our faith in their young lives. They must see us on our knees daily, asking the Lord for His blessings and expressing our gratitude unto Him. They need to see us using our priesthood to administer to those in need, and to bless our children. They need to see us reverently worshiping in our sacrament meetings. They need to see us cheerfully and willingly giving of our time and talents to the building of the Lord's kingdom here on earth. They need to see us proving our faith by the payment of our tithes and offerings to Him.

They need to see us diligently studying and discussing the scriptures to increase our faith and understanding.

I read recently an article in a magazine designed especially for Latter-day Saints about a study that was made of the benefits of reading to children. It stated that when a mother or a father consistently reads to a child, the child enters school at a much higher level and excels in reading during these early grades. If there is a direct correlation between the early training a child receives from parents and the rapidity with which a child learns, how important would it be, then, for us to spend time reading the gospel of Jesus Christ to our children, to imbue and instill in them, in their tender and early years, faith in the gospel of our Lord and Savior?

Help child learn obedience

The second principle President McKay outlined for us is *obedience*. President Joseph Fielding Smith has said: "Of course there should be prayer and faith and love and obedience to God in the home. It is the duty of parents to teach their children these saving principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ, so that they will know why they are to be baptized and that they may be impressed in their hearts with a desire to continue to keep the commandments of God after they are baptized, that they may come back into his presence. Do you, my good brethren and sisters, want your families, your children; do you want to be sealed to your fathers and your mothers before you? . . . If so, then you must begin by teaching at the cradle-side. You are to teach by example as well as precept" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1948, p. 153).

I remember being impressed one time with the need to teach obedience. I was on a new job working long hours, and I guess I was somewhat neglectful of my family. My son seemed to crave more time and attention. He was finding all sorts of ways to attract my attention. One day when I came home,

his mother had him prepared to take me downstairs to see what mischief he had recently created. As we descended the stairs, he sheepishly opened the door to our food storage room. There I found he had been using his dart set to practice his marksmanship on our food storage. He caught my attention all right, and made me realize he was looking for the metes and bounds we expected of him in our family government. When they were outlined, and when I gave him the proper attention, then he was very obedient. How important it is that we teach obedience early in the lives of our children, especially to the commandments of the Lord!

Use the tool of love

Finally, President McKay taught us the necessity of *love*. I've always been impressed with the fact that when the Lord was teaching His disciples in those final hours of His earthly ministry as they met in the Last Supper, after teaching service by the washing of their feet, His next instructions concerned love. He taught,

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (John 13:34).

I recently enjoyed an article in the *Reader's Digest* written about enduring values. It stated "that the climate of our times tends to support the idea that love is a seasonal monsoon: it comes, it blows fiercely; it goes by. That is too bad, because a child needs the kind of love that is as trustworthy as the rising of the sun. If a child is to grow up to truly join the human race, he needs to know how to keep love alive.

"A child should learn not merely to love, but to be a loving person—to make love his stance in the world. 'Love' may come and go, but a loving person, like the sun itself, never loses his or her sustaining warmth" (*Reader's Digest*, June 1981, p. 164).

Sometime ago I remember reading about an experiment with chickens. I do not remember the source. Young pullets, as they grew in their life cycle, were given all of the food they needed to eat, without being required to make an effort to obtain it. Then as the pullets matured, they were turned out into the chicken coop, where they had to scratch for their food. A chicken who had never been taught how to scratch as a pullet would mature without learning this ability and would literally starve to death, even though just below the surface of the ground was all the food it needed to sustain life.

Then the article went on to compare this example with a child who was not taught the ability to love early in its life. In all probability, according to the article, the child would not be able to develop that choice characteristic as it matured to adulthood. How tragic it would be if a child were deprived of the ability to love!

A strong family

Today, I would like you to pause, ponder, and think of the value of an immortal soul, especially the ones entrusted to you as parents. Where are your priorities? Have you committed yourself to give the sufficient time necessary to train your children?

Dr. Nick Stinnett of the University of Nebraska gave a most interesting talk at an annual meeting of the National Council on Family Relations. It was titled "Characteristics of Strong Families." His six points were:

1. A strong family spends a significant amount of time together while playing, working, eating, or in recreation. Although family members all have outside interests, they find adequate time to spend together.

2. Strong families have a high degree of commitment to each family member, as indicated not only by the time spent together, but also by their ability to work together in a common cause.

3. Strong families have good communication patterns, as indicated by the time spent listening and speaking to each other in conversation.

4. Strong families have a high degree of religious orientation.

5. Strong families have the ability to deal with crises in a positive way because they have spent time together, are committed to each other, and have good communication patterns.

6. Strong family members frequently give compliments to each other which are genuine and not superficial. (See "In Search of Strong Families," in *Building Family Strengths: Blueprints for Action*, ed. Nick Stinnett, et al. [Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979], pp. 23-30.)

We who have embraced the gospel of Jesus Christ ought to have the devotion and the determination necessary to build strong family units. May God bless us that we may "organize [ourselves]; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house" (D&C 109:8) for those we love that is worthy of an eternal family unit is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

Before hearing President Hinckley's concluding remarks, which I am sure we all anticipate with pleasure, we should like to express, on behalf of all who have listened to the singing during sessions of this general conference, appreciation and our sincere gratitude to the Tabernacle Choir, the Young Men-Young Women choir, and Ricks College men's choir, and to their conductors and accompanists.

We thank our city officials for the cooperation given this conference, the Relief Society and Church Health Unit nurses who have been on hand to render service throughout the conference, and the ushers and interpreters.

We express appreciation to the local and national press representatives for the coverage given to the conference and to the owners and managers of the many radio and television stations and cable systems who have given public service time to carry sessions of this conference in many countries.

The Assembly Hall on Temple Square has been thoroughly renovated and a new organ installed. The building is being used for the first time this conference since the renovation was completed. Because of the scope of the renovation, the building will be rededicated at special services to be held this evening at 7:00 P.M. However, due to the limited seating capacity of the building, we regret that the rededication service will not be open to the public. Only the General Authorities and general officers of the Church and their companions and some of the leaders of local regions, stakes, and wards who have been accustomed to holding their conferences in the Assembly Hall and their companions have been invited.

We shall now be pleased to listen to President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, who will be the concluding speaker of the conference, after which the Tabernacle Choir will sing "God Be with You."

The benediction will be offered by Elder George P. Lee, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

This conference will then stand adjourned for six months.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My brethren and sisters, ordinarily President Spencer W. Kimball would be occupying this position. I am satisfied that many of you were seriously disappointed that you have not had the opportunity of seeing him or hearing from him on this occasion. As I indicated yesterday morning, he is showing the effects of his advanced age and the rigorous life which he has lived. However, he rises each day and dresses, and we consult with him frequently. If President Kimball could not be here, President Romney would be doing this. But he isn't here, either. And as President Romney remarked last October at the priesthood meeting, "It looks as if they've left it to the kids."

Great worldwide church

You will now be returning to your homes. Many of you will return to the various nations of Europe, to Africa, and to the many nations of South America. Others will return to Australia and New Zealand and the islands of the Pacific, to Mexico and Central America, and to the lands of Asia. Many will return to their homes in Canada and across the United States. The miracle of this work as it spreads over the earth never escapes me. I took occasion here to open the testimony of Joseph Smith concerning the words spoken to him when a young man seventeen years of age. He was visited by Moroni in the night, and he reports, "He [Moroni] called me by name, and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me, and that his name was Moroni; that God had a work for me to do; and that my name should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues, or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people" (Joseph Smith—History 1:33).

We see in this congregation today a fulfillment of those remarkable

words of prophecy. This has become a great, cosmopolitan church. We rejoice in the tremendous growth of the work across the world. We are thankful for your great faith and faithfulness. We all look upon one another as brothers and sisters, regardless of the land we call home. We belong to what may be regarded as the greatest society of friends on the face of the earth.

Fellowship of the Saints

When the emperor of Japan was in the United States some few years ago, I attended a luncheon for him in San Francisco. We sat at a table with three other couples who had had extensive experience in Japan and who had resided there at one time or another while working in government, business, or educational employment. One of the gentlemen said to me, "I have never seen anything like your people. We had many Americans come to Japan while we were there, and most of them experienced a severe cultural adjustment and much loneliness and homesickness. But whenever we had a Mormon family come, they had many instant friends. Members of your church in Japan seemed to know when they were expected and were there to welcome them. They and their children were immediately integrated socially as well as into your religious community. There seemed to be no culture shock and no loneliness. My wife and I talked about it many times."

That is the way it should be. We must be friends. We must love and honor and respect and assist one another. Wherever Latter-day Saints go, they are made welcome, because Latter-day Saints are mutual believers in the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ and are engaged together in his great cause.

We speak of the fellowship of the Saints. This is and must be a very real thing. We must never permit this

spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood to weaken. We must constantly cultivate it. It is an important aspect of the gospel.

Basic declaration of our theology

Now, brethren and sisters, we have had a wonderful conference, a marvelous conference. All who have spoken have done so under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The music has been superb. We are deeply grateful to all who have participated—speakers, those who have offered prayers, and those who have lifted our souls with music.

As we return to our homes let us contemplate the things we have heard. Let us go with resolution and determination to more fully live the gospel. "We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things" (Article of Faith 13).

That article of our faith is one of the basic declarations of our theology. During this great conference we have been reminded of many of the virtues set forth in that brief statement. We ought to reflect on it again and again. I wish that every family in the Church would write out that article of faith and put it on a mirror where every member of the family would see it every day. Then, whenever we might be tempted to do anything shoddy or dishonest or immoral, there would come into our minds with some force this great, all-encompassing statement of the ethics of our behavior. There would be less rationalizing over some elements of our personal conduct which we try to justify with one excuse or another.

Brethren advocating reading from Gospels and Third Nephi

Some would have us believe that the area between good and evil is largely gray and that it is difficult to determine what is right and what is wrong. For any who so believe, I recommend this beautiful statement of Moroni found in the Book of Mormon: "For behold, the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil; wherefore, I show unto you the way to judge; for everything which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ; wherefore ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God" (Moroni 7:16).

Let us establish in our lives the habit of reading those things which will strengthen our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. He is the pivotal figure of our theology and our faith. Every Latter-day Saint has the responsibility to know for himself or herself with a certainty beyond doubt that Jesus is the resurrected, living Son of the living God. The Brethren of the Council of the Twelve are advocating that we read a chapter a day of the Gospels—that is, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in the Bible; and Third Nephi in the Book of Mormon, particularly beginning with the eleventh chapter of Third Nephi where is found the account of Christ's visit among the Nephites in this hemisphere. I should like to endorse this program and commend it to you and urge you to follow it.

"Fear not to do good"

Brethren and sisters, we have nothing to fear if we stay on the Lord's side. If we will be prayerful, seeking wisdom from God, who is the source of all true wisdom; if we will cultivate a spirit of love and peace and harmony in our homes; if we will fulfill our assigned responsibilities in the Church with enthusiasm and faithfulness; if we

will reach out to our neighbors and others in a spirit of Christian love and appreciation, helping those in distress wherever we may find them; if we will be honest with the Lord in the payment of our tithes and offerings, we shall be blessed as God has promised. Our Father has made explicit covenants with his people. He is in a position to keep those covenants. It is my testimony that he does so.

May I read to you in conclusion these great, reassuring words given by the Lord long ago to this people: "Fear not to do good, my sons, for whatsoever ye sow, that shall ye also reap. . . .

"Fear not, little flock; do good; let earth and hell combine against you, for if ye are built upon my rock, they cannot prevail. . . .

"Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not" (D&C 6:33-34, 36).

Love and blessing of First Presidency and other Brethren

In closing I give to you the love and blessing of President Spencer W.

Kimball, of his Counselor President Marion G. Romney, and of all of my Brethren of the General Authorities. To this I add my own expression to you of gratitude for your sustaining influence, for your devoted service, and for your expressions of faith. May the Lord bless you generously, as he will if you will walk in faith. For this I humbly pray as I leave with you my testimony and witness that I know that God our Eternal Father lives, that Jesus is the Christ, the living resurrected Savior of mankind, and that this Church in which we have the honor to serve is their church restored to the earth for the blessing of all of our Father's children who will give heed to its message. God bless you. May he be with you in all things, at all times, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "God Be with You."

Elder George P. Lee offered the benediction.

SALT LAKE TABERNACLE CHOIR AND ORGAN BROADCAST

The following broadcast, announced by J. Spencer Kinard and originating with KSL Radio and Television, Salt Lake City, Utah, was presented from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 3, 1983, through the courtesy of the Columbia Broadcasting System's network throughout the United States, parts of Canada, and through other facilities to several points overseas:

Announcer: Once more we welcome you within these walls with Music and

the Spoken Word from the crossroads of the West.

CBS and its affiliated stations bring you at this hour the Mormon Tabernacle Choir from Temple Square in Salt Lake City, with Jerold Ottley conducting the Choir, John Longhurst, Tabernacle organist, and the Spoken Word given by Spencer Kinard.

(Choir without announcement: "Halleluiah Sing!"—Wilkinson)

Announcer: "Christ, the Lord is ris'n, Halleluiah Sing." The Tabernacle Choir has sung these words in praise of

the Savior's resurrection, set to music by Scott Wilkinson.

We next hear an American spiritual in a setting by H. T. Burleigh, "Were You There when they crucified my Lord?"

(Choir: "Were You There?"
—arr. Burleigh)

Announcer: The Tabernacle Choir next sings music by Crawford Gates set to a biblical text proclaiming the message of Easter, "He Is Not Here."

(Choir: "He Is Not Here"
—Gates)

Announcer: At the console of the Tabernacle organ John Longhurst plays a seventeenth century chorale by Johann Crueger, followed by a prelude by Johannes Brahms based on that melody "Beloved Jesus."

(Organ: "Beloved Jesus"
—Brahms)

Announcer: Jerusalem stirred with passion that Sunday before the Passover. Travelers had clustered there bringing sacrificial lambs. Coins clattered in coffers where pigeons were sold, and in the temple yard merchants were busy earning silver off the celebration. But above the hubbub hung a question: Would the prophet from Galilee come? "What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?" they asked one another (John 11:56).

Even as they wondered, Jesus Christ's Apostles had fetched him a young donkey for his entry into the city. It was to be his last entry, so he paused for a moment at the Mount of Olives, looking across at the golden city—and he wept. Not for himself, though he knew his death was imminent, but for Jerusalem, a city whose walls and children would be ground into the earth. Then he proceeded.

Word spread ahead that he was coming. And as he did, the babble of voices united into an uproar of adulation. "Hosanna to the Son of David," they cried. "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord"

(Matthew 21:9). Even before he made it to the gates of the city, crowds were thronging the way, waving palm fronds and myrtle, spreading their garments in his path.

They were giving him a messianic welcome. For this moment, at least, they were his people and he was their king. He came not with armies, but riding a gentle animal, and they believed they adored him.

Where was this crowd just five days later when Jesus hobbled to Golgotha, bent under a cross? History does not tell us. Their shouts had been carried away on the wind, their palm fronds withered, and so Christ went alone to be crucified.

As we contemplate a lonely Savior on a hillside cross, we may feel critical of this crowd whose love was so brief, but it should teach us something deeper. It is the human tendency for even the most righteous enthusiasm to wane. We are inspired, see with clarity, and then the fog rushes in. We seek to proclaim our love of the Lord, and then circumstances teach us forgetfulness. We mean to amend our character, and then the urgency leaves. We shout for the Lord one day and turn our backs the next. When we hope that we would have been one to rush out and carry his cross, we need to examine whether even now our shouts swell and ebb on a fickle wind.

Announcer: We now hear the Choir sing a nineteenth century hymn tune with a text by Charles Wesley, in a choral setting by Robert Cundick: "Hail the Day that sees him rise, Alleluia."

(Choir: "Hail the Day"
—Williams-Roberts/Cundick)

(Choir without announcement:
"Beautiful Savior"—arr. Cornwall)

Announcer: "Of all the stars in heav'n above, Jesus shines brighter and brings to all the world His love." We have heard the Choir sing this twelfth century text to the melody of a Silesian folk song in a setting by the late Taber-

nacle Choir conductor, J. Spencer Cornwall.

We close today's broadcast with music from the oratorio *The Redemption* by Charles Gounod, "Unfold, Ye Portals . . . (and) receive Him ascending on high."

(Choir: "Unfold, Ye Portals"
—Gounod)

Announcer: Again we leave you from within the shadows of the everlasting hills. May peace be with you this day . . . and always.

Announcer (on radio): This concludes the two-thousand, seven-

hundred, ninety-eighth performance continuing the fifty-fourth year of this traditional broadcast from the Mormon Tabernacle on Temple Square, brought to you by CBS and its affiliated stations, originating with Station KSL in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Jerold Ottley conducted the Choir, John Longhurst was at the organ, the Spoken Word was given by Spencer Kinard.

In another seven days at this same hour, Music and the Spoken Word will be heard again from the crossroads of the West.

This is the CBS Radio Network.

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE MUSIC

The Tabernacle Choir furnished the choral numbers for the Saturday morning, Sunday morning, and Sunday afternoon sessions of the conference with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducting.

The music for the Saturday afternoon session was provided by a Young Men—Young Women choir from the Ensign, Granite, Pioneer, Rose Park, Liberty, and Monument Park regions, directed by Margaret C. Richards.

At the general priesthood meeting the Ricks College men's choir from

Rexburg, Idaho furnished the music, directed by Richard Robison and Noel Brown.

Prelude, postlude, and interlude music and accompaniments on the Tabernacle organ throughout the conference sessions were played by Robert Cundick, John Longhurst, Roy M. Darley, and Clay Christiansen, Tabernacle organists.

Francis M. Gibbons
Clerk of the Conference

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THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY
SAINTS

Official Report of the
One Hundred Fifty-third
Semiannual General

CONFERENCE

of The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints

held in the Tabernacle
Salt Lake City, Utah

October 1 and 2, 1983

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THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-THIRD SEMIANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The 153rd Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, October 1, 1983, at 10:00 A.M.

The general sessions of the conference were held at 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday, October 1 and 2, 1983. The general priesthood meeting was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, October 1, 1983, at 6:00 P.M.

President Spencer W. Kimball attended and presided at the Saturday morning and Sunday morning sessions of the conference and watched the other sessions on television. President Marion G. Romney, First Counselor in the First Presidency, attended the Saturday morning and Sunday morning sessions of the conference and watched the other sessions on television. President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday morning, general priesthood, and Sunday morning sessions. President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, conducted the Saturday afternoon and Sunday afternoon sessions.

Television and radio stations carried portions or all of some of the conference sessions to large audiences throughout the world. The general sessions and the general priesthood session were also carried via satellite transmission to over six hundred stake centers. The general priesthood session was carried by closed-circuit transmission to approximately 1,153 locations in many different countries.

General Authorities present

The following General Authorities of the Church attended one or more of the general sessions:

The First Presidency: Spencer W. Kimball, Marion G. Romney, and Gordon B. Hinckley.

The Council of the Twelve: Ezra Taft Benson, Mark E. Petersen, Howard W. Hunter, Thomas S. Monson, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, Bruce R. McConkie, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, and Neal A. Maxwell.

The First Quorum of the Seventy:
Presidents: J. Thomas Fyans, Carlos E. Asay, M. Russell Ballard, Dean L. Larsen, Royden G. Derrick, G. Homer Durham, and Richard G. Scott. *Additional members:* Marion D. Hanks, A. Theodore Tuttle, Franklin D. Richards, Theodore M. Burton, Paul H. Dunn, Hartman Rector, Jr., Loren C. Dunn, Robert L. Simpson, Rex D. Pinegar, Wm. Grant Bangerter, Robert D. Hales, Adney Y. Komatsu, Joseph B. Wirthlin, Gene R. Cook, Charles Didier, William R. Bradford, George P. Lee, John H. Groberg, Jacob de Jager, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Robert E. Wells, James M. Paramore, Hugh W. Pinnock, F. Enzo Busche, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Ronald E. Poelman, Derek A. Cuthbert, Robert L. Backman, Rex C. Reeve, Sr., F. Burton Howard, Ted E. Brewerton, Jack H. Goaslind, Jr., and Angel Abrea.

The Presiding Bishopric: Victor L. Brown, H. Burke Peterson, and J. Richard Clarke.

Emeritus General Authorities: Eldred G. Smith, Sterling W. Sill, Henry D. Taylor, Bernard P. Brockbank, James A. Cullimore, Joseph Anderson, John H. Vandenberg, and O. Leslie Stone.

Other authorities present

Other authorities of the Church in attendance included Regional Representatives, presidents of stakes and their counselors, presidents of temples, bishops of wards, and presidencies and

members of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood quorums.

Many general, stake, and ward auxiliary officers also attended.

FIRST DAY MORNING MEETING

FIRST SESSION

The first general session of the conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah on Saturday, October 1, 1983, at 10:00 A.M. President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The music for the opening session was provided by the Tabernacle Choir with Donald Ripplinger conducting and John Longhurst at the organ.

Before the commencement of the meeting, the Tabernacle Choir sang "For the Strength of the Hills" without announcement.

President Hinckley then made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Brethren and sisters, we are convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City in this, the first general session of the 153rd Semi-annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

President Spencer W. Kimball, President of the Church, who is seated on the stand, presides at this conference and has asked me to conduct this session. His advancing age and physical disabilities have in recent months restricted some of his activities. But he has intermittently met with the Council of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve in the Thursday temple meetings, as recently as last Thursday, and his presence there is always welcome and greatly appreciated, as it is appreciated this morning.

We acknowledge likewise the presence of President Marion G. Romney, First Counselor in the First Presidency, who, because of physical problems, also has been limited in his active participation in Church administration. We are grateful for your presence, President Romney, and extend our love and best wishes to you.

We welcome those who are participating in the conference this morning, whether seated here in the Tabernacle or in the overflow session in the nearby Assembly Hall, where Elders M. Russell Ballard and Hugh W. Pinnock preside; or the many thousands who are participating by satellite transmission, radio, and television. The proceedings are being carried to over six hundred stake centers throughout the United States (including Alaska) and Canada, to which the conference is being carried by satellite transmission.

We acknowledge the General Authorities of the Church and the Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary general presidencies and the Activities Committee who are seated on the stand. We extend a special welcome to government, education, and civic leaders who are present.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Donald Ripplinger with John Longhurst at the organ, is providing the music for this session.

The Choir opened this session by singing "For the Strength of the Hills."

The Choir will now sing "The Lord's Prayer." Following the singing, the invocation will be offered by Elder Royden G. Derrick, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Choir sang "The Lord's Prayer."

Elder Royden G. Derrick offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

In view of his recent call to serve as the president of the Washington (D.C.) Temple, we hereby extend to Elder Franklin D. Richards an honorable release as one of the Presidents of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He has served as the Senior President of that quorum since it was organized.

Also in view of the call of Sister Shirley W. Thomas to assist her husband in his duties as president of the Australia Melbourne Mission, we extend to her an honorable release from her service as the second counselor in the Relief Society general presidency.

All who wish to join in extending a sincere vote of thanks and appreciation to Elder Richards and Sister Thomas for their remarkable service, please indicate by the uplifted hand. Thank you.

It is proposed that Elder Richard G. Scott be called as one of the Presidents of the First Quorum of the Seventy, filling the vacancy created by the release of Elder Franklin D. Richards.

Those in favor manifest it by the uplifted hand. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

It also is proposed that Sister Ann Stoddard Reese succeed Sister Shirley W. Thomas as the second counselor in the Relief Society general presidency.

All in favor please manifest it by the uplifted hand. Any opposed by the same sign.

With these exceptions, there have been no changes in the General Authorities or general officers of the Church since the last general conference. It is proposed, therefore, that we sustain all of the General Authorities and general officers of the Church as at present constituted.

All in favor manifest it by the uplifted hand. Any opposed may so manifest it. Thank you.

President Gordon B. Hinckley spoke without announcement.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Faith as our foundation

To Latter-day Saints throughout the world, and to men and women of goodwill everywhere: we greet you in the name of the Lord as we gather from near and far in this great world conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We affirm before all men our belief in God the Eternal Father and in his Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost. This is the first article of our faith and the foundation of all of our work.

President Kimball's influence

We are particularly pleased to have with us—yes, pleased and honored—this remarkable man whom we sustain as a prophet of God, our prophet, seer, and revelator, our friend and leader, President Spencer W. Kimball.

We regret that the condition of his health does not permit him to speak to us. We have heard him many times in the past as he has spoken from this pulpit, and the memories of his great testimonies continue to encourage and strengthen all of us.

Who can measure the influence of this man upon others? I suppose if we

were to seek for just one word to characterize him, it would be *love*.

The power of love

I read from my notebook a statement he made on October 23, 1980, to a large assembly of Chinese brethren and sisters in Taipei, Taiwan. He said on that occasion:

"Somehow the Lord gave me from the time of my birth a spirit of love. I loved my companions in the mission field. I loved those against whom I played basketball as a boy. I loved people in all the world. I love you."

If he were to speak to us this morning, I am confident that would be the tenor of his remarks. This great reaching out with love has been the chemistry of his remarkable leadership. His life is a lesson for each of us, a lesson in the wondrous power of love.

Though his body is tired and weak, the force of that leadership is felt throughout the Church in all the world. It is an agent that binds us together as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Its unifying influence is felt in all of the higher councils of the Church.

Hallmark of the true church

We are grateful that President Romney is also with us as First Counselor in the First Presidency. He also is having health problems. Were he to speak, I am confident that he would testify of this great and moving power in the life and character of our President. I bear witness of it. I am confident that each of the Twelve and the Seventy and the Bishopric could do likewise.

I thank each one of the members of these councils and quorums who con-

stitute the General Authorities of the Church. I thank them for their love and loyalty, for their faith and devotion, for their unity of purpose and action, under the leadership of our President.

The Lord said that except ye are one, ye are not mine (see D&C 38:27).

This great unity is the hallmark of the true church of Christ. It is felt among our people throughout the world. As we are one, we are his.

Onward progress of the kingdom

And so, as we open this great conference, from which there will be radiated across the world a feeling of love, we pray that we shall be blessed of the Lord. We pray for our prophet dear, whom we love and honor. We pray for one another that we may go on in unity and strength. If we do so, no power beneath the heavens can stop the onward progress of this great kingdom. I pray that we shall never be wanting in our faith, in our devotion, in our love for the Lord and his work, and in our desire to serve unitedly for the advancement of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "Send Forth Thy Spirit."

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will then address us.

The Tabernacle Choir sang "Send Forth Thy Spirit."

President Ezra Taft Benson

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ

As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we need to place unreserved confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ, whom we accept as the Son of God. Until the world accepts Him as the Savior of mankind, lives His teachings, and looks to Him as the *Way*, the *Truth*, and the *Life* in all phases of our lives, we shall continue in our anxiety about the future and our ability to cope with the challenges that mortality brings to each of us.

The fundamental principle of our religion is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Why is it expedient that we center our confidence, our hope, and our trust in one solitary figure? Why is faith in Him so necessary to peace of mind in this life and hope in the world to come?

Hope, confidence, and strength to overcome

Our answers to these questions determine whether we face the future with courage, hope, and optimism or with apprehension, anxiety, and pessimism.

My message and testimony is this: Only Jesus Christ is uniquely qualified to provide that hope, that confidence, and that strength to overcome the world and rise above our human failings. To do that, we must place our faith in Him and live by His laws and teachings.

Why faith in Jesus Christ?

The Lord God Omnipotent

Jesus Christ was and is the *Lord God Omnipotent*. (See Mosiah 3:5.) He was chosen before He was born. He was the all-powerful Creator of the heavens and the earth. He is the source of life and light to all things.

His word is the law by which all things are governed in the universe. All things created and made by Him are subject to His infinite power.

Son of God

Jesus Christ is the *Son of God*.

He came to this earth at a fore-appointed time through a royal birth-right that preserved His godhood. Combined in His nature were the human attributes of His mortal mother and the divine attributes and powers of His Eternal Father.

His unique heredity made Him heir to the honored title—the Only Begotten Son of God in the flesh. As the Son of God, He inherited powers and intelligence which no human ever had before or since. He was literally Immanuel, which means “God with us.” (See Matthew 1:23.)

Even though He was God’s Son sent to earth, the divine plan of the Father required that Jesus be subjected to all the difficulties and tribulations of mortality. Thus He became subject to “temptations, . . . hunger, thirst, and fatigue” (Mosiah 3:7).

The Redeemer

To qualify as the *Redeemer* of all our Father’s children, Jesus had to be perfectly obedient to all the laws of God. Because He subjected Himself to the will of the Father, He grew “from grace to grace, until he received a fulness” of the Father’s power. Thus He had “all power, both in heaven and on earth” (D&C 93:13, 17).

Once this truth about the One we worship as the Son of God is understood, we can more readily comprehend how He had power to heal the sick, cure all manner of diseases, raise the dead, and command the elements. Even devils, whom He cast out, were subject to Him and acknowledged His divinity.

The great Lawgiver

As the great *Lawgiver*, He gave laws and commandments for the bene-

fit of all our Heavenly Father's children. Indeed, His law fulfilled all previous covenants with the house of Israel. Said He:

"Behold, I am the law, and the light. Look unto me, and endure to the end, and ye shall live; for unto him that endureth to the end will I give eternal life" (3 Nephi 15:9).

His law required all mankind, regardless of station in life, to repent and be baptized in His name and receive the Holy Ghost as the sanctifying power to cleanse themselves from sin. Compliance with these laws and ordinances will enable each individual to stand guiltless before Him at the day of judgment. Those who so comply are likened to one who builds his house on a firm foundation so that even "the gates of hell shall not prevail against them" (3 Nephi 11:39).

The Rock of our salvation

Appropriately we praise Him as the *Rock of our salvation*. (See 2 Nephi 4:30).

To have any measure of appreciation and gratitude for what He accomplished in our behalf, we must remember these vital truths:

Jesus came to earth to do our Father's will.

He came with a foreknowledge that He would bear the burden of the sins of us all.

He knew that He would be lifted up on the cross.

He was born to be the Savior and Redeemer of all mankind.

Only He was able and willing to redeem

He was *able* to accomplish His mission because He was the Son of God and He possessed the power of God.

He was *willing* to accomplish His mission because He loves us.

No mortal being had the power or capability to redeem all other mortals from their lost and fallen condition, nor could any other voluntarily forfeit his

life and thereby bring to pass a universal resurrection for all other mortals.

Only Jesus Christ was able and willing to accomplish such a redeeming act of love.

We may never understand nor comprehend in mortality *how* He accomplished what He did, but we must not fail to understand *why* He did what He did.

Everything He did was prompted by His unselfish, infinite love for us. Hear His own words:

"For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent; . . .

"Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink" (D&C 19:16, 18).

As was so characteristic of His entire mortal experience, the Savior submitted to our Father's will and took the bitter cup and drank.

He suffered the pains of all men in Gethsemane so they would not have to suffer if they would repent.

He submitted Himself to humiliation and insults from His enemies without complaint or retaliation.

And, finally, He endured the flogging and brutal shame of the cross. Only then did He voluntarily submit to death. In His words:

"No man taketh it [my life] from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (John 10:18).

The Resurrection and the Life

He is the *Resurrection* and the *Life*. (See John 11:25.)

This power to revive His own life was possible because Jesus Christ was God—even the Son of God. Because He had the power to overcome death, all mankind will be resurrected.

"Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19).

How we reverence His name—yes, even the hallowed titles that represent His deeds!

Great Exemplar

He is our *Great Exemplar*.

He was perfectly obedient to our Heavenly Father and showed us how to forsake the world and keep our priorities in perspective.

Because of His love for us, He showed us how to rise above petty weaknesses and to demonstrate affection, love, and charity in our relationships with others.

The Bread of Life

He is the *Bread of Life*. (See John 6:35.)

By fasting, prayer, and service to others, He showed that "man shall not live by bread alone" (Matthew 4:4) but must be nourished by the word of God.

He was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15), and so He is able to help them that are tempted (see Hebrews 2:18).

Prince of Peace

He is the *Prince of Peace*—the ultimate *Comforter*. (See Isaiah 9:6.)

As such He has power to comfort an anguished heart pierced by sorrow or sin. He provides a special kind of peace that no human agency can provide:

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

The Good Shepherd

He is the *Good Shepherd*. (See John 10:11.)

He possesses all the attributes of the divine nature of God. He is virtuous, patient, kind, long-suffering,

gentle, meek, and charitable. If we are weak or deficient in any of these qualities, He stands willing to strengthen and compensate.

Wonderful Counselor

He is a *Wonderful Counselor*. (See Isaiah 9:6.)

Indeed there is no human condition—be it suffering, incapacity, inadequacy, mental deficiency, or sin—which He cannot comprehend or for which His love will not reach out to the individual.

He pleads today:

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

Advocate, Mediator, Judge

He is our *Advocate, Mediator, and Judge*.

Because He is God, He is perfectly equitable with justice and mercy. He can simultaneously plead our cause and judge our destiny.

Faith in Him is more than mere acknowledgment that He lives. It is more than professing belief.

Faith in Jesus Christ consists of complete reliance on Him. As God, He has infinite power, intelligence, and love. There is no human problem beyond His capacity to solve. Because He descended below all things (see D&C 122:8), He knows how to help us rise above our daily difficulties.

Faith in Him means believing that even though we do not understand all things, He does. We, therefore, must look to Him "in every thought; doubt not, fear not" (D&C 6:36.)

Faith in Him means trusting that He has all power over all men and all nations. There is no evil which He cannot arrest. All things are in His hands. This earth is His rightful dominion. Yet He permits evil so that we can make choices between good and evil.

"Love the Lord . . . and thy neighbor"

His gospel is the perfect prescription for all human problems and social ills.

But His gospel is only effective as it is applied in our lives. Therefore, we must "feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do" (2 Nephi 32:3).

Unless we *do* His teachings, we do not demonstrate faith in Him.

Think what a different world this would be if all mankind would do as He said: "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. . . .

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37, 39).

The perfect example

What then is the answer to the question "What is to be done?" concerning the problems and dilemmas that individuals, communities, and nations face today? Here is His simple prescription:

"Believe in God; believe that he is, and that he created all things, both in heaven and in earth; believe that he has *all* wisdom, and *all* power, both in heaven and in earth; believe that man doth not comprehend all the things which the Lord can comprehend.

" . . . Believe that ye must repent of your sins and forsake them, and humble yourselves before God; and ask in sincerity of heart that he would forgive you; and now, if you believe all these things *see that ye do them*" (Mosiah 4:9-10; italics added).

As members of the Church, we are "under obligation to make the sinless

Son of Man [our] ideal—the one perfect being who ever walked the earth.

"Sublimest Example of Nobility

"God-like in nature

"Perfect in his love

"Our Redeemer

"Our Savior

"The immaculate Son of our Eternal Father

"The Light, the Life, the Way"

(David O. McKay, *Improvement Era*, June 1951, p. 478).

With all my soul, I love Him.

I humbly testify that He is the same loving, compassionate Lord today as when He walked the dusty roads of Palestine. He is close to His servants on this earth. He cares about and loves each of us today. Of that you can be assured.

He lives today as our Lord, our Master, our Savior, our Redeemer, and our God.

God bless us all to believe Him, to accept Him, to worship Him, and to fully trust in Him, and to follow Him is my humble prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "Savior, Redeemer of My Soul" without announcement.

President Hinckley

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just addressed us, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "Savior, Redeemer of My Soul."

We shall now be pleased to listen to Elder James E. Faust, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder James E. Faust

Witnesses to Book of Mormon

Some time ago I held in my hand my mother's copy of her favorite book. It was a timeworn copy of the Book of Mormon. Almost every page was marked; in spite of tender handling, some of the leaves were dog-eared, and the cover was worn thin. No one had to tell her that one can get closer to God by reading the Book of Mormon than by any other book. She was already there. She had read it, studied it, prayed over it, and taught from it. As a young man I held her book in my hands and tried to see, through her eyes, the great truths of the Book of Mormon to which she so readily testified and which she so greatly loved.

As a young boy in the Cottonwood Ward, I was greatly impressed when I listened to James H. Moyle tell in sacrament meeting of his having heard both Martin Harris and David Whitmer, two of the witnesses of the Book of Mormon, affirm their testimony concerning that book. They, along with Oliver Cowdery, had testified in connection with the original publication of the Book of Mormon "that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon; and we . . . bear record that these things are true" ("The Testimony of Three Witnesses," Book of Mormon).

When James H. Moyle visited David Whitmer, Whitmer was an old man; he was out of the Church and was living in a log cabin in Richmond, Missouri. Of this visit to David Whitmer, James H. Moyle stated in this very building on March 22, 1908:

"I went to his humble home, . . . and I told him . . . as a young man starting out in life I wanted to know from him . . . what he knew about the Book of Mormon, and what about the testimony he had published to

the world concerning it. He told me in all the solemnity of his advanced years, that the testimony he had given to the world, and which was published in the Book of Mormon, was true, every word of it, and that he had never deviated nor departed in any particular from that testimony, and that nothing in the world could separate him from the sacred message that was delivered to him. I still wondered if it was not possible that he could have been deceived, . . . so I induced him to relate to me, under such cross-examination as I was able to interpose, every detail of what took place. He described minutely the spot in the woods, the large log that separated him from the angel, and that he saw the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated, that he handled them, and that he did hear the voice of God declare that the plates were correctly translated. I asked him if there was any possibility for him to have been deceived, and that it was all a mistake, but he said, 'No' " (quoted in Gordon B. Hinckley, *James Henry Moyle* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1951], pp. 366-67).

The keystone of our religion

However, the Book of Mormon did not yield its profound message to me as an unearned legacy. I question whether one can acquire an understanding of this great book except through singleness of mind and strong purpose of heart. We must ask not only if it is true, but also do it in the name of Jesus Christ. Said Moroni, "Ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost" (Moroni 10:4).

Joseph Smith, who translated the gold plates from which the Book of Mormon came, had this to say: "I told

the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book" (*History of the Church*, 4:461).

The dictionary says that a keystone is "the uppermost and last set stone of an arch which completes it and locks its members together." A secondary definition is "the fundamental element, as of science or doctrine" (*Funk and Wagnalls New Practical Standard Dictionary, Britannica World Language Edition*, 2 vols., 1956, 1:735).

The Book of Mormon is a keystone because it establishes and ties together eternal principles and precepts, rounding out basic doctrines of salvation. It is the crowning gem in the diadem of our holy scriptures.

It is a keystone for other reasons also. In the promise of Moroni previously referred to—namely, that God will manifest the truth of the Book of Mormon to every sincere inquirer having faith in Christ (see Moroni 10:4)—we have a key link in a self-locking chain.

Keystone of our individual faith

A confirming testimony of the Book of Mormon convinces that "Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God" (Title Page, Book of Mormon) and also spiritually verifies (a) the divine calling of Joseph Smith and (b) that he did see the Father and the Son. With that firmly in place, it logically follows that one can receive a verification that the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price are true companion scriptures to the Bible and the Book of Mormon.

All of this confirms the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the divine mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, led by a living prophet enjoying continuous revelation. From these basic verities can flow an understanding of other saving principles of the fulness of the gospel.

In addition, the Book of Mormon is a necessary keystone of our own individual faith. President Ezra Taft Benson affirmed, "I have noted within the Church the difference in discernment, in insight, conviction, and spirit between those who know and love the Book of Mormon and those who do not. That book is a great sifter" (*New Era*, May 1975, p. 19). An understanding of the Book of Mormon can really help lock into place an individual's faith in Jesus Christ.

What Book of Mormon is not

It is important to know what the Book of Mormon is *not*. It is not primarily a history, although much of what it contains is historical. The title page states that it is an account taken from the records of people living in the Americas before and after Christ. It was "written by way of commandment, and also by the spirit of prophecy and of revelation. . . . And also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations."

George Q. Cannon stated that "the Book of Mormon is not a geographical primer. It was not written to teach geographical truths. What is told us of the situation of the various lands or cities . . . is usually simply an incidental remark connected with the doctrinal or historical portions of the work" (*Juvenile Instructor*, Jan. 1890, p. 18).

Confirming evidence of Jesus

What, then, is the Book of Mormon? It is confirming evidence of the birth, life, and crucifixion of Jesus and of his work as the Messiah and the Redeemer. Nephi writes about the Book of Mormon: "All ye ends of the earth, hearken unto these words and believe in Christ; and if ye believe not in these words believe in Christ. And if ye shall believe in Christ ye will believe in these words, for they are the words of Christ" (2 Nephi 33:10).

Nephi and his brother Jacob join with Isaiah to constitute three powerful pre-Messianic voices proclaiming the first coming of Jesus. Isaiah is quoted extensively by Nephi because he is the principal Old Testament prophet who prophesied of the coming of the Messiah.

To bring us unto Christ

The Book of Mormon establishes the truthfulness of the Bible. (See 1 Nephi 13:40.) It is evidence "to the world that the holy scriptures are true" (D&C 20:11). It foretells the establishment of the fulness of the gospel of peace and salvation. It was written to give us principles and guidelines for our eternal journey.

One of the ultimate messages of the Book of Mormon, and indeed of the Old Testament and all human history, is that mankind cannot reach perfection on its own. There is another message which comes through loud and clear from its pages. It is the often unpopular and seemingly harsh injunction—"Repent or perish." When the Book of Mormon people listened to this prophetic message, they flourished. When they forgot the message, they perished.

In Galatians Paul said, "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ" (Galatians 3:24). The records maintained by the Book of Mormon prophets—and portions of what is now the Bible brought from the eastern continent—served, according to Abinadi, "to keep them in remembrance of God and their duty towards him" (Mosiah 13:30). So the Book of Mormon is a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ. (See Mosiah 13:27–32.)

Translated with aid and power of God

The test for understanding this sacred book is preeminently spiritual. An obsession with secular knowledge rather than spiritual understanding will make its pages difficult to unlock.

To me it is inconceivable that Joseph Smith, without divine help, could have written this complex and profound book. There is no way that Joseph Smith, an unlearned young frontiersman, could have fabricated the great truths it contains, generated its great spiritual power, or falsified the testimony of Christ that it contains. The book itself testifies that it is the holy word of God.

New evidence of the divinity of the Book of Mormon has just come to light. The recently discovered letter of Lucy Mack Smith, Joseph's mother, dated January 23, 1829, to her sister-in-law, Mary Pierce, is additional confirmation of the Book of Mormon. This letter was written a year before the Book of Mormon was published. It contains an accurate statement of some of the happenings of the times and the contents of the book and other historical information.

With the aid of modern computer science, a topical guide has been placed in the King James Version of the Bible, containing doctrinal cross-references to the other scriptures. From these references we find countless confirming evidences that Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon with the aid and power of God. On almost every one of its 531 pages are numerous references that tie in doctrinally to the King James Bible. In comparison, many statements that seem fragmented in the Bible are more complete in the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants.

Confirmation by the Holy Spirit

References to teachings also taught in the Old Testament and the New Testament are so numerous and overwhelming throughout the Book of Mormon that one can come to a definitive conclusion by logic that a human intellect could not have conceived of them all. But more important than logic is the confirmation by the Holy Spirit that the story of the Book of Mormon is true.

All scriptures are one in that they testify of Jesus. Jacob, a Book of Mormon prophet, reminds us that "none of the prophets have written, nor prophesied, save they have spoken concerning this Christ" (Jacob 7:11). Speaking of the scriptures, the Psalmist said, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105).

The Book of Mormon will encourage only righteousness. Why, then, has hostility been engendered against the book? In part, no doubt, it may have come because the origin of the book was from golden plates delivered to Joseph Smith by an angel. These were seen and handled by selected witnesses, but not put on public display. Perhaps it is also because it is claimed primarily to be the work of ancient prophets here on the American continent.

Testimony as special witness

The great worth of the Book of Mormon was declared by the Savior himself. He said in 3 Nephi, "This is my doctrine, and it is the doctrine which the Father hath given unto me" (3 Nephi 11:32).

The Redeemer further declared in the Book of Mormon, "Behold I have given unto you my gospel" (3 Nephi 27:13). As a special witness, I testify that Jesus is the Christ and that Nephi's and Isaiah's prophecies of His coming have in fact been fulfilled. Like Nephi, "We talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ" (2 Nephi 25:26).

I testify that the Savior will come again, and that at his second coming some will say, "What are these wounds in thine hands and in thy feet?" He will

show the wounds in His hands, wrists, and feet, and they will ask when and where he received these wounds. He will answer: "I am Jesus that was crucified. I am the Son of God" (D&C 45:51-52).

I testify through the sure conviction that springs from the witness of the Spirit that it is possible to know things that have been revealed with greater certainty than by actually seeing them. We can have a more absolute knowledge than eyes can perceive or ears can hear. God himself has put his approval on the Book of Mormon, having said, "As your Lord and your God liveth it is true" (D&C 17:6).

I can now see more clearly through the eyes of my own understanding what my mother could see in her precious old worn-out copy of the Book of Mormon. I pray that we may live in such a way as to merit and gain a testimony of and abide by the great truths of the Book of Mormon. I testify that the keystone of our religion is solidly in place, bearing the weight of truth as it moves through all the earth, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder James E. Faust, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

The Choir and congregation will now join in singing "High on the Mountain Top," following which we shall hear from Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The Choir and congregation sang "High on the Mountain Top."

Elder L. Tom Perry

One of the special opportunities we have as General Authorities is to visit the stakes of Zion. Thirty to forty times each year we find ourselves stay-

ing in the home of a different stake president. We have the privilege of being guests in the greatest homes you will find in all the world.

Strength in family unit

Let me tell you about one of my recent experiences. I was assigned to a stake conference to release the stake president, who had served for many, many years. It was a difficult stake to administer. The stake had been losing population. It was located near one of our major city centers. Industry had moved in. With the growth of industry, many of the members had moved out to the more suburban areas. Because of his assignment, he had stayed in the area to shepherd the flock. He had not found it to be a hopeless situation. Through his energy, effort, and great enthusiasm, the stake started to grow once again.

As the weekend progressed, his children came by auto and air, returning home to pay tribute to their father for his years of faithful service. I found a special spirit in this home. They were a very close family. How they enjoyed being together!

As I stood to address the conference in its final session, there seated to my left sat his entire family, tears streaming down their faces as they honored their father on this grand occasion.

Following the conference session, I had been invited to stay for family dinner before leaving for the airport to fly home. As the family gathered around the table, the father requested that we kneel in family prayer. Kneeling in prayer, I discovered their strength. This family understood their relationship to God, their Eternal Father. They understood their relationship to their earthly father and mother, to their brothers and sisters. The brotherhood and sisterhood existing in this family unit made it easy for them to stretch beyond their borders to friends and neighbors.

Duty and privilege to teach prayer

Being a guest in so many different homes over the last few years has certainly convinced me that a special spirit is clearly evident when a family prays together.

Our prophets have admonished us repeatedly to make family prayer a regular part of our daily worship. President John Taylor asked the Saints:

"Do you have prayers in your family? . . .

"And when you do, do you go through the operation like the guiding of a piece of machinery, or do you bow in meekness and with a sincere desire to seek the blessing of God upon you and your household? That is the way that we ought to do, and cultivate a spirit of devotion and trust in God, dedicating ourselves to him, and seeking his blessings" (*Journal of Discourses*, 21:118).

President Heber J. Grant, in referring to this matter, said:

"I have little or no fear for the boy or the girl, the young man or the young woman, who honestly and conscientiously supplicate God twice a day for the guidance of His Spirit. I am sure that when temptation comes they will have the strength to overcome it by the inspiration that shall be given to them" (*Gospel Standards* [Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1941], p. 26).

It is clearly our duty and privilege as parents to teach our children to pray, and regular family prayer sets the pattern.

Divine fellowship with God

Prayer is a divine fellowship with God. Such spiritual companionship brings a matchless blessing. I believe families who pray together understand the meaning and comfort the Savior was trying to give to His believers, as He offered His inspiring prayer as His earthly ministry was coming to an end.

"I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

"As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. . . .

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:15-18, 20-21).

Draw near to our Father

President Heber J. Grant once counseled us:

"The minute a man stops supplicating God for his spirit and direction, just so soon he starts out to become a stranger to him and his works. When men stop praying for God's spirit, they place confidence in their own unaided reason, and they gradually lose the spirit of God, just the same as near and dear friends, by never writing to or visiting with each other, will become strangers" (*Improvement Era*, Aug. 1944, p. 481).

Prayer endows us with the power to draw near to our Eternal Father. How important it is, then, that one of our fundamental teachings to our children is how to pray.

How to address the Lord

Could I encourage you to consider the subject of prayer in your discussions as you hold family home evenings? Could I direct your teaching of prayer to at least four main areas of emphasis?

First, the way we address our Father in Heaven in prayer. I listen to so many people offering prayers, and I wonder who they are addressing. The salutation is so complicated I find it difficult to comprehend the being to which the prayer is being directed. I am reminded of the occasion when the first Congress was trying to determine how to address the president of our country. The suggestion was given that he could be called "His Highness, President of the United States and Protector of the Liberties of the Same." Washington's request was to just call him Mr. Presi-

dent. (Willis M. and Ruth West, *The American People* [Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1948].)

When the Lord instructed His disciples on how to pray, He said:

"And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. . . .

"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name" (Matthew 6:5, 9).

In the words of other prayers given to us by the Savior, the term *Father* is also used. "O God, the Eternal Father" is the way the Lord instructed us to bless the sacrament. (See D&C 20:77.) By use of the word *Father*, we understand our relationship to Him. He is our Eternal Father, and we are His children. Teach your children how to address the Lord in prayer.

Language of prayer

Second, use the sacred language of prayer. We should always address Deity by using the sacred pronouns *thou*, *thee*, *thy*, and *thine*. The late President Stephen L. Richards gave us this wise counsel:

"We have discovered . . . a lack of proper teaching with reference to prayer. I know that I myself have been shocked out in the mission field as I have heard missionaries called on for prayer who seem to have had no experience or training whatever in the use of the language of prayer. . . .

"I think, my brethren, that in the quorums and in the classes, you would do well, as in the homes also, to teach the language of prayer—'Thee and Thou,' rather than 'you.' It always seems disappointing to me to have our Father in Heaven, our Lord, addressed as 'you.' It is surprising how much we see of this. . . . I think you might make note of it, and avail yourselves of any opportunities that may come in order to

teach the sacred and reverential language of prayer" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1951, p. 175).

Let us teach our children to use the language of prayer.

Gratitude to the Lord

Third, offer prayers of gratitude. I was requested to bless a lad who was having problems in his young life a few weeks ago. After the blessing, as I prepared to leave, his mother said to him, "Son, thank him for the blessing before he leaves." Instead of turning to me, he lowered his head, folded his arms, and thanked his Father in Heaven. How perceptive children are!

As I have opportunity of kneeling each night and morning with my wife in prayer, I am full of gratitude for the blessing and privilege of having her companionship. I am full of gratitude for the blessings that come to me through my children and their lives as I am able to be with them and watch their growth and progress.

When you are on your knees in prayer, there is an overwhelming feeling of gratitude to the Lord for the many blessings that he bestows on his children.

How blessed we are for our understanding of who He is. How blessed we are as a people for the gift of the gospel. I marvel at what He has created for our use and benefit and for the privilege of enjoying this earthly experience. My heart is especially filled with gratitude at this season of the harvest when I go out to dig a hill of potatoes and there find manyfold over the small piece I planted a few months before, or pull off an ear of corn and see how those two or three kernels placed in the earth now yield a hundredfold. As I travel and see the beauty of His creations—the mountains, the fertile plains, the sparkling streams, or the mighty oceans—how grateful I am for His blessings to me. When we kneel in family prayer, let us teach our children to express gratitude unto the Lord for His many blessings to us.

What to pray for

Fourth, our petitions unto the Lord. The Prophet Joseph Smith at one time stated:

"We would say to the brethren, seek to know God in your closets, call upon him in the fields. Follow the direction of the Book of Mormon, and pray over and for your families, your cattle, your flocks, your herds, your corn, and all things that you possess; ask the blessing of God upon all your labors, and everything that you engage in" (*History of the Church*, 5:31).

President Brigham Young once counseled us:

"Again, suppose a family wish to assemble for prayer, what would be orderly and proper? For the head of the family to call together his wife . . . and children, . . . and when he prays aloud, all present, who are old enough to understand, should mentally repeat the words as they fall from his lips; and why so? That all may be one.

"If the people will ask in faith, they will receive, and let all mentally ask precisely as does the one who is spokesman. Let all leave the cares of their work behind them; let the kitchens take care of themselves, and let the barns, the flocks and herds take care of themselves, and if they are destroyed while you are praying, be able to freely say, 'Go, they are the Lord's; He gave them to me, and I will worship Him; I will assemble my family and call upon the name of my God.'

"By leaving business and the cares thereof where they belong, and attending strictly to worship in its season, if not at first, you soon will be united, and be able to bring every evil principle into subjection. If all are bound up in this manner, don't you see that it will make a mighty cord of faith?" (*Journal of Discourses*, 3:53).

Let us teach our children to pray for courage, for opportunity, for comfort, for peace, for understanding, and not for material gifts. Let us teach them

to pray, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10).

Time for prayer

President Kimball has counseled us: "There will *always* be time for prayer. There will *always* be the moments of blessed solitude, of closeness to the Heavenly Father, of freedom from worldly things and cares.

"When we kneel in family prayer, our children at our side on their knees are learning habits that will stay with them all through their lives. If we do not take time for prayers, what we are actually saying to our children is, 'Well, it isn't very important, anyway. We won't worry about it. If we can do it conveniently, we will have our prayer, but if the school bell rings and the bus is coming and employment is calling—well, prayer isn't very important and we will do it when it is convenient.' Unless planned for, it never seems to be convenient. On the other hand, what a joyous thing it is to establish such customs and habits in the home that when parents visit their children in the latter's homes after they are married they just naturally kneel with them in the usual, established manner of prayer!" (*The Miracle of Forgiveness* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969], p. 253).

Teaching prayer by example

I am grateful for my children, who are teaching my grandchildren the blessings of prayer. I believe the first

word I heard from Terry, Esther, Audrey, and Thomas's lips has been *Amen*, oftentimes repeated with great gusto and enthusiasm. This has been followed by *Father in Heaven*. The beginning of their parents' earthly instruction has been to teach them who they are and how they can communicate with their Eternal Father. I am certain the same practice will be followed for Benjamin, Michael, and Justin, just as they are old enough to also learn how to approach their Father in Heaven in prayer.

I can think of no greater teaching to our children than that of the power of prayer. We should do it by example, and take our children daily before the Lord and give them the peace and assurance that can come from knowing they are a child of our Father in Heaven.

May we, this day, commit ourselves to so live that we will go before the Lord with a clear conscience and ask for His divine guidance and assistance and express our gratitude unto Him for the blessings He has given to us.

May the power of prayer bless our homes, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have just listened to Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Carlos E. Asay, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now speak to us.

Elder Carlos E. Asay

Parent-child interviews

Several years ago, I approached one of my daughters and said, "My dear, it's time for an interview." Her

response was less than enthusiastic, and I determined within my own mind that I was boring her terribly. So instead of subjecting her to a formal conversation, I invited her into the car and drove to the Dairy Queen where we

both enjoyed a root beer float. All the way to and from the store, I asked questions, and she freely responded. She didn't even realize that she was being interviewed—or at least that is what I thought. A few weeks later, I announced once again that I wanted to interview her. This time she promptly asked, "Wet or dry?"

Dry interviews

I wonder if our conduct of good practices—even the conducting of interviews with our children—is sometimes done in a dry and deadening manner. Is it possible that in our drive to perform or fulfill a Church expectancy we collide with purpose? Can we not become so obsessed with form that we forget family? If so, perhaps we should ask ourselves whether within we are "full of dead men's bones" (Matthew 23:27).

When I think of dry performances, my mind turns to the ancients who altered the lesser law. They multiplied rituals, ceremonies, and symbols to the extent that the law itself was worshiped more than the Lord. In fact, the law was so abused that it pointed people away from, not forward to, the Messiah.

Wet interviews

The acceptable performance, I feel, is made "wet" and given zest by the living waters which issue from Christ. It is a performance founded upon inspired teachings such as:

"[You] must have no other object in view . . . but to glorify God, and must not be influenced by any other motive than that of building his kingdom" (Joseph Smith—History 1:46).

"He that is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Matthew 23:11).

"For the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (2 Corinthians 3:6).

"When thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth" (Matthew 6:3).

Questioning a son's beliefs

Living performances are void of roteness and stiffness and self-centered tendencies. They are made by Saints who speak and act according to the feelings of their hearts and the Spirit of the Lord which is in them. (See 2 Nephi 4:12.)

Alma's interview with Helaman is a classic "wet" and refreshing performance. It is a short, three-question, forty-five-second exchange between father and son. According to the record, Alma was approaching the end of his ministry. He knew that he must select someone to assume prophetic and record-keeping responsibilities. Helaman was his choice. Therefore, Alma came to his son and asked: "Believest thou the words which I spake unto thee concerning those records which have been kept?"

Without hesitation, Helaman answered: "Yea, I believe." He might have said, "Yes, I believe in the scriptures; and yes, I believe all that you have taught me."

Alma's second question was simply: "Believest thou in Jesus Christ, who shall come?" Again, without delay, Helaman stated: "Yea, I believe all the words which thou hast spoken." (See Alma 45:2–5.)

What a tribute to the father! He had talked of Christ, rejoiced in Christ, preached of Christ, and taught his son to know the source to which he might look for a remission of his sins. (See 2 Nephi 25:26.)

Faith and devotion

Up to this point in the interview, the father's questions were sampling the son's basic beliefs. Now it was essential that those beliefs be tested and determined as being more than idle lip service. Alma's capstone inquiry was, "Will ye keep my commandments?"

I am not certain what went through Helaman's mind as he prepared to give his final response. He knew the necessity of honoring his parents and respect-

ing priesthood authority. His previous actions had verified this fact. I like to think that Helaman's reply was promoted by a heartfelt desire to be obedient rather than by a fear of authority. Deep love of God and father were reflected in his words: "Yea, I will keep thy commandments with all my heart."

It is a marvelous thing when a father is able to make his commandments square perfectly with God's expectations. Apparently, this condition was achieved by Alma, for Helaman was ready and willing to obey with all his heart.

This short, informative, and inspiring interview must have pleased Alma greatly. Not only had he communicated heart-to-heart and soul-to-soul with his son, but the son had openly declared his faith and pledged his devotion. To culminate the exchange, Alma, under the inspiration of the Spirit, prophesied and extended this blessing: "Blessed art thou; and the Lord shall prosper thee in this land." (See Alma 45:6-8.)

The Alma-Helaman approach

I wonder if our interviews with our children are as inspirational and building as the one between Alma and Helaman. I find it significant that the father came to the son; the son was not summoned to stand inspection or to give a report. I find it refreshing that the conversation was direct and without any verbal sparring; it was not labored or rehearsed. I find it exemplary that commitment was drawn without prying, wringing, or pressuring. And I find it most beautiful that the father concluded with a tender blessing.

Is this not a performance, or a pattern of communicating, that we should follow? And I refer to the principles involved, not necessarily to the form.

On one occasion when I arrived home late from an assignment, my wife expressed concern about one of our sons. She was worried that his mind was not riveted upon serving a mission, and she said as much to me. Her con-

cerns certainly captured my attention, and I asked where the son was. She told me that he was in his room preparing to retire. Immediately I went to the room and sat on the edge of his bed. When I asked if I could speak with him a moment, he said, "Certainly."

The hour was late. He was tired, and so was I. I, therefore, could see that nothing would be gained by a long conversation. And following the direct Alma-and-Helaman approach, the conversation went something like this:

"Son, are you still planning on serving a mission?"

"Yes," he answered. "I've always planned on serving, and I haven't changed."

"Son, do you know what qualifies a young man to serve a mission? Do you know what *worthiness* means?"

"Yes, Dad," he said. "I understand the requirements and standards of worthiness that must be met."

I said, "Thank you. I have one last question: Are you clean and worthy to serve? Could you accept a call if one were issued you today?"

There was a moment of reflective silence; then he declared: "It isn't easy. Temptation is real and found everywhere. However, since you've asked, I am clean and I am worthy to serve."

This was a wonderful, beautiful, spontaneous, and sanctifying experience.

I thanked my son, kissed him, assured him of my love, and bid him good night. I returned to my bedroom and told my wife that all was well and that she could go to sleep.

Means and ends

I do see great wisdom in the practices and performances which we encourage parents to follow in the Church. There is virtue in sponsoring family home evenings; in conducting family prayers, as Elder Perry has mentioned; in giving father's blessings; and in holding parent-child interviews. All of these are important and have their place. However, the participation in

such performances and the reporting of such activity must not become the end. They are means of involving, means of teaching, and means of blessing people. All should be engaged in for the purpose of saving and exalting souls.

I thank God for my wife and my children; they make life so very meaningful. I thank God for the restored Church and living prophets who have provided me inspired programs for the benefit of those around me. And I'm grateful for the gospel which comes from the fountain of living waters—even Jesus Christ. But I pray humbly that I will be blessed not to confuse means and ends or become confused with performances at the expense of the spirit underlying all commandments. May our interviews, our prayers, our communications with our children be

sanctifying and free of dryness and "dead men's bones," I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Tabernacle Choir sang "Praise Ye the Father" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Elder Carlos E. Asay, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has spoken to us, following which the Tabernacle Choir sang so magnificently "Praise Ye the Father."

Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now speak to us, and he will be our concluding speaker.

Elder Boyd K. Packer

A lesson

I want to tell you of an incident that happened many years ago. Two of our sons, then little boys, were wrestling on the rug, and they had reached that line which separates laughter from tears. So I worked my foot carefully between them and lifted the older one back to a sitting position on the rug. As I did so, I said, "Hey there, you little monkeys. You'd better settle down."

To my surprise he folded his little arms, his eyes swimming with deep hurt, and protested, "I *not* a monkey, Daddy, I a *person*!"

The years have not erased the overwhelming feeling of love I felt for my little sons. I was taught a profound lesson by my little boys. Many times over the years his words have slipped back into my mind, "I *not* a monkey, Daddy, I a *person*!" I was taught a profound lesson by my little boy.

The mystery of life

Now the cycle of life has moved swiftly on, and both of those sons have little boys of their own, who teach their fathers lessons. They now watch their children grow as we watched them. They are coming to know something as fathers that they could not be taught as sons. Perhaps now they know how much their father loves them. Hopefully, they know as well why prayers begin "Our *Father* who art in heaven."

All too soon their children will be grown with little "persons" of their own, repeating the endless cycle of life.

There is on the West Coast a statue by Ernesto Gazzeri which depicts in marble that cycle of life. There are toddlers and children, teenagers, young lovers, the mature and the aged, gazing at a newborn baby. Two figures to the back, however, face away from the group. An aged couple, supporting one another, haltingly moves away from the family circle.

Persons enter life through mortal birth and, in due time, disappear through the veil of death. Most of them never sense why we are here.

Nothing is more obvious than what the statue represents, but the sculptor entitled it *The Mystery of Life*.

Unanswered questions

Occasionally, as at the time of birth, we pause in awe of what nature has to say. We see patterns of creation, so ordered and so beautiful as to sponsor deep feelings of reverence and humility. Then, just when we might discover the meaning of life, we are jerked back by the wild, uncontrolled things that humanity is doing to itself.

There are so many unanswered questions. Why the inequities in life?

Some are so rich.

Some so wretchedly poor.

Some so beautifully formed, and others with pitiful handicaps.

Some are gifted and others retarded.

Why the injustice, the untimely death? Why the neglect, the sorrow, the pain?

Why divorce, incest, perversion, abuse, and cruelty?

If there be order and meaning to life, they are hardly visible in what mortals do to one another and to themselves.

Answers to deep questions

In counterpoint, we see love and devotion, sacrifice, faith, and humility; we see humanity in exalted expression of courage and heroism.

When at last the mystery of life is unraveled, what will be revealed?

I know a man who studied for the ministry. Then just before his ordination he dropped out because there were so many unanswered questions. He still regarded himself as a devout, if somewhat disillusioned, Christian. He found another profession, married, and was raising a family when our missionaries found him.

He made a very superficial study of the doctrines of the Church and found them tolerable enough. The fundamentals of Christianity were visible. But he was most interested in programs and activities that would benefit his family.

It was *after* he was baptized that he made the discovery of his life. To his surprise he found, underlying the programs of the Church, a solid foundation of doctrine. He had no idea of the depth and breadth and height of our theology. When once he moved from interest in the programs to a study of the gospel of Jesus Christ, he found answers which explained to his full satisfaction the deep questions that had left him unable to accept ordination as a clergyman.

One doctrine was completely new to him. Although he was a student of the Bible, he had not found it there until he read the other revelations. Then the Bible was clear to him and he understood.

The doctrine is so logical, so reasonable, and explains so many things, that it is a wonder that the Christian world rejected it. It is so essential a part of the equation of life that, left out, life just cannot add up, it remains a mystery.

The doctrine is simply this: life did not begin with mortal birth. We lived in spirit form before we entered mortality. We are spiritually the children of God.

This doctrine of premortal life was known to ancient Christians. For nearly five hundred years the doctrine was taught, but it was then rejected as a heresy by a clergy that had slipped into the Dark Ages of apostasy.

Once they rejected this doctrine, the doctrine of premortal life, and the doctrine of redemption for the dead, they could never unravel the mystery of life. They became like a man trying to assemble a strand of pearls on a string that was too short. There is no way they can put them all together.

Sacred things hidden from the insincere

Why is it so strange a thought that we lived as spirits before entering mortality? Christian doctrine proclaims the Resurrection, meaning that we will live after mortal death. If we live beyond death, why should it be strange that we lived before birth?

The Christian world in general accepts the idea that our condition in the Resurrection will be determined by our actions in this life. Why can they not believe that some circumstances in this life were determined by our actions before coming into mortality?

The scriptures teach this doctrine, the doctrine of premortal life. For His own reasons, the Lord provides answers to some questions, with pieces placed here and there throughout the scriptures. We are to find them; we are to *earn* them. In that way sacred things are hidden from the insincere.

Children of God

Of the many verses revealing this doctrine, I will quote two short phrases from the testimony of John in the ninety-third section of the Doctrine and Covenants. The first, speaking of Christ, says plainly, "He was in the beginning, before the world was" (D&C 93:7).

And the other, referring to us, says with equal clarity, "Ye were also in the beginning with the Father" (D&C 93:23).

Essential facts about our premortal life have been revealed. Although they are sketchy, they unravel the mystery of life.

When we comprehend the doctrine of premortal life, we know that we are the children of God, that we lived with him in spirit form before entering mortality.

We know that this life is a test, that life did not begin with birth, nor will it end with death.

Imaginary football battle

Then life begins to make sense, with meaning and purpose even in all of the chaotic mischief that mankind creates for itself.

Imagine that you are attending a football game. The teams seem evenly matched. One team has been trained to follow the rules; the other, to do just the opposite. They are committed to cheat and disobey every rule of sportsmanlike conduct.

While the game ends in a tie, it is determined that it must continue until one side wins decisively.

Soon the field is a quagmire.

Players on both sides are being ground into the mud. The cheating of the opposing team turns to brutality.

Players are carried off the field. Some have been injured critically; others, it is whispered, fatally. It ceases to be a game and becomes a battle.

You become very frustrated and upset. "Why let this go on? Neither team can win. It must be stopped."

Imagine that you confront the sponsor of the game and demand that he stop this useless, futile battle. You say it is senseless and without purpose. Has he no regard at all for the players?

He calmly replies that he will not call the game. You are mistaken. There is a great purpose in it. You have not understood.

He tells you that this is not a spectator sport—it is for the participants. It is for their sake that he permits the game to continue. Great benefit may come to them because of the challenges they face.

He points to players sitting on the bench, suited up, eager to enter the game. "When each one of them has been in, when each has met the day for which we has prepared so long and trained so hard, then, and only then, will I call the game."

The test and the purpose

Until then, it may not matter which team seems to be ahead. The

present score is really not crucial. There are games within games, you know. Whatever is happening to the team, each player will have his day.

Those players on the team that keeps the rules will not be eternally disadvantaged by the appearance that their team somehow always seems to be losing.

In the field of destiny, no team or player will be eternally disadvantaged because they keep the rules. They may be cornered or misused, even defeated for a time. But individual players on that team, regardless of what appears on the scoreboard, may already be victorious.

Each player will have a test sufficient to his needs; how each responds is the test.

When the game is finally over, you and they will see purpose in it all, may even express gratitude for having been on the field during the darkest part of the contest.

Testing can have opposite effects

I do not think the Lord is quite so hopeless about what's going on in the world as we are. He could put a stop to all of it any moment. But He will not! Not until every player has a chance to meet the test for which we were preparing before the world was, before we came into mortality.

The same testing in troubled times can have quite opposite effects on individuals. Three verses from the Book of Mormon, which is another testament of Christ, teach us that "they had wars, and bloodsheds, and famine, and affliction, for the space of many years.

"And there had been murders, and contentions, and dissensions, and all manner of iniquity among the people of Nephi; nevertheless for the righteous' sake, yea, because of the prayers of the righteous, they were spared.

"But behold, because of the exceedingly great length of the war between the Nephites and the Lamanites many had become *hardened*, because

of the exceedingly great length of the war; and many were *softened* because of their afflictions, insomuch that they did humble themselves before God, even in the depth of humility" (Alma 62:39-41; italics added).

Surely you know some whose lives have been filled with adversity who have been mellowed and strengthened and refined by it, while others have come away from the same test bitter and blistered and unhappy.

Doctrine of premortal life

There is no way to make sense out of life without a knowledge of the doctrine of premortal life.

The idea that mortal birth is the beginning is preposterous. There is no way to explain life if you believe that.

The notion that life ends with mortal death is ridiculous. There is no way to face life if you believe that.

When we understand the doctrine of premortal life, then things fit together and make sense. We then know that little boys and little girls are not monkeys, nor are their parents, nor were theirs, to the very beginning generation.

We are the children of God, created in his image.

Our child-parent relationship to God is clear.

The purpose for the creation of this earth is clear.

The testing that comes in mortality is clear.

The need for a redeemer is clear.

When we do understand that principle of the gospel, we see a Heavenly Father and a Son; we see an atonement and a redemption.

We understand why ordinances and covenants are necessary.

We understand the necessity for baptism by immersion for the remission of sins. We understand why we renew that covenant by partaking of the sacrament.

Cause to rejoice

I have but touched upon the doctrine of premortal life. We cannot, in these brief conference talks, do more than that. Oh, if we but had a day, or even an hour, to speak of it.

I assure you there is, underlying the programs and activities of this church, a depth and breadth and height of doctrine that answers the questions of life.

When one knows the gospel of Jesus Christ, there is cause to rejoice. The words *joy* and *rejoice* appear through the scriptures repetitively. Latter-day Saints are happy people. When one knows the doctrine, parenthood becomes a sacred obligation, the begetting of life a sacred privilege. Abortion would be unthinkable. No one would think of suicide. And all the frailties and problems of men would fade away.

We have cause to rejoice and we do rejoice, even celebrate.

"The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth" (D&C 93:36).

God bless us that we and all who will hear His message can celebrate the Light! Of Him I bear witness, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Tabernacle Choir sang "As the Dew from Heaven Distilling" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has been our concluding speaker. The Tabernacle Choir has sung "As the Dew from Heaven Distilling."

We are grateful to the managers and operators of the many television and radio stations and cable systems for offering their facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this conference to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "Hear Thou Our Hymn, O Lord."

The benediction will then be given by Bishop J. Richard Clarke, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, after which the conference will be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The Choir sang "Hear Thou Our Hymn, O Lord." Bishop J. Richard Clarke offered the benediction.

FIRST DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

SECOND SESSION

The second general session of the 153rd Semiannual General Conference began at 2:00 P.M. on Saturday, October 1, 1983. President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve, conducted.

Music for this session was provided by the Mormon Youth Chorus under the direction of Robert C. Bowden with Roy M. Darley at the organ.

At the beginning of the meeting, President Benson made the following remarks:

President Ezra Taft Benson

My beloved brethren and sisters, the First Presidency has asked that I conduct this session of the conference.

We deeply regret the absence of President Spencer W. Kimball and President Marion G. Romney, to whom we extend our love and blessings.

We are pleased to welcome those who are gathered in the Tabernacle for this, the second general session of the 153rd Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We also welcome those who are participating by means of television or radio, and also the many who are watching in over six hundred stake centers throughout the United States (including Alaska) and Canada to which the conference is being carried by satellite transmission. We note that Elders Dean L. Larsen and Ronald E. Poelman are presiding at the overflow session in the Assembly Hall.

We are pleased to acknowledge especially our guests who are present this afternoon, along with general and local Church leaders and members from many parts of the world.

We express our appreciation to the owners and operators of the many radio and television stations and to the owners and operators of cable systems for their cooperation in making these proceedings available to members and friends of the Church in many countries.

The music for this session will be provided by the Mormon Youth Chorus under the direction of Robert C. Bowden with Roy Darley at the organ.

The chorus will begin this service by singing "I Need Thee Every Hour." The invocation will be offered by Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The chorus sang "I Need Thee Every Hour."

Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi offered the invocation.

President Benson

The chorus will now sing "O Divine Redeemer," following which Elder Thomas S. Monson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will speak to us.

The Mormon Youth Chorus sang "O Divine Redeemer."

Elder Thomas S. Monson

The National Gallery at Trafalgar Square in London, England, is one of the truly great museums of art in all the world. The gallery proudly proclaims its Rembrandt Room and Constable Corner and urges all to take the tour of Turner's masterpieces. Visitors come from every corner of the earth. They depart uplifted and inspired.

Labels on paintings

During a recent visit to the National Gallery, I was surprised to see displayed in a most prominent location magnificent portraits and landscapes which featured the name of no artist.

Then I noticed a large placard which provided this explanation:

"This exhibition is drawn from the large number of paintings that hang in a public but somewhat neglected area of the Gallery: the lower floor. The exhibition is intended to encourage visitors to look at the paintings without being too worried about who painted them. In several instances, we do not precisely know.

"The information on labels on paintings can often affect, half-unconsciously, our estimate of them; and here labeling has been deliberately subordinate in the hope that visitors will read only after they have looked

come. His dear wife felt exactly as he did. Their unique manner of tithing payment continued throughout their earning lives.

Gustav and Margarete Wacker established a home that was a heaven. They were not blessed with children but mothered and fathered their many Church visitors. A sophisticated and learned leader from Ottawa told me, "I like to visit President Wacker. I come away refreshed in spirit and determined to ever live close to the Lord."

Did our Heavenly Father honor such abiding faith? The branch prospered. The membership outgrew the rented Slovakian Hall and moved into a modern and lovely chapel of their own. President and Sister Wacker had their prayers answered by serving a proselyting mission to their native Germany and later a temple mission to the beautiful temple in Washington, D.C. Then, just three months ago, his mission in mortality concluded, Gustav Wacker passed away peacefully while being held in the loving arms of his eternal companion. Only one label appears fitting for such an obedient and faithful servant: "Who honors God, God honors." (See 1 Samuel 2:30.)

"The Lord looketh on the heart"

A label frequently seen and grudgingly borne is one which reads: "Handicapped."

Years ago, President Spencer W. Kimball shared with President Gordon B. Hinckley, Elder Bruce R. McConkie, and me an experience he had in the appointment of a patriarch for the Shreveport Louisiana Stake of the Church. President Kimball described how he interviewed, how he searched, and how he prayed, that he might learn the Lord's will concerning the selection. For some reason, none of the suggested candidates was the man for this assignment at this particular time.

The day wore on. The evening meetings began. Suddenly President Kimball turned to the stake president

and asked him to identify a particular man seated perhaps two-thirds of the way back from the front of the chapel. The stake president replied that the individual was James Womack, whereupon President Kimball said, "He is the man the Lord has selected to be your stake patriarch. Please have him meet with me in the high council room following the meeting."

Stake President Charles Cagle was startled, for James Womack did not wear the label of a typical man. He had sustained terrible injuries while in combat during World War II. He lost both hands and one arm, as well as most of his eyesight and part of his hearing. Nobody had wanted to let him in law school when he returned, yet he finished third in his class at Louisiana State University. James Womack simply refused to wear the label "Handicapped."

That evening as President Kimball met with Brother Womack and informed him that the Lord had designated him to be the patriarch, there was a protracted silence in the room. Then Brother Womack said, "Brother Kimball, it is my understanding that a patriarch is to place his hands on the head of the person he blesses. As you can see, I have no hands to place on the head of anyone."

Brother Kimball, in his kind and patient manner, invited Brother Womack to make his way to the back of the chair on which Brother Kimball was seated. He then said, "Now, Brother Womack, lean forward and see if the stumps of your arms will reach the top of my head." To Brother Womack's joy, they touched Brother Kimball, and the exclamation came forth, "I can reach you! I can reach you!"

"Of course you can reach me," responded Brother Kimball. "And if you can reach me, you can reach any whom you bless. I will be the shortest person you will ever have seated before you."

President Kimball reported to us that when the name of James Womack was presented to the stake conference,

"the hands of the members shot heavenward in an enthusiastic vote of approval."

The word of the Lord to the prophet Samuel at the time David was designated to be a future king of Israel provided a fitting label for the occasion. It certainly was the thought of each faithful member: "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

Like a golden thread woven through the tapestry of life is the message on the label of a humble heart. It was true of the boy Samuel, it was the experience of Jesus, it was the testi-

mony of Gustav Wacker, it marked the calling of James Womack. May it ever be the label which identifies each of us: "Lord, here am I." In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Thomas S. Monson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder Marion D. Hanks, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

He will be followed by Elder Charles Didier, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Marion D. Hanks

I desire to speak this morning of the value of our free agency and of the love that preserved it for us and which should motivate and direct our use of it.

Suppose civilization were about to end

Many years ago I was introduced to an idea which at first seemed only an exercise in imagination, or perhaps a peg on which to hang a story. But I have thought of it occasionally since as I have traveled the earth, often separated from family and other loved ones.

Suppose that everyone in the world received simultaneously the word that the inconceivable was about to occur: civilization as we know it was about to end.

What would happen?

Well, for one thing, the streets would be a maelstrom of frantic people trying to get to a telephone to talk with someone. Every line would be jammed and every telephone booth besieged by people trying to reach someone to say "I love you." There would be other messages also. "I'm so sorry," would be one of them, or "How foolish I have been."

God loves us and believes in us

The condition of the world about us assures us that the unthinkable could happen; but it is not of such a cataclysm that I am thinking, but of our daily walk and our everyday relationships. They who love should manifest their love while there is a chance to do so. If we are waiting for some later time, some period when all imperfections are corrected and when all frustrations pass away, we are not wise. Resentment or pride or selfishness or impatience can lead us to miss what life is meant to be, and can be, and is for those who love and serve. To postpone loving and giving until some time of perfect freedom from distress or discomfort is a great mistake; it will not happen. It is not for this world.

But we should be earnestly seeking and striving to correct and improve our own attitude and our own behavior. God has so ordained it. He loves us and believes in us and has done and will do anything he can to help us, but he will not impose on our free agency. "We love him," says the scripture, "because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). He does not love us because we love him;

he loves us unconditionally. But his love does not take the course of negating or smothering our privilege to choose, or our responsibility to account for what we choose and to experience the consequences. Indeed, it is written that he weeps for the bad judgment of some of his willful and disobedient children:

"Behold these thy brethren . . . are the workmanship of mine own hands, and I gave unto them their knowledge, in the day I created them; and in the Garden of Eden, gave I unto man his agency" (Moses 7:32).

"And . . . the God of heaven looked upon the residue of the people, and he wept" (Moses 7:28).

Lucifer wanted forced salvation

We had that agency with God before this world was. In the heavenly council of which the scriptures teach, there was another plan than God's presented: Lucifer was permitted to offer his program. It is vital for us in our leadership and our relationships to remember that God so loved that he would not shield us from the perils of freedom, from the right and responsibility to choose. So deep is his love and so precious that principle that he, who was conscious of the consequences, required that we choose. Lucifer had no love in his heart, no real concept of freedom or respect for it. He had no confidence in the principle or in us. He argued for forced salvation, for imposed survival, for an agencyless round trip to the earth and back again. None would be lost, he insisted. But he seemed not to understand that none would be any wiser, either, or any stronger or more compassionate or humble or grateful or more creative, under his plan.

Still choosing

We understood before we left that premortal state that freedom is precarious, difficult. We knew that to love would make us vulnerable to heart-

break and pain and disappointment. But we had learned that the alternatives to love and freedom of choice cannot provide the climate for growth and creative capacity that can eventually lead us to a stewardship like our Father's. The unselfish love of our Father's First-born in the spirit helped us understand when he, knowing the personal cost ahead for him but also the eternal significance for all of us, volunteered for his role of redemption.

We chose then, and we are, in consequence, on this earth still choosing.

"He died for me"

Recently I listened to a lovely young lady just leaving her teens as she spoke in a stake conference, her first address ever. She had never known a true family of her own. She had experienced many temporary homes, made many mistakes, had much heartache and hopelessness. Then an older Church couple found her, and loved her, and taught her. Her prepared talk was witty and interesting, but when she laid it down and bore witness through tears, it became magic:

"No one ever helped me to understand that I was worth anything," she said, "that I was special in any way. And then the missionaries taught me about Jesus Christ and his love and the God who sent him. They taught me that Jesus died for me—for *me*. I am valuable! I am valuable! He died for me."

Godly love and free agency

The lesson of God's great love and wisdom seems lost on many who are on this earth because of their choice but we do not understand. Our responsibility is to help them. But we must ourselves pray and strive earnestly that we do not obscure its meaning. If we do not really love and really believe in free agency, we may be inclined to impose our will on others for what we think is their best good. If we love enough, we will not do that, even at the risk of failure. Instruction and rules and training and disci-

pline are essential, of course. From our Father's example of godly love and patience, we should be motivated to stretch to any lengths to teach, to persuade, to encourage, to help.

But in matters of conscience and faith, if we truly love we will never seek to impose our will and deprive others of their agency. That is, after all, Satan's way. He is still permitted in this world to pursue his own rebellious approach. Since his encounter with earth's first family, he has waged war unceasingly upon God's children.

A scene to give us pause is portrayed in the book of Moses:

"Satan . . . had a great chain in his hand, and it veiled the whole face of the earth with darkness; and he looked up and laughed, and his angels rejoiced."

But it is written also:

"And . . . angels descend[ed] out of heaven, bearing testimony of the Father and Son; and the Holy Ghost fell on many" (Moses 7:26-27).

Choose life and good

The contest for the souls of men continues. We go on choosing.

The loving Father who at such great cost has preserved our agency in and out of this world has made every effort to help us use it well, but he has made it plain where the responsibility now lies:

"I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil;

"In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply. . . .

"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live" (Deuteronomy 30:15-16, 19).

It is written that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting

life" (John 3:16). That holy Son died for us and gave us the wonderful example of his life, and nothing in that life touches my heart with greater impact than the manner in which he chose to live among us:

"Forasmuch," it is written, "as the children [that is, we] are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same. . . .

"For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but . . . took on him the seed of Abraham.

"Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

"For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (Hebrews 2:14, 16-18).

Through that love it now is that "we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

God and Christ love us

He has the feeling of our infirmities; he understands our temptations. He came not as an angel but in flesh and blood that he might be a merciful and faithful advocate for us with the Father.

Would we improve our individual performance in relationship with others if we truly had the "feeling of their infirmities" and truly sought to be a faithful and merciful high priest, or Relief Society teacher, or friend, or wife, or husband?

The intensity and integrity of God's love and Christ's love are beyond our comprehension, but we are here to learn, and we must try.

Love as the heart of agency

Only Christ was sinless in this world, and this is why repentance must

always company with faith as first principles. God's plan and Christ's sacred gift prepared the way for us to improve, to grow, to change, to learn wisdom and mercy and forgiveness. Out of the wise use of our free agency proceeds every other wholesome quality and every blessing.

It is my deep conviction that any act or program or rule planned or performed without love at its heart, love as the spirit of it, or which curtails the agency of our Heavenly Father's children, is not worthy of God's kingdom or of his leaders or people.

Repeatedly He has protected our eternal agency, thus helping us to qualify through opposition and in the face of alternatives for the sweet blessing of eternal creative service. But we must choose—and be held accountable.

All of this came together for me in a very personal way a year or so ago in Manila in the Philippines when a telephone call from my wife reached me in the middle of the night in a hotel room telling me that our only son had suffered a severe accident that threatened his mobility and perhaps his life. He was being flown home to be operated on.

About the time of his anticipated arrival home, I telephoned. There was

a brief delay, then the sound of my wife's voice, quiet and subdued. "Your four sons-in-law are standing around your son administering to him," she said. "Paul has anointed him, and John is about to give him a blessing. He was worried because you're not here. This will be the first administration he's had from anyone but his father—but he's comforted now." I joined them in that prayer of blessing on my knees in a lonely hotel room half a world away, a room suddenly made sweet and warm.

Whether or not that day ever occurs in our lifetime when the telephone lines may be especially busy, we should be thinking of the love we have and should express, and manifest it for those nearest us and for those round about, and for all others, and for our holy Savior and his father.

Well may we sing, "I stand all amazed at the love Jesus offers me." In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

We have just listened to Elder Marion D. Hanks, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Charles Didier, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now address us.

Elder Charles Didier

Friend or foe

Since the beginning of humanity, man has divided his world into two camps, friends and foes, with the purpose of gratifying his pride and ambition and exercising power, dominion, or compulsion over the other camp.

Military leaders have canonized the expression "friend or foe" and have devised different ways to quickly identify who was who. Early biblical stories tell us about this selection process. At the end of a battle, the Ephraimites

were trying to escape through the passages of the Jordan. Unfortunately, these escape routes were already occupied by their enemies, the Gileadites, who had to know who was friend or foe. They asked the fugitives: "Art thou an Ephraimite? If he said, Nay;

"Then said they unto him, Say now Shibboleth: and he said Sibboleth: for he could not frame to pronounce it right" (Judges 12:5-6).

And that mispronunciation meant death. Forty-two thousand perished that day. Apparently the process was

very successful and did not leave room for misunderstanding.

Love your enemies

There are not many alternatives to answer the question "Friend or foe?" It is simply one or the other. You may, of course, try to pretend to be a friend because of fear of losing your life, but the end result is almost always the same. We will see that there is an analogy between this selection process used by the natural man and the selection process of finding the potentially divine man.

Since the beginning of humanity, history has recorded that one of the deviations of man has been and still is to create artificial divisions and to fight holy wars because of racial, religious, cultural, or political differences and to justify these crimes against humanity in the name of the Lord.

Today, in our very complex world, we may well be reminded of the true message that comes from Christ himself to avoid constant battles and a final holocaust when he declared: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you" (3 Nephi 12:44).

Friend of world is enemy of God

However, the essential personal question that we need to consider is whether our relationship with Deity will be that of friend or foe. If well understood, because of its eternal implications, this relationship can bring eternal life; if misunderstood, misused, misapplied, misconceived, or misrepresented, it can bring mortal as well as spiritual death.

A warning is given us by James: "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?"

"Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye

fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:1-4).

Enemy to God

What is an enemy to God? A scripture defines it concisely:

"For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever" (Mosiah 3:19).

One might wonder, after listening to this very strong statement, if man can abandon this carnal nature and this belief that earth is his final resource, providing food, shelter, comfort, pleasure, games, and even gods. Can he discover, by faith, that it is our Heavenly Father who constitutes the eternal resource when he knows how to cultivate this friendship?

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8).

True friend of God

What then is a true friend of God?

President David O. McKay explained the process: "That man is most truly great who is most Christlike.

"What you sincerely in your heart think of Christ will determine what you are, will largely determine what your acts will be" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1951, p. 93).

"By choosing [Jesus Christ] as our ideal, we create within ourselves a desire to be like him, to have fellowship with him" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1951, p. 98).

To become a friend of God is possible because of the Mediator, the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Let us now consider additional teachings of the prophet Benjamin:

"For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, *unless* he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father" (Mosiah 3:19; italics added).

One of the real purposes of life is to become a friend of the Mediator, our Savior and Redeemer, and not only understand his mission but also support it and then qualify to be called his friend, his disciple, and to enter into the presence of his Father.

"I give unto you these sayings that you may understand and know how to worship, and know what you worship, that you may come unto the Father in my name, and in due time receive of his fulness" (D&C 93:19).

"He is our friend"

Prophets and Apostles testify of the importance of Christ being our friend. The testimony of President Spencer W. Kimball last year in general conference touched my heart when he concluded his address by testifying: "I know that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God and that He was crucified for the sins of the world. He is my friend, my Savior, my Lord, and my God. With all my heart I pray that the Saints may keep His commandments, have His Spirit to be with them, and gain an eternal inheritance with Him in celestial glory" (*Ensign*, Nov. 1982, p. 6).

To be able to say "He is our friend" means that we need to qualify as his friends, to have the same purposes, to be advocates and strong defenders of his cause.

David and Jonathan

We can learn a great lesson from the friendship of David and Jonathan, which was based on a covenant to be faithful to the Lord. Let me share some excerpts of the qualities of that friendship.

"The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul" (1 Samuel 18:1).

"Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father" (1 Samuel 19:4).

"And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever" (1 Samuel 20:42).

Choose the right

As individuals, and especially teenagers, what kinds of friends do we select, adopt, confide in, and visit with? Are we strong enough to refuse to be a friend of the world and its representatives? Are we strong enough to accept friendship with Christ? Is to be a friend to be complacent and surrender to lower standards, or is it to maintain Christlike standards and defend them? Do we consider mutual friendship as a way to maintain and develop the foundation of our testimony of Christ? "Feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things that ye should do" (2 Nephi 32:3). The conditions are set; the model is given. Then why not become his disciple by being his witness? Why entertain the constant dilemma of your mind? *Be* committed to be his friend!

We find the same challenge with teaching our children to build an eternal association of friendship and love. "But I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth" (D&C 93:40). Do we treat our sons and daughters as children of God? Do we teach by example? Do we pray with them? Do we attend church with them?

Do we have family home evening regularly? Our spiritual progress and qualifying to become friends with Christ and his Father depend on how faithfully we live the gospel in our homes and how diligently we impart the teachings to our children.

"Ye will not suffer your children that they go hungry, or naked; neither will ye suffer that they transgress the laws of God, and fight and quarrel one with another, and serve the devil, . . . he being an enemy to all righteousness" (Mosiah 4:14).

Our challenge is to choose the right, to declare that we are friends of our Heavenly Father. The covenant that we made through baptism is a contract to become a friend of God.

Abraham "was called the Friend of God" (James 2:23). Prophets and Apostles down through the dispensations have been friends of God. If you have not done so previously, now is the time to become friends of God. We

have the knowledge of the scriptures, the testimonies of the prophets. I know that my Redeemer lives. I want to call him my friend; I want to be called his friend. May we all qualify to be his disciples, his friends, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Charles Didier, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

The chorus and congregation will now join in singing "The Spirit of God Like a Fire Is Burning," following which Elder Paul H. Dunn, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will speak to us.

The chorus and congregation sang "The Spirit of God Like a Fire Is Burning."

Elder Paul H. Dunn

It's 3:00 P.M. in Salt Lake City. Can you just imagine the scramble that's going on in many homes, with those trying to decide which channel and station to tune in on? Being somewhat interested in sports myself, I couldn't help but think as I was sitting here about some wise counsel my father once gave. I think it's appropriate here.

"Paul," he said, "remember: one day for church, six days for fun. Odds on going to heaven—six to one."

He also made this observation. He said, "Whenever I pass our little church I like to linger for a visit, so that when I'm carried in, the Lord won't say, 'Who is it?'"

Speaking of age

One day while celebrating the birthday of one of my granddaughters, I had her sitting on my lap, as grand-

fathers do, and we were talking about age, wisdom, and experience, and all of a sudden she looked up at me and said, "Granddaddy, were you born before they invented water?" Now that's a sobering thought.

Well, speaking of age, someone else has said, "Do you know how to tell when you are getting a little older?" I said no. He said, "You know you're getting old—

- "When, after you get it all together, you realize you'd do better if you took it apart.
- "When you get a little winded while brushing your teeth.
- "When you reach the age when you know all the answers but nobody asks any of the questions.
- "When your crow's feet need orthopedic shoes.
- "When your appendix scar hits your knee.

- "When instead of Max Factor you may want to consider Kemtone.
- "While sitting in a rocking chair you have difficulty in getting it started.
- "When you get out of the shower, you're glad the mirror's fogged up.
- "When you get up in the morning and you have one shoe on and one shoe off and you can't tell whether you are getting up or going to bed."

Well, you may have some different signs, but despite our best plans and efforts, growing older is going to happen to most of us. How those mature years are spent depends on every one of us.

Older and better

To those in their golden years, age should only be hateful if it means the cessation of growth, the withering of dreams, the silencing of feelings. And these qualities, after all, have nothing to do with chronology and everything to do with heart. Douglas McArthur once observed, "Live with enthusiasm! Nobody grows old by deserting their ideals. Years wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul. You are as young as your faith, as old as your doubt, as young as your self-confidence, as old as your fear, as young as your hope, as old as your despair."

History abounds with people who, as they got older, got better. Michelangelo didn't undertake his monumental frescoed altar wall of the Sistine Chapel until he was sixty-nine years of age. When he died at ninety, he was still busy with his poetry, paintings, and sculpture.

Goethe, German genius of literature, didn't finish the classic *Faust* until he was eighty-one. He had begun it forty years earlier, but when he came back to it, he had enhanced insight and freshness of imagination due to the extra years of life.

Herbert Hoover took on the job of coordinating the world's food supplying of thirty-eight countries at the age of seventy-two. He was the United

States representative to Belgium at the age of eighty-four.

Thomas Edison was still inventing when past ninety. Benjamin Franklin was a key political figure and a wise, insightful diplomat for America when past seventy-five.

My own mother, now past eighty-five, still paints and gardens. Her paintings are sought-after classics. Moses was over eighty when he led the Israelites. Think of the great spiritual contributions of our past prophets and those of President Kimball today.

Winston Churchill was sixty-five when he promised the British people his blood, toil, tears, and sweat during World War II. Albert Schweitzer was in his eighties when he roamed equatorial Africa tending the sick, working on his manuscripts, and playing Bach on the piano.

Each day with relish and interest

Now, you might have a tendency to say, "But these people were and are extraordinary, gifted in ways beyond the average." But I say to you, the most extraordinary talent each of these had was enthusiasm, a flair for taking each new day with relish and interest, and a refusal to let wastelands of the soul develop and choke out life. Ralph Waldo Emerson put it this way. He said, "We do not count a man's years until he has nothing else to count" (John Bartlett, *Familiar Quotations*, 14th ed. [Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1968], p. 609).

The elderly bless our lives

To those who have been privileged by the experience of having aging parents and grandparents with them, think of the countless ways the elderly bless our lives. Remember the admonitions of the Lord.

First from Proverbs:

"The glory of young men is their strength: and the beauty of old men is the gray head" (Proverbs 20:29).

Next from Job:

"With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding.

"With him is wisdom and strength, he hath counsel and understanding" (Job 12:12-13).

And then there is this concern recorded in Psalms: "Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth" (Psalm 71:9).

"Wake me when they come"

Many is the time in my current position when those in their advanced years have sought counsel in getting their families to share and take an interest in them. I remember reading of such an experience, which I would like to share. This item was found in an old magazine. No author's name was mentioned, just this from a heavyhearted observer. He said:

"Just next door lives a wonderful old man. He is still very alert and active. That special morning he awakened earlier than usual, bathed, shaved and put on his best clothes. Surely, he thought, they would come today.

"He didn't take his daily walk to the gas station to visit with the old-timers of the community, because he wanted to be right there when they came.

"He sat on the porch with a clear view of the road so he could see them coming. Surely they would come today.

"He decided to skip his noon nap because he wanted to be up when they came.

"He had six children. Two of his daughters and their married children lived within four miles. They hadn't been to see him for such a long time. But today was a special day. Surely they would come today.

"At suppertime he refused to cut the cake and asked that the ice cream be left in the freezer. He wanted to wait and have dessert with them when they came.

"About 9 o'clock he went to his room and got ready for bed. His last words before turning out the lights were: 'Promise to wake me when they come.'

"You see, it was his birthday, and he was 91."

Three conclusions and the personal touch

In our modern age of sophistication and progress, I find it a little disturbing that the old expression "Age before beauty" seems to have been reversed. Never before has there been so much emphasis on youth and beauty. While youth and beauty are cherished attributes, age and experience can be tremendous assets.

And, while our computer-age technology has been unsurpassed at lengthening and enriching the lives of our older citizens, I'm not so sure it has replaced or improved upon the personal touch. From the scriptures I have just cited, three important conclusions can be drawn:

First, there are advantages to old age;

Second, we can learn from the wisdom and understanding that age and experience offer; and

Third, older folks are able, productive, and useful, and should not be put on a shelf.

To those who wonder if we have an obligation to bring these conclusions to pass, the Lord's answer to Cain's question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" (see Genesis 4:9) is a resounding yes! He said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 19:19).

Reach out with love

The final question, I suppose, then, ought to be: "How are we going to accomplish this?" With older friends and family, why don't you and I first—

1. Seek their counsel.
2. Visit or call on them regularly.
3. Include them in our activities.

4. Let them share their experiences.

5. See to it that they have the basic necessities of life.

6. Provide care for them when they are sick.

7. Treat them as dignified human beings, not as charity cases.

Let us take advantage of having parents, grandfathers, grandmothers, great-grandparents, friends, and neighbors around us. May we in our own special way reach out to them—not with pity, but with love. Consider again, brothers and sisters, this counsel from the Lord: “*Honour thy father and*

thy mother,” that their days—and ours—might be long upon the earth. (See Exodus 20:12; italics added.)

Finally, may we do unto the aged what we would want to have done to us. Remember: our time is coming. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Paul H. Dunn, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

Elder Adney Y. Komatsu, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will be our next speaker.

Elder Adney Y. Komatsu

In recent months we have seen the completion and dedication of several temples in the Church—one in Atlanta, Georgia; one in Apia, Samoa; one in Nuku'alofa, Tonga; and another in Santiago, Chile. Others are now in the planning and construction stages, and of course many are in operation in various parts of the world.

Why temples

I am grateful for the special calling that I have at the present time to serve as the president of the Tokyo Temple. It is a joy and a privilege to visit with the Saints who come to that holy edifice to partake of the blessings there.

Why does the Church build and maintain temples?

This question was asked by the contractor for the Tokyo Temple when he was engaged to begin that construction about five years ago. He noted that the Buddhist and Shinto religions in Japan build many shrines and temples, but this was the first time he had heard of a Christian church building a temple. Christian religions are noted for building beautiful chapels and cathedrals, but he had never heard of a Christian temple before. Of the many churches

that profess Christianity, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the only one that builds temples.

The contractor was told that the temple would be a sacred building, a holy house, where the glorious work of salvation for the living and the dead would be carried out, where baptisms for the dead and other ordinances would be performed to bring about the joining of wife to husband, children to parents, for the living as well as the dead, and where families would be sealed together for time and for all eternity.

The house of the Lord

The direction to the Prophet Joseph Smith was clear when he received this revelation on August 2, 1833, only three years after the Church was organized, instructing that a temple should be built:

“Verily I say unto you, that it is my will that a house should be built unto me in the land of Zion, like unto the pattern which I have given you.

“Yea, let it be built speedily, by the tithing of my people.

“Behold, this is the tithing and the sacrifice which I, the Lord, require at

their hands, that there may be a house built unto me for the salvation of Zion—

“For a place of thanksgiving for all saints, and for a place of instruction for all those who are called to the work of the ministry in all their several callings and offices;

“That they may be perfected in the understanding of their ministry, in theory, in principle, and in doctrine, in all things pertaining to the kingdom of God on the earth, the keys of which kingdom have been conferred upon you.

“And inasmuch as my people build a house unto me in the name of the Lord, and do not suffer any unclean thing to come into it, that it be not defiled, my glory shall rest upon it;

“Yea, and my presence shall be there, for I will come into it, and all the pure in heart that shall come into it shall see God.

“But if it be defiled I will not come into it, and my glory shall not be there; for I will not come into unholy temples” (D&C 97:10–17).

The Kirtland Temple

There were very few members of the Church at this time, but they all greatly sacrificed, and the Kirtland Temple was completed and dedicated. The Lord appeared in glory and accepted the temple. Moses, Elias, and Elijah also appeared, each to commit his keys and dispensations. (See D&C 110.)

However, before the temple work could really begin in the Kirtland Temple, the Saints had to flee the attacks of mobs. The temple fell into the hands of wicked men, and, as was stated in the revelation, when it became defiled, it was disowned by the Lord. Efforts were made by the Saints to build a temple in Missouri, but again they were forced to flee for their lives.

“The fulness of the priesthood”

Again, after nearly five years, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the following revelation:

“For there is not a place found on earth that he may come to and restore again that which was lost unto you, or which he hath taken away, even the fulness of the priesthood.

“For a baptismal font there is not upon the earth, that they, my saints, may be baptized for those who are dead—

“For this ordinance belongeth to my house, and cannot be acceptable to me, only in the days of your poverty, wherein ye are not able to build a house unto me. . . .

“And verily I say unto you, let this house be built unto my name, that I may reveal mine ordinances therein unto my people;

“For I deign to reveal unto my church things which have been kept hid from before the foundation of the world, things that pertain to the dispensation of the fulness of times” (D&C 124:28–30, 40–41).

In this revelation, which is recorded in section 124 of the Doctrine and Covenants, reference is made to “the fulness of the priesthood.” What is the meaning of that and how is it obtained? The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “If a man gets a fullness of the priesthood of God he has to get it in the same way that Jesus Christ obtained it, and that was by keeping all the commandments and obeying all the ordinances of the house of the Lord” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 308).

President Joseph Fielding Smith further taught: “If you want salvation in the fullest, that is exaltation in the kingdom of God, so that you may become his sons and his daughters, you have got to go to the temple of the Lord and receive these holy ordinances which belong to that house, which cannot be had elsewhere. *No man shall receive*

the fulness of eternity, of exaltation, alone; no woman shall receive that blessing alone; but man and wife, when they receive the sealing power in the temple of the Lord, . . . shall pass on to exaltation, and shall continue and become like the Lord. And that is the destiny of men; that is what the Lord desires for his children" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954-56], 2:44).

The new and everlasting covenant

It is clear, then, that unless we go to the temple of the Lord and receive all the ordinances and obey the commandments, we cannot receive a fulness of priesthood blessings and neither can we receive exaltation. These are wonderful blessings that have been made available to us through temple work.

I have been a member of the Church most of my life. I was baptized when I was seventeen and was ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood at age twenty-one. While still a young man, I served in many assignments and had many good experiences in the Church that helped me to learn many concepts that were helpful to me in building my faith and testimony. But I never felt that I had completed my *full* membership in the Church until I took my bride to the temple and received the new and everlasting covenant and the blessings and understanding of the work performed there.

Baptism for the dead

I was the first member of my family to be baptized into the Church and thus have the responsibility to perform vicariously the temple work for my ancestors who did not have the opportunity to hear the gospel during their time on this earth. I also have had the responsibility to teach my children the gospel and to instill in their hearts and minds the importance of temple work. My wife and I have four children, the

oldest of whom is married and has two children—our grandchildren, who are very special to us. Our children were born under the covenant, and our grandchildren have also been born under the covenant. The greatest gift I might give to my children or grandchildren in this life, or the most valuable legacy I might leave them, would be a testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel and the importance of genealogy and temple work, which binds us all together down through the generations in love and in happiness.

Importance and blessings of the work

There are many people in the world who travel great distances at great personal sacrifice to go to the temple. I know our Heavenly Father is aware of their righteous desires and blesses them abundantly for their efforts. Recently a group came to the Tokyo Temple from Okinawa—nine hundred miles by plane—among them a young couple who had come to be married. It had required all the money they could possibly save to pay for their transportation, and there was nothing left for a wedding celebration or honeymoon. When those who accompanied the couple realized their plight, they dug deep into their own pockets and contributed what little they had so the couple could have money for a delightful one-day honeymoon in Tokyo. Not only did the young couple enjoy the blessings of the temple, but they also enjoyed and appreciated the generosity and kindness of their brothers and sisters. Surely Paul's teachings to the Ephesian Saints apply, when he said, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19).

I have a firm and abiding testimony of the importance of this work and the blessings it can bring into our lives. I express gratitude for this testimony and for the small part I now enjoy

in teaching genealogy and temple work. May we all be blessed to receive the fulness of the blessings of the house of the Lord, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Adney Y. Komatsu, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us.

Elder Mark E. Petersen, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our concluding speaker.

Elder Mark E. Petersen

The Angel Moroni came!

About two weeks ago we noted one of the most important anniversaries in our Church history.

It was on September 21, 1823, when the angel Moroni first appeared to the young prophet Joseph Smith in his farm home near Palmyra, New York.

As we remember it today, we declare our solemn testimony to all mankind that, indeed, *Moroni did come!* It is a fact, a firm and unshakable truth. Moroni came!

As an angel of God, a messenger from heaven, this glorious personage visited Joseph Smith in physical reality. It was no dream, nor any kind of mystic occurrence.

It was a visitation. Two physical beings communed together—with Moroni, a resurrected person of flesh and bones, emerging from the eternal veil and paying repeated and never-to-be-forgotten visits to this mortal farm boy, Joseph Smith. (See *Joseph Smith—History* 1:30–54.)

The ministry of angels!

Many people no longer believe in the ministry of angels. But God does! He has used this means of communication from the days of Adam. Is there any reason why He should not continue the procedure in our day?

Angels ministered to many people in both Old and New Testament times, delivering messages from the Lord.

Abraham walked and talked with angels. An angel assisted Israel

at the time of the Exodus. (See Exodus 14:19.) An angel fought an invading army in the days of the prophet Isaiah. (See Isaiah 37:36.) When Daniel was in the lion's den, an angel closed the mouths of the lions, and Daniel's life was spared. (See Daniel 6:22.)

The angel Gabriel announced to the virgin Mary in Nazareth that she would become the mother of the Savior. (See Luke 1:30–33.) The same angel told the father of John the Baptist of his prophet-son soon to be born. (See Luke 1:13.)

When Joseph and Mary and the Divine Infant fled to Egypt, it was an angel who gave them direction, and upon the death of the wicked King Herod, the angel told them to return home. (See Matthew 2:13, 19–20.)

When the Savior spoke of the sanctity of little children, he said, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven *their angels* do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 18:10; italics added).

When Jesus neared His crucifixion, He could have called twelve legions of angels to His assistance if He had wished to avoid the bitter cup. (See Matthew 26:53.) Then, are there angels? Would Jesus have spoken like that if they were nonexistent?

At His resurrection, an angel rolled the stone away from the tomb. The women saw him there and heard him speak. (See Matthew 28:2, 5.)

When Stephen bore his final testimony to his persecutors, his face shone like that of an angel. (See Acts 6:15.)

An angel released Peter from prison. (See Acts 5:19.) Paul spoke of the tongues of men and of angels. (See 1 Corinthians 13:1.)

Angel to bring the everlasting gospel

The scripture clearly teaches that the purpose of the ministry of angels is "to call men unto repentance . . . by declaring the word of Christ unto the chosen vessels of the Lord, that they may bear testimony of him" (Moroni 7:31). And that is very pertinent with regard to Moroni.

The Lord also teaches that, over the ages, if angels have ceased to appear, it is because of unbelief and the spirit of apostasy among men. But where there is faith, the ministry of angels will last as long as the earth shall stand or "there shall be one man upon the face thereof to be saved" (Moroni 7:36).

Because the Lord desires to save mankind, even until the end, He revealed to John the Revelator that in the latter days angels would again fly through the midst of heaven as emissaries of the Almighty. John saw that one of these angels would fly from heaven to earth and would bring the everlasting gospel back to earth, it having been lost to mankind over the ages. (See Revelation 14:6.)

Moroni and the early history of America

That angel was Moroni. He had lived in America some fifteen hundred years ago and was a prophet of God at that time. He and his father, Mormon, were historians of the people who formerly inhabited this land. They wrote the history of their nation, engraving it upon plates of gold to resist the ravages of time, for that record was to have significant importance in latter days.

To preserve it in safety, Moroni encased it in a box which he made of stone and buried it in the ground. Some critics regard this as a most peculiar thing to do, but it would have been more unusual if he had not done so. Why?

Because what he did was in full harmony with a well-established custom followed by various nations in the ancient world to preserve and protect their precious documents.

Other ancient records on metal plates

Records have been engraved on metal over a period of many centuries. A number now have been recovered. Such treasures have been found from Korea to Sri Lanka, from ancient Assyria and Persia to India, from Java to Bangkok, from Italy, from Greece, and from the Qumran caves in Palestine where the Dead Sea scrolls were obtained.

Not all of these records were made on gold. Ancient peoples also wrote upon silver plates, brass plates, copper plates, lead plates, and in some instances even on tin, which proved not to be fully permanent, since it is subject to oxidation more readily than some other metals.

One of the most publicized of these discoveries was the copper scroll found with the other Dead Sea Scrolls in Palestine. It, too, contained ancient sacred writings.

King Darius, who put Daniel in the lion's den (see Daniel 6), wrote his records on gold and silver sheets and placed them in stone boxes and buried them in the ground for safekeeping, just as Moroni did. His records now have been translated and published. To make certain someone would be able to read them, Darius wrote in three different languages.

Ancient Assyria's King Sargon II had the same idea, but he used a variety of metals to make his books—gold, silver, brass, copper, and even tin. He also engraved on alabaster. He dearly

desired to preserve those records for future posterity, so what did he do? Like Darius and like Moroni, he placed them in well-made stone boxes to protect them, and buried them in the ground, in the foundation of his palace. His records, too, have been translated and published.

A book made of nineteen thin sheets of gold, found in Korea in 1965, contains part of the Buddhist scripture, engraved in Chinese. The thin pages making up this valuable record are approximately fourteen inches square, hinged together so they can open and close like a book.

The plates found in Pyrgi, Italy, in 1964 are seven and a half inches long and about half that wide, are engraved in Phoenician characters, and relate to the dedication of a shrine for the goddess Astarte. They date to about 500 B.C., about the time of Lehi.

Containers for ancient records

It is interesting that some of these ancient records were hidden away in specially constructed stone boxes such as Moroni's, some completely cut out of single stones, others cemented together in sections. A few were made of obsidian and were beautifully engraved both inside and out. They were used to contain various precious things. Larger stone boxes which have been found are known to have been used for grain storage.

In Mexico and Central America scores of stone boxes have been discovered, large and small, and some of them also are beautifully engraved with designs both inside and out.

No one need be skeptical any longer about records kept by ancient peoples who preserved their writings by engraving them on metal, nor about the stone and metal boxes in which they were stored away.

Moroni buried the records

Of course there are metal records in ancient times. Of course they were

made of gold, silver, copper, and lead! Of course many of them date to the period in which Lehi left Jerusalem, and of course this custom was carried with him to America!

The last man in the ancient line of American prophets was Moroni. He and his father, Mormon, compiled the sacred records of their own people covering a thousand years, including the account of still an earlier people, the Jaredites, who came to this continent from the Tower of Babel. The Jaredite records were engraved on twenty-four sheets of solid gold.

Following the destruction of his nation in war, and being the only survivor of the vicious battles that were fought, Moroni also made a stone box and placed in it the record made by his father and himself and buried it in the ground for safekeeping, just as did Darius, just as did Sargon. It was to remain there until such time as the Lord would decree otherwise.

Angels, Apostles, prophets, revelations

In these modern times the very mention of angels brings scoffs and scorn from some critical listeners who say that angelic ministrations are a thing of the past, if they actually ever did occur.

They assert also that there is no more revelation from heaven and that there are no more Apostles and prophets in the earth, since they belonged to the time of Peter and Paul. They teach that the Bible contains all that is needed in any case and is a sufficient guide to salvation. They forget that the scripture is subject to as many interpretations as there are different denominations and creeds in this world, and they run into the hundreds.

We declare that there is revelation today! There are Apostles and prophets on earth now! They are inspired, and they do speak the word of God. Marvelous and repeated angelic visitations have taken place in modern times as God once again established His divine

Church on earth, following a long period of darkness.

Moroni fulfilled two prophecies

Moroni fulfilled two biblical prophecies by coming to Joseph Smith. John the Revelator saw an angel fly in the midst of heaven, bringing the everlasting gospel back to earth. (See Revelation 14:6-7.)

John further said that this angel would fly in the "hour of [God's] judgment" (Revelation 14:7), which could only mean the latter days. This timing made it strictly a modern affair.

He came as predicted, and Moroni was that angel. His coming opened a new dispensation of the gospel of Christ, direct from God. It had no relationship to any other religious movement. It was a new and divine episode, a modern revelation from the heavens, a fresh effort on the part of the Almighty to introduce today's nations to the gospel of His Beloved Son.

There is only one gospel of Christ. That angel, flying in midheaven, possessed it, and brought it back to earth as a divine restoration of divine truths. And we repeat—that angel was Moroni.

A prophet raised up

In what form or shape or by what method did Moroni restore the everlasting gospel? Was it through some tangible means?

Amos of old, the inspired seer of the Lord, taught that God does His work through prophets. In fact, he said that God actually will do nothing without revealing His plans to His servants the prophets. (See Amos 3:7.)

Then what would God do about the angel bringing the gospel back to earth in modern times? There were no prophets on earth to whom he could come. The world no longer even believed in them. If the Lord would do nothing—not even send His angel to earth to restore the gospel—without the services of a living prophet, how could

He accomplish His divine purpose? How could the angelic visitation predicted for the latter days be consummated if there were no prophets to receive it?

God could do only one thing, and that was to raise up a new prophet for this particular purpose, and this He did in the person of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Jr., who lived near Palmyra, New York, in 1823. It was this young man to whom the angel Moroni came.

In what way did the angel deliver the gospel to Joseph Smith, thus restoring it to public knowledge?

The prophet Isaiah explains. In the twenty-ninth chapter of his book, he tells of an ancient record that would come out of the ground in the latter days, in a time preceding the restoration of Palestine as a fruitful field. (See Isaiah 29:17.) This record would be in the form of a book, he said, having to do with a people who had been destroyed suddenly. (See Isaiah 29:5.)

A marvelous work and a wonder

Some words of this book, Isaiah predicted, would be taken to a learned man who would reject them. Then, he said, the book itself would be given to an unlearned man, whom we now know to be Joseph Smith, who fit Isaiah's description for he had only a very meager formal education. In his hands, Isaiah said, this book would be published to the world by the miraculous power of God and would become a marvelous work and a wonder. (See Isaiah 29:11-12, 14; Joseph Smith—History 1:63-65.)

This book was that selfsame volume prepared anciently by Mormon and Moroni, containing the simple and beautiful truths of the gospel in their fulness, as taught by the ancient American prophets. It is called the Book of Mormon. It was this book that Moroni made available to the world through the services of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Thus, this record, containing the everlasting gospel, restored to man the sav-

ing truths required for salvation, which alone comes through Christ.

Moroni had hidden that record in the ground some four hundred years after Christ, and he knew exactly where to go to recover it. He had encased it in a stone box and buried it, just as did King Darius and Emperor Sargon in their days.

Having thus hidden it away, Moroni was now chosen of God to recover it and deliver it to the new modern prophet for publication. In that way he brought the gospel back to earth, for the record contained the gospel in its simplicity and in its fullness. The record was there, it was the word of God, and it came about by the act of God. It was a mighty miracle of God.

Testimony of Moroni and the Prophet Joseph Smith

So Moroni fulfilled two biblical prophecies in coming to Joseph Smith: the fourteenth chapter of Revelation and the twenty-ninth chapter of Isaiah. He did come to earth as an angel. He did deliver to Joseph Smith the golden record which had been prepared under the direction of Almighty God. It is a new witness for the Lord Jesus Christ; it declares, as does the Bible, that Jesus of Nazareth indeed is the Son of God, our Savior and Redeemer. That book is available to all mankind. A million copies are published each year, in more than a score of languages.

So, again, we testify that the Book of Mormon is true. It is the word of Almighty God, restored in this day by angelic ministry and by the direction of God himself. We testify that Moroni came as an angel on September 21, 1823, revealing his ancient record and that he did so as a servant of Jesus Christ. Before its publication, he allowed twelve modern American citizens of good repute to examine the golden record so that they could bear witness of having seen or handled it.

We testify that Joseph Smith indeed was a modern prophet of God,

raised up specially for the purpose we have described.

And most solemnly we testify that Jesus Christ of Nazareth is the Son of God, our Savior, our Redeemer, our Creator. We testify further that we are His ordained servants, and we speak by the power that He restored to us and has given to us in this day. And we testify, in all solemnity, that this work in which we are engaged is verily true, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

The Mormon Youth Chorus sang "O My Father" without announcement.

President Benson

Elder Mark E. Petersen, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has been our concluding speaker. The Mormon Youth Chorus has favored us with two verses of that great song "O My Father." We hope and pray that we will all make it up there—to the celestial kingdom.

We remind the brethren of the general priesthood meeting which will convene here in the Tabernacle this evening at 6:00 P.M.

The nationwide CBS Radio Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those desiring to attend this broadcast must be in their seats no later than 9:15 A.M.

The singing for this session has been furnished by the Mormon Youth Chorus. We are grateful for your presence here today, my young brethren and sisters, and for the beautiful spirit your music has added to this choice meeting.

The chorus will now sing in closing "Praise Ye the Lord." Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Bishop Victor L. Brown, Presiding Bishop of the Church.

The chorus sang "Praise Ye the Lord."

Bishop Victor L. Brown offered the benediction.

GENERAL PRIESTHOOD MEETING

THIRD SESSION

The general priesthood meeting convened in the Tabernacle at 6:00 P.M. on Saturday, October 1, 1983.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for this session was provided by a combined men's choir from the Tabernacle Choir and the Mormon Youth Chorus directed by Jerold Ottley and Robert C. Bowden with Clay Christiansen at the organ.

President Hinckley opened this session with the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Brethren, it is a great privilege and blessing to greet you in this general priesthood meeting of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Before we commence our meeting, and while we are all tied together on the network which has been arranged for this priesthood meeting, I should repeat the announcement made a very few minutes ago that Brigham Young University defeated UCLA, score 37-35. Settle down now, and just relax and bask in the joy of that announcement, which will be a very happy announcement to members of the Church everywhere, except those members of the UCLA Institute of Religion.

President Spencer W. Kimball is watching the proceedings of this session on television and has asked that we go forward and that I conduct this meeting.

He asked that we extend his love and best wishes to all of the brethren participating in this session.

For the information of those in outlying areas, we announce that at the first general session this morning Elder Franklin D. Richards was released as a President of the First Quorum of the Seventy because he has been called to preside over the Washington (D.C.)

Temple. Elder Richard G. Scott filled that vacancy in the Presidency of the First Quorum.

Sister Shirley W. Thomas, who has served as the second counselor in the Relief Society presidency, is assisting her husband who presides over the Australia Melbourne Mission. She was honorably released, and Sister Ann Stoddard Reese was called to replace her.

These services are being relayed by closed-circuit transmission and will reach members of the priesthood gathered in the Assembly Hall, the Marriott Center on the BYU campus, and in approximately 1,153 locations in many countries around the world. They are also being carried to over six hundred stake centers by satellite transmission.

A week ago tonight, we had a similar meeting of the women of the Church assembled here in the Tabernacle, with the proceedings carried to stake centers all across this continent. I was here and, as I reflect on that, I would say that they were probably the more attractive congregation.

We extend our greetings and blessings to all the priesthood brethren wherever they may be.

Elders A. Theodore Tuttle and Derek A. Cuthbert are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall, and Elders Robert L. Simpson and Ted E. Brewerton preside at the BYU Marriott Center.

The singing during this session will be furnished by a combined men's choir of the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth Chorus under the direction of Jerold Ottley and Robert Bowden with Clay Christiansen at the organ.

We shall begin this service by the men's choir singing "Glory to God on High." Following the singing, Elder G. Homer Durham, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The men's choir sang "Glory to God on High."

Elder G. Homer Durham offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

The choir will now favor us with "See the Mighty Priesthood Gathered." Elder Jack H. Goaslind, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will then address us.

Elder Jack H. Goaslind, Jr.

The Lord's "last lecture"

A few years ago, there was a popular series of firesides called the "Last Lecture" series. Well-known LDS scholars were asked to choose a topic which to them was so important that it could be the subject of the last discourse they were ever permitted to deliver. We received some very interesting insights from the choice of topics. It has occurred to me that our Lord, after his resurrection but before his ascension, gave such a "last lecture" to his disciples. His last lecture provides a profoundly significant insight. Of all the topics from the vaults of eternal wisdom that he could have treated, he said simply, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). And the disciples "went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following" (Mark 16:20).

It is my prayer this evening that I might comment on the Lord's last lecture, teaching you priesthood holders according to the covenants and motivating you to respond as the Lord's disciples, with faith and unrelenting commitment. I especially hope that you young men of the Aaronic Priesthood will understand the importance of what I will say, because upon you will rest

The men's choir sang "See the Mighty Priesthood Gathered."

President Hinckley

I think that great anthem was written by Robert Manookin; a tremendous composition apropos the priesthood and the gathering in which we are met.

Elder Jack H. Goaslind will now speak to us, and he will be followed by Brother James M. Dunn, recently released as president of the Colombia Bogotá Mission

the major responsibility of taking the gospel to the ends of the earth.

The salvation of souls

The life of God—the eternal, exalted life we all seek—is inherently concerned with the salvation of souls. It is the "work and . . . glory" of God to "bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). It is by bringing about the conditions necessary for the salvation of his children that God glorifies himself, progresses, and expands his dominions. (See D&C 132:31.)

Paul said that God "will have all men to be saved" (1 Timothy 2:4). To our Father in Heaven, "the worth of souls is great" (D&C 18:10), and "the redemption of their soul is precious" (Psalm 49:8). Therefore, God sent his Son, the Savior and Redeemer, to loose the bands of death and atone for the sins of carnal, fallen men. The Lord suffered the pain of all men that all men might come unto him on condition of repentance. (See D&C 18:11–12.)

Our call to cry repentance to all people is a direct consequence of the infinite and eternal Atonement. (See D&C 18:10–14.) It is by teaching the gospel and administering the ordinances that the Atonement becomes effective in a person's life. As Paul said, "How shall they believe in him of

whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:14).

Preach the gospel

Jesus Christ himself exemplified the manner in which we fulfill this call. He announced the purpose of his ministry by quoting Isaiah in his first public discourse, given in a Nazarene synagogue.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

"To preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18-19).

The conditions of our discipleship impose on us the identical mission, for he said, "The works which ye have seen me do that shall ye also do" (3 Nephi 27:21). We are empowered, as necessary, to do all that the Savior did—except for the Atonement itself—in our labors to save our fellowmen. In fact, we are told that we must be "the saviors of men" or we will be "as salt that has lost its savor" (D&C 103:10).

The Lord has not left the accomplishment of this sacred labor to chance. Through sacred covenants he imposes this responsibility on all members of his kingdom, and simultaneously empowers us to fulfill these covenants. Even young children and youth have this sacred duty and also the power to do it.

Elder John A. Widtsoe taught that in our premortal state "we agreed . . . to be not only saviors for ourselves but measurably, saviors for the whole human family. . . . The working out of the plan became then not merely the Father's work, and the Savior's work, but also our work" (*Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*, Oct. 1934, p. 189). We understood, as President George Albert Smith noted, that "we cannot receive the beneficent favor of our Heavenly

Father that is bestowed upon us, the knowledge of eternal life, and selfishly retain it, thinking that we may be blessed thereby. It is not what we receive that enriches our lives, it is what we give" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1935, p. 46). Therefore, "those who receive the message are obligated," said Elder Widtsoe, ". . . by the ageless agreement made before this world was organized . . . [to] do all in their power to bring it to the attention of others" (*Priesthood and Church Government*, rev. ed., comp. John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954], pp. 318-19).

These solemn premortal promises are renewed and confirmed upon us in the ordinances of salvation. In baptism, for example, we covenant to "stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that [we] may be in, even until death" (Mosiah 18:9). The promise is that the Lord will "pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon you" (Mosiah 18:10). When partaking of the sacrament, we renew this covenant, recalling that Christ, when introducing this sacred ordinance, said, "Of me ye shall bear record unto all the world" (Joseph Smith Translation, Mark 14:23). Again, the promise for faithfulness is that we "may always have his Spirit to be with" us (D&C 20:77).

Again, we are "endowed with power from on high" in holy places to enable us to "go forth among all nations" (D&C 38:32-33). At the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, Joseph Smith prayed that God's servants "may go forth from this house armed with thy power, and that thy name may be upon them, and thy glory be round about them, and thine angels have charge over them;

"And from this place they may bear exceedingly great and glorious tidings, in truth, unto the ends of the earth" (D&C 109:22-23).

By obeying the commandments and fulfilling these covenants, we are sanctified, purified, and born of the Spirit. We become vessels worthy of

receiving the Holy Spirit and the accompanying gifts of the Spirit that must attend this work if we are to succeed. The fulfilling of the commandments, as Moroni explained, "bringeth remission of sins;

"And the remission of sins bringeth meekness, and lowliness of heart; and because of meekness and lowliness of heart cometh the visitation of the Holy Ghost, which Comforter filleth with hope and perfect love" (Moroni 8:25-26).

God will hold us responsible

Love, then, is evidence of our own conversion and is manifest as concern for the salvation of others. Jacob said to the Nephites: "I am desirous for the welfare of your souls. Yea, mine anxiety is great for you" (2 Nephi 6:3). The sons of Mosiah "were desirous that salvation should be declared to every creature, for they could not bear that any human soul should perish" (Mosiah 28:3).

This love, or charity, is our greatest asset. John recognized that "perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John 4:18), which fear and reluctance are the greatest obstacle to our experiencing the joy of missionary service. It is also by exercising that "faith which worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6) that we are able to draw upon spiritual power, because God "worketh by power, according to the faith of the children of men" (Moroni 10:7).

As noted by Moroni, this perfect love comes as a direct result of having our sins remitted. It is imperative, therefore, "for the sake of retaining a remission of your sins from day to day" (Mosiah 4:26) that we administer to the needs and wants of our brothers and sisters, both temporally and spiritually.

We must realize that we have received a divine commission from God and we neglect it at the peril of our salvation. President Spencer W. Kimball said, "If we do not do our duty in regard to missionary service, then I am convinced that God will hold us

responsible for the people we might have saved had we done our duty" (*Ensign*, Oct. 1977, p. 5). This echoes Jacob's sobering doctrine: "We did magnify our office unto the Lord, taking upon us the responsibility, answering the sins of the people upon our own heads if we did not teach them the word of God with all diligence; wherefore, by laboring with our might their blood might not come upon our garments; otherwise their blood would come upon our garments, and we would not be found spotless at the last day" (Jacob 1:19).

Working for the salvation of others

That is the warning. Our eternal welfare is at stake, as also is the eternal welfare of our nonmember brothers and sisters. Yet the promises for our diligence are glorious. We know that—

- Bringing souls unto the Lord is "the thing which will be of the most worth unto you" (D&C 16:6).
- By proclaiming the gospel "thou wilt do the greatest good unto thy fellow beings, and wilt promote the glory of him who is your Lord" (D&C 81:4).
- Those who seek to bring forth Zion "shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost" (1 Nephi 13:37).
- Faithful servants will be "crowned with honor, and glory, and immortality, and eternal life" (D&C 75:5).
- "Great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!" (D&C 18:16).

Brethren, let me state it clearly and pointedly. Working for the salvation of others is essential for our own salvation. You cannot fully magnify your calling according to the oath and covenant of the priesthood unless you are actively engaged in this work of salvation, for the priesthood is conferred on you as an instrument of service.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie once said: "This call to missionary service does not leave us any choice or option as to the course we should pursue. It is not merely a permissive invitation

which allows us to spread the gospel message on a voluntary basis, or if we find it convenient to do so. The decree is mandatory. We have no choice about it, if we are to retain the favor of God" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1960, p. 54).

Obligation to serve a mission

Young men, do you understand why President Spencer W. Kimball said that "every young man should fill a mission"? (*Ensign*, Oct. 1974, p. 8). It is not an option; it is your obligation to serve. And do you mature couples understand that President Kimball has made it clear that you also have this responsibility? (See *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982], p. 551.) He said, "The time is at hand to go" (*Go Ye into All the World*, text from a film produced by Brigham Young University Department of Motion Picture Production [Provo: Brigham Young University, 1974], p. 2). This service is as much for your benefit as it is for the benefit of the Church and the nonmembers who receive your message. We are grateful for the increasing numbers of young men and couples who are serving missions. We assure you that there is no more important thing you can do than prepare

for a mission by prayerfully studying the scriptures, keeping yourselves morally clean, and conducting your temporal and spiritual lives with the goal of a mission firmly in mind.

I have tried to teach you according to your covenants as members of the Church and as priesthood bearers. I urge you to prayerfully ask the Lord for a testimony of the covenant you have assumed to preach the gospel. Then, as you keep all the "covenants by which ye are bound," the Lord "will cause the heavens to shake for your good" (D&C 35:24).

I know that the responsibility and opportunity of missionary service is the most worthwhile thing we can do. The blessings must be experienced to be appreciated.

I conclude with the Prophet Joseph Smith's question: "Brethren, shall we not go on in so great a cause?" (D&C 128:22). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Elder Goaslind.

Brother James M. Dunn, former president of the Colombia Bogotá Mission, will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Brother James M. Dunn

My dear brethren, to repeat an expression that's popular among missionaries these days, this is an "awesome" experience. I pray that the calming influence of the Spirit will be with me, that I might express my thoughts to you.

First baptism

When I left on my first mission as a young man, I had practically no understanding of missionary work. I had

a feeble testimony of the gospel, but I had faith that what I was doing was right.

Upon arrival in Montevideo, Uruguay, I was assigned to Elder Wayne G. Scheiss, my first senior companion. I immediately found that he cared for me. In our brief three months together, he taught me all I was smart enough to learn of the missionary discussions. He taught me the rudiments of the Spanish language. And he taught me to put my feet on the proper path toward mission-

ary service and to turn my heart toward godly things.

Elder Scheiss let me baptize our first convert. Mario had already been taught most of the missionary discussions by the time I arrived, but my companion thought it best that I perform the ordinance. I studied hard to memorize the baptismal prayer in Spanish. I worked on my accent in order to be understood on that sacred occasion.

I shall never forget finally finding myself standing in the baptismal font at the Deseret Branch with Mario, raising my arm to the square, and saying, "Habiendo sido comisionado por Jesucristo . . ." "Having been commissioned of Jesus Christ, I baptize you" (D&C 20:73).

I had heard of people being commissioned to paint pictures. I had heard of people being commissioned to serve as military officers. But when it occurred to me that I had been commissioned by the Savior to baptize in his sacred name for the remission of sins, I felt a rush of testimony and pride and gratitude that went through my entire soul. I knew that I was in the service of the most important Master of all. I knew I was authorized to perform that ordinance, and I knew that Mario left that font pure and clean and acceptable to our Heavenly Father. I am grateful to my companion for that baptism experience. And I am grateful for my commission from the Lord.

Blessings of missionary work

In August of this year, the Aaronic Priesthood young men of our ward had the assignment to administer the sacrament to the residents of a local rest home. I went along with them in case they needed some assistance. Naturally, they didn't. Everything was under control. But as a result of my attendance there, I had a great experience. After the meeting, the branch president came to me and asked: "Would you happen to be related to Billy E. Dunn?"

I said, "Yes, sir. He's my father."

He then said: "Your dad was one of my favorite missionary companions. We served on the mission board together. And I'll never forget when President Murphy sent us out in the mission's old Model A Ford to tour the island." And he went on reminiscing for some time, telling me of his missionary experiences with my father in Hawaii fifty years ago. By the way he spoke, the light in his eye, and the smile on his face, it was as though he lived those cherished experiences only yesterday.

The interpersonal relationships between missionaries are among the choicest blessings we receive as the result of missionary service. The friendships and the positive influence of one missionary upon the other can be eternal.

Influencing lives for the better

One of the great thrills a missionary has is to play a part in having the gospel change the life of a person, of a complete family—to see an unhappy mother, a confused father, a lost young woman or young man find his way to the path that leads to real happiness and eventually to eternal life.

No missionary that ever lived failed to influence the lives of many for the better regardless of the number of converts he may have gained.

Energized, enthusiastic, optimistic, and confident

With respect to his personal challenges, every missionary will tell you, as I tell you now, that as he presses on and exercises his faith there comes the most extraordinary spiritual sensation: a flow of confidence, courage and power to overcome, a knowledge that God is with him and that he cannot fail with God on his side—regardless of the nature of the problem or even the results.

It has been my experience that while serving full time as a missionary

I have felt more energized, more enthusiastic, more optimistic, and more confident in doing what I was doing than in any other thing I've done in my life. Particularly in connection with my most recent assignment as a mission president, I knew that God had sent me to do his work, and I knew that his work would be done. I also knew that I had the greatest generation of young men and women in the world's history there to help me and to help one another to accomplish extraordinary things during the course of our mission together. I loved to see each day dawn, and I treasured the experiences of every day.

"Y Yo Tercero"

Missionaries not only teach, they also learn a great deal from others. One thing I learned as a young missionary was that spiritual fitness, as well as physical and mental fitness, comes by paying a price that includes self-denial.

After I had been made a senior companion, I met Carlos Garcia in Montevideo. Carlos was about fourteen years old. We became acquainted as he attended our presentations of the missionary discussions in the home of his neighbors, the Carabajals. Carlos wanted us to teach his family and helped us arrange to meet his parents and his younger brothers and sisters. We taught the Garcias and watched them become members of the Church. One day as we visited in the Garcia home, we noticed large red letters about six inches high that had been cut out and pasted on the living room wall. They spelled "*Y Yo Tercero*," meaning "And I Third."

We asked Carlos what the saying meant. He said: "Well, I figure it this way. God is first. My family and others come second. And I am third." I have never forgotten this great teaching.

Colombian missionaries

On my most recent mission, which I served with my wife, Penny, and our six daughters, we came espe-

cially to love and appreciate our missionaries and had a special appreciation for our Colombian missionaries.

I know that the same can be said for missionaries serving all over the world in their own homelands. They are remarkable. Our Colombian missionaries were not only handsome, charming, and intelligent, but they were also dedicated, capable, and effective. One unusual Colombian missionary with his North American junior companion, because of their special gifts and talents, baptized fifty-two people in one month. Another Colombian sister was responsible for the conversion of fourteen people before she had been a member of the Church for one year and received a formal call as a missionary. These young people returned home from their missions without fanfare. Many of them did not know where they would live. Many of them had parents who made it clear to them that they had no place in their homes on their return. But they served God first, with faith that he would provide for them and for their future. It is impossible adequately to eulogize these young people. My only regret concerning our Colombian missionaries was that we did not have three times as many.

No one pointing accusing finger

At times, as we talk of missions and missionary work, some young men shy away because they do not feel that they are worthy. Please remember, young men, that no one points an accusing finger at you. Your priesthood leaders—your adviser and your bishop—do not set themselves as judges to criticize. They want to help. If you feel that worthiness is a problem and it's bothering you, talk to your quorum adviser or, if necessary, see your bishop and set a course with him to get yourself squared away with the Lord. What a great blessing it will be to you, to us, and to many hundreds of others.

One time a young missionary who had recently arrived at Bogota to serve in our mission said to me in an initial interview: "Well, President, I guess you've heard all about me and about all the trouble I was before receiving my mission call and all the problems I had at the MTC."

I said to him: "No, Elder, I haven't heard a thing and, frankly, unless it concerns a serious moral transgression, I don't want to know. The only thing that matters to me, and I believe that the only thing that matters to the Lord, is what you do from now on. I know that you have been called by God to serve in this mission and that you can be a powerful and effective advocate for the Savior. You have a real opportunity right here and right now to go out and show the Lord and others who you really are and what you can do." I think the missionary was a little surprised at my response, and it effectively terminated our interview.

That young man worked with enthusiasm and energy in some of the areas of our mission that might be considered tough. He taught, he converted, he baptized. He became a district leader and a zone leader. He left our mission with my greatest respect for the work he had done and for the man he had become.

Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone

Caring—the motivating force

Benjamin Franklin said, "I think that talents for the education of the youth are the gift of God; and that he on whom they are bestowed, whenever a way is opened for use of them, is as strongly called as if he heard a voice from heaven."

And Elder Harold B. Lee related: "Someone asked [a great opera singer who had a large family] which of her children was her favorite. Her reply revealed the depth of her true moth-

A missionary testimony

Above all the benefits and blessings of missionary service that come into the life of a missionary—and that which brings unparalleled peace and comfort to the soul—is the testimony which comes to him, perhaps not all at once, perhaps line upon line. (See Isaiah 28:13.) That testimony I wish to bear to you now as a returned missionary. I know God lives. I know that Jesus is the Christ, God's Son, the leader of all humanity, and the measure of mankind. He is the King, our Counselor, and our Friend. He is worthy of our most pure and profound adoration and deserving of our very best efforts. As missionaries, we long to serve him with all our heart, might, mind, and strength. (See D&C 4:2.) In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Brother Dunn.

We shall now hear from Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and he will be followed by Elder David B. Haight of the Council of the Twelve.

erhood: 'My favorite child is the one who is sick until he gets well or the one who is absent until he returns' " (in *Church News*, 13 June 1964, p. 14).

This same great depth of caring ought to be the motivating force behind every bishop and every adviser.

Growing up no picnic

John Sonnenberg, a great Regional Representative, related this experience as a young dentist. They had seven children, all young, and only one

car. When his wife went to town she had to take the bus. One day she and the seven children were waiting for the bus. When the bus stopped, the children and Sister Sonnenberg boarded. She put her token in, and then stood and put one token in the box for each of her seven children. The bus driver was amazed, and he said, "Lady, are these all your children, or is this a picnic?"

She responded, "They are all my children, and it's no picnic!"

In this generation, growing up is no picnic for a young man. It requires stability, high standards, prayer, and parents and Aaronic Priesthood advisers who care.

Henry Eyring's "style"

Henry Eyring, a leading scientist and a great teacher who recently passed away, would have contests with his students. Even in his midsixties he could do a standing broad jump to the top of his desk. He challenged university students to a thirty- or forty-yard foot race.

One day just a few short years before he died, he was in the Church Administration Building. His brother-in-law, President Spencer W. Kimball, came out of his office and saw Henry Eyring standing there with a cane. He said, "Henry, what is the cane for?"

And Henry Eyring said, "Style, President, style."

No wonder he had such an influence on the minds of young men all over the Church. He had "style."

"I was listening"

This past summer at the Nauvoo Aaronic Priesthood Encampment, special missionary preparation workshops were held. Bishops conducted these sessions with their Aaronic Priesthood. Every young man was given his own missionary preparation book. Two thousand young men participated in this activity.

A bishop reported that one young man would not get involved. He lazed on the grass a few feet from the group.

He would occasionally laugh or seem to make fun. He would not participate, as he had no intention of serving a mission. Around a campfire that night, during a testimony meeting, this young man stood up and began to talk. He said, "This morning I did not participate in the missionary preparation workshops, but I was listening, I was listening. I have been thinking, thinking a lot." Then, with great emotion he said, "I have made a decision to go on a mission."

"What do I need to do?"

A year ago at Flagstaff, Arizona, a special banquet for Eagle Scouts was held. There were 1,150 Eagle Scouts. John Warnick, the director of Mormon Relationships, invited all those who would commit to go on a mission to stand. All 1,150 stood.

Later, one of the young men, a Catholic boy, went to the bishop and said, "I am not a Mormon, and I committed to go on a mission. What do I need to do?"

The bishop said, "Let's talk to your parents." During the visit with the family, it was decided that the family should hear the discussions. The family, including the Eagle Scout, are all members of the Church now.

Eyes open and a prayer in your heart

A ward Mutual was having a swimming party. The bishopric attended, dressed in suits. Many of the youth had already been in swimming. Everything stopped while a great old high priest gave an opening prayer. During the prayer there was a splashing in the pool. The counselor in the bishopric said: "I think I have always been practical enough, so I opened one eye to see who it was that was so irreverent as to swim during the prayer. A twelve-year-old Spanish boy, who could not swim, had somehow gotten into the deep end of the pool and was drowning. His eyes reflected fear and terror. I took

two steps, dove into the pool, suit, shoes and all, pulled the young man to the side and helped him out. He sat on the edge of the pool and I waited in the pool. The good old high priest prayed on and on."

The counselor continued, "I think the young man would have drowned if we had waited for the prayer to end to save him." Then he concluded by saying, "I think we have to keep an eye open and be ready to do whatever is necessary to save our youth. And by the way, the bishop never did open his eyes, even when I dove in."

Bishops, keep your eyes open, with a constant prayer in your heart that the Lord will let you know when your youth are in trouble.

A salesman approached a door. Inside, a young man was dutifully, dully practicing the piano. The salesman said, "Young man, is your mother home?"

The boy replied, "What do you think?"

As this mother monitored her son's practicing, we give thanks to the great men who dutifully monitor, care for, and love the youth.

Commit to pray

Some years back, Terry, a deacon, was at Tracy Wigwam on an overnight camp. That night a full moon hung overhead. The adviser took Terry by the arm and said, "Let's go for a walk." They went several hundred feet from the cabins. The adviser said, "Terry, let's kneel here and have a prayer." They knelt together and prayed. After the prayer Terry's adviser said to him, "Terry, do you pray?" Terry answered that he did not. "Terry, will you commit to pray every day all the rest of your life?"

Terry said, "I never made a commitment unless I intended to keep it." He thought about prayer and decided it was right. It was a good thing. He said to his adviser, "Yes, I will pray all the rest of my life."

Terry, who went on to high school, then quarterbacked for the University of Utah where he was all-conference, and went on to play for the Pittsburgh Steelers, said, "I have kept that commitment, and I have prayed every morning and night since that day." And Terry is here tonight.

Harness the energies of love

One of the most Christlike acts any leader can perform is to go out after the sheep. Elder Harold B. Lee said, "One's love is measured by how much he gives, not how much he gets." (Excerpts from an address by Elder Harold B. Lee at the Venturer-Explorer Department, pamphlet, 1968, n.p.)

A French scientist, Rene de Char-dan, said, "Some day after we have mastered the winds and the waves, the tides and gravity, we will harness for God the energies of love, and then for the second time in the history of the world men will have discovered fire." Such is the love of a great man in my life, Bruford Reynolds.

Bruford Reynolds believed in me

When I was a boy of eleven, I used to go over to the old Richards Ward every Tuesday night. The Scouts would be having their troop meeting. I would lie on the ground and watch through the basement window. The Scouts would have patrol contests, build a fire using flint and steel, practice first aid, drill, and play games. I could hardly wait to become a deacon and a Scout.

When I was ordained a deacon I also registered in Scouting. Bruford Reynolds was the deacons quorum adviser for a period of time and also was the Scoutmaster.

Two months after I joined the troop I went to Brother Reynolds's home to pass off the Second Class requirements. When I had done this, Bruford Reynolds said to me: "Vaughn, you have a lot of leadership ability, but we cannot use you because you are

rowdy in troop meeting. When you get squared away, we need you."

Having come from a large inactive family that was poor, I had little personal attention. My father had never told me that I could be anything. I gave a great deal of thought to my conduct. I decided to change. The following Tuesday I hardly moved an eyeball. I was as near perfect as I knew how to be.

Bruford Reynolds was true to his word. I became an assistant patrol leader, a patrol leader, assistant senior patrol leader, then senior patrol leader. He believed in me and had a profound impact on my life.

"He will lead in high places in the Church"

About five years ago I called Bruford Reynolds on the phone. He was bishop at the time. I said, "May I be invited to speak at your sacrament meeting sometime in the near future?"

He said, "We are not supposed to ask General Authorities."

"You aren't," I said. "I am asking you."

He then said, "I would love to have you come on Easter." So I prepared a talk on the Savior's life.

When I began to speak, I first told the people in his ward what a wonderful man their bishop had been in my life. I told them how I used to go over and lie down on the ground and watch through the window. I shared with them examples of great lessons he taught me. I told them of the influence he had on my life and how he had told me I had leadership abilities. Then I shared with them how much I loved him. After brief comments about the bishop, I then spoke about the Savior.

At the conclusion of my talk, Bishop Reynolds stood. "We are not supposed to speak after General Authorities," he said, "but I want to share this additional part of the story that Elder Featherstone does not know.

"During part of the time I was deacons adviser and Scoutmaster, I also served another youth group. Both

groups met on Tuesday, the Scouts at 7:30 and the other group at 8:00. I would get Scout meeting started and then I would leave to go over to the Lincoln Ward where the second group met. At 8:30 I would return to conclude the last half hour of Scout meeting. Elder Featherstone was my senior patrol leader, and I would leave him in charge of the troop. He isn't the only one who has lain on the ground and watched through the basement window! I used to do that when I would come back from Lincoln Ward. I wanted to see what was going on.

"One night I had a problem and could not make it back to the Scout troop until just before 9:00 P.M. I did not stop to look in the window, but just hurried down the hall to the Scout room. You can learn a lot about what is going on in a youth meeting by listening at the door. I listened at the door. Elder Featherstone had called the troop together for a Scoutmaster's Minute. I could hear what was being said.

"All of a sudden I heard footsteps behind me. I looked back, and here were four district commissioners from the Boy Scouts who had come to visit our troop. I wondered what they thought when they saw the Scoutmaster standing outside the Scout room, listening at the door. I didn't know what to say, so I put my finger to my lips in a hushing signal, and then I motioned them to listen at the door. They all leaned over and listened. In a minute one of the men said, 'That boy will be a fine leader out in the world some day.'"

And Bru Reynolds said, "No, one day he will lead in high places in this Church."

What life is all about

Two years ago we decided to have a reunion and honor Bruford Reynolds and other youth leaders who led us in Richards Ward between 1940 and 1950. The chapel was completely filled with men, former boys who had lived in the ward. We had raised money to

buy some very nice gifts, which were presented to them, and using an opaque projector, we showed pictures of the boys and some of the activities during those years. We made a real fuss over Bruford Reynolds and the other great men.

Then we called for a response. Bruford Reynolds stood up, and with great tears dimming his eyes he said, "I think this is the greatest day of my life." As I thought about that statement, I looked out across that group of deacons/Scouts grown tall. It included three men who had been stake presidents, two men who had been mission presidents, several men in stake presidencies, thirty-three men who had been bishops or counselors, and one who is a General Authority. Then I thought, maybe this is what life is all about, to be able to look back and see the young men you had influenced grow up and become leaders in the kingdom.

Love and farewell between a great adviser and a boy

A short time after that reunion, young Bruford Reynolds, a son, who was also a bishop, called and said, "Did you know my dad is in the hospital? He had a serious heart attack. He is in the LDS Hospital, and we wondered if you knew." I had not known. I told him that I would like to see him but I had to catch a plane in a little over an hour. I didn't see how I could get up to the hospital before I had to leave. He then said, "Oh, that's okay. Dad is going to be released tomorrow to return home."

I said, "Tell him I love him, and I'll drop in to see him as soon as I get back."

I hung up the phone, thought for only a moment, and decided everything else could wait. I took my briefcase, airplane tickets, and drove to the LDS Hospital to see Bruford Reynolds. As I walked through the door, our eyes met. The love between a great man and boy spanned the years. I went over to him and sat down, and we talked. Then I said, "I know you have been adminis-

tered to, but would you feel all right if I knelt by your bed and offered a prayer?" I knelt down and together we prayed. When I finished, my eyes were filled with tears, as were his. Then I bent down over him and kissed him on the forehead and left.

Bruford Reynolds died an hour later. I was one of his boys, saying "farewell" to a great adviser one last time.

Watchmen and torchbearers

My testimony to all of you wonderful brethren who preside over and lead the Aaronic Priesthood is that you are more important to the Church than you would ever dare to suppose.

In Isaiah, the prophet asks, "Watchman, what of the night?" (Isaiah 21:11). This generation of youth will be the torchbearers in the future, possibly in the darkest period of the world. So remember, brethren:

The God of the great endeavor gave me a torch to bear.

I lifted it high above me in the dark and murky air.

Straightway with loud hosannas the crowd acclaimed its light,

And followed me as I carried my torch through the dark and starless night.

Til mad with peoples' praises and drunken with vanity,

I forgot it was the torch that drew them and fancied they followed me.

And my arm grew sore and weary upholding the shining load,

And my tired feet went stumbling over the hilly road.

I fell with the torch beneath me, in a moment the flame was out.

But lo, from the throng a stripling sprang forth with a mighty shout,

Caught up the torch as it smoldered and lifted it high again,

Til fanned by the winds of heaven it fired the souls of men.

As I lay alone in the darkness, the feet of the trampling crowd,

Passed over and far beyond me, their praises proclaimed aloud.

And I learned in the deepening shadow this glorious verity,
 'Tis the torch the people follow, who ere the bearer be.

("The Torchbearer," anonymous.)

A great truth. They *will* be the torchbearers. May we be the watch-

men. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Elder Featherstone.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder David B. Haight of the Council of the Twelve.

Elder David B. Haight

I rejoice with each of you priesthood holders, assembled in hundreds of meetinghouses throughout the world, in the knowledge that what is said here tonight is in harmony with and will assist in hastening the fulfillment of ancient and modern prophecy of our Lord and Savior's plan "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39).

We have a great work entrusted to us. My remarks tonight are centered in our efforts to find and recover men and families who have strayed from active Church participation. The dedicated heart and willing mind of every man and boy listening tonight is required to be vigorously involved in his priesthood responsibility to bring into activity and fellowship those men and boys we classify as inactive, thereby moving mankind nearer to the ultimate peace and joy of eternal life.

Two young men took different paths

During this past month I received two widely differing messages. One was a formal invitation to attend the swearing-in ceremony in Washington, D. C., of the newest and youngest member of the United States Tax Court—an appointment made by the President of the United States, and a very prestigious honor.

Within hours of receiving that invitation, I had a visit from a law en-

forcement officer inquiring if I knew a certain young man. I replied, "Of course I know him. Why do you ask?" This young man had indicated to the officer that he knew me. A sordid story was then related to me of drugs, immorality, stealing to satisfy the high cost of drugs, buying illicit sexual favors, and cheap rooming house living. When I expressed a desire to see and help this young man, the officer suggested I not see him at this time because of his emotional condition.

The families of these two young men are well known to me. As boys they were members of the same ward. Both received the Aaronic Priesthood and had had the same Sunday School teachers. The scriptures, Church magazines, and lesson manuals had been made available in their homes.

One received the Melchizedek Priesthood, fulfilled a mission, married in the temple, and while attending law school served in a bishopric; and now, Judge Stephen Jensen Swift has been honored by his national government by appointment to a federal judgeship.

The other young man never merited or obtained the promised blessings of the Melchizedek Priesthood. Going to top-rated private schools overshadowed interest in a mission. He never married, associated with the wrong people, has now become a ridiculer of gospel principles because they differ from his life-style, and is virtually an outcast from family,

society, and from the word of God. His family's life-style failed to encourage him spiritually by its lack of interest in the scriptures, family home evenings, family and personal prayer, and hearing in their home testimonies of religious belief.

"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap"

The Honorable Judge Stephen Swift is settling his family in Washington, D. C., and learning to feel comfortable in the robes of a federal judge. He has our love, admiration, and highest respect.

The other young man needs our love even more—a special love. I have faith that we can recover him. It was such as he of whom the Savior spoke: "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?" (Luke 15:4).

Paul taught, for he had experienced firsthand, that "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

Save our youth and save generations

Young men are sowers. Young women are sowers. Who trains and guides these sowers? Who points out to them which is the right grain to place in the sower's bag? Who teaches them how to place the sower's bag on their shoulders? Who teaches the young sower going out into the field for the first time whether the season is right, or how far to scatter the seed? Hopefully, a caring father, a loving mother, teachers and quorums, or other loved ones will guide their footsteps.

"When we do not act preventively in the earlier years," President Kimball said, "we must later on act redemptively but with . . . fewer and more labored results" (MIA Conference, 23 June 1974, p. 7). In saving our youth, we save generations.

Put the priesthood of God to work

There is an unusual concern being expressed by the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles over the increasing numbers of men and boys—who have such an influence upon their wives and families—who are now listed on quorum and ward reports as inactive.

We remind all of you that—

Every inactive man has a bishop, quorum president, and home teachers.

Every inactive woman has a bishop, Relief Society president, and visiting teachers.

Every inactive young woman has a bishop and a Young Women's presidency.

Every inactive young man has a bishop and quorum president.

And every member of the Church has a stake president or a mission president.

President Harold B. Lee taught: "There is no new organization necessary to take care of the needs of this people. All that is necessary is to put the priesthood of God to work" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1972, p. 124).

Strengthen thy brethren

Your attention to this alarming trend of inactivity must now become one of our most urgent priorities. The worth of all souls is great in the sight of God, whether they be nonmembers, inactive members, or active members.

The gospel teaches us that every member of the Church has an obligation to strengthen his fellow members. The Savior himself instructed the Apostle Peter: "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:32).

Guidelines through First Presidency and Twelve

Guidelines for Melchizedek Priesthood quorum activation efforts have already been given to stake presi-

dents with the necessary instructions from the Regional Representatives.

To clarify and reemphasize the fundamental concepts of Melchizedek Priesthood quorum participation and to help the quorums utilize their manpower resources, I would like to read the following statement of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve. It will guide stake presidents, bishops, and Melchizedek Priesthood quorum leaders in organizing local efforts to effectively reach their members:

"The Lord gave instruction in the revelations that holders of the priesthood should be organized by quorums. The presidency of the quorum is responsible for the activity of each quorum member. Home teaching, wherein quorum members 'visit the house of each member' (D&C 20:51), is one of the most effective means by which the members of the quorum are cared for and strengthened.

"The bishop, as presiding high priest and chairman of the ward priesthood executive committee, which is the home teaching committee, in consultation with Melchizedek Priesthood quorum presidents and group leaders, should assign families for home teaching purposes to quorums and groups. Generally, members will receive home teachers from their own quorums. However, where there is a special need, inactive Melchizedek Priesthood bearers and prospective elders and their families may be assigned to the quorum or group that can provide the most effective fellowshiping and teaching. Home teachers will report to their own quorum presidencies or group leaders.

"Brethren who have special talents in teaching the inactive should be assigned by the bishop as home teachers to selected inactive families. When those families are brought into activity, the teachers may then be assigned to work with other inactive families.

"When an inactive elder or prospective elder who has been assigned to the high priests is brought to priesthood meeting by his home teacher, he may attend the high priests or seventies

groups or the elders quorum, depending upon his needs. The bishop makes this decision in consultation with the Melchizedek Priesthood quorum and group leaders.

"When it is appropriate for a prospective elder to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood, he should be ordained an elder and then become a member of the elders quorum. Age is not the determining factor for Melchizedek Priesthood ordinations for these brethren. Men are ordained to offices of the priesthood when their calling requires it and by inspiration and according to their worthiness." (See *Ensign*, Nov. 1983, p. 92.)

Waiting for a knock on their door

This thoughtfully prepared statement of Melchizedek Priesthood quorum and quorum member participation has one purpose: to assist stake presidents, bishops, and the Melchizedek Priesthood quorum leaders in organizing their priesthood power to be the most productive in bringing back those who have strayed.

Many stakes have already enthusiastically implemented activation efforts, with heart-warming results. Most wards and stakes in the Church can recount their own successes—they are many. Stake and ward leaders know what to do: inspired home teaching, temple preparation seminars, fellowshiping with genuine love, appropriate church assignments—these are the key ingredients. We need to get organized and "do it."

There are tens of thousands of good people who have quietly drifted away and are now waiting for a knock on their door. Those who have strayed must experience a doctrinal conversion and social integration by someone who cares.

Become a star thrower

Loren Eiseley walked along a stormy beach late one afternoon "with the wind roaring at his back and the

seagulls screaming" overhead. Tourists who came to the beach would collect shellfish and sea life tossed up each night, boil them in large kettles, and take the shells home as souvenirs. Eiseley walked far down the beach around a point away from the collectors and saw "a gigantic rainbow of incredible perfection." Toward its foot he "discerned a human figure . . . gazing . . . at something in the sand."

"In a pool of sand . . . a starfish had thrust its arms up stiffly and was holding its body away from the stifling mud. . . . ['Is it still alive?'] Eiseley asked."

"'Yes,' " [said the man standing in the rainbow] and with a quick . . . gentle movement he picked up the star and spun it . . . far out into the sea.

"It may live," he said, "if the offshore pull is strong enough. . . ."

At first Eiseley felt only the futility of the man's efforts, "throwing one starfish at a time back into the sea when it nightly tosses out hundreds." He walked away, looking sadly "at the shell collectors . . . [and] the steaming kettles in which . . . voiceless things were being boiled alive."

The next morning Eiseley again went to the beach. Again the star thrower was there. "Silently [Eiseley] . . . picked up a still-living star, spinning it far out into the waves. . . . 'I understand,' [he] said. 'Call me [a star] thrower [also].'"

Of throwing the starfish back he wrote, "It was like a sowing—the sowing of life on an infinitely gigantic scale. . . ." He saw the star thrower stoop and throw once more. Eiseley joined with him. They "flung and flung again while all about [them] roared the insatiable waters."

They, "alone and small in that immensity, hurled back the living stars." They set their shoulders and

"cast, . . . slowly, deliberately, and well. The task was not to be assumed lightly" (Loren Eiseley, *The Star Thrower* [New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978], pp. 171–73, 184). Each moment counted if they were to rescue the starfish that they sought to save.

We need star throwers—throwers with vision and who have a sense of discipleship with the Savior, who feel the need to save where there is still life and hope and value, and not to let that life die on a friendless beach, but to hurl it back to where it belongs.

In a world where materialism, cynicism, and hopelessness exists, we share the message of greatest hope—the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Be a star thrower! Then you may better understand our Lord's commandment: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 19:19).

God bless us all in his divine work of the recovering of souls, that our resolve will be firm, that our timing will be now, and that our success will be sweet, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Elder Haight.

We shall stand and sing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet." We shall then hear from President Ezra Taft Benson.

The choir and congregation sang "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

President Hinckley

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us.

President Ezra Taft Benson

What manner of men ought we to be?

My beloved brethren, I have entitled my remarks "What Manner of Men Ought We to Be?" You will recognize this title as a variation of the question Jesus posed to the Nephites. (See 3 Nephi 27:27.) It is a timely question for each member of the priesthood of God to consider.

This title is prompted by reports that have recently come to my attention about the shocking actions of some fathers and husbands, and their unrighteous actions involve wife and child abuse.

Emulate the character of the Savior

As I have listened to these reports, I have asked myself, "How can any member of the Church—any man who holds the priesthood of God—be guilty of cruelty to his own wife and children?"

Such actions, if practiced by a priesthood holder, are almost inconceivable. They are totally out of character with the teachings of the Church and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

As priesthood holders, we are to emulate the character of the Savior.

The Christlike traits

And what is His character?

He has identified the cardinal virtues of His divine character in a revelation to all priesthood holders who serve in His ministry. You are familiar with this verse in section 4 of the Doctrine and Covenants, which was given a year before the Church was organized:

"Remember faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, diligence" (D&C 4:6).

These are the virtues we are to emulate. This is the Christlike character.

Let us discuss a few of these traits.

Virtuous behavior

A priesthood holder is *virtuous*. Virtuous behavior implies that he has pure thoughts and clean actions. He will not lust in his heart, for to do so is to "deny the faith" and to lose the Spirit. (See D&C 42:23.)

He will not commit adultery "nor do anything like unto it" (D&C 59:6). This means fornication, homosexual behavior, self-abuse, child molestation, or any other sexual perversions.

Virtue is akin to holiness—an attribute of godliness. A priesthood holder should actively seek for things that are virtuous and lovely and not that which is debasing or sordid. Virtue will "garnish [his] thoughts unceasingly" (D&C 121:45).

Whenever a priesthood holder departs from the path of virtue in any form or expression, he loses the Spirit and comes under Satan's power. He then receives the wages of him whom he has chosen to serve. As a result, sometimes the Church must take disciplinary action, for we cannot condone nor pardon unvirtuous and unrepented actions.

All priesthood holders must be morally clean to be worthy to bear the authority of Jesus Christ.

Temperate in emotions and expressions

A priesthood holder is *temperate*. This means he is restrained in his emotions and verbal expressions. He does things in moderation and is not given to indulgence. In a word, he has self-control. He is the master of his emotions, not the other way around.

A priesthood holder who would curse his wife, abuse her with words or

actions, or do the same to one of his own children is guilty of grievous sin.

"Can ye be angry, and not sin?" asked the Apostle Paul (Joseph Smith Translation, Ephesians 4:26).

If a man does not control his temper, it is a sad admission that he is not in control of his thoughts. He then becomes a victim to his own passions and emotions, which lead him to actions that are totally unfit for civilized behavior, let alone behavior for a priesthood holder.

President David O. McKay once said, "A man who cannot control his temper is not very likely to control his passion, and no matter what his pretensions in religion, he moves in daily life very close to the animal plane" (*Improvement Era*, June 1958, p. 407).

Patient and understanding

A priesthood holder is to be *patient*. Patience is another form of self-control. It is the ability to postpone gratification and to bridle one's passions. (See Alma 28:12.) A patient man does not engage in impetuous behavior in his relationships with loved ones, which he will later regret. Patience is composure under stress. A patient man is understanding of others' faults.

A priesthood bearer who is patient will be tolerant of the mistakes and failings of his loved ones. Because he loves them, he will not find fault nor criticize nor blame.

Kind and gentle

A priesthood bearer is *kind*. One who is kind is sympathetic and gentle with others. He is considerate of others' feelings and courteous in his behavior. He has a helpful nature. Kindness pardons others' weaknesses and faults.

Emulate Christ's way of life

Can you see how we become more Christlike as we are more virtuous, more kind, more patient, and more in control of our emotional feelings?

The Apostle Paul used some vivid expressions to illustrate that a member of the Church must be different from the world. He commended us to "put on Christ," "put off . . . the old man," and "put on the new man" (Galatians 3:27; Ephesians 4:22, 24).

What does that mean to us as brethren of the priesthood?

It means that we must become like Jesus Christ. We must emulate His way of life in our lives. Of necessity, we must be "born again" (John 3:3) and put aside worldly lusts and former behavior unsuited to the Christlike character. We must seek the Holy Ghost to temper our actions.

Desire a righteous and virtuous life

How is this done?

As I've thought about the serious sins that some of our brethren have committed, I've wondered, "Did they seek the Lord to help them overcome their emotional outbursts? Did they rely on fasting and prayer? Did they seek a priesthood blessing? Did they ask our Heavenly Father to temper their emotions by the influence of the Holy Ghost?"

Jesus said we are to "hunger and thirst after righteousness" (3 Nephi 12:6). To do this, we must earnestly desire a righteous and virtuous life.

Call upon God and give away all sins

I cite for you an example of a man whose life was changed to a more Christlike life after he earnestly desired such a change and sought the Lord's help.

Lamoni's father was a king who had bitter enmity toward the Nephites. A great missionary by the name of Aaron—one of the sons of Mosiah—had come to the Lamanite nation to bring them the gospel. He proceeded to the king's home and subsequently engaged him in a gospel discussion about the purpose of life. Once the king became receptive to his message, Aaron

taught him about Christ, the plan of salvation, and the possibility of eternal life.

This message so impressed the king that he asked Aaron, "What shall I do that I may have this eternal life of which thou hast spoken? Yea, what shall I do that I may be born of God, having this wicked spirit rooted out of my breast, and receive his Spirit, that I may be filled with joy" (Alma 22:15).

Aaron instructed him to call upon God in faith to help him repent of all his sins. The king, anxious for his own soul, did as Aaron instructed:

"O God," he prayed, "Aaron hath told me that there is a God; and if there is a God, and if thou art God, wilt thou make thyself known unto me, and I will give away *all my sins to know thee*" (Alma 22:18; italics added).

Now I want you, my brethren, to hear again this humble man's words: "I will give away *all my sins to know thee*."

Brethren, each of us must surrender our sins if we are to really know Christ. For we do not know Him until we become like Him. There are some, like this king, who must pray until they, too, have "a wicked spirit rooted" from them so they can find the same joy.

Act as He would act

Attaining a righteous and virtuous life is within the capability of any one of us if we will earnestly seek for it. If we do not have these character traits, the Lord has told us that we should "ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (D&C 4:7).

The Apostle Peter tells us that when we possess these traits we are not "unfruitful in the *knowledge* of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:8; italics added).

To *know* the Savior, then, is to be like Him.

God will bless us to be like His Son when we make an earnest effort.

To be like Christ should be the righteous aspiration of every priest-

hood holder. We should act as He would act in our relationships with others.

The Lord said,

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself . . . *all ungodliness, and every worldly lust*, and keep my commandments" (see Matthew 16:24; Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 16:26; italics added).

He expects His disciples to follow Him by their actions.

The commandments to love

Now, may I say a word about our relationships with our wives and our families.

Your wife is your most precious and eternal helpmate—your eternal companion. She is to be cherished and loved.

There are only two commandments where the Lord tells us to love someone with all our hearts. The first you are familiar with as the Great Commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matthew 22:37).

The second commandment to love another with all our hearts is this: "Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt *cleave unto her* and none else" (D&C 42:22; italics added).

There are only two whom we are commanded to love with all our hearts—the Lord our God, and our wives!

Love wife and family

What does it mean to love someone with all our hearts? It means with all our emotional feelings and our devotion. Surely when you love your wife with all your heart, you cannot demean her, criticize her, find fault with her, nor abuse her by words, sullen behavior, or actions.

What does it mean to "cleave unto her"? It means to stay close to her, to be loyal to her, to strengthen her, to

communicate with her, and to express your love for her.

The same applies to our families. Our homes should be havens of peace and joy for our families. Surely no child should fear his own father—especially a priesthood father. A father's duty is to make his home a place of happiness and joy. He cannot do this when there is bickering, quarreling, contention, or unrighteous behavior.

Leadership in the home

As the patriarch in your home, you have a serious responsibility to assume leadership in the home. You must create a home where the Spirit of the Lord can abide.

You should always remember the statement of the Savior that "the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil" (3 Nephi 11:29). Never allow the adversary to be an influence in your home.

Change of attitude and behavior

Now, brethren, I have spoken plainly. I do not wish to offend anyone, but there needs to be a change of attitude and behavior on the part of some who claim membership in the Lord's church but who act in an un-Christlike manner.

As holders of the priesthood of God, we must be more Christlike in our attitude and behavior than what we see in the world. We should be as charitable and considerate with our loved ones as Christ is with us. He is kind, loving, and patient with each of us. Should we not reciprocate the same love to our wives and children?

I opened with the question "What manner of men ought we to be?" You remember the Lord's answer is this: "Verily I say unto you, *even as I am*" (3 Nephi 27:27; italics added).

He expects us to be like Him. He expects us to demonstrate the fruits of the Spirit in our lives which are "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness,

goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Galatians 5:22-23).

Christlike traits to permeate home

These Christlike traits should characterize each priesthood holder and should permeate every Latter-day Saint home. It can be done and must be done if we are to honorably bear His name.

Never in the history of mankind has there been a greater need for men to be united in their determination and actions to be Christlike in character.

To follow Him is to emulate His character.

Resolve to "put on Christ"

Let us not leave this priesthood meeting tonight without a firm resolve to put aside any action that is foreign to the nature of Christ.

Let us resolve to apply the traits of our Lord and Savior in our own lives.

Let us as priesthood brethren have His image in our countenances. (See Alma 5:14, 19.)

Let us "put on Christ"!

He is our Savior, our Redeemer, and our Great Exemplar.

This is my fervent witness as I invoke the blessings of God upon each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, President Benson, for that timely and important message.

For those of you who plan to come to the Tabernacle for the morning session tomorrow, you must be in your seats before 9:15 A.M. because of the broadcast.

We are grateful to the men of this combined choir for the inspiring music which has added so much to this service. Following my closing remarks, the choir will sing "Ye Who Are Called to Labor," following which Elder Angel Abrea, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the benediction.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My brethren, I pray for the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Young men: Congratulations on goodness of your lives

I should like first to say a few words to the boys who are here. I think every one of you young men wishes to be successful in life. The fact that you have made an effort to attend this meeting indicates that you are interested in worthwhile things. I recently read the results of a study of high school students in the United States: "Religion plays a prominent role in the lives of high school students who earn top grades and participate in extracurricular activities, a recent poll reports. The poll . . . surveyed 55,000 juniors and seniors from 22,000 public, private, and parochial high schools across the nation. . . . The survey shows that 85 percent of high achievers are reared in homes in which both natural parents live and formal religion is practiced. Nearly 45 percent live in rural communities. By an 84 percent margin, high achievers favor traditional marriages and reject the use of cigarettes and illegal drugs. Only 4 percent have used marijuana, and 89 percent have never smoked cigarettes" (*Christianity Today*, 18 Feb. 1983, p. 35).

You see, you who are members of the Church are not alone. Those who indulge in cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs would try to make you believe that you are "square" because you do not. But the fact is that there are tens of thousands just like you. Most of the youth of the Church refrain from these substances. And beyond these are the thousands of students who earn top grades and participate in extracurricular activities in their high schools, 85 percent of whom come from good homes where formal religion is practiced, and 89 percent of whom have never smoked cigarettes. It is a fact that you are with the majority of the

achievers when you leave these things alone.

To you young men who are here tonight in such large numbers—you deacons, teachers, and priests—I congratulate you most warmly on the goodness of your lives. I congratulate you on your strength, your courage to stand by your convictions. I congratulate you on your ambitions to educate your minds and hands, to serve the Lord as missionaries, to live lives that will be a credit to yourselves, to your families, and to the Church of which you are members.

Lure of immorality

And while I congratulate you on your strength to refrain from the use of alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs, none of which will do you any good and all of which will do you harm, I warn you of another insidious and growing evil. This is the seductive lure of immorality. I am going to speak plainly. We hear much these days of teenage sexual misbehavior. There is too much of it among our own youth.

Any boy who indulges in illegitimate sexual activity, as we define that in the doctrines and standards of this Church—and I think no one misunderstands what I mean when I say that—does himself irreparable damage and robs her with whom he is involved of that which can never be restored. There is nothing clever about this kind of so-called conquest. It carries with it no laurels, no victories, no enduring satisfaction. It brings only shame, sorrow, and regret. He who so indulges cheats himself and robs her. In robbing her, he affronts her Father in Heaven, for she is a daughter of God.

I know that this is strong language, plainly spoken. But I feel the trends of our times call for strong language and plain words. Jehovah did not speak ambiguously when he said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Ex-

odus 20:14). Nor did the Lord when He said in modern revelation, "Thou shalt not steal; neither commit adultery, nor kill, nor do anything like unto it" (D&C 59:6).

Repentance and forgiveness

Before leaving this matter I should like to add that if there be any here who have so sinned, there is repentance and there is forgiveness, provided there is "godly sorrow." (See 2 Corinthians 7:10.) All is not lost. Each of you has a bishop, who has been ordained and set apart under the authority of the holy priesthood and who, in the exercise of his office, is entitled to the inspiration of the Lord. He is a man of experience, he is a man of understanding, he is a man who carries in his heart a love for the youth of his ward. He is a servant of God who understands his obligation of confidentiality and who will help you with your problem. Do not be afraid to talk with him.

Education

Now, while I am speaking of youth, I wish to say parenthetically just a word about education. I have great respect and appreciation for teachers. I am pleased to note that there is a public awakening to the need to prioritize our educational resources and programs. We live in a competitive world, and those who are now being trained will need the very best of schooling if they are to be qualified for the society into which they will move within a very short time.

We have in the Church a strong tradition regarding quality education. Over the years we have allocated a substantial part of the Church budget to education, both secular and religious. As a people we have supported public education. Where there is a well-demonstrated need, we should be supportive. Such can become an investment in the lives of our children, our communities, and our nation. However, let it not be supposed that all of

the remedies may be found only with increased funding. There is need for a searching analysis of priorities and a careful weighing of costs. Let us be supportive; let us also be prudent concerning the resources of the people.

Older brethren: "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord"

Now to you older brethren, may I touch upon a subject that may be pertinent to some of you, and to which President Benson has so eloquently referred. It is the responsibility to keep ourselves free from what one writer called "the world's slow stain." I speak of those influences of which I spoke to the boys, the beguiling and seductive lures that pull us in the direction of immorality and nullify our effectiveness as priesthood leaders.

Declared the Lord in 1831: "Go ye out from among the wicked. Save yourselves. Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord" (D&C 38:42).

The plague of pornography

There is an ever-growing plague of pornography swirling about us. The producers and purveyors of smut are assiduously working a mine that yields them many millions in profit. Some of their products are artfully beguiling. They are designed to titillate and stimulate the baser instincts. Many a man who has partaken of forbidden fruit and then discovered that he has destroyed his marriage, lost his self-respect, and broken his companion's heart, has come to realize that the booby-trapped jungle trail he has followed began with the reading or viewing of pornographic material. Some who would not think of taking a sip of liquor or of smoking a cigarette, have rationalized indulgence in pornography. Such have warped values totally unbecoming one who has been ordained to the priesthood of God.

Portrayals of sexual perversion, violence, and bestiality become increasingly available for those who succumb to their lures. As this happens,

religious activities are likely to become less attractive because the two do not mix any more than oil and water mix.

Dangers of television

A thought-provoking study was recently published in *Public Opinion* magazine. It has been commented upon by many writers. John Dart, religion editor for the *Los Angeles Times*, wrote a column last February in which he said:

"A survey of influential television writers and executives in Hollywood has shown that they are far less religious than the general public and 'diverge sharply from traditional values' on such issues as abortion, homosexual rights and extramarital sex. . . . While nearly all of the 104 Hollywood professionals interviewed had a religious background, 45 percent now say they have no religion, and of the other 55 percent only 7 percent say they attend a religious service as much as once a month.

"This group has had a major role in shaping the shows whose themes and stars have become staples in our popular culture.' . . .

"Eighty percent of the respondents said they did not regard homosexual relations as wrong, and 51 percent did not deem adultery as wrong. Of the 49 percent who called extramarital affairs wrong, only 17 percent felt that way strongly, the study said. Nearly all—97 percent—favored the right of a woman to choose an abortion, 91 percent holding that view strongly.

"By contrast, other surveys have indicated that 85 percent of Americans consider adultery wrong, 71 percent regard homosexual activity wrong and nearly three-fourths of the public wants abortion limited to certain hard cases or banned altogether" (*Los Angeles Times*, 19 Feb. 1983, part 2, page 5).

These are the people who, through the medium of entertainment, are educating us in the direction of their own standards, which in many cases are diametrically opposed to the standards

of the gospel. Even beyond these, who produce for public television and cable, are the hard-core pornographers who seductively reach out to ensnare those gullible enough and those so weak in their discipline of self that they spend money to buy these lascivious products.

Nephi foresaw our day

We are not immune to these influences. Centuries ago Nephi foresaw our day and said concerning it:

"For the kingdom of the devil must shake, and they which belong to it must needs be stirred up unto repentance, for the devil will grasp them with his everlasting chains, and they be stirred up to anger, and perish;

"For behold, at that day shall he rage in the hearts of the children of men, and stir them up to anger against that which is good.

"And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well—and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell.

"And behold, others he flattereth away, and telleth them there is no hell; and he saith unto them: I am no devil, for there is none—and thus he whispereth in their ears, until he grasps them with his awful chains, from whence there is no deliverance" (2 Nephi 28:19–22).

That which "carefully leads him down to hell"

Those are interesting and descriptive words—"leadeth them away carefully down to hell," and "he whispereth in their ears." How descriptive of the seductive and beguiling ways of the purveyors of filth and violence and evil.

Brethren, I am not suggesting a public boycott, but I am suggesting a personal avoidance of such things. There is so much of the good and the beautiful and the uplifting in literature

and art and life itself that there should be no time for any man who holds the priesthood of God to patronize, to watch, to buy that which only "carefully leads him down to hell."

Critics belittle the divine

Now there is another matter I wish to mention. And perhaps I could repeat a few lines that I spoke on another occasion:

We now seem to have a great host of critics. Some appear intent on trying to destroy us. They belittle that which we call divine.

In their cultivated faultfinding, they see not the majesty of the great onrolling of this cause. They have lost sight of the spark that was kindled in Palmyra which is now lighting fires of faith across the earth, in many lands and in many languages. Wearing the spectacles of humanism, they fail to realize that spiritual promptings, with recognition of the influence of the Holy Ghost, had as much to do with the actions of our forebears as did the processes of the mind. They have failed to realize that religion is as much concerned with the heart as it is with the intellect.

Critics belittle our forebears

We have those critics who appear to wish to cull out of a vast panorama of information those items which demean and belittle some of the men and women of the past who worked so hard in laying the foundation of this great cause. They find readers of their works who seem to delight in picking up these tidbits, and in chewing them over and relishing them. In so doing they are savoring a pickle, rather than eating a delicious and satisfying dinner of several courses.

We recognize that our forebears were human. They doubtless made mistakes. . . . But the mistakes were minor, when compared with the marvelous work which they accomplished. To highlight the mistakes and gloss

over the greater good is to draw a caricature. Caricatures are amusing, but they are often ugly and dishonest. A man may have a blemish on his cheek and still have a face of beauty and strength, but if the blemish is emphasized unduly in relation to his other features, the portrait is lacking in integrity.

"Look to God and live"

There was only one perfect man who ever walked the earth. The Lord has used imperfect people in the process of building his perfect society. If some of them occasionally stumbled, or if their characters may have been slightly flawed in one way or another, the wonder is the greater that they accomplished so much. . . .

I do not fear truth. I welcome it. But I wish all of my facts in their proper context, with emphasis on those elements which explain the great growth and power of this organization.

There is promise, given under inspiration from the Almighty, set forth in these beautiful words:

"God shall give unto you knowledge by his Holy Spirit, yea, by the unspeakable gift of the Holy Ghost" (D&C 121:26).

The humanists who criticize us, the so-called intellectuals who demean us, speak only from ignorance of this manifestation. . . . They have not heard it because they have not sought after it and prepared themselves to be worthy of it. . . .

Do not be trapped by the sophistry of the world which for the most part is negative and which seldom, if ever, bears good fruit. . . . Rather, "look to God and live" (Alma 37:47).

Follow leadership of the Church

Brethren, the Church is true. Those who lead it have only one desire, and that is to do the will of the Lord. They seek his direction in all things. There is not a decision of significance affecting the Church and its people that is made without prayerful consider-

ation, going to the fount of all wisdom for direction. Follow the leadership of the Church. God will not let his work be led astray.

Brethren, if we live worthy of his inspiration, there will never be doubt in our minds concerning the truth of this work and the great mission of this kingdom. God bless you as men and boys holding the priesthood. May your example evoke the respect and the

admiration of all with whom you associate. I humbly pray as I leave you my witness and testimony of the divinity of this work, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The men's choir sang "Ye Who Are Called to Labor."

Elder Angel Abrea offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY MORNING MEETING

FOURTH SESSION

The fourth general session of the conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, October 2, 1983. President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music for this session with Jerold Ottley directing and Robert Cundick at the organ.

Prior to the beginning of the session, the Choir sang "Hail to the Brightness of Zion's Glad Morning" without announcement.

President Hinckley then made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My beloved brethren and sisters, we welcome you in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on Temple Square in this, the fourth session of the 153rd Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We are greatly honored and pleased with the presence of President Spencer W. Kimball and also the presence of President Marion G. Romney. We express appreciation to the Lord, who has made it possible for these, our beloved leaders, to be with us.

We also acknowledge those tuned to this conference by radio and television, those who are seated in the overflow congregation in the Assembly Hall where Elders Rex D. Pinegar and Robert L. Backman preside, and those participating through satellite transmission assembled in over six hundred stake centers in the United States and Canada.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders, and officers and members of the Church from many lands who have assembled to worship and to counsel together in this great conference.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Jerold Ottley with Robert Cundick at the organ, is providing the music for this session.

The Choir opened these services by singing "Hail to the Brightness of Zion's Glad Morning" and will now sing "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing," following which Elder J. Thomas Fyans, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The Choir sang "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing."

Elder J. Thomas Fyans offered the invocation.

The Choir sang "The Morning Breaks; the Shadows Flee" without announcement.

President Hinckley

The Tabernacle Choir has sung "The Morning Breaks; the Shadows Flee."

President Hinckley spoke without announcement.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

The Tabernacle Choir has sung "The Morning Breaks." I think I should like to use those marvelous words written by Parley P. Pratt as something of a theme:

The morning breaks; the shadows flee;

Lo, Zion's standard is unfurled!

The dawning of a brighter day
Majestic rises on the world.

The clouds of error disappear
Before the rays of truth divine;
The glory bursting from afar
Wide o'er the nations soon will shine.
(*Hymns*, no. 269.)

Work moving forward

I greet you with appreciation for your love for the Lord and for your loyalty to his great cause.

I see the fruits of your faith, and I am grateful. I thank you for the energy you put into this work. I know that at times it feels burdensome. Some of it may appear unnecessary. But out of effort and labor comes strength, and out of service comes gladness.

I thank you for your faith in the payment of your tithes and offerings. You are making possible the growth and strengthening of this work across the world. But you do not need thanks. Every man and woman who pays his or her honest tithing has a testimony of the blessings that come therefrom. He or

she can bear witness that the Lord opens the windows of heaven and pours out blessings as he has promised. (See Malachi 3:10.)

I give you the assurance, my brothers and sisters, that the work is moving forward. Wherever it is established in more than eighty nations, it is growing in strength. The faith of the people is increasing, as reflected in their increased activity. The missionary work continues to flourish. Our young men and women continue to leave their homes to go into the world to bear witness of the Savior and of the restoration of his eternal gospel in this the dispensation of the fulness of times. (See D&C 124:41.) The work of salvation for the dead, through the vast genealogical program of the Church and the selfless labor of love that goes on in the temples, is moving at a pace never previously known.

Help given in Utah—

Our people are more faithful in attendance at their meetings, and since our last conference a very substantial number of them have had opportunity to demonstrate their love for neighbor as well as for God. In the floods which we have experienced in this area, there has been an unexcelled expression of neighborliness and Christian service. A woman who was not a member of the Church was interviewed on television and said, "I am not a Mormon, but I

have come to know who my bishop is." She went on to speak with unrestrained appreciation for her neighbors, who, almost entirely Latter-day Saints, had been as generous in their help toward her as they had been in their help toward one another. There is a stake not far from here where the members of each ward undertook the repair or replacement of a home damaged or lost in the flood. Hundreds of thousands of sandbags were filled and put in place. There were, of course, those not of the Church doing likewise, but all concerned have spoken with high praise for the Church organization which was able to muster forces so rapidly and so effectively.

In Tonga—

Help in very substantial quantities was sent to the people of Tonga, following a wild typhoon that ripped apart homes and farms. Both members and nonmembers were blessed by that assistance.

In Brazil—

Latter-day Saints in Brazil came to the aid of their countrymen, both Mormon and non-Mormon, who suffered the loss of homes and crops when terrible floods ravaged the vast southern area of that nation.

In Ghana

Again through the welfare program, and the cooperation of the Kaiser Aluminum Company, who furnished transportation, we were able to send substantial supplies of food and medicine to rescue many of the starving people of Ghana in Africa. Lives, not a few, were literally saved by this assistance.

I do not mention these efforts in a spirit of boasting, but only to express gratitude to the Lord for the means and the resources and the will of our people to be helpful in times of crisis.

Funds for these works of mercy have come largely from fast offerings. Despite the increased needs to meet such disasters, as well as aggravated problems incident to the present economy, fast-offering contributions have kept pace. Thank you for this marvelous expression of faith as you have gone without meals yourselves to help those in distress.

Atlanta Temple

I report also the dedication of four new temples since June of this year. For the benefit of any listening who may not be members of the Church, I should explain that a temple occupies a unique and peculiar place in our theology. It is not a house of public worship, of which we now have many thousands across the world. Temples, on the other hand, are dedicated as special houses of God, in which are performed some of the most sacred and elevating ordinances associated with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In June we dedicated a new temple in Atlanta, Georgia. This was the culmination of a dream that began a century and more ago when, in the days of the poverty of our people, missionaries were first sent to the southern states. A few accepted their testimony, but many more rose in bitterness against them. These early missionaries endured much persecution. Some were stripped and beaten; some were murdered by hateful enemies. But with faith they persevered. Eventually, thousands upon thousands joined the Church, and today the work is strong and growing in that beautiful part of the nation where we now have hundreds of faithful congregations of Latter-day Saints.

On the occasion of the Atlanta Temple dedication, the testimonies of the people—those spoken and those expressed in tears of gratitude—together with their songs of thanksgiving, all bore witness to the strength of their faith and their love for God.

Samoa and Tonga temples

In August we were in Samoa and Tonga for temple dedications. Again our hearts were lifted by the outpouring of the Christlike love we experienced and witnessed among the wonderful Saints of Polynesia. Through ancient prophets the Lord promised that in the latter days he would remember his people upon the isles of the sea. We have witnessed a marvelous fulfillment of these promises where today, among these loving and gracious people, we have scores of congregations, strong and flourishing schools to bless them with the benefits of education, and now beautiful temples of the Lord in which they may receive blessings to be found nowhere else.

Santiago Chile Temple

Only a fortnight ago we were in Santiago, Chile, for the dedication of another beautiful temple. For me it was a miracle to be with more than fifteen thousand Latter-day Saints who assembled for these dedicatory services which extended over a period of three days. The nation of Chile is twenty-seven hundred miles long, and our faithful people gathered from such distant cities as Arica in the far north and Punta Arenas in the far south to rejoice over the marvelous blessing that had come to them in the erection and dedication of this sacred house of God.

Among them were Brother and Sister Ricardo Garcia, the first to be baptized when missionaries were sent to Chile in 1956. Only twenty-seven years later, there are more than 140,000 members of the Church in that nation.

For those of us favored to attend these dedicatory services, there has come a great refreshing of our faith and an increased affection for our brethren and sisters who love the Lord and walk with loyalty to him and his commandments.

The youth—certain promise of the future

I recently had the opportunity of meeting with fourteen-thousand seminary and institute students assembled in the Long Beach Convention Center. They had gathered from various areas of Southern California, handsome young men and beautiful young women. Most are high school students who meet five days each week for a seminary class at 6:15 in the morning, which is held in a Church building near the school under the direction of a dedicated and able teacher. On my way home from Chile, I met in Detroit with another group of these students at 6:15 in the morning.

These are bright and gifted and attractive youth. One cannot look into their faces and have any doubt concerning the future of this work. They are part of a marvelous generation whose numbers are constantly growing and whose faith is infectious.

They are to be found not only in the areas I have mentioned but wherever our work is established. They are the certain promise of the future of the Church and of its growing strength and the fulfilling of its mission. Furthermore, they will bless the nations and the lands of which they are a part, for they are young men and women with ambition for education. They believe in the cultivation of the mind, of the development of their skills, of the need to master new technologies, to serve in the world of work into which they will move.

They are young men and women of virtue and sobriety who have been reared to believe that our bodies are the temples of the Spirit of God and that we cannot defile these bodies without affronting him who is our creator.

A history of faith

They are the young men and women of faith who have been schooled in the scriptures. They know the Old Testament and the great charac-

ters who march through its pages. They are familiar with the New Testament and have developed a love for the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Their faith in him has been reaffirmed and strengthened as they have studied that marvelous testament of the New World, the Book of Mormon. They are familiar with the word of God as it has come through modern revelation. They are students who are acquiring both secular and religious education, learning by study and also by faith. They are examples of the power of that first great principle, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The history of this Church is a history of the expression of such faith. It began with a farm boy in the year 1820 when he read that great promise set forth in the Epistle of James:

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

"But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed" (James 1:5-6).

It was faith, the simple faith of a fourteen-year-old boy, that took him into the woods that spring morning. It was faith that took him to his knees in pleading for understanding. The marvelous fruit of that faith was a vision glorious and beautiful, of which this great work is but the extended shadow.

It was by faith that he kept himself worthy of the remarkable manifestations which followed in bringing to the earth the keys, the authority, the power to reestablish the Church of Jesus Christ in these latter days. It was by faith that this marvelous record of ancient peoples, this testament which we call the Book of Mormon, was brought forth by the gift and power of God "to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ." It was by faith that a small band of early converts, notwithstanding the very powers of hell brought against them, strengthened and sustained one another, left home and family to spread the word, moved from New York to Ohio and from Ohio to

Missouri and from Missouri to Illinois in their search for peace and freedom to worship God according to the dictates of conscience.

It was through the eyes of faith that they saw a city beautiful when first they walked across the swamps of Commerce, Illinois. With the conviction that faith without works is dead, they drained that swampland, they platted a city, they built substantial homes and houses for worship and education and, crowning all, a magnificent temple, then the finest building in all of Illinois.

Again came persecution, with profane and murderous mobs. Their prophet was killed. Their dreams were shattered. Again it was by faith that they pulled themselves together under the pattern he had previously drawn and organized themselves for another exodus.

With tears and aching hearts they left their comfortable homes and their workshops. They looked back upon their sacred temple, and then with faith turned their eyes to the West, to the unknown and to the uncharted, and while the snows of winter fell upon them, they crossed the Mississippi that February of 1846 and plowed their muddy way over the Iowa prairie.

With faith they established Winter Quarters on the Missouri. Hundreds died as plague and dysentery and black canker cut them down. But faith sustained those who survived. They buried their loved ones there on a bluff above the river, and in the spring of 1847 they started west, moving by faith up the Elkhorn and beside the Platte toward the mountains of the West.

It was by faith that Brigham Young looked over this valley, then hot and barren, and declared, "This is the place." Again by faith, four days later, he touched his cane to the ground a few hundred feet east of where I stand and said, "Here will be the temple of our God." The magnificent and sacred house of the Lord to the east of this Tabernacle is a testimony of faith, not only of the faith of those who built it but

of the faith if those who now use is in a great selfless labor of love.

Wrote Paul to the Hebrews, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). All of the great accomplishments of which I have spoken were once only "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." But with vision, with labor, and with confidence in the power of God working through them, they brought their faith to reality.

A great future

Behind us is a glorious history. It is bespangled with heroism, tenacity to principle, and unflagging fidelity. It is the product of faith. Before us is a great future. It begins today. We cannot pause. We cannot slow down. We cannot slacken our pace or shorten our stride.

In a dark period of our history, when enemies were throwing accusations against the Church, the First Presidency issued a proclamation to the world in which they set forth the dimensions of this work. Said they: "Our motives are not selfish; our purposes not petty and earth-bound; we contemplate the human race—past, present, and yet to come—as immortal beings, for whose salvation it is our mission to labor; and to this work, broad as eternity and deep as the love of God, we devote ourselves, now, and forever" (*Messages of the First Presidency*, comp. by James R. Clark, 6 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965–75], 26 Mar. 1907, 4:155).

A great distance to go

With faith we must go forward toward the fulfillment of that commitment. We must ever keep before us the big picture, while not neglecting the details. That large picture is a portrayal of the whole broad mission of the Church; but it is painted one brush stroke at a time through the lives of

all members, the composite of whose activities becomes the Church at work.

Each of us, therefore, is important. Each is a brush stroke, as it were, on the mural of this vast panorama of the kingdom of God. If there are blanks, if there are distortions, if there are off-color areas, then the picture is defective to all who look upon it.

Shall any of us say that with faith we cannot do better than we are now doing?

There is no obstacle too great, no challenge too difficult, that we cannot meet with faith. We live in a world where the standards of the gospel are challenged, where they are ridiculed, where sacred things are mocked. Shall we compromise? Shall we revile those who speak ungraciously of us?

In a more troubled day, the Lord said to Thomas B. Marsh:

"Be patient in afflictions, revile not against those that revile. Govern your house in meekness, and be steadfast. . . .

"Go your way whithersoever I will, and it shall be given you by the Comforter what you shall do and whither you shall go. . . .

"Be faithful unto the end, and lo, I am with you. These words are not of man nor of men, but of me, even Jesus Christ, your Redeemer, by the will of the Father" (D&C 31:9, 11, 13).

Said the Savior to his disciples, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

This is the commandment which is before us. Regrettably we have not reached perfection. We have a great distance to go. We must cultivate the faith to reform our lives, commencing where we are weak and moving on from there in our work of self-correction, thus gradually and consistently growing in strength to live more nearly as we should.

With faith we can rise above those negative elements in our lives which constantly pull us down. With effort we

can develop the capacity to subdue those impulses which lead to degrading and evil actions.

With faith we can school our appetites.

We can reach out to those whose faith has grown cold and warm them by our own faith.

God grant us faith

Let us never forget, my brethren and sisters, that each of us is a part of the whole and that what we do mars or beautifies the magnificent panorama of the kingdom of God.

As our fathers labored in faith with a moving vision of the destiny of this work, even so can we. There is so much to be done, so much improvement to be made, but we can do it, walking in faith.

"If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; *and nothing shall be impossible unto you*" (Matthew 17:20; italics added).

So declared the Lord.

God grant us faith, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "Sweet Is the Work, My God, My King," following which Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Council of the Twelve, will address us.

The Choir sang "Sweet Is the Work, My God, My King."

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

"Both good and evil spoken of"

Throughout the expanse of human history, no prophet has been scrutinized in such a sustained way, on as wide a scale, or for so long a period of time as Joseph Smith, Jr. The communication capacity of this age and the global impact of his work have so ensured.

Young Joseph was told that his name would be "both good and evil spoken of" throughout the world (Joseph Smith—History 1:33). Except from a divine source, how audacious a statement! Yet his contemporary religious leaders, then much better known than Joseph, have faded into the footnotes of history, while the work of Joseph Smith grows constantly and globally.

We have no hesitancy, however, in stipulating that Joseph was, by the standards of the world, "not learned." Isaiah foresaw it. (See Isaiah 29:11–12.) Joseph did not have the

skilled, formal tutoring young Saul had at the feet of Gamaliel. (See Acts 22:3.)

Emma Smith reportedly said that Joseph, at the time of the translation of the Book of Mormon, could not compose a "well-worded letter, let alone dictate a book like the Book of Mormon . . . [which was] marvelous to me—a marvel and a wonder—as much as to anyone else" (Preston Nibley, *The Witnesses of the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1968], p. 28).

This obscure young man apparently paused while translating and dictating to Emma—probably from the fourth chapter of 1 Nephi—concerning the "wall of Jerusalem"—and said, in effect, "Emma, I didn't know there was a wall around Jerusalem."

Tutored by the Lord and by past prophets

But Joseph's keen mind was being awakened and expanded as the tutoring words of the Lord and of past prophets flowed through his quickened consciousness. In fact, he was the very seer foreseen anciently by the earlier Joseph in Egypt! (See 2 Nephi 3:6-7, 16-18.)

In a prophetic father's blessing given in December 1834 to Joseph Smith, Jr., Father Smith confirmed those promises given the ancient Joseph, and pronounced added blessings, including these, upon young Joseph: "Thy God has called thee by name out of the heavens . . . to do a work in this generation which no other man would do as Thyself." The ancient Joseph "looked after his posterity in the last days . . . And sought diligently to know . . . who would bring the word of the Lord [to them] and his eyes beheld thee, my son: [Joseph Smith, Jr.] his heart rejoiced and his soul was satisfied."

Young Joseph also heard his father promise, "Thou shalt like to do the work which the Lord shall command Thee." (See 2 Nephi 3:8.)

Earlier, during the approximately ninety days of translating, Joseph was processing—and at a remarkable rate—truths and concepts of immense significance, beyond what was then his capacity. A few gems only from that treasure trove:

Childlike and saintly submissiveness

Could Joseph have been expected, for instance, to appreciate fully that, through him, would be given the only significant scriptural elaboration of one of the most fundamental and demanding declarations of Jesus?

"Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3).

Through Joseph Smith's translation came these stunning, defining, and

sobering words about what childlike and saintly submissiveness really means:

"A saint [is one who becomes] through the atonement of Christ the Lord . . . a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father" (Mosiah 3:19).

Help in overcoming temptation

Likewise, Paul wrote that since Jesus was tempted, he understood how to succor us when we are tempted. (See Hebrews 2:18; 4:15.) Yet it was through Joseph Smith that these confirming and clarifying words of Alma were given:

"And [Jesus] shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; . . . he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people . . . that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities" (Alma 7:11-12).

Petitionary prayer

Illuminated also was petitionary prayer: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matthew 21:22). "Plain and precious" and needed light was added to those words through Joseph:

"And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, *which is right*, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you" (3 Nephi 18:20; italics added).

"He that asketh in the Spirit asketh according to the will of God; wherefore it is done even as he asketh" (D&C 46:30).

Rich language and deep concepts

Not only did confirming and clarifying truths flow through Joseph, but also rich language and deep concepts.

From Ammon:

"How blind and impenetrable are the understandings of the children of men; for they will not seek wisdom, neither do they desire that she should rule over them!

"Yea, they are as a wild flock which fleeth from the shepherd, and scattereth, and are driven" (Mosiah 8:20–21).

From Jacob:

"Ye have broken the hearts of your tender wives, and lost the confidence of your children, because of your bad examples before them; . . . many hearts died, pierced with deep wounds" (Jacob 2:35).

From Amulek, who finally triumphed over ambivalence:

"Nevertheless, I did harden my heart, for I was called many times and I would not hear; therefore I knew concerning these things, yet I would not know" (Alma 10:6).

Theology and beauty combine, again and again, in the pages provided through Joseph, as when the resurrected Christ appeared in the Western Hemisphere:

"And when [Jesus] had said these words, he himself also knelt upon the earth; and behold he prayed unto the Father, and the things which he prayed cannot be written. . . .

"And no tongue can speak, neither can there be written by any man, neither can the hearts of men conceive so great and marvelous things as we both saw and heard Jesus speak; and no one can conceive of the joy which filled our souls at the time we heard him pray for us unto the Father" (3 Nephi 17:15–17).

Serious study of the blessed Book of Mormon admits one to a wonder world of complexity and beauty, even in the midst of the book's simple, but powerful, spiritual refrain. We are

given that which we most need—yet we are athirst for more!

Granted, whenever the words of heaven are filtered through mortal minds and tongues there is some diminution. Yet, as with Nephi of old, so it was with Joseph Smith:

"If ye shall believe in Christ ye will believe in these words, for they are the words of Christ, and he hath given them unto me" (2 Nephi 33:10).

Joseph learned inspirational expression

Joseph later learned to express his own thoughts inspirationally, as in his forgiving letter of 1840 to a betraying but repenting W. W. Phelps.

"It is true, that we have suffered much in consequence of your behavior—the cup of gall, already full enough for mortals to drink, was indeed filled to overflowing when you turned against us. One with whom we had oft taken sweet counsel together, and enjoyed many refreshing seasons from the Lord—"had it been an enemy, we could have borne it."

"However, the cup has been drunk, the will of our Father has been done, and we are yet alive, for which we thank the Lord. . . .

"I shall be happy once again to . . . rejoice over the returning prodigal. . . .

"Come on, dear brother, since the war is past, For friends at first, are friends again at last" (*History of the Church*, 4:163–64).

Opposition in all things

Was Joseph imperfect like other prophets? Of course! Surely, Joseph could identify with these words of an ancient prophet, which he translated:

"Condemn me not because of mine imperfection, neither my father, because of his imperfection, . . . but rather give thanks unto God that he hath made manifest unto you our imperfections, that ye may learn to be more

wise than we have been" (Mormon 9:31; see also D&C 67:5).

Joseph, who translated the instructive words "there is an opposition in all things" (2 Nephi 2:11), came to understand, by experience, that the calisthenics of spiritual growth involve isometrics, the pitting of the emerging self against the stern resistance of the old self.

Anxieties and unjust accusations

Did Joseph experience the same anxieties in carrying out his mission as did other prophets? Indeed! Joseph could understand with what feelings a weary and beset Paul wrote:

"For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears" (2 Corinthians 7:5; see also 2 Corinthians 4:8).

Was Joseph unjustly accused as were other prophets? Yes! Even unto this very day fragments of fact are flung at his memory. Paul was accused of being mad and deranged. (See Acts 26:24.) Even Jesus himself was accused of being a winebibber, of being possessed of a devil, and of being mad. (See Matthew 11:19; John 10:20.)

Loved the work and his associates

Yet, in the midst of all these things, as promised, Joseph loved the work to which he had been called. And he loved his associates! In giving individual assignments to the Twelve, we see his love and humor tenderly intertwined:

"John Taylor, I believe you can do more good in the editorial department than preaching. You can write for thousands to read; while you can preach to but a few at a time. We have no one else we can trust the paper with, and hardly with you, for you suffer the paper to come out with so many mistakes" (*History of the Church*, 5:367).

Joseph was filled with mercy as evidenced in the healing of the many

fevered sick on the banks of a river, and where his hands could not go, Joseph sent a healing handkerchief! (See *History of the Church*, 4:3-5.)

He sorrowed over his loss of a newborn child and was given permission to care for a neighbor's child during the day, then return the baby to her mother at night. An older sister of the baby, Margarette McIntire, later reported:

"One evening he did not come [home] with [the child] at the usual time, and mother went down to the Mansion to see what was the matter, and there sat the Prophet with the baby wrapped up in a little silk quilt. He was trotting it on his knee, and singing to it to get it quiet before starting out" (*Ensign*, Jan. 1971, pp. 36-37).

Leader-servant

Was Joseph a leader-servant? Demonstrably! A girl and her brother were struggling in the deep mud on their way to school. The Prophet Joseph "stooped down and cleaned the mud from our little heavy-laden shoes, took his handkerchief from his pocket, and wiped our tear-stained faces. He spoke kind and cheering words to us, and sent us on our way to school rejoicing" (*Juvenile Instructor*, 15 Jan. 1892, p. 67).

In fleeing with Joseph from a mob, a young man reported, "sickness and fright had robbed me of my strength. Joseph had to decide whether to leave me to be captured by the mob, or endanger himself by rendering aid. Choosing the latter course, he lifted me upon his broad shoulders and bore me with occasional rest through the swamp and darkness. Several hours later we emerged upon the only road and soon reached safety. Joseph's herculean strength permitted him to [save] my life" (*New Era*, Dec. 1973, p. 19).

A victim of intolerance, Joseph Smith was deeply offended when a Catholic convent was burned in New England, saying, "Yes, in sight of the very spot where the fire of American

Independence was first kindled" (*History of the Church*, 2:465). Maligned, even today, Joseph once declared, "I am just as ready to die in defending the rights of a Presbyterian, a Baptist, or . . . any other denomination" (*History of the Church*, 5:498).

Tens of thousands come to truth

While most mortals misunderstand the significance of Joseph's ministry, the adversary surely did not!

Unsurprisingly, Joseph Smith, Jr., was still growing spiritually and intellectually, when he was murdered. Yet, Joseph lived long enough to "lay out the plan of all the work which God has given you to do" as promised in the blessing from his dying father in 1840. Now the ends of the earth inquire after his name. No wonder an admiring but dying Brigham Young's last words were "Joseph, Joseph, Joseph!" (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Essentials in Church History*, 24th ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1971], p. 459).

Thus, those who revile Joseph Smith will not change Joseph's status with the Lord (see 2 Nephi 3:8)—merely their own! Instead—as was promised Joseph in an 1834 father's blessing:

"Thousands and tens of thousands shall come to a knowledge of the truth, through thy ministry, and thou shalt rejoice with Them in the Celestial Kingdom; [and] thou shalt stand on Mount Zion when the tribes of Jacob come shouting from the north, and with thy brethren, the Sons of Ephraim, crown them in the name of Jesus Christ."

Gratitude for the Prophet

Some may seek to explain Joseph merely by attaching to him the generous adjective *remarkable*. Joseph was remarkable, but, much more importantly, he was instrumental!

Even now, one hears faintly the distant but approaching drum roll of history building toward a crescendo of mortal recognition when all shall see "things as they really are" (Jacob 4:13).

Meanwhile, the ancient records which a young Joseph translated will be with us "from generation to generation as long as the earth shall stand" (2 Nephi 25:22; see also D&C 5:10). These records defined a seer as one who can translate ancient records, is a revelator, and knows of things past and future. (See Mosiah 8:13–17.) Such a seer, wrote Ammon, is greater than a prophet! (See Mosiah 8:15–17.)

Therefore, brothers and sisters, I have no hesitancy—only gladness—in declaring my everlasting admiration for Joseph, the Seer! I thank the Father for providing such a seer! I thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for calling, directing, and tutoring Joseph!

Humbly, I give apostolic "praise to the man who communed with Jehovah," in the name of Jesus Christ, amen!

The Choir sang "Praise to the Man" without announcement.

President Hinckley

We have heard Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, followed by the Choir singing "Praise to the Man."

The Choir and congregation will now join in singing "Hope of Israel," following which we shall be pleased to hear from Elder Franklin D. Richards, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Choir and congregation sang "Hope of Israel."

President Hinckley

Elder Franklin D. Richards, who was released yesterday as a member of

the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy because of his call to preside over the Washington (D.C.) Temple, will now address us. He will

be followed by Bishop H. Burke Peterson, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric.

Elder Franklin D. Richards

My dear brothers and sisters—yes, ye are all brothers and sisters—the counsel of my Brethren, as well as the beautiful music and the opening prayer, have made this a most inspirational meeting.

The Lord has sustained me

When I was called to be a General Authority twenty-three years ago, my response in this beautiful Tabernacle was: "I have love in my heart this morning, President McKay, for you and my brethren that are presiding over the affairs of the kingdom of God, and I have love in my heart for my fellowmen. I can truthfully say that I have no enmity nor hatred toward any man, and I pray that the Lord will sustain me in this position" (in Conference Report, Oct, 1960, p. 47).

Yes, the Lord has truly sustained me in this position, for which I am truly grateful.

At the October 1976 general conference, the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve restructured the First Quorum of the Seventy. I have served as one of the Presidency of this quorum for the past seven years. This has been a choice experience as our quorum of forty-seven members has served in many capacities both at the headquarters of the Church and throughout the world. I commend them for their dedication and effective service.

With humble hearts and firm commitment

As has just been explained, I have been called to be the president of the

Washington (D.C.) Temple, and my wife, Helen, has been called to serve as matron of the temple.

We are grateful for the confidence placed in us by our Father in Heaven, the First Presidency, and our Brethren.

We approach this assignment with humble hearts and with full commitment to devote our best efforts to the building of the kingdom of God.

A message of peace

We are living in a period in which there are wars and rumors of wars among nations and much hatred, conflict, and contention among people.

It seems to me the most pressing need in the world today is peace—not only among nations, but also within families and in our social and business relationships.

From the Passover Feast of nineteen centuries ago came this great message of promise and exhortation from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

Jesus Christ is called the Prince of Peace (see Isaiah 9:6), and his message is a message of peace to the individual and to the world. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the plan of life that will restore peace to the world, remove inner tensions and troubles, and bring happiness to the human soul. It is the greatest philosophy of life ever given to man.

Need for peacemakers

A mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is to establish this peace and happiness in the hearts and homes of the people.

Certainly one of the greatest messages given to man by Jesus Christ is known as the Sermon on the Mount.

Practically all of the basic principles in man's relationship with others are contained in this great sermon.

Part of this sermon is referred to as the Beatitudes, and these begin with the word *Blessed*. These Beatitudes outline conditions which bring about peace and happiness. In this great sermon, the Savior admonished all to be peacemakers as he said, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9). *Blessed* means happy, favored, and glorified.

If ever there was a time when we needed peacemakers, it is today; today seems to be a most appropriate time to discuss what we might do to assist in establishing peace, at least within our relationships.

Have you ever wondered how you could be a peacemaker? I would like to mention a few possibilities. Really, our opportunities are unlimited.

Certainly in our homes, as well as elsewhere, we can all be peacemakers by exhibiting love and goodwill, thus offsetting the evil of contention, envy, and jealousy. Where misunderstandings exist between children and parents we can encourage adjustments on the part of both. We can pray together for the spirit of peace.

Homes can be seriously disrupted because of family strife. At times, husbands and wives in an atmosphere of contention destroy their own happiness as well as that of their children.

Divorces seem to be continually increasing. Many of these divorces undoubtedly could have been avoided if peacemakers had been involved during periods of strife.

Young adult peacemakers

An interesting example that I was closely associated with and which I have referred to previously was one in which several young adults became peacemakers in their homes.

A very wise bishop called several young people into his office and said to them: "I would like you to help me in an experiment. I would like to prove the impact and influence of one member on the spirit of the family. For one month, I would like each of you to be the peacemaker in your home. Don't say anything about this to your family, but be thoughtful, kind, and considerate. Be an example. Where there is quarreling or bickering among members of your family, do whatever you can to overcome these faults by creating an atmosphere of love, harmony, and helpfulness.

"When you are irritated—and irritations arise in almost every family—control yourself and help the others to control themselves. I would like to see every home in our ward be 'a bit of heaven on earth.' At the end of the month, I would like you to meet with me again and report."

It was a challenge for these young people, and they met the challenge in a wonderful way.

When they reported back to the bishop, remarks such as these were made. One young fellow said: "I had no idea I would have so much influence in my home. It's really been different this last month. I've been wondering if much of the turmoil and strife we used to have was caused by me and my attitudes."

A young lady said: "I guess we were just the normal family with our selfishness causing little daily conflicts. But as I have worked with my brothers and sisters, a lot of this has been eliminated, and there has been a much sweeter spirit in our home. I believe you really have to work at it to have the spirit of peace in your home."

Another young lady reported: "Yes, there has been a much sweeter

and cooperative and unselfish spirit in our home since I began this experiment, but the biggest difference of all has been in me. I've tried hard to be a good example and a peacemaker, and I feel better about myself than I have ever felt. A wonderful feeling of peace has come over me."

Ways to be peacemakers

Brothers and sisters, how would you like to try the bishop's experiment in your home by being a peacemaker for one month? In the words of the bishop, "Where there is quarreling or bickering among the family members, do whatever you can to overcome these faults by creating an atmosphere of love, harmony, and helpfulness. When you are irritated, control yourself and help the others to control themselves."

I can promise you as you try this experiment and become a peacemaker in your home that the rewards will be most gratifying.

Another way we can be a peacemaker both in our home and our social and business relationships is by avoiding criticism.

Did you ever stop to think that every time you criticize, you are judging?

Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, said:

"Judge not, that ye be not judged.

"For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged" (Matthew 7:1-2).

We can also be a peacemaker by practicing and teaching forgiveness. Jesus was asked how many times one should forgive, and he replied that we should forgive without limit. Forgive him "seventy times seven" (Matthew 18:22).

In modern revelation, the Lord has said, "Inasmuch as you have forgiven one another your trespasses, even so I, the Lord, forgive you" (D&C 82:1).

An important part of forgiving is forgetting. In some ways, being able to forget is almost as valuable as being able to remember.

Again, as one reviews the various areas of life's activities and appreciates the many human inadequacies, the great value of patience is seen as an important part of being a peacemaker.

Sometimes we are misunderstood, even by those who are closest to us. Under such circumstances, patience will develop within us the capacity to accept criticism if warranted or not. The ability to exercise forbearance under provocation means that we are following the Savior's teachings to do good to those that spitefully use us and to turn the other cheek. (See Matthew 5:39, 44.)

Patience is truly a mighty virtue and can be developed as we become peacemakers and make up our mind to be patient within our own life as well as with others.

I am grateful that the restored gospel of Jesus Christ incorporates the remarkable principle of patience. I am most thankful for the patience my Father in Heaven has evidenced with me in my life.

Be a peacemaker

In dedicating the Hyde Park chapel in London, among other things President McKay said: "If you want peace, yours is the responsibility to obtain it" (*Church News*, 11 Mar. 1961, p. 15).

Brothers and sisters, it is important to appreciate that the gospel has to be lived in order to be fully realized and its power received.

I bear you my testimony that peace can be enjoyed by individuals, families, and society in general, as well as by nations as we live the principles of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

I rejoice in my knowledge that God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, live and appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith, and that through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph Smith the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the power to act in the name of God has been restored and the Church reestablished on the earth and,

further, that President Spencer W. Kimball is a living prophet. May the Lord's choicest blessings be with him, and may we have the courage and good judgment to follow his counsel and advice.

May each of us in our daily lives assume the role of peacemaker that we may enjoy the peace that surpasseth all understanding, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Elder Franklin D. Richards. I should just like to say that Elder Richards has done a tremen-

dous thing; he has rendered a great service in his capacity as Senior President of the First Quorum of the Seventy since that quorum was first organized. I'm sure that the prayers of all of us go with him as he undertakes his great new responsibility as president of the Washington (D.C.) Temple. In that capacity, he will continue to go to stake conferences as a General Authority of the Church and render that kind of yeoman service which he has rendered over a period of many years.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Bishop H. Burke Peterson, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric of the Church.

Bishop H. Burke Peterson

My dear brothers and sisters, this morning I would like to express some feelings that have been going through my mind for some time. I have prayed for the spirit to understand, and to be understood.

An unforgiving and unforgetting spirit

I want to speak of a weakness that has thwarted the spiritual growth of men through the ages. It has affected young and old, rich and poor. Its onward roll is not limited by national boundaries, or race, or creed, or social standing. It affects some who appear to be strong. It affects many who are weak. It poisons the spirit of a person to the point that one is hobbled by its debilitating power. It has the power to drag people to the depths of hell; yet, when released from its hold, they may soar to celestial heights. It has kept many from rising to their full potential. It has been a roadblock to the talented and to the favored. It is one of the most effective tools of Satan. We are speaking of an unforgiving and unforgetting spirit.

There are many today who harbor in the deep recesses of their hearts a canker, a hurt, a feeling of resentment, a dislike, or in some cases even a hate because of unpleasant experiences with past and present associations. Some have been taken advantage of in a business sense. Others have had their feelings hurt by neighbors, or relatives, or friends. A few have been lied to or had a trust of long standing betrayed. Some children, young and now grown, have been offended by harsh or dictatorial parents. Husbands and wives may have deep schisms between them caused by criticism and a resulting resentment. The list of sad experiences goes on and on—yes, it is too long. To those of you who have been nursing the wounds of hurt feelings from the past, even from the little things, I would like to tell an experience which happened some time ago.

The price of revenge

For much of our lives, we lived in central Arizona. Some years ago a group of teenagers from the local high school went on an all-day picnic into

the desert on the outskirts of Phoenix. As some of you know, the desert foliage is rather sparse—mostly mesquite, catclaw, and palo verde trees, with a few cactus scattered here and there. In the heat of the summer, where there are thickets of this desert growth, you may also find rattlesnakes as unwelcome residents. These young people were picnicking and playing, and during their frolicking, one of the girls was bitten on the ankle by a rattlesnake. As is the case with such a bite, the rattler's fangs released venom almost immediately into her bloodstream.

This very moment was a time of critical decision. They could immediately begin to extract the poison from her leg, or they could search out the snake and destroy it. Their decision made, the girl and her young friends pursued the snake. It slipped quickly into the undergrowth and avoided them for fifteen or twenty minutes. Finally, they found it, and rocks and stones soon avenged the infliction.

Then they remembered: their companion had been bitten! They became aware of her discomfort, as by now the venom had had time to move from the surface of the skin deep into the tissues of her foot and leg. Within another thirty minutes they were at the emergency room of the hospital. By then, the venom was well into its work of destruction.

A couple of days later I was informed of the incident and was asked by some young members of the Church to visit their friend in the hospital. As I entered her room, I saw a pathetic sight. Her foot and leg were elevated—swollen almost beyond recognition. The tissue in her limb had been destroyed by the poison, and a few days later it was found her leg would have to be amputated below the knee.

It was a senseless sacrifice, this price of revenge. How much better it would have been if, after the young woman had been bitten, there had been an extraction of the venom

from the leg in a process known to all desert dwellers.

The cleansing process

As I have said, there are those today who have been bitten—or offended, if you will—by others. What can be done? What will you do when hurt by another? The safe way, the sure way, the right way is to look inward and immediately start the cleansing process. The wise and the happy person removes first the impurities from within. The longer the poison of resentment and unforgiveness stays in a body, the greater and longer lasting is its destructive effect. As long as we blame others for our condition or circumstance and build a wall of self-justification around ourselves, our strength will diminish and our power and ability to rise above our situation will fade away. The poison of revenge, or of unforgiving thoughts or attitudes, unless removed, will destroy the soul in which it is harbored.

Henry Home said, "No man ever did a designed injury to another, but at the same time he did a greater to himself" (*The New Dictionary of Thoughts*, [Garden City, N.Y.: Standard Book Co., 1957], p. 309).

Loving every person

During World War II there were terrible examples of man's inhumanity to man. After the war was over and the concentration camps were opened, there was much hatred among the weak and emaciated survivors. In one camp, observers noticed a native of Poland who seemed so robust and peaceful they thought he must have only recently been imprisoned. They were surprised to learn that he had been there over six years! Then, they reasoned, he must not have suffered the terrible atrocities to his family members that most of the prisoners had. But in questioning him, they learned how soldiers had come to his city, lined up against a wall his wife, two daughters, and three small

sons, then opened fire with a machine gun. Though he begged to die with them, he had been kept alive because of his knowledge and ability in language translation.

This Polish father said: "I had to decide right then . . . whether to let myself hate the soldiers who had done this. It was an easy decision, really. I was a lawyer. In my practice I had seen . . . what hate could do to people's minds and bodies. Hate had just killed the six people who mattered most to me in the world. I decided then that I would spend the rest of my life—whether it was a few days or many years—loving every person I came in contact with" (George G. Ritchie with Elizabeth Sherrill, *Return from Tomorrow* [Waco, Texas: Chosen Books, 1978], p. 116).

Forgive and be forgiven

The Lord has said: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

"But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14–15).

And he further added: "For he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin" (D&C 64:9).

In other scriptures the Lord has said he would forgive and forget the sins of those who have truly repented. Ofttimes we choose to decide when a person has repented, and when we will forgive. We have been told mankind will be judged on the intent of the heart. No mortal can see into the depth of another. There is only One who can. His is the role of a judge—not ours. If you are prone to criticize or judge, remember, we never see the target a man aims at in life. We see only what he hits.

From Moroni we read:

"And now, my brethren, seeing that ye know the light by which ye may judge, which light is the light of Christ,

see that ye do not judge wrongfully; for with that same judgment which ye judge ye shall also be judged" (Moroni 7:18).

The Savior's example

Forgiveness of others for wrongs—imaginary or real—often does more for the forgiver than for the forgiven. That person who has not forgiven a wrong or an injury has not yet tasted of one of the sublime enjoyments of life. The human soul seldom reaches such heights of strength or nobility as when it removes all resentments and forgives error or malice. No one can be classed as a true follower of the Savior who is not in the process of removing from his heart and mind every feeling of ill will, bitterness, hatred, envy, or jealousy toward another.

The greatest example of one who willingly forgave walked the shores of Galilee two thousand years ago. If any person had been mistreated, it was he. President Spencer W. Kimball wrote of the Savior:

"All his life he had been the victim of ugliness. As a newborn infant he had been spirited away to save his life at the instruction of an angel in a dream. . . . At the end of a hectic life he had stood in quiet, restrained divine dignity. . . .

"They pushed him around and jostled him and buffeted him. Not an angry word escaped his lips. . . . They slapped him in his face and on his body. . . . Yet he stood resolute, un intimidated. Literally did he follow his own admonition when he turned his other cheek so that it too could be slapped and smitten.

"Words, too, are hard to take. In-criminations and recriminations and their blasphemy of things, persons, places and situations sacred to him must have been hard to take. . . . Yet he stood his ground, never faltering. No cringing, no denials, no rebuttals. When false, mercenary witnesses were paid to lie about him, he seemed not to condemn them. They twisted his words and misinterpreted his meanings, yet he

was calm and unflustered. Had he not been taught to pray for them 'which despitefully use you'?

"He was beaten, officially scourged. He wore a crown of thorns. . . . He was mocked and jeered. He suffered every indignity at the hands of his own people. . . . He was required to carry his own cross. . . . Finally, with the soldiers and his accusers down below him, he looked upon the Roman soldiers and said these immortal words: '*Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do*' (Luke 23:34)." (*The Miracle of Forgiveness* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969], pp. 279-80).

Plead for the spirit of forgiveness

Now, brothers and sisters, let us go to our homes and dismiss from our beings—and purge from our souls—the venom of any feeling of ill will or bitterness toward anyone. Let us strike from our hearts the unwillingness to forgive and forget; and, instead, approach men in the spirit of the Master, even those who "despitefully use you"

(Matthew 5:44). Let us pray—rather, let us plead for the spirit of forgiveness. Let us look for the good in each other—not the flaws.

The Master knew men's lives would be changed more quickly and more surely by love than by criticism. In 1 John 4:19 we read: "We love him, because he first loved us."

I testify to the importance of this principle of salvation, the principle of forgiving and forgetting, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "Lo, My Shepherd Is Divine" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Bishop H. Burke Peterson, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, has just addressed us. We thank him for his beautiful words. The Choir then sang "Lo, My Shepherd Is Divine."

Elder Marvin J. Ashton, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us, and he will be our concluding speaker.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

Recently I had the opportunity of congratulating a special young lady upon her graduation from college. Knowing she had achieved this lofty goal under extreme difficulties, I said, "Would you mind telling me in one word how you were able to achieve this great accomplishment?" While she paused momentarily, words like *courage*, *determination*, and *faith* flashed through my mind as I anticipated her answer. Then without hesitation she said, "Elder Ashton, the word is *commitment*."

"Be something, Abe"

Most of us who have ever heard of the great American leader Abraham

Lincoln will recall what he said of his mother: "All that I am, All that I hope to be, I owe to my Angel mother" (in *Abraham Lincoln's Philosophy of Common Sense*, ed. Edward J. Kempf, 3 parts [New York: The New York Academy of Sciences, 1965], 1:60). But how many of us know what his mother's last words to him were? They were "Be something, Abe."

Not only is this wise counsel, but it also expresses the yearnings of most fathers' and mothers' hearts to have their children be something. Simple terms, but, oh, how powerful, "Be something." I am so pleased she didn't say, "Be someone." She said, "Be something, Abe." There is a significant difference. In the dictionary *someone* is

defined as "conceived or thought of, but not definitely known," while *something* is identified as "a person or thing of importance."

Abraham Lincoln's mother knew her son, his potential, and the rocky roads ahead of him; hence, she wanted him to commit himself promptly to being steadfast and immovable in living and promoting deeds of courage and faith in the lives of all mankind.

A word of hope is poured out on every generation of people by those who advocate accomplishment, an exemplary life, living up to one's abilities, and keeping one's commitments.

Commitment to worthy goals and gospel principles

True happiness is not made in getting something. True happiness is becoming something. This can be done by being committed to lofty goals. We cannot become something without commitment.

Commitment as a word cannot stand alone. We must always ask, "Committed to what?" As all of us blend into the programs of the Church, it behooves us to set goals for ourselves in order to reap the blessings of self-improvement and excellent performance in given assignments.

"Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness;

"For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch as men do good they shall in nowise lose their reward.

"But he that doeth not anything until he is commanded, and receiveth a commandment with doubtful heart, and keepeth it with slothfulness, the same is damned" (D&C 58:27-29).

As we search for good causes, we must consider our own needs, but also we must live in compliance with gospel teachings.

Is it I?

President Spencer W. Kimball at the Regional Representatives Seminar of April 3, 1975, said, "I believe in goals, but I believe that the individual should set his own. Goals should always be made to a point that will make us reach and strain. Success should not necessarily be gauged by always reaching the goal set, but by progress and attainment."

In setting our own goals we need to examine our own needs and abilities. The direction in which we are moving is more important than where we are at the moment. Goal setting should cause us to stretch as we make our way.

Self-examination is most difficult. Surveys have shown that most people take credit for success to themselves, but blame their failures on external forces or other people. It would be well, when confronted with problems, to be able to ask the same questions the Twelve Apostles asked during the Last Supper.

"Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.

"And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

"And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?" (Matthew 26:20-22).

When our progress seems to be at a standstill, it is well for us to ask who is at fault. Is it I? Am I sufficiently committed to righteous goals? Do I have the courage, fortitude, and wisdom to apply self-examination—or will I be inclined to try and decide which of my associates will fail?

Positive motivation to total commitment

William Clement Stone, a Chicago millionaire, in an interview said, "Only if you have drive, the push, 'the want to' will you succeed in any field." He went on to say, "Regardless of your religious beliefs, read the Bible, the

most inspirational book of all time. And learn to employ the power of prayer." This man had learned the value of commitment. He had the "want to." He had also learned to turn to God for direction, guidance, and help.

Many people are motivated by spiritual goals. The question is, "For what reasons?" Is it because of good feelings and promised rewards, or is it because of fear of not living the commandments? The best motivation is toward the positive. Total commitment to correct gospel principles brings joy, satisfaction, and the abundant life.

Dale Carnegie once said, "If you are not in the process of becoming the person you want to be, you are automatically engaged in becoming the person you don't want to be."

Genius, power, and magic

However, we must realize not all problems of life can be solved at once. A commitment to solve our daily needs and the reaching of immediate lesser goals will bring meaningful successes. Realize that God will judge you by the way you make use of all your possibilities. It is wise and proper to want to make the most of every opportunity, but don't quit or weep because of failure or disappointments. Break down big commitments into smaller ones that you can handle. Then self-esteem will grow and commitment toward goals of greater magnitude will become possible. The journey of success is long and is dotted with a series of commitments to worthy goals. A person does not become committed to worthwhile goals just by making the declaration or decision. It must be daily progression toward established purposes.

When one is wholly committed, added strengths and talents become evident. Assistance comes from unexpected sources. Who of us has not accepted some assignment with fear and trepidation, feeling totally inadequate to take on such a responsibility? But with concern and obedience we

move forward—working hard and praying often. As the task is completed, to our surprise, we have been successful. We humbly realize that our own abilities have been added upon.

Goethe wrote, "What you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it" (*Faust: Vorspiel auf dem Theater*, 1:227, as translated by John Anster, *Faustus, a Dramatic Mystery: Prelude at the Theatre*, 1:303, 1835). We would add that commitment has genius, power, and magic in it.

The scriptures say it this way: "For I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them" (1 Nephi 3:7).

See beauties and thrills, not flaws

A truly committed person does not falter in the face of adversity. Until one is committed, there is a chance to hesitate, to go off in another direction, or to be ineffective. Members within our ranks who are committed to living the gospel of Jesus Christ will not be affected by the rationale of hecklers.

Our enemies are becoming more hostile with each passing week. They seem intent on not only deceiving the uncommitted among us but on leading astray even the elect. They criticize our leaders. They scoff at what we consider to be sacred. They mock ordinances and covenants we know to be true and holy. They delight in discovering and sharing human flaws and frailties among our leaders past and present rather than acknowledging and benefiting from the truths they taught. They go to the tree, and instead of enjoying the fruit thereof, they point out the scars discovered on the tree trunk.

Do not be deceived. God will not be mocked. (See Galatians 6:7.) We have no intention of quarreling or demanding equal time to refute. We invite the dissenters as well as all others to open their eyes and see the beauties and

thrills available to those who walk in His path looking for the good.

For example, it is a sad day in the life of any individual or group when by present training, attitude, and design, they would go to a football game and judge the participants by the dirt and grime on their uniforms rather than by how many tackles were made or yards gained.

By the same token, where is the pleasure for these same people who, attending a big league baseball game, will not cheer or clap for the home run hitter who drives in the winning runs but would rather dwell upon the fact that when the star, according to their research, was in grade school he was kept after school for misconduct? Woe unto those who feast on the dirt and the distasteful instead of the fruits.

Use Christ as master teacher

Contrast those attitudes with that demonstrated by an elderly widow acquaintance of ours who travels to the temple every morning, spends the day attending sessions, and returns home by bus tired and worn just because "I love everyone, even those I cannot see." Her attendance record? "I go every day it is open. Sometimes when I don't feel too strong it is difficult, but I make it somehow." The word is *commitment*.

We all have eyes, ears, and minds to lift, lead, and love. Total commitment to God and His ways will not permit us to engage in destructive criticism, retaliation, or undue disgust. We should commit ourselves to marching shoulder to shoulder in the battle to save souls—without destroying, condemning, or belittling.

With Paul's conversion came commitment. Joseph Smith placed commitment ahead of life itself. From the time of his first vision until his martyrdom, he was a victim of bitter persecution, reviling, and ridicule, but never did he falter in spite of extreme adversity. As he recorded his story, he wrote:

"However, it was nevertheless a fact that I had beheld a vision. I have thought since, that I felt much like Paul, when he made his defense before King Agrippa, and related . . . when he saw a light, and heard a voice; but still there were but few who believed him; some said he was dishonest, others said he was mad. . . . But all this did not destroy the reality of his vision. He had seen a vision, he knew he had. . . .

"So it was with me. I had actually seen a light, and in the midst of that light I saw two Personages, and they did in reality speak to me; and though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true. . . . For I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it; at least I knew that by so doing I would offend God, and come under condemnation" (Joseph Smith—History 1:24–25).

Certainly neither the Apostle Paul nor Joseph Smith waived, though they faced severe trials. As mentioned earlier, in our present day there are many who are sowing seeds of dissension and discord. With half truths and slander, they are endeavoring to lead members of the Church of Jesus Christ into apostasy. Sometimes I wonder just how Christian it is to call someone else un-Christian, when we are referring to his conduct. Those who are firmly committed to living the gospel of Jesus Christ will not be confused, confounded, or led astray.

If we profess to be Latter-day Saints, let us be committed to living like Latter-day Saints, using Jesus Christ as our master teacher.

Not far enough

It is not too late to commit ourselves to living the gospel totally while here on earth. Each day we must be committed to lofty Christian performance because commitment to the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ is essential to our eternal joy and happi-

ness. The time to commit and recommit is now.

I'm thinking of a five-year-old boy who fell out of bed during the night and came crying to his mother's bedside. To her question, "Why did you fall out of bed?" he replied, "I fell out because I wasn't in far enough!"

It has been my experience over the years that, generally speaking, those who fall out of the Church are those who aren't in far enough.

In a simple statement, the difference between those committed and those who are not is the difference between the words *want* and *will*. For example, "I want to pay tithing, but our funds are so limited," or "I will pay my tithing." "I want to go to sacrament meeting if I have time," or "I will go to sacrament meeting." "I would like to be a good teacher, but the children are so noisy," or "I will be a good teacher."

Commitment to God, the Savior, and the Church

To reap the full benefits of life, we must fill our days with commitment to worthy goals and principles. There is no other way. As these commitments lead us to action, we will find added growth and dimension which will guide us toward a productive life here on earth and open the door for eternal life with our Father in Heaven.

The word is *commitment*. To be something, we must be committed.

God is our Father. Jesus is our Savior, and this is His Church. May we commit ourselves to living Christlike lives regardless of the environment or opposition I pray, in the worthy name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Marvin J. Ashton, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has been our concluding speaker this morning.

We appreciate the courtesies shown by the owners and operators of the many radio, television, and cable systems who have offered their facilities as a public service to make the proceedings of this conference available to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

The Tabernacle Choir will now conclude this morning's service, singing "Then comes the quiet of Christ to me" ("When Rooks Fly Homeward").

The benediction will be pronounced by Elder Robert E. Wells, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and the conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The Choir sang "When Rooks Fly Homeward."

Elder Robert E. Wells offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

FIFTH SESSION

The fifth and final general session of the 153rd Semiannual General Conference commenced at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, October 2, 1983.

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, conducted this session.

Music was provided by the Tabernacle Choir directed by Jerold Ottley with John Longhurst at the organ.

President Benson made the following remarks at the outset of the meeting:

President Ezra Taft Benson

The First Presidency has asked that I conduct this concluding session of the conference.

We extend our love and blessings to President Spencer W. Kimball, who is watching the proceedings of this session on television in his Hotel Utah apartment, and to President Marion G. Romney, who is watching at home.

We extend a sincere welcome to all assembled this afternoon in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, in the fifth and concluding session of the 153rd Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We also welcome those seated in the Assembly Hall where Elders James M. Paramore and F. Burton Howard preside.

We send our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere who are participating in these proceedings by radio, television, and satellite transmission.

The Tabernacle Choir, with Jerold Ottley directing and John Longhurst at the organ, is providing the music for this session.

The Choir will begin this service by singing "Awake, Ye Saints of God, Awake!" The invocation will be offered by Elder Theodore M. Burton, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Tabernacle Choir sang "Awake, Ye Saints of God, Awake!"

Elder Theodore M. Burton offered the invocation.

President Benson

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "As the Hart Yearns." Following the singing, we shall hear from Elder Howard W. Hunter, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The Choir sang "As the Hart Yearns."

Elder Howard W. Hunter

To parents with feelings of guilt and unworthiness

General Authorities have the privilege of meeting and getting acquainted with members of the Church all over the world who have consistently lived good lives and raised their families in the influence of the gospel. These Saints have enjoyed the great blessings and comfort that can come from looking back, as parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents, over long and successful parenting efforts. Surely this is something each of us would like.

However, there are many in the Church and in the world who are living with feelings of guilt and unworthiness because some of their sons and daughters have wandered or strayed from the fold. My remarks today are directed primarily to those mothers and fathers.

Rare not to make errors

At the outset we understand that conscientious parents try their best, yet nearly all have made mistakes. One does not launch into such a project as parenthood without soon realizing that there will be many errors along the way. Surely our Heavenly Father

knows, when he entrusts his spirit children into the care of young and inexperienced parents, that there will be mistakes and errors in judgment.

For every set of parents there are many "first-time" experiences that help to build wisdom and understanding, but each such experience results from the plowing of new ground, with the possibility that errors might be made. With the arrival of the first child the parents must make decisions about how to teach and train, how to correct and discipline. Soon there is the first day at school and the first bicycle. Then follows the first date of the first teenager, the first problem with school grades, and possibly, the first request to stay out late or the first request to buy a car.

It is a rare father or mother indeed who travels the difficult path of parenting without making errors along the way, especially at these first-time milestones when experience and understanding are somewhat lacking. Even after the parent has gained experience, the second-time and third-time occurrences of these milestones are sometimes not much easier to handle, nor do they come with much less chance of error.

Influences on children

What more challenging responsibility is there than working effectively with young people? There are numerous variables that determine the character and the personality of a child. It is probably true that parents are, in many or perhaps most cases, the greatest influence in shaping the life of a child, but sometimes there are other influences that also are very significant. No one knows the degree to which heredity influences lives, but certainly brothers and sisters, friends and teachers, neighbors and Scoutmasters have significant effects.

We know, too, that the influences on a child are not restricted to heredity or to people; certainly, things in the physical surroundings will have their effect—such as the house and the play-

things, the yard and the neighborhood. Playgrounds and basketballs, dresses and cars—or the lack of these—all have their influence on the child.

One must conclude that—with the multitude of influences and the innumerable decisions, each with so many alternatives to consider and evaluate—even though parents strive to choose wisely, an unwise choice will sometimes be made. It is almost impossible to always say and do the right thing at every point along the way. I think we would agree that as parents we have made mistakes which have had a negative effect on the attitude of the child or on his progress. On the other hand, parents usually do the right thing or make the right decision under the circumstances, yet boys and girls often have negative responses to right or correct decisions.

Not alone

If a parent has made what could be considered an error—or, on the other hand, has never made a mistake, but still the lamb has wandered from the fold—in either case there are several thoughts I would like to share with you.

First, such a father or mother is not alone. Our first parents knew the pain and suffering of seeing some of their children reject the teachings of eternal life. (See Moses 5:27.) Centuries later Jacob came to know of the jealousy and ill feelings of his older sons toward his beloved Joseph. (See Genesis 37:1–8.) The great prophet Alma, who had a son named Alma, prayed at length to the Lord regarding the rebellious attitude of his son and no doubt was overwhelmed with concern and worry about the dissension and the wickedness his son was causing among those who were within the Church. (See Mosiah 27:14.) Our Father in Heaven has also lost many of his spirit children to the world; he knows the feelings of your heart.

Errors of judgment and the principle of repentance

Second, we should remember that errors of judgment are generally less serious than errors of intent.

Third, even if there was a mistake made with full knowledge and understanding, there is the principle of repentance for release and comfort. Rather than constantly dwelling on what we perceive as a mistake or a sin or a failure to the detriment of our progress in the gospel or our association with family and friends, it would be better for us to turn away from it. As with any mistake, we may repent by being sorrowful and by attempting to correct or rectify the consequences, to whatever extent possible. We should look forward with renewed faith.

Don't give up hope, and know where responsibility lies

Fourth, don't give up hope for a boy or a girl who has strayed. Many who have appeared to be completely lost have returned. We must be prayerful and, if possible, let our children know of our love and concern.

Fifth, remember that ours was not the only influence that contributed to the actions of our children, whether those actions were good or bad.

Sixth, know that our Heavenly Father will recognize the love and the sacrifice, the worry and the concern, even though our great effort has been unsuccessful. Parents' hearts are oftentimes broken, yet they must realize that the ultimate responsibility lies with the child after parents have taught correct principles.

Be careful in judgments

Seventh, whatever the sorrow, whatever the concern, whatever the pain and anguish, look for a way to turn it to beneficial use—perhaps in helping others to avoid the same problems, or perhaps by developing a greater insight into the feelings of others who are struggling in a similar way. Surely we

will have a deeper understanding of the love of our Heavenly Father when, through prayer, we finally come to know that he understands and wants us to look forward.

The eighth and final point of reminder is that everyone is different. Each of us is unique. Each child is unique. Just as each of us starts at a different point in the race of life, and just as each of us has different strengths and weaknesses and talents, so each child is blessed with his own special set of characteristics. We must not assume that the Lord will judge the success of one in precisely the same way as another. As parents we often assume that, if our child doesn't become an over-achiever in every way, we have failed. We should be careful in our judgments.

Responsibilities of parenthood

Let us not misunderstand. The responsibilities of parenthood are of the greatest importance. The results of our efforts will have eternal consequences for us and the boys and girls we raise. Anyone who becomes a parent is under strict obligation to protect and love his children and assist them to return to their Heavenly Father. All parents should understand that the Lord will not hold guiltless those who neglect these responsibilities.

After the Exodus and while Israel was in the wilderness, Moses, in teaching his people, instructed them that the commandments of the Lord should be taught by parents to their children in the home. He said to them:

"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

"And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

Don't ruin your life

We should never let Satan fool us into thinking that all is lost. Let us take pride in the good and right things we have done; reject and cast out of our lives those things that are wrong; look to the Lord for forgiveness, strength, and comfort; and then move onward.

A successful parent is one who has loved, one who has sacrificed, and one who has cared for, taught, and ministered to the needs of a child. If you have done all of these and your child is still wayward or troublesome or worldly, it could well be that you are, nevertheless, a successful parent. Perhaps there are children who have come into the world that would challenge any set of parents under any set of circumstances. Likewise, perhaps there are others who would bless the lives of, and be a joy to, almost any father or mother.

My concern today is that there are parents who may be pronouncing harsh judgments upon themselves and may be allowing these feelings to destroy their lives, when in fact they have done their best and should continue in faith. That all who are parents might find joy in their efforts with their children is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Howard W. Hunter, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder Robert D. Hales, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He will be followed by Elder William R. Bradford, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Robert D. Hales

Sorrow and suffering

There are many kinds of sorrow and suffering:

- Self-inflicted suffering
- Suffering from infirmities of our mortal bodies and sorrow from separation by death.
- Suffering that tries and tests us
- Suffering to develop our spiritual strength
- Suffering to humble us and lead us to repentance
- The Savior's suffering and atoning sacrifice, the most important event in the history of the world.

But if our sorrow and suffering strengthen our faith in our Savior, Jesus Christ, "[our] sorrow shall be turned [to] joy" (John 16:20).

Can hurt loved ones most

Thirty years ago, as a branch president, I was interviewing a man and

his wife. The wife was tearing down her husband; he had not been the provider she had expected; he had not been the companion she had dreamed about before her marriage; they could not communicate together without arguing and attacking one another.

Her husband loved her, and yet she hurt him. There were tears in his eyes as he absorbed the verbal abuse. I couldn't take any more as a twenty-one-year-old branch president, and asked, "Why do you hurt this person who loves you the most? Why do you hurt a husband who would do anything to help you?"

Her answer startled me. "Oh, I guess we argue and injure those we love because we can hurt them the most."

I have never forgotten that incident. There is truth in that example. We can't hurt a stranger as much as we can a loved one. We know just what to do to hurt our companions, parents, or brothers and sisters. We know where

they are vulnerable. We know how they can be hurt the most by our actions. To many it seems to be a test of faith in life to be wounded by those closest to us. Of Jesus it is said in Zechariah that when asked where he had received the wounds in his hands, he would say that he "was wounded in the house of [his] friends" (Zechariah 13:6). Isn't it true that God, our Father, and his Son grieve when we sin? When we fail to be obedient and accept the atoning sacrifice of our Lord, aren't we hurting Him who loves us most?

Sorrow can be turned to joy

On one occasion Elder LeGrand Richards, who was being helped into a wheelchair a little against his will, turned to the younger General Authorities and said, "You, too, will grow old, if you live long enough." I observe my eighty-two-year-old mother—paralyzed the past eight years—and my eighty-four-year-old father—who is an artist, whose test of suffering is dimmed eyesight—and realize the joy they will receive when they receive perfect immortal bodies. The suffering in mortality will bring a greater appreciation of the blessings of a resurrected, perfect body. Also, our joy of service in helping our parents in time of need brings us a greater appreciation for one another.

We are told that out of suffering, sorrow, and sadness that joy will come. Sometimes we cannot understand that mortal suffering can bring eternal blessings. Jesus told his Apostles:

"A little while, and ye shall not see me. . . .

"I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy" (John 16:16, 20).

Jesus likened this to a woman's travail and suffering before her hour of delivery: as soon as she gives birth, "she remembereth no more the anguish" (John 16:21).

Savior's visit in spirit world

After the Crucifixion, the earth was rent by earthquakes and eruptions that caused death and destruction. (See Matthew 27:51.) How could those who experienced such suffering have any comprehension of the joyous scene described by President Joseph F. Smith's vision of the Savior's visit to the spirits of the dead in the spirit world while his body lay in the tomb?

"All these had departed the mortal life, firm in the hope of a glorious resurrection, through the grace of God the Father and his Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

"I beheld that they were filled with joy and gladness, and were rejoicing together because the day of their deliverance was at hand.

"They were assembled awaiting the advent of the Son of God into the spirit world, to declare their redemption from the bands of death.

"Their sleeping dust was to be restored unto its perfect frame, bone to his bone, and the sinews and the flesh upon them, the spirit and the body to be united never again to be divided, that they might receive a fulness of joy.

"While this vast multitude waited and conversed, rejoicing in the hour of their deliverance from the chains of death, the Son of God appeared, declaring liberty to the captives who had been faithful;

"And there he preached to them the everlasting gospel, the doctrine of the resurrection and the redemption of mankind from the fall, and from individual sins on conditions of repentance" (D&C 138:14–19).

Suffering tries and tests

Oh, there's the suffering that tries and tests us. Job, a perfect man was tested and tried by Satan. Job's friends assumed his suffering was a result of sin, but the scriptures tell us he "sinned not, nor charged God foolishly" (Job 1:22). Nor should we charge God foolishly for our own suf-

ferings or assume we know the cause of another's suffering.

Suffering to develop strength will not exceed our ability to endure to the end.

When Joseph Smith was in Liberty Jail, he cried to the Lord for comfort, and the Lord gave it to him. He said that "if the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee, know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good" (D&C 122:7).

Such trials give us the development of spirituality that we probably never would get if we didn't have the experience where the very jaws of hell gape open their mouth wide after us. Not only must we survive, but we must develop the ability to have a concern for others while we are suffering. It is a key element in our spiritual growth. As we lose our lives in the service of our fellowmen, we find ourselves.

Jesus gave us the perfect example at Gethsemane when he forgave his Apostles who slept while he bled at every pore for all our sins. He only asked, "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" (Matthew 26:40). Jesus also expressed concern for his mother's care as he suffered on the cross. And even while he was suffering, he taught the gospel to those who were suffering next to him. (See John 19:26-27.)

One of the greatest examples in my life happened when I was a brand-new General Authority on my first assignment. One of the General Authorities had a wife who had passed away just a few days before. I walked onto the airplane and there he was, sitting on the front row of the airplane. What a great message! I was moved by it because at the time I said to myself, "How can one who is suffering go out to help others?" He talked to me about how difficult it was for him to go on assignment, but he went to give succor and helped others when he was hurting.

Suffering is universal; how we react to suffering is individual. Suffering can take us one of two ways. It can be a strengthening and purifying experi-

ence combined with faith, or it can be a destructive force in our lives if we do not have faith in the Lord's atoning sacrifice. The purpose of suffering, however, is to build and strengthen us. We learn obedience by the things we suffer. We should be humbled and drawn to the Lord, as in the case of the prodigal son who appreciated his home only after going into the world and experiencing sorrow when he shut out his loved ones. (See Luke 15:11-32.) So suffering in his case was a vital part of his repentance.

Repentance

When suffering comes as a consequence of sin, it should lead to repentance. Alma testified to his son Helaman:

"And it came to pass that as I was thus racked with torment, while I was harrowed up by the memory of my many sins, behold, I remembered also to have heard my father prophesy unto the people concerning the coming of one Jesus Christ, a Son of God, to atone for the sins of the world.

"Now, as my mind caught hold upon this thought, I cried within my heart: O Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy on me, who am in the gall of bitterness, and am encircled about by the everlasting chains of death.

"And now, behold, when I thought this, I could remember my pains no more; yea, I was harrowed up by the memory of my sins no more.

"And oh, what joy, and what marvelous light I did behold; yea, my soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain!" (Alma 36:17-20).

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ

After a number of mistakes and failures to live as we know we should, we may lose confidence in ourselves and have a poor self-image of who we are and what we are capable of becoming. We may forget that we are children of God and have the potential of dwelling with him and his Son if we accept

the Atonement and keep the commandments.

The first of the commandments we must keep is to have faith. First, we must gain faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Faith that he lives. Faith that he hears and answers prayers. Faith that he will forgive us of our transgressions. Faith in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

The atoning sacrifice

Why is the Savior's atonement so important as the central gospel principle in the Church and in our lives?

Jesus was born of heavenly parents in a premortal world—he was the firstborn of our Heavenly Father. In mortality, the Babe of Bethlehem's birth and life, concluding with the atoning sacrifice, was prophesied by ancient prophets in all dispensations. Only he could make the atoning sacrifice—having received the power over death from his Father. He overcame death, the grave's power was nullified, and he became our Savior, Mediator, and Master of the Resurrection—a means of salvation and immortality to all of us. We will all be resurrected and become immortal because of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

In the study of the Atonement, most of us have probably asked the question, "Why is it so easy for the world to see and believe that in Adam all men died and were cast out from the presence of our Heavenly Father, yet it is so hard for the world to understand how Jesus Christ can bring us back in the same manner?" The scriptures are clear on this.

"For as by one man's disobedience [Adam] many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. . . .

"That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 5:19, 21).

"He will take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death which

bind his people; and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, . . . that he may know according to the flesh, . . . that he might take upon him the sins of his people, that he might blot out their transgressions according to the power of his deliverance" (Alma 7:12-13).

"For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

"But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I" (D&C 19:16-17).

I stand all amazed at the love

Jesus offers me,
Confused at the grace that so fully
he proffers me;

I tremble to know that for me he
was crucified,
That for me, a sinner, he suffered,
he bled and died.

I marvel that he would descend
from his throne divine
To rescue a soul so rebellious and
proud as mine;
That he should extend his great
love unto such as I,
Sufficient to own, to redeem, and
to justify.

I think of his hands pierced and
bleeding to pay the debt!
Such mercy, such love, and
devotion can I forget?
No, no, I will praise and adore at
the mercy seat,
Until at the glorified throne I kneel
at his feet.
Oh, it is wonderful that he should
care for me,
Enough to die for me!
Oh, it is wonderful, wonderful to
me!
("I Stand All Amazed," *Hymns*,
no. 80.)

It is my prayer that our sorrow and suffering will strengthen our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that our sorrow shall be turned to joy, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Robert D. Hales, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder William R. Bradford, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder William R. Bradford

Heavenly Father gave us a plan

I proclaim unto you that I know there is a God in the heaven. He is our Father. We are His children, begotten in His image and likeness. We are His seed and have the potential within us to become as He is.

For this to happen, our Heavenly Father prepared a plan. An earth would be created upon which our spirits could be born into physical bodies, a place where we could have experiences that would teach and test us, a place to develop the godly potential within us. Here we, the seed of God, can mature into the product of the harvest of the Father's work, which is "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39).

The plan provides us with the needed resources and instruction to become as He is. By obedience we may become lawful heirs to the quality of life He lives and to a fulness of that which He possesses.

Our Father taught us the plan in our pre-earthly life. He gave us free agency to choose for ourselves whether or not we would accept the plan. The fact that we are here on the earth with physical bodies is *prima facie* evidence that we did accept it.

Lucifer brought sin and transgression

However, others of God's children chose not to accept the plan. Led by Lucifer, they rebelled against our Father and sought to gain power and glory through force. They were defeated in this attempt and were cast out

of the Father's presence. They are here upon the earth without physical bodies. They are still led by Lucifer, who became Satan, the devil. They are not involved in developing godly potentials; rather, they are continually struggling to influence man to misuse the resources and to disobey the instructions of our Father. Even more insidious is their relentless influence to deceive man into doing nothing with the resources and remaining ignorant of the instructions. Through this influence have come sin and transgression: sins of commission and sins of omission.

Death and separation

We refer to the instructions the Father has given us as commandments. It is because of sin and the transgression of these commandments that man becomes sensual, devilish, and fallen man. (See D&C 20:20.)

"Fallen man" means that man is subject to death and separation from God. When death comes to the physical body, the spirit body lives on, separated from the presence of God. Thus, the condition of fallen man is death and separation.

"How do you know?"

What I have said, I declare in soberness to be true. I declare it to the receptive ear, to those who also know it is true. I declare it, unashamedly, to the doubting ear, to those who would mock and scorn, as we can imagine could have been the case when the declarations fell from the lips of Noah and the people surely demanded from him

an answer: "How do you know? How do you know?" I declare it to the slumbering, who, in their ignorance of God's plan and their darkness of mind, can but think the question, "How do you know? How do you know?"

Messages of the Book of Mormon

I hold in my hand the Book of Mormon, another testament of Jesus Christ. This book has cost the sacrifice, even the lives, of countless thousands to preserve and bring forth. Its coming forth is part of the marvelous restoration by God of His resources and His instruction to His children.

Now that we have the Book of Mormon, which has been inspired, protected, and delivered by divine powers into our hands—now that we can read it—to our amazement we find that one of the two major messages it contains for us is the record of a fallen people.

In this book, page after page, story after story, character by character, we are taught that there is a God in the heaven; that He framed the heaven and the earth; that we are His children and He is our Father; that we are begotten in His image and after His likeness; that there is a plan for our becoming as He is; that the plan was challenged by him who rebelled against the Father and who was cast down to the earth to become Satan, the devil, the father of lies and transgression; that our Father allowed our spirit bodies to come to this earth to take upon them physical bodies; that here on earth we may, if we will, obey the Father's commandments, which will qualify us to return to His presence and live the glorious style of life He lives. "But by the transgression of these holy laws man became sensual and devilish, and became fallen man" (D&C 20:20).

Problem: Man transgressed holy commandments

Yes, it is with amazement that we discover that one of the two major messages in the Book of Mormon is the

record of a fallen people; but that amazement turns to gratitude as we realize that God is explaining the truism that "you can't know the solution if you don't first understand the problem."

The problem is that man has transgressed the holy commandments of God and has become fallen man, to suffer death and everlasting separation from the presence of God.

Solution: Fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ

But this Book of Mormon contains a second message. It contains the solution. It contains the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Just as the doctrine of fallen man lays before us the fulness of our fallen condition, so does the gospel of Jesus Christ lay before us the fulness of the way to overcome that condition. It is the solution.

Central to the gospel of Jesus Christ is the plan of redemption. God gave His children commandments that they "should love and serve him, the only living and true God, and that he should be the only being whom they should worship" (D&C 20:19). By the transgression of these holy laws came the Fall; "wherefore, the Almighty God gave his Only Begotten Son" (D&C 20:21).

The Resurrection and the Atonement

He came to the earth and did a work. He fulfilled the requirements of the plan of redemption. The work He did brought about the resurrection, meaning the reuniting of our spirit bodies with a renewed physical body.

The work He did was an atonement which opens again the way for us to reach our potential as the seed of God. Now, although we have become fallen man, if we repent and obey the commandments, we can return to our Father's presence:

"And since man had fallen he could not merit anything of himself; but the sufferings and death of Christ atone

for their sins, through faith and repentance, and so forth; and that he breaketh the bands of death, that the grave shall have no victory, and that the sting of death should be swallowed up in the hopes of glory" (Alma 22:14).

The need for a savior

If you had a son, your very own seed, would you not want him to mature into the fulness of his potential? While he was yet young and tender, would you not give him teachings, instruction, even commandments? Would these commandments not be to protect him from harm and evil, even death?

If, by his disobedience to your teachings and commandments, he fell into a situation from which he had no power to extract himself—a situation in which he would surely die, a situation from which, without help, he could not return to be in your companionship—would you not do all in your power to bring about his salvation?

God is our Father. We are His children. In our state as fallen man, He has sent a savior. He is Jesus Christ.

Since all men have sinned, there is not one who can return to the Father except through Jesus Christ. He is the only one of the Father's children who has not transgressed the holy laws. If He had, He too would have become fallen man. If this had happened, who would be our savior? But Christ is sinless, and He has brought about our atonement on the terms of our repentance and obedience.

His own declaration comes to us by way of stern commandment:

"Wherefore, I command you to repent, and keep the commandments which you have received by the hand of my servant Joseph Smith, . . .

"And it is by my almighty power that you have received them" (D&C 19:13-14).

Did we not receive the Book of Mormon from the Lord by the hand of Joseph Smith, God's mighty prophet of the Restoration?

Christ, speaking to the Nephite nation as revealed to us in the Book of Mormon, gave us further instruction regarding the steps we must take to overcome our condition as fallen man. Said He:

"And I bear record that the Father commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent and believe in me.

"And whoso believeth in me, and is baptized, the same shall be saved; and they are they who shall inherit the kingdom of God.

"And whoso believeth not in me, and is not baptized, shall be damned" (3 Nephi 11:32-34).

To be damned simply means to be stopped in your progress. It means to remain in the condition of fallen man.

Christ continues:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, that this is my doctrine, and I bear record of it from the Father; and whoso believeth in me believeth in the Father also; and unto him will the Father bear record of me, for he will visit him with . . . the Holy Ghost" (3 Nephi 11:35).

Another testament of Jesus Christ

I ask you to ponder the question, "How can anyone understand the role of, or the need for, a savior if he does not first understand what it is he must be saved from?"

The Book of Mormon contains the record of a fallen people. It outlines how man got into a condition which subjects him to death and separation from God.

The Book of Mormon also contains the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It outlines for us in perfect clarity what has been done for us and what we must do ourselves to overcome our fallen condition and return to the presence of God.

Now, O fallen man, with so great a witness, do you yet dare to ask, "How do you know? How do you know?"

The Book of Mormon holds out to us a fulness of what we must be saved from. It gives us a complete under-

standing of the role of, and the need for, a savior. It is another testament of Jesus Christ, which I proclaim and testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "Ye Simple Souls Who Stray" without announcement.

President Benson

Elder William R. Bradford, a member of the First Quorum of the Sev-

enty, has just addressed us, following which the Tabernacle Choir sang "Ye Simple Souls Who Stray."

The Choir and congregation will now join in singing "How Firm a Foundation," following which Elder Richard G. Scott, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will address us.

The Choir and congregation sang "How Firm a Foundation."

Elder Richard G. Scott

I have been deeply humbled by the call that has come to serve as one of the Presidents of the First Quorum of the Seventy. I have talked to the Lord about it and have promised him I would give him everything I have for that service. I have pled with him that he will help me qualify to receive his inspiration and support, so that I may do his will and that of his servants.

I have prayed earnestly that the Lord would guide me to say that which would benefit some of his children here on earth. After considerable effort on my part, there have come a series of impressions and a sacred feeling that somewhere there are those to whom I can provide much-needed help from the Lord. I pray that I may faithfully communicate those impressions, so that they will sink deeply into the consciousness of the individuals to whom they are intended and there find permanent root. May they transmit the Lord's love and his desire to show you how to get help urgently needed to bring purpose and happiness into your life.

The Savior knows you

I do not know who you are. Perhaps you are one in maturing years who, because of long physical illness or growing feelings of loneliness, has begun to express bitterness and self-pity.

Perhaps you are a young man or woman struggling with serious misunderstandings within the family circle. You may be a husband estranged from your wife or a single-parent mother with the frightening task of raising children without a loving, understanding, supportive companion. Perhaps you are a choice, obedient daughter who with each passing day is concerned that life-long dreams of eternal companionship seem to be slipping away. Whoever you are, I solemnly testify that the Savior knows you; he loves you and is aware of your specific needs.

He allows others to help him in his work. May I be such an instrument today.

Service to others

I will share one principle of truth which, if applied, can open the door to all the others you need to lift your spirit. It is a principle that will give you the power to make a difference in the quality of your own life.

I speak of service—self-sacrificing service to others in need. I know it is hard to help another when you feel you have been wronged. I know it is difficult to take the first step when your own heart aches for companionship or yearns for understanding. Yet such acts of service open to us

the mercy and love of Jesus Christ, the Master.

When light goes out

Free agency is a divine gift, and God will not override it. Because of free agency, we must take the first step. Our initial acts of kindness or service to others provide us with channels of inspiration and power. In contrast, darkness and despair close in when the light of love and service dims or goes out within us. Feelings of bitterness and dissatisfaction feed upon themselves and give place to thoughts and acts of unkindness, criticism, and eventually even hatred.

I vividly recall a couple who came for counsel. She was in the final stages of divorce, and he was bitter with resentment. Gone were the flowering petals of love that had given such meaning and purpose to their courtship. Shattered was the trust that once served as a sacred bond to draw them together. The ugly entanglement of selfishness was strangling what was left of the few remaining feelings of mutual respect. I listened privately to one and then the other. Their story was all too familiar. "I love her, but do not want to be trampled upon." "I'm grateful for what he does, but if I show the least gratitude, he thinks all our differences are resolved, and I am submerged again."

Their problems were further complicated by economic pressures. Yet, as I listened to each separately, I could see that the means they tenaciously held individually, if shared selflessly, could have solved their financial difficulties. I could see in each admirable characteristics. There was a sincere testimony of truth, a desire to do right, and an anxiety to feel at peace with the Lord for the decisions about to be taken.

He had honestly tried to show love and affection and had done much to help her, but in every case these righteous gestures were destroyed by simultaneously expressed feelings of concern for self. In his own words, "I do not want her to take advantage of

me." She restrained the honest feelings of gratitude in her heart for his help with the children and home and said nothing. They had not the courage, nor the vision, to build one another.

Three things to mend and heal

Two individuals trapped in the cross fire of intense feelings rarely can think clearly or be properly motivated. They need help, and the best source of help is the Savior. Oh, how I pray they will use the principles we discussed to reach out, to lift, to build, to edify, and to forgive one another.

Three things are required to mend broken lines of communication and to heal hearts that once expressed deep feelings of pure love, respect, and trust.

First, an understanding of the principles which bring happiness in marriage. They have been eloquently stated by President Spencer W. Kimball in many of his messages. Two noteworthy examples are printed in his book entitled *Marriage* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1978).

Second, a willingness to live worthily and to strive diligently to obey the commandments of God. Such a course allows our hearts and minds to be touched by divine guidance, and our efforts to be magnified by power from on high.

Third, a sincere, selfless desire to build the other. This requires an analysis of one's own life, to identify and change those things that must be altered so that love and trust can grow and mature and feelings of forgiveness flower.

It also requires a willingness to recognize all that is good and uplifting in one's companion and to set aside the microscopic concentration on faults and defects. Criticism is often motivated by a desire to rationalize one's own shortcomings and to justify termination of sacred marriage covenants.

Build others

If you would be loved, love another. If you would be understood, show understanding to another. If you would find peace, harmony, and happiness, lift another.

Yet, if we build another for selfish reasons, our acts cannot produce desirable fruits. Has not Jesus said:

"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. [Alms are righteous acts.]

"Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites, . . . that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

"But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

"That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly" (Matthew 6:1-4).

Power of the gospel

I am convinced that when we give unconditional love; when our interest is first in serving, building, edifying, strengthening without thought of self; when we do not expect an automatic return for each act of kindness, generosity, or sincere effort to help; when

we are not concerned about what we will receive or what others will say or whether our own burdens will be diminished, but selflessly seek to build another, the miracle of the power of the gospel is released in our lives. When we permit the Lord to work through us to bless others, that sacred experience releases power in our own lives, and miracles occur. Well did the Master say, "For inasmuch as ye do it unto the least of these, ye do it unto me" (D&C 42:38).

Respect and love must be earned, and there is no better way to earn them than to lift another.

Begin now with your best effort. Reach out to another. You will feel the power of the Lord flow through you. Your own self-respect will return, and you can love yourself again. Your life will be enriched and given purpose, and you will be given the power to make a difference in everything around you. Of this I testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

We have just listened to Elder Richard G. Scott, a new member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now speak to us.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie

Read, ponder, and pray about Book of Mormon

Two ministers of one of the largest and most powerful Protestant denominations came to a Latter-day Saint conference to hear me preach.

After the meeting I had a private conversation with them, in which I said they could each gain a testimony that Joseph Smith was the prophet through

whom the Lord had restored the fulness of the gospel for our day and for our time.

I told them they should read the Book of Mormon, ponder its great and eternal truths, and pray to the Father in the name of Christ, in faith, and he would reveal the truth of the book to them by the power of the Holy Ghost.

As every gospel scholar knows, the Book of Mormon proves that

Joseph Smith was called of God to minister in the prophetic office and to restore the truths of salvation in plainness and perfection.

The Book of Mormon is a volume of holy scripture comparable to the Bible. It contains a record of God's dealings with the ancient inhabitants of the Americas. It is another testament of Jesus Christ.

American witness of Christ

It contains the fulness of the gospel, meaning that it is a record of the Lord's dealings with a people who had the fulness of the gospel, and meaning also that in it is found a summary and a recitation of what all men must believe and do to gain an inheritance in the heavenly kingdom reserved for the Saints.

As the teachings and testimonies of Moses and Isaiah and Peter find place in the Bible, so the parallel preaching and the same Spirit-guided testimonies of Nephi and Alma and Moroni have come down to us in the Book of Mormon.

This American witness of Christ was written upon gold plates which were delivered to Joseph Smith by an angelic ministrant. This ancient record was then translated by the gift and power of God and is now published to the world as the Book of Mormon.

If this book is what it purports to be—if the original record was revealed by a holy angel; if the translation was made by the power of God and not of man; if Joseph Smith was entertaining angels, seeing visions, and receiving revelations—all of which is an established verity; if the Book of Mormon is true—then the truth and divinity of the Book of Mormon proves the truth of this great latter-day work in which we are engaged.

Sincere and devout people

All of this I explained to my two Protestant friends. One of them, a congenial and decent sort of fellow, said

somewhat casually that he would read the Book of Mormon. The other minister, manifesting a bitter spirit, said: "I won't read it. We have experts who have read the Book of Mormon, and I have read what our experts have to say about it."

This account dramatizes one of our problems in presenting the message of the Book of Mormon to the world. There are sincere and devout people everywhere who have heard what other people say about this volume of holy writ, and so they do not read it themselves.

Instead of drinking from that fountain from whence clear streams of living water flow, they prefer to go downstream and drink from the roily, muddy, poison-filled streams of the world.

Door to salvation

The plain fact is that salvation itself is at stake in this matter. If the Book of Mormon is true—if it is a volume of holy scripture, if it contains the mind and will and voice of the Lord to all men, if it is a divine witness of the prophetic call of Joseph Smith—then to accept it and believe its doctrines is to be saved, and to reject it and walk contrary to its teachings is to be damned.

Let this message be sounded in every ear with an angelic trumpet; let it roll round the earth in resounding claps of never-ending thunder; let it be whispered in every heart by the still, small voice. Those who believe the Book of Mormon and accept Joseph Smith as a prophet thereby open the door to salvation; those who reject the book outright or who simply fail to learn its message and believe its teachings never so much as begin to travel that course along the strait and narrow path that leads to eternal life.

Read, ponder, and pray to gain witness

Shortly after my experience with these two ministers, two other minis-

ters from the same denomination came to another of our conferences to hear me preach. And, once again, after the meeting I had a private discussion with them.

My message was the same. Taking the Book of Mormon as their guide, they must read, ponder, and pray in order to gain a witness from the Spirit as to the truth and divinity of this great latter-day work.

I told them of my prior experience with their two colleagues and how one of them had refused to read the Book of Mormon, saying that they had experts who had read the book and he had read what their experts had said.

I then said, "What is it going to take to get you gentlemen to read the Book of Mormon and find out for yourselves what is involved, rather than relying on the views of your experts?"

Pray in faith

One of these ministers, holding my copy of the Book of Mormon in his hands, let the pages flip past his eyes in a matter of seconds. As he did so, he said, "Oh, I've read the Book of Mormon."

I had a momentary flash of spiritual insight that let me know that his reading had been about as extensive as the way he had just flipped the pages. In his reading he had done no more than scan a few of the headings and read an isolated verse or two.

A lovely young lady, a convert to the Church whose father was a minister of the same denomination as my four Protestant friends, was listening to my conversation with the second two. At this point she spoke up and said, "But Reverend, you have to pray about it."

He replied, "Oh, I prayed about it. I said, 'Oh God, if the Book of Mormon is true, strike me dead'; and here I am."

My unspoken impulse was to give this rejoinder: "But Reverend, you have to pray in faith!"

Pray, study, ask

This account dramatizes another of our problems in teaching those who read the Book of Mormon how to read it in order to gain the promised witness by the power of the Holy Ghost.

The pattern for this was set in the experience of Oliver Cowdery. He desired not alone to act as a scribe to Joseph Smith but also to translate directly from the plates. After much importuning, the Lord permitted Brother Cowdery to try.

The divine authorization contained these provisos: "Remember that without faith you can do nothing; therefore ask in faith. Trifle not with these things; do not ask for that which you ought not. . . . And according to your faith shall it be done unto you" (D&C 8:10-11).

Oliver tried to translate and failed. Then came the divine word: "Behold, you have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me." That is, he had not done all that in his power lay; he had expected the Lord to do it all merely because he asked.

"But, behold, I say unto you," the divine word continued, "that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right" (D&C 9:7-8).

Of the Lord or of Lucifer?

Now, if the Book of Mormon is true, our acceptance of it will lead to salvation in the highest heaven. On the other hand, if we say it is true when in fact it is not, we are thereby leading men astray and surely deserve to drop down to the deepest hell.

The time is long past for quibbling about words and for hurling unsavory epithets against the Latter-day Saints. These are deep and solemn and ponderous matters. We need not think we can

trifle with sacred things and escape the wrath of a just God.

Either the Book of Mormon is true, or it is false; either it came from God, or it was spawned in the infernal realms. It declares plainly that all men must accept it as pure scripture or they will lose their souls. It is not and cannot be simply another treatise on religion; it either came from heaven or from hell. And it is time for all those who seek salvation to find out for themselves whether it is of the Lord or of Lucifer.

A test

May I be so bold as to propose a test and issue a challenge. It is hoped that all who take this test will have a knowledge of the Holy Bible, because the more people know about the Bible, the greater their appreciation will be of the Book of Mormon.

This test is for saint and sinner alike; it is for Jew and Gentile, for bond and free, for black and white, for all of our Father's children. We have all been commanded to search the scriptures, to treasure up the Lord's word, to live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God. (See D&C 84:44.) This, then, is the test:

Let every person make a list of from one hundred to two hundred doctrinal subjects, making a conscious effort to cover the whole field of gospel knowledge. The number of subjects chosen will depend on personal inclination and upon how broad the spectrum will be under each subject.

Then write each subject on a blank piece of paper. Divide the paper into two columns; at the top of one, write "Book of Mormon," and at the top of the other, "Bible."

Then start with the first verse and phrase of the Book of Mormon, and continuing verse by verse and thought by thought, put the substance of each verse under its proper heading. Find the same doctrine in the Old and New Testaments, and place it in the parallel columns.

What think ye of the Book of Mormon?

Ponder the truths you learn, and it will not be long before you know that Lehi and Jacob excel Paul in teaching the Atonement; that Alma's sermons on faith and on being born again surpass anything in the Bible; that Nephi makes a better exposition of the scattering and gathering of Israel than do Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel combined; that Mormon's words about faith, hope, and charity have a clarity, a breadth, and a power of expression that even Paul did not attain; and so on and so on.

There is another and simpler test that all who seek to know the truth might well take. It calls for us simply to read, ponder, and pray—all in the spirit of faith and with an open mind. To keep ourselves alert to the issues at hand—as we do read, ponder, and pray—we should ask ourselves a thousand times, "Could any man have written this book?"

And it is absolutely guaranteed that sometime between the first and thousandth time this question is asked, every sincere and genuine truth seeker will come to know by the power of the Spirit that the Book of Mormon is true, that it is the mind and will and voice of the Lord to the whole world in our day.

We ask, then: What think ye of the Book of Mormon? Who can tell its wonder and worth? How many martyrs have suffered death in the flesh to bring it forth and carry its saving message to a wicked world?

God has spoken in our day

We answer: It is a book, a holy book, a book of sacred, saving scripture. It is a voice from the dust, a voice that whispers low out of the earth, telling of a fallen people who sank into an endless oblivion because they forsook their God.

It is truth springing out of the earth as righteousness looks down from heaven. It is the stick of Joseph in the hands of Ephraim, which will guide all

Israel, the ten tribes included, to return to Him whom their fathers worshipped. It contains the word that will gather the whole house of Israel and make them once again one nation upon the mountains of Israel, as it was in the days of their fathers.

It is an account of the ministry of the Son of God to his other sheep in the day they saw his face and heard his voice and believed his word.

It is the divine evidence, the proof, that God has spoken in our day. Its chief purpose is to convince all men, Jew and Gentile alike, that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, who manifests himself, by faith, in all ages and among all peoples.

Prepare men for now and for eternity

It came forth in our day proving to the world that the Bible is true; that Jesus, by whom the Atonement came, is Lord of all; that Joseph Smith was called of God, as were the prophets of old; that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the one place on earth where salvation is found.

It is the book that will save the world and prepare the sons of men for joy and peace here and now and everlasting life in eternity.

As it happens, I am one of the many who have come to know, by the revelations of the Holy Ghost to my soul, that the Book of Mormon is true. And, knowing that I will be accountable for that witness before the bar of the great Jehovah when he judges all men, I testify that as he lives the Book

of Mormon is true, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

Before hearing President Hinckley's concluding remarks, we should like to express, on behalf of all who have listened to the singing during sessions of the general conference, appreciation and our sincere gratitude to the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth Chorus and to their conductors and organists.

We thank our city officials for the cooperation given this conference, and the Relief Society and Church Health Unit nurses who have been on hand to render service throughout the conference, and the ushers and interpreters.

We express appreciation to the local and national press representatives for the coverage given to the conference and to the owners and managers of the many radio and television stations and cable systems which have given public service time to carry sessions of this conference in many countries.

We shall now be pleased to listen to President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, who will be the concluding speaker of the conference, after which the Tabernacle Choir will sing "Precious Savior, Dear Redeemer."

The benediction will be offered by Elder Rex C. Reeve, Sr., a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

This conference will then stand adjourned for six months.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My brethren and sisters, it has been customary for President Kimball to speak at the conclusion of the conference, but because of his age and the infirmities of his health, that is not pos-

sible. I know that you would have appreciated hearing from him. I know likewise that I am a poor substitute. It has been wonderful that he and President Romney have been able to be with

us. Just to see them has lifted the hearts of many, many people.

The spirit of the conference

While we were at lunch, we sat with a man who is now a grandfather who said that his little four-year-old grandson came to him the other day and said, "Grandpa, why do the humming-birds hum?" Grandpa said, "I don't know. Why?" The little boy said, "Because they don't know the words."

It is unlikely that we will remember very many of the words that we have heard during the meetings of this conference. But I hope that we shall be able to "hum" the spirit of this conference and that we shall carry with us a great feeling of uplift because of our participation together. It has been a glorious time. The Spirit of the Lord has been with us. We have every reason to be grateful. We have been refreshed in our testimonies and strengthened in our faith.

Read and implement the counsel

We have heard sound counsel from the Brethren who have spoken to us. Having heard it, I hope we will read it when the proceedings of the conference are published, and again savor to our benefit that which has been said.

They have testified of our Eternal Father and of his Beloved Son, and they have done so by the power of the Holy Ghost. By that same power they have spoken of the Prophet Joseph and that which came of his faith and industry and calling as a servant of the Lord.

They have counseled us concerning our families, our lives, our affairs. All of us will be the stronger as we implement in our lives and in our homes the things to which we have listened.

Critics mock the sacred

Do not fear concerning the Church. We have had mentioned in this conference some of our critics. They

mock that which is most holy to us. They jest over and hold up to ridicule that which has come by revelation from the Almighty. Any man who tries to find humor at the expense of that which is sacred to another is deeply flawed in character. Shame on those who stoop to such actions in the name of fun and on those who witness and laugh. Simple courtesy would dictate a decent respect for that which is sacred to neighbors and associates in one's society.

The Lord himself has said, "Remember that that which cometh from above is sacred, and must be spoken with care, and by constraint of the Spirit" (D&C 63:64).

Would a true Christian injure another?

As has been indicated, there are a few who have taken it upon themselves as their mission to belittle and demean and destroy the faith of the weak, with a badly flawed argument that we are not Christians.

To all of these we have a twofold answer, quietly spoken. The first is this: Would a true follower of Christ, a follower of him who was the epitome of love and mercy and consideration, so seek to injure another?

"By their fruits ye shall know them"

The second: We ask only that we be judged by our fruits. Said the Master:

"Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

"Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

"A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. . . .

"Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:16-18, 20).

By that standard we are willing to be judged.

In God's hands

At a time when we were under far more intensive siege than we are today, President Joseph F. Smith stood at this pulpit in this Tabernacle and said:

"We thank God for His mercies and blessings; and I do not know but what we owe in some small degree gratitude to those who have bitterly opposed the work of the Lord; for in all their opposings and bitter strife against our people the Lord has developed His power and wisdom, and has brought His people more fully into the knowledge and favor of the intelligent people of the earth. Through the very means used by those who have opposed the work of God, He has brought out good for Zion. Yet, it is written, and I believe it is true, that although it must needs be that offenses come, woe unto them by whom they come; but they are in the hands of the Lord as we are. We bring no railing accusation against them. We are willing to leave them in the hands of the Almighty to deal with them as seemeth Him good. Our business is to work righteousness in the earth, to seek for the development of a knowledge of God's will and of God's ways, and of His great and glorious truths which He has revealed through the instrumentality of Joseph the Prophet, not only for the salvation of the living but for the redemption and salvation of the dead" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1908, pp. 2-3).

And so we let the matter rest there.

Live gospel standards

Now let those of us who have traveled to the conference return to our homes with resolution in our hearts, and those of us who have participated in the conference by means of satellite transmission, television, and radio resolve also that we shall try a little harder to live the standards of the gospel, of which we have heard these days; that we shall lower our voices of criticism and negativism; that we will look for good in the world; that as employees we

will be honest with our employers in giving of our time and of our talents; that we shall cultivate within our hearts a love one for another, both within and without the Church; that as husbands and wives we shall be true to one another in every respect; that every husband and holder of the priesthood will treat his companion and children with love and deference; that we will cultivate in our homes family prayer, making it the habit of our daily lives; that we will deal honestly with all men and walk humbly and obediently with God our Eternal Father. For this I humbly pray.

Blessings upon this people

I remember as a boy sitting in this Tabernacle and hearing President Heber J. Grant, his voice trembling with conviction, read these words:

"How long can rolling waters remain impure? What power shall stay the heavens? As well might man stretch forth his puny arm to stop the Missouri river in its decreed course, or to turn it up stream, as to hinder the Almighty from pouring down knowledge from heaven upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints" (D&C 121:33).

I believed those words when I heard President Grant read them then. I believe them now. I believe without any question, my brethren and sisters, that this is the work of God and that he is pouring out, in a marvelous and miraculous way, his blessings upon this people.

Walk without fear

We held in this hall a week ago last evening a great meeting of the women of the Church. And beyond this hall, there were thousands and tens of thousands assembled in more than six hundred other halls, to which the proceedings of this meeting were carried by satellite transmission. I thought of the miracle of it, the marvel of it, of this great sisterhood of more than a million wonderful women, devoted to

the gospel of Jesus Christ, who walk with faith in their hearts—mothers, whose greatest desire is to rear another generation of faithful sons and daughters, who love the Lord and are willing to walk in obedience to the commandments of the Master.

And then last evening we had assembled here the men, the priesthood of the Church, hundreds of thousands—here and across the world in more than 1,153 other places, as well as the 600 stake centers to which the proceedings of the earlier meeting were carried. And I said again to myself, “What glorious things the God of heaven has wrought in behalf of his people.” Let us be thankful; let us walk in gratitude; let us walk without fear.

There comes into my mind these great words from one of the letters of Paul to Timothy:

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord” (2 Timothy 1:7–8).

I commend those marvelous words to you: “God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord.”

“Deny yourselves of all ungodliness”

I wish to read as we conclude this great conference this challenge of Moroni, among the last words that he wrote after wandering in loneliness for a long period. As he looked down to this day when his record should come forth, he gave this great charge to us of this generation:

“And awake, and arise from the dust, O Jerusalem; yea, and put on thy

beautiful garments, O daughter of Zion; and strengthen thy stakes and enlarge thy borders forever, that thou mayest no more be confounded, that the covenants of the Eternal Father which he hath made unto thee, O house of Israel, may be fulfilled.

“Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness” (Moroni 10:31–32).

As we all sang together in this meeting that stirring hymn, the chorus of which contains these words, my heart was lifted in a great surge of emotion concerning the faith of this people:

I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and
cause thee to stand,
Upheld by my righteous,
omnipotent hand.
("How Firm a Foundation,"
Hymns, no. 66.)

Blessings of heaven

I leave you my testimony and invoke the blessings of heaven upon you. I know that God our Eternal Father lives. I know that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior and the Redeemer of mankind. I know that this is the work of the Lord, that this Church is established upon a foundation of Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone. (See Ephesians 2:20.) I know these things, and I know that you know them; and with that knowledge may we go forward with our lives, walking with integrity and gladness and faith, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Tabernacle Choir sang
“Precious Savior, Dear Redeemer.”

Elder Rex C. Reeve, Sr., offered
the benediction.

GENERAL WOMEN'S MEETING

With the theme "A Season for Strength," a general women's meeting was held Saturday evening, September 24, 1983, in the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, Utah. Latter-day Saint women and girls ten years of age and older met in the Tabernacle and Assembly Hall on Temple Square and gathered in meetinghouses to view the proceedings by television and satellite coverage. The program included music

by a multiregion women's chorus, pre-recorded tape segments, and talks by President Gordon B. Hinckley of the First Presidency and the general presidents of the Relief Society, Primary, and Young Women.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor to the First Presidency, gave the following talk at that meeting.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My beloved sisters, it is a privilege and an honor to be with you.

You are not alone

I suppose this is the largest gathering of women ever convened in the history of the Church. The Tabernacle is filled to capacity. Additionally, women are assembled in over six hundred stake centers, and many others are watching in homes where television is available. As I have looked over this vast congregation, I have thought, "What a profitable day for the hairdressers!"

I know that many of you out there feel lonely at times. Some of you girls find that there are only two or three Latter-day Saints in the large schools which you attend. You women who work may find yourselves the only members of the Church at your places of employment. You who are widows and some who have been divorced may feel that you are alone. The numbers who are participating in this meeting tonight should give you the assurance that you are not alone. You are part of the greatest sorority or sisterhood on earth. It probably includes some two million women.

"What are little girls made of?"

This vast congregation includes girls and women from the age of ten and up. I am happy for the inclusion of the ten-year-olds. Ten is a great age, a beautiful age, when a child who previously appeared to be all arms and legs and appetite seems to partake of a refining influence that brings with it beauty and grace. It is like blossoms in the spring that burst with the warmth of the sun. It is a time of awakening of mental and physical powers. It is the bridge season between childhood and youth.

Do you know that the great prophet-historian Mormon received his charge concerning the sacred records when he was only ten years of age? The book which we have today, this sacred and marvelous testament of Christ, resulted from Mormon's faithfulness in meeting that assignment. Never discount the importance of a ten-year-old.

"What are little girls made of? Sugar and spice, and everything nice." So goes the old nursery rhyme. But more importantly, they are the promise of the future. Through them, eventually, must filter the qualities of all of the earlier generations, which will become the bone and the tissue, the minds and the spirits, of the generations yet to be.

To you young girls I say with all of the strength and conviction I can muster, be sweet, be good, be strong

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and virtuous and wonderful. Somehow I feel that the Lord included you with those of whom he spoke when he said, "Except ye . . . become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). Channing Pollock, the gifted author and playwright, once wished, through one of his characters, that we might all be born old and gradually grow younger and ever more innocent until at death we have become as little children.

Young women: Prepare for any eventuality

I next would like to say a few words to you young women, you who have crossed the threshold from childhood and early youth into the maturity of your later teens and early twenties. For you this must be a season for strength. It is a season that demands discipline of mind and of body. This is the season for preparation, and the Lord has said, "If ye are prepared ye shall not fear" (D&C 38:30).

It is a time for education. The world that lies ahead of you will be fiercely competitive. Now is the time to train yourselves for possible future responsibilities.

Education is a tradition that has come down from our early history. We believe in the training of our youth, girls as well as boys. Brigham Young once said, "We have sisters here who, if they had the privilege of studying, would make just as good mathematicians or accountants as any man" (*Journal of Discourses*, 13:61).

You have available to you tremendous opportunities for training your minds and your hands. You will wish for marriage and the companionship of a good husband. But none of us can foretell the future. Prepare yourselves for any eventuality. You need not go to a university if that is not your taste. There are wonderful technical colleges across the land which will hone your skills and assist you in qualifying yourselves for future responsibilities.

Hopefully, most of you will marry. But the training you have received will not have been in vain. It will be a blessing whether you be single or married.

Keep yourselves worthy of marriage. This is an age when strength is needed to retain that worthiness. Sceldom if ever in the history of the world have we been so widely exposed to those seductive influences which lead to degradation, sin, and regret. The merchants of pornography and some designers of entertainment are as clever as hell itself with their beguiling wares. They would lead you into a trap that could eventually bring only sorrow, remorse, and heartache.

Said the Lord, "Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly." He then gave this promise: "Then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God. . . .

"The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion . . . ; thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever" (D&C 121:45-46).

Exaltation

I paraphrase a few words of a statement made by the First Presidency more than forty years ago:

How glorious is she who lives a chaste life. She walks unfearful in the full glare of the noonday sun, for she is without moral infirmity. She can be reached by no shafts of base calumny, for her armor is without flaw. Her virtue cannot be challenged by any just accuser, for she lives above reproach. Her cheek is never blotched with shame, for she is without hidden sin. She is honored and respected by all mankind, for she is beyond their censure. She is loved by the Lord, for she stands without blemish. The exaltations of eternities await her coming. (*Messages of the First Presidency*, comp. by James R. Clark, 6 vols [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1975], 3 Oct. 1942, p. 6:177.)

Now if there be any here who have slipped, I hold out to you the assurance that there is forgiveness for the individual who truly repents. God will forgive those who acknowledge the error of their ways and who demonstrate by the goodness of their lives the sincerity of their repentance.

Marriage in the temple: A privilege beyond price

I should like now to say a few words to those of you who are married. I would hope that you may have been married in the house of the Lord. Our Father in Heaven, who loves his children, has provided for them a privilege beyond price, and that is the eternal sealing of the most precious of all relationships.

To you who have this priceless blessing, live worthy of it. Loyalty is of the very essence of your temple vows and covenants—loyalty to your companion, loyalty to your children, loyalty to God with whom you have made solemn covenant. He will not be mocked. Glorious and wonderful are the promises to those who keep their covenants and walk in obedience to his divine commandments. The sense of responsibility that comes therewith will sweeten marriage, will bring a sanctifying influence to the home, will make more precious the children who come of that union, and will give peace throughout the seasons of life and comfort in time of death.

Be patient and be an example

I recognize that there are many in this vast congregation who have not had the opportunity of temple marriage, whose husbands may not be members of the Church or may not have qualified themselves to go to the house of the Lord. To you I wish to say, be patient, be prayerful. Stifle your tendency to criticize. Live the kind of life in your home that will cause your companion to see in you that goodness, that

virtue, and that strength which come of the gospel.

I remember a family I knew fifty years ago. The wife was a devoted member of the Church. The husband was not a member. He smoked and drank. She hoped and she prayed. She lived for the day when his heart might be touched by the Spirit of the Lord. Years passed one after another into more than a decade. Her example was one of goodness and gladness and faith. After many years he began to soften. He saw what the Church did for her and for their children. He turned around. He humbled himself. He was baptized. He has since served as a quorum president and a bishop, as a missionary, and as a worker in the temple.

You have not failed until you have quit trying, and please remember that your example in your home will be a more persuasive sermon than will any other kind of preachment.

Salute to homemakers

I salute most warmly and sincerely you dedicated and wonderful homemakers. I have only respect for the title "housewife."

I clipped this from the *Wall Street Journal*, titled "The Most Creative Job in the World":

"It involves taste, fashion, decorating, recreation, education, transportation, psychology, romance, cuisine, designing, literature, medicine, handicraft, art, horticulture, economics, government, community relations, pediatrics, geriatrics, entertainment, maintenance, purchasing, direct mail, law, accounting, religion, energy and management. Anyone who can handle all those has to be somebody special. She is. She's a homemaker" (3 June 1983).

Unmarried: Take advantage of opportunities

Now, a word to you who have not married. It would be a beautiful world if every girl had the privilege of mar-

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riage to a good man whom she could look upon with pride and gladness as her companion in time and eternity, hers alone to love and cherish, to respect and help.

But it does not always work out that way. There are some who, for reasons unexplainable, do not have the opportunity of marriage. To you I should like to say, don't spend your time and wear out your lives wandering about in the wasteland of self-pity. God has given you talents of one kind or another. He has given you the capacity to serve the needs of others and bless their lives with your kindness and concern. Reach out to someone in need. There are so very many out there.

Add knowledge to knowledge. Refine your mind and skills in a chosen field of discipline. There are tremendous opportunities for you if you are prepared to take advantage of them. Nearly all of the honorable vocations of life are now open to women. Do not feel that because you are single God has forsaken you. The world needs you. The Church needs you. So very many people and causes need your strength and wisdom and talents.

Be prayerful, and do not lose hope. But do not become obsessed with ambition to find a companion. Your obsession likely will only make you less attractive, or it may cause a weakening of your standards. Live the very best life of which you are capable, and the Lord in his greater wisdom and in his eternal season will give you answer to your prayers.

To mothers who must work

To you women who find it necessary to work when you would rather be at home, may I speak briefly. I know that there are many of you who find yourselves in this situation. Some of you have been abandoned and are divorced, with children to care for. Some of you are widows with dependent families. I honor you and respect you for your integrity and spirit of self-reliance. I pray that the Lord will bless

you with strength and great capacity, for you need both. You have the responsibilities of both breadwinner and homemaker. I know that it is difficult. I know that it is discouraging. I pray that the Lord will bless you with a special wisdom and the remarkable talent needed to provide your children with time and companionship and love and with that special direction which only a mother can give. I pray also that he will bless you with help, unstintingly given, from family, friends, and the Church, which will lift some of the burden from your shoulders and help you in your times of extremity.

We sense, at least in some small degree, the loneliness you must occasionally feel and the frustrations you must experience as you try to cope with problems that sometimes seem beyond your capacity to handle. Sometimes you need food for your tables, and we trust that bishops will be there to supply food and other goods and services under the great program which the Lord has provided in his Church. But we know that more often your greater need is for understanding and appreciation and companionship. We shall try a little harder to cultivate these virtues, and I urge you sisters who are in a position to do so to reach out with greater concern to those who find themselves in these less fortunate circumstances.

To mothers who work when not necessary

Now to others who work when it is not necessary and who, while doing so, leave children to the care of those who often are only poor substitutes, I offer a word of caution. Do not follow a practice which will bring you later regret. If the purpose of your daily employment is simply to get money for a boat or a fancy automobile or some other desirable but unnecessary thing, and in the process you lose the companionship of your children and the opportunity to rear them, you may find that you have lost the substance while grasping at the shadow.

Women's responsibility in building the kingdom

In conclusion, I should like to say a word to all women of the Church. I know of no doctrine which states that we made a choice when we came to earth as to whether we wished to be male or female. That choice was made by our Father in Heaven in his infinite wisdom. I am satisfied that he loves his daughters as much as he loves his sons. President Harold B. Lee once remarked that priesthood is the power by which God works through us as men. I should like to add that motherhood is the means by which God carries forward his grand design of continuity of the race. Both priesthood and motherhood are essentials of the plan of the Lord.

Each complements the other. Each is needed by the other. God has created us male and female, each unique in his or her individual capacities and potential. The woman is the bearer and the nurturer of children. The man is the provider and protector. No legislation can alter the sexes. Legislation should provide equality of opportunity, equality of compensation, equality of political privilege. But any legislation which is designed to create neuter gender of that which God created male and female will bring more problems than benefits. Of that I am convinced.

I wish with all my heart we would spend less of our time talking about rights and more talking about responsibilities. God has given the women of this Church a work to do in building his kingdom. That concerns all aspects of our great triad of responsibility—which is, first, to teach the gospel to the world; second, to strengthen the faith and build the happiness of the member-

ship of the Church; and, third, to carry forward the great work of salvation for the dead.

A season for strength

This is a season for strength. I conclude with these stirring words of Moroni, written as he sealed his record to come forth in the dispensation of the fulness of times:

"Awake, and arise from the dust, O Jerusalem; yea, and put on thy beautiful garments, O daughter of Zion; and strengthen thy stakes and enlarge thy borders forever, that thou mayest no more be confounded, that the covenants of the Eternal Father which he hath made unto thee, O house of Israel, may be fulfilled.

"Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness" (Moroni 10:31-32).

Live up to your inheritance

Put on thy beautiful garments, O daughters of Zion. Live up to the great and magnificent inheritance which the Lord God, your Father in Heaven, has provided for you. Rise above the dust of the world. Know that you are daughters of God, children with a divine birthright. Walk in the sun with your heads high, knowing that you are loved and honored, that you are a part of his kingdom, and that there is for you a great work to be done which cannot be left to others.

God be thanked for the wonderful women of this Church. May he plant in your hearts a sense of pride in your capacities and a conviction of truth which shall be as a rudder to keep you safe through every storm, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

SALT LAKE TABERNACLE CHOIR AND ORGAN BROADCAST

The following broadcast, announced by J. Spencer Kinard and originating with KSL Radio and Television, Salt Lake City, Utah, was presented from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, October 2, 1983, through the courtesy of the Columbia Broadcasting System's network throughout the United States, parts of Canada, and through other facilities to several points overseas:

(Choir without announcement: "Ode to Music"—Butler)

Announcer: Once more we welcome you within these walls with Music and the Spoken Word from the crossroads of the West.

CBS and its affiliated stations bring you at this hour the Mormon Tabernacle Choir from Temple Square in Salt Lake City, with Jerold Ottley conducting the Choir, Robert Cundick, Tabernacle organist, and the Spoken Word given by Spencer Kinard.

Announcer: The Tabernacle Choir opened today's broadcast of Music and the Spoken Word singing a composition by Eugene Butler with text by John Dwight, "Ode to Music."

The Choir next sings music by Tschesnokoff, "Now We Sing Thy Praise . . . Lord of all creation."

(Choir: "Now We Sing Thy Praise"—Tschesnokoff)

Announcer: Tenor soloist Kenneth Jones joins the Choir in singing the music of B. Cecil Gates, "I know that My Redeemer Lives . . . to bless and comfort me through the years."

(Choir: "My Redeemer Lives"—Gates)

Announcer: At the console of the Tabernacle organ on Temple Square, Robert Cundick plays "Minuet" from the *Suite Gothique* by Leon Boellman.

(Organ: "Minuet"—Boellman)

Announcer: We live in a beautiful world, a world of not only beautiful objects, but of beautiful moments, beautiful experiences. Each season is glorious in its time, and each has its lesson. Presently the harvested fields are being turned under, and the rich aroma of earth and decaying stubble forewarns the snow of winter. And winter will come, then spring, and each beautiful moment of growth and maturity and change will bring forth its scent and scene.

All this beauty is real, not only in itself but it is also an emblem and evidence of him who made it, as are each of us. The world is made for our instruction as well as our pleasure. However, we may not always see beauty where God made things beautiful. Moments may escape us, and we may focus too much on the evidence of physical things.

When the Lord called upon the prophet Samuel to anoint David as king of Israel, Samuel was instructed: "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature . . . for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

Too frequently in a world of commerce, "outward appearance" becomes an end in itself rather than serving as an emblem of that deeper, more fundamental spiritual beauty. Often a "successful" appearance is regarded as more important than the true success of virtue; too often people are not judged by the beauty of their hearts, but by the costliness of their apparel, by the size and year of their automobiles, by the location and square footage of their homes. The beauty and wealth of the earth, which God intended for our edification and enjoyment, become merely indications of rank and status,

the means of separating us one from another, and from our God.

As we try to understand and to recognize the beauty of life, it is important for us to remember that the Savior himself was not born to wealth or station, but to the simple beauty of a manger. The humility of his birth—of his upbringing as a carpenter and of the society he kept with fishermen—is a lesson to us in how to see our world, what to look for in it, and what to find in one another.

If we can see beauty where God made it, and if we can learn to see through the beautiful moment to God himself, then perhaps we will understand the beauty of humility—even the humility of the Savior—and the glory of a humble heart.

(Choir without announcement: "Jesus, Once of Humble Birth"—"English Chorister")

Announcer: The Tabernacle Choir has sung an English hymn tune with a text by Parley P. Pratt, "Jesus, Once of Humble Birth."

The Choir closes today's broadcast singing the music of Charles Gounod, "O Divine Redeemer."

(Choir: "O Divine Redeemer"—Gounod)

Announcer: Again we leave you from within the shadows of the everlasting hills. May peace be with you this day . . . and always.

Announcer (on radio): This concludes the two-thousand, eight-hundred, twenty-fourth performance continuing the fifty-fifth year of this traditional broadcast from the Mormon Tabernacle on Temple Square, brought to you by CBS and its affiliated stations, originating with Station KSL in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Jerold Ottley conducted the Choir, Robert Cundick was at the organ, the Spoken Word was given by Spencer Kinard.

In another seven days at this same hour, Music and the Spoken Word will be heard again from the crossroads of the West.

This is the CBS Radio Network.

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE MUSIC

The Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir furnished the choral numbers for the Saturday morning, Sunday morning, and Sunday afternoon sessions of the conference with Jerold Ottley and Donald H. Ripplinger conducting.

The music for the Saturday afternoon session was provided by the Mormon Youth Chorus with Robert Bowden conducting.

At the general priesthood meeting, a combined men's choir from the Tabernacle Choir and the Mormon

Youth Chorus directed by Jerold Ottley and Robert C. Bowden furnished the music.

Prelude, postlude, and interlude music and accompaniments on the Tabernacle organ throughout the conference sessions were played by Robert Cundick, Roy M. Darley, John Longhurst, and Clay Christiansen, Tabernacle organists.

Francis M. Gibbons
Clerk of the Conference

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THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY
SAINTS

Official Report of the
One Hundred Fifty-fourth
Annual General

CONFERENCE

of The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints

held in the Tabernacle
Salt Lake City, Utah

April 7 and 8, 1984

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THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-FOURTH ANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The 154th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 7, 1984, at 10:00 A.M.

The general sessions of the conference were held at 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday, April 7 and 8, 1984. The general priesthood meeting was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, April 7, 1984 at 6:00 P.M.

President Spencer W. Kimball attended three sessions of the conference and watched the other sessions on television in his apartment in the Hotel Utah. President Marion G. Romney, First Counselor in the First Presidency, watched the conference on television in his home because of ill health. President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday morning, general priesthood, and Sunday morning sessions. President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, conducted the Saturday afternoon and Sunday afternoon sessions.

Television and radio stations carried portions or all of some of the conference sessions to large audiences throughout the world. The general sessions and the priesthood session were also carried via satellite transmission to more than 650 stake centers. The general priesthood session was also carried by closed-circuit transmission to approximately 892 locations in many countries.

General Authorities present

The following General Authorities of the Church attended one or more of the general sessions:

The First Presidency: Spencer W. Kimball,¹ Gordon B. Hinckley.

The Council of the Twelve: Ezra Taft Benson, Howard W. Hunter, Thomas S. Monson, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, Bruce R. McConkie, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, and Russell M. Nelson.²

The First Quorum of the Seventy: Presidents: J. Thomas Fyans, Carlos E. Asay, M. Russell Ballard, Dean L. Larsen, Royden G. Derrick, G. Homer Durham, and Richard G. Scott. *Additional Members of the Seventy:* Marion D. Hanks, A. Theodore Tuttle, Franklin D. Richards, Theodore M. Burton, Paul H. Dunn, Hartman Rector, Jr., Loren C. Dunn, Robert L. Simpson, Rex D. Pinegar, Wm. Grant Bangerter, Robert D. Hales, Adney Y. Komatsu, Joseph B. Wirthlin, Gene R. Cook, Charles Didier, William R. Bradford, George P. Lee, John H. Groberg, Jacob de Jager, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Robert E. Wells, James M. Paramore, Hugh W. Pinnock, F. Enzio Busche, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Ronald E. Poelman, Derek A. Cuthbert, Robert L. Backman, Rex C. Reeve, Sr., F. Burton Howard, Ted E. Brewerton, Jack H. Goaslind, Jr., Angel Abrea, John K. Carmack, Russell Taylor, Robert B. Harbertson, Devere Harris, Spencer H. Osborn, and Philip T. Sonntag.

¹President Marion G. Romney was excused due to ill health.

²Dallin H. Oaks, sustained Saturday morning as a new member of the Twelve, was out of the city and so was excused.

The Presiding Bishopric: Victor L. Brown, H. Burke Peterson, and J. Richard Clarke.

Emeritus General Authorities: Eldred G. Smith, Sterling W. Sill, Henry D. Taylor, Bernard P. Brockbank, James A. Cullimore, Joseph Anderson, and John H. Vandenberg.³

Other authorities present

Other authorities of the Church in attendance included Regional Representatives, presidents of stakes and their counselors, presidents of temples, bishops of wards, and presidencies and members of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood quorums.

Many general, stake, and ward auxiliary officers also attended.

FIRST DAY MORNING MEETING

FIRST SESSION

The first general session of the 154th Annual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 7, 1984, at 10:00 A.M. President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The music for the opening session was provided by the Tabernacle Choir with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducting and Robert Cundick at the organ.

Prior to the meeting the Tabernacle Choir sang "Praise the Lord with Heart and Voice" without announcement.

President Hinckley then made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

We are convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City in this, the first general session of the 154th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We deeply regret that President Spencer W. Kimball is unable to be with us this morning. He is in his apartment in the Hotel Utah, where he will watch the conference on television.

We also regret the absence of President Marion G. Romney, First

Counselor in the First Presidency. He has asked to be excused and will watch the conference proceedings on television at his home.

We welcome all who are participating in the conference this morning, whether seated here in the Tabernacle or in the overflow session in the nearby Assembly Hall where Elders Royden G. Derrick and Rex C. Reeve, Sr., preside; or who are participating by satellite transmission, radio, or television. The proceedings are being carried to over six hundred and fifty stake centers throughout the United States and Canada where members of the Church are assembled.

We acknowledge the General Authorities of the Church and the Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary general presidencies and the Activities Committee who are seated on the stand. We also extend a special welcome to government, education, and civic leaders who are present.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger with Robert Cundick at the organ, is providing the music for this session.

The Choir opened the conference by singing "Praise the Lord with Heart

³O. Leslie Stone was excused because he was out of town.

and Voice," and they will now sing "Behold, the Tabernacle of God." Following the singing, the invocation will be offered by Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Choir sang "Behold, the Tabernacle of God."

Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., offered the invocation.

President Gordon B. Hinckley spoke without announcement.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My beloved associates in the work of the Lord, this is truly a world conference, with the restored gospel now taught in some ninety nations. It is a wonderful and a marvelous thing that has come to pass. The work is moving forward. It will continue to grow and spread over the earth, for it is the work of God, restored in this the dispensation of the fulness of times, that the purposes of the Almighty in behalf of his sons and daughters might be accomplished.

The Lord's prophet

This work is a great and important part of his grand, eternal plan. It is the Church of Jesus Christ. It bears his name. He stands at the head; we are but his servants. Our desire is to do his will: to be sensitive to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit, and then to go forward with faith to accomplish whatever he has commanded. He has placed a prophet on the earth. Though he is advanced in age, he is the prophet of the Lord, and he will be with us for so long as the Lord wills. And as the Lord's appointed servant, no major decision concerning this work will be made without his consideration and his direction. As we begin this conference, we shall take care of several items of business according to his expressed will and consent.

Releases of Relief Society and Young Women

There is a principle followed in the Church of rotating responsibilities. Inherent in a call to serve is a release, to be expected and welcomed after service well performed. In that spirit we extend honorable releases to the following: Sister Barbara B. Smith as president of the Relief Society, together with her counselors, Sister Marian R. Boyer and Sister Ann Reese, and all members of the Relief Society General Board; Sister Elaine A. Cannon as president of the Young Women, together with her counselors, Arlene B. Darger and Norma B. Smith, and members of the Young Women board. These women have performed a remarkable work during the years they have served. They have given countless hours of time, have given of their means and of their strength, have traveled far and wide without regard for personal convenience, all in furthering the work of the Lord. They retire now with our love and blessing, and we pray that the Lord will continue to pour out his Spirit upon them and upon their families and their homes. All who wish to join in an expression of appreciation to these beloved sisters for their dedicated, effective service may now do so by the uplifted hand.

Twelve and Seventies

As you know, there are two vacancies in the Council of the Twelve

Apostles, incident to the passing of Elder LeGrand Richards and Elder Mark E. Petersen. We shall take action to fill these vacancies this morning, and we shall also add to the First Quorum of the Seventy.

In the case of the Seventy, we are putting into effect the practice long generally followed and accepted in the Church with reference to other offices. Members of the First Quorum of the Seventy are General Authorities in every sense: in calling, in responsibility, in power and authority. Theirs have been permanent appointments, and those presently serving will continue so to serve. However, tenure of appointment is not important insofar as the work is concerned. Calls to serve as bishop, stake president, Regional Representative, mission president, temple president, and president of the auxiliary organizations are for a period of years. The individual is then honorably released and others are afforded the opportunity of service. After much prayerful consideration, we have called six men, mature and tested through long years of service, to become members of the First Quorum of the Seventy, to serve for periods of three to five years, just as a mission president or temple president would do, and then to be released with honor and appreciation. While they so serve, they will be General Authorities with every right, power, and authority necessary to function. They will be expected to give their full time to this work while they are in office. This procedure, we feel, will provide a constant infusion of new talent and a much widened opportunity for men of ability and faith to serve in these offices.

Sustaining of General Authorities and general officers

I shall now present to you the names of the General Authorities and general officers of the Church for your vote.

It is proposed that we sustain President Spencer W. Kimball as

prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, by the same sign.

Marion G. Romney as First Counselor in the First Presidency, and Gordon B. Hinckley as Second Counselor in the First Presidency. All in favor, please signify it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

It is proposed that we sustain as President of the Council of the Twelve, Elder Ezra Taft Benson. All in favor, please manifest it. Those opposed, by the same sign.

As the Council of the Twelve Apostles: Ezra Taft Benson, Howard W. Hunter, Thomas S. Monson, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, Bruce R. McConkie, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, and Dallin H. Oaks. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

With reference to Dallin Oaks, I should like to say that while we nominate and sustain him today, he will not be ordained to the apostleship, nor will he be set apart as a member of the Council of the Twelve, nor will he begin his apostolic service, until after he completes his present judicial commitments, which may require several weeks. He is absent from the city, and necessarily absent from the conference. We excuse him.

It is proposed that we sustain the Counselors in the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

As the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy: J. Thomas Fyans, Carlos E. Asay, M. Russell Ballard, Dean L. Larsen, Royden G. Derrick, G. Homer Durham, and Richard G. Scott. As the new members of the First Quorum of the Seventy, previously referred to: John K. Carmack, Russell C. Taylor, Robert B. Harbertson, Devere Harris, Spencer H. Osborn, and Philip T. Sonntag. And all

the other members of the First Quorum of the Seventy, the Presiding Bishopric, and the emeritus Brethren as at present constituted. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

The Relief Society: Barbara Ann Woodhead Winder as president. The Young Women: Ardeth Greene Kapp as president. All in favor, please manifest it. Those opposed, by the same sign. I should say that these calls have come just very recently—a matter of hours—to these women, and they will have more time to select their counselors and members of their boards.

All of the other general officers and boards as at present constituted. All in favor, manifest it. Contrary, by the same sign.

It appears to me that the voting has been unanimous in favor of the General Authorities and these general officers.

New temples announced

I mention to you another matter. We announced this morning the con-

struction of five new temples, to be built in Bogotá, Colombia; San Diego, California; Portland, Oregon; Las Vegas, Nevada; and Toronto, Ontario, Canada. We met earlier at 7:30 this morning with officers of the stakes in these areas, and all expressed their enthusiastic support of these undertakings.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

We shall ask the Brethren and sisters who have been newly called to take their places on the stand, the women over here and the new Seventies here. That will be a long walk for some of them.

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "How Wondrous and Great." We shall then be pleased to hear from President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The Choir sang "How Wondrous and Great."

President Ezra Taft Benson

Take gospel to the world

Ten years ago President Spencer W. Kimball stood at this pulpit. In that conference, he was sustained by Saints throughout the world as President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

In the decade of his leadership that has followed, we have seen progress and growth unequaled in the history of the Church.

In his first conference address as President of the Church, President Kimball declared the program of the Church is "to reaffirm and boldly carry forward the work of God in cleanliness, uprightness, and to take that gospel of

truth to that world that needs so much that godly life" (*Ensign*, May 1974, p. 8).

My message today is to provide counsel on how we as a church and as individuals can carry forward the work of God to all the world.

Strengthen families

First, we need to strengthen families.

We must recognize that the family is the cornerstone of civilization and that no nation will rise above the caliber of its homes. The family is the rock foundation of the Church. We therefore

call on the head of every household to strengthen the family.

We believe marriage was ordained by God for a wise, eternal purpose. The family is the basis of the righteous life. Divinely prescribed roles of father, mother, and children were given from the very beginning.

God established that fathers are to preside in the home. Fathers are to provide, love, teach, and direct.

A mother's role is also God-ordained. Mothers are to conceive, bear, nourish, love, and train. They are to be helpmates, and are to counsel with their husbands.

Parents' responsibility

There is no inequality between the sexes in God's plan. It is a matter of division of responsibility.

Children are likewise counseled in holy writ in their duty to parents:

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

"Honour thy father and mother; [which is the first commandment with promise;]

"That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth" (Ephesians 6:1-3), said the Apostle Paul.

When parents, in companionship, love, and unity, fulfill their heaven-imposed responsibility and children respond with love and obedience, great joy is the result.

Spiritually strengthen families

Recently a letter came to me from a member of the Church describing some of the difficulties and challenges that a husband and his wife were having in rearing their children.

They were married in the temple, but subsequently drifted into inactivity. They had only recently become active again in Church responsibility. They asked for personal counsel as to what they might do to ensure that their children would remain faithful to the gospel and avoid some of the pitfalls that

they had experienced and had seen come to other families.

In other words, they were asking, "How can we spiritually strengthen our family?"

I would invite each of you to ponder that significant question. As a response to this request, I would further invite you to consider the tried and tested formula that successful families have used over the years to attain love, unity, and loyalty to one another and to understand the principles of the gospel.

Love, respect, communication

Successful families have love and respect for each family member. Family members know they are loved and appreciated. Children feel they are loved by their parents. Thus, they are secure and self-assured.

Strong families cultivate an attribute of effective communication. They talk out their problems, make plans together, and cooperate toward common objectives. Family home evening and family councils are practiced and used as effective tools toward this end.

Fathers and mothers in strong families stay close to their children. They talk. Some fathers formally interview each child, others do so informally, and others take occasion to regularly spend time alone with each child.

Provide wholesome influences

Every family has problems and challenges. But successful families try to work together toward solutions instead of resorting to criticism and contention. They pray for each other, discuss, and give encouragement. Occasionally these families fast together in support of one of the family members.

Strong families support each other.

Successful families do things together: family projects, work, vacations, recreation, and reunions.

Successful parents have found that it is not easy to rear children in an environment polluted with evil. Therefore, they take deliberate steps to provide the best of wholesome influences. Moral principles are taught. Good books are made available and read. Television watching is controlled. Good and uplifting music is provided. But most importantly, the scriptures are read and discussed as a means to help develop spiritual-mindedness.

Tried and proven formula

In successful Latter-day Saint homes, parents teach their children to understand faith in God, repentance, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. (See D&C 68:25.)

Family prayer is a consistent practice in these families. Prayer is the means to acknowledge appreciation for blessings and to humbly recognize dependence on Almighty God for strength, sustenance, and support.

It is a wise and true maxim that families that kneel together stand upright before the Lord!

This, then, is the tried and proven formula for rearing successful families. I commend the formula to you.

As parents and grandparents in Zion, it has been the shared hope of my wife and me that all of us will be together in the eternities—that all will be worthy, without a single empty chair.

That is my fervent hope and prayer for each family in the Church.

Now may I direct some remarks to us as members of the Church individually.

New editions of standard works

More than at any time in our history, brothers and sisters, we have need for greater spirituality. The way to develop greater spirituality is to feast on the words of Christ as revealed in the scriptures.

One of the most significant happenings in recent Church history is the publication of the new editions of the

standard works with the new footnotes and other helps.

I think we can say without exaggeration that never before in any dispensation have the Saints been so abundantly blessed with the words of the Lord and His prophets.

For your profit and learning

Now our challenge is to do as the Lord commanded: "Study my word which hath gone forth among the children of men" (D&C 11:22).

This year we are to read the Book of Mormon in the adult curriculum of the Church. The Prophet Joseph Smith said of this sacred record: "The Book of Mormon [is] the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1977], p. 194).

We urge you to study the Book of Mormon as individuals and families and then to do as the prophet Nephi counseled: liken the scriptures to yourselves so that it will be for your profit and learning. (See 1 Nephi 19:23–24.)

We have requested priesthood leaders to minimize administrative meetings on the Sabbath so that families may engage in worship and family time. Our hope is that you will use this time to attend your meetings, render Christian service, visit family members, hold family home evenings, and study the scriptures.

Accept callings and give service

We counsel you to accept callings in the Church and to serve faithfully in the positions to which you are called. Serve one another. Magnify your callings. As you do so, you will be the means of blessing others and you will increase in spirituality.

We urge you, particularly priesthood brethren and Relief Society sisters, to be sensitive to the needs of the

poor, the sick, and the needy. We have a Christian responsibility to see that the widows and fatherless are assisted. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

Keep the commandments

We urge you to keep the commandments of God. By so doing, you will keep yourself free from the bondage of sin.

"Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy might, mind, and strength; and in the name of Jesus Christ . . . serve him" (D&C 59:5).

Confess the hand of God in all things. (See D&C 59:21.)

"Be patient in afflictions" (D&C 24:8).

"Be of good cheer" (D&C 61:36).

Sustain and support the priesthood in the home and Church. (See D&C 107:22.)

Pay an honest tithe and a generous fast offering. (See D&C 119:4; Mosiah 4:21.)

"Love thy neighbor as thyself" (D&C 59:6).

Teach your children. Bring them up in light and truth. (See D&C 93:40, 42-43.)

"Cease to find fault one with another" (D&C 88:124).

"Forgive one another" (D&C 64:9).

Elect honest, good, and wise men to public office. (See D&C 98:10.)

Obey and befriend "that law which is the constitutional law of the land" (D&C 98:6).

Be thrifty. Stay out of debt. (See D&C 19:35.)

Do not covet. (See D&C 88:123.)

Be honest in your dealings with others. (See D&C 51:9.)

Observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy. (See D&C 59:10, 12-13.)

Abstain from the use of liquor, tobacco, and strong and hot drinks. (See D&C 89:5-9.)

"Cease to be unclean"; shun pornography (D&C 88:124).

Seek learning out of the best books. (See D&C 88:118.) Avoid literature and movies which portray evil as good and good as evil.

Do not commit adultery "nor do anything like unto it" (D&C 59:6). That means petting, fornication, homosexuality, and any other form of immorality.

"Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly" (D&C 121:45).

"Practice virtue and holiness" continually (D&C 38:24).

"Clothe yourselves with the bond of charity" (D&C 88:125).

Live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God. (See D&C 98:11.)

Be valiant in your testimony of Christ. (See D&C 76:51, 79.)

Honor your covenants. (See D&C 25:13.)

"Endure to the end" (D&C 14:7).

In a word, though you live in the world, be not of the world!

The mission of the Church

The mission of the Church is to save souls by proclaiming the gospel, perfecting the Saints, and redeeming the dead.

We urge you to do all within your talent and means to help build the kingdom of God on the earth. Always strive to sustain, support, and do what is best for the kingdom of God.

We commend you!

Finally, a word of commendation and encouragement.

Over forty years ago President Kimball and I were called to be members of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. We were ordained Apostles only a few minutes apart.

When we came into the Council, there were 146 stakes. Today there are 1,460—over 800 of which have been organized since President Kimball became President.

The number of members in 1943 was less than a million. Today we exceed five million. Almost two million have become members in the last ten years.

The Church has never been in a better position than at present. There are more devoted members than ever before. Missionary work has caused us to rapidly expand throughout the world. Genealogical and temple work has significantly increased. Leadership has improved. Our youth are more spiritually prepared than ever before.

We are pleased with the activation of many of our brethren and sisters. We encourage priesthood and auxiliary leaders to continue this great effort.

Latter-day Saints, we commend you! We commend your faithfulness. Never have our opportunities and our blessings been so great. In the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith, "Shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward and not backward. Courage . . . and on, on to victory!" (D&C 128:22).

Heritage from the Lord

Some of our members have become disturbed because of derogatory things said about the Church and its leaders, or because of misrepresentations about our doctrines or our practices.

But opposition is not new to the Church. We have had opposition in the past, and we shall continue to have opposition in the future. Do not become discouraged by what others say or do. Stay on the strait and narrow path. You do this by holding fast to the iron rod—the words of God as contained in the scriptures and as given by His living servants on this earth.

I carry with me a statement of the Lord from the Book of Mormon, which my brethren of the Twelve have

heard me quote. The passage reads as follows:

"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall revile against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord" (3 Nephi 22:17).

Fervent prayer to bless good men and women

Brothers and sisters, this is the work of the Lord. This is His church on the earth. He has entrusted His church to the care of humble men, who have extraordinary responsibilities. We need your faith, your support, and your constant prayers.

I testify to you that God lives and that today He communicates to His servants His will. President Spencer W. Kimball is his chosen prophet on earth today. I testify that this is the Church of Jesus Christ—the kingdom of God on this earth.

I pray most earnestly that God's favor and blessing will be on you, your families, and good men and women the world over, for we all are children of one Father.

To this I testify and leave my blessing, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Tabernacle Choir sang "Truth Eternal" without announcement.

President Hinckley

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve, has just addressed us, followed by the Choir singing "Truth Eternal."

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

Unusual response

A few weeks ago while in Idaho reorganizing a stake presidency, I not only met some outstanding priesthood leaders and set three of them apart as a new stake presidency, but I also met a very special young lady I will not soon forget. The newly called presidency, one of whom was serving as a bishop at the time, asked if I could interview a prospective bishop so if he were cleared he could be installed the following Sunday after conference. The appointment was made. I sat in a private office with a well-groomed, attractive couple.

After a few words of greeting and introductions, I looked at her and said, "Tell me about your husband." She hesitated and finally said, "Elder Ashton, I really don't know him very well." Since this was a most unusual response, I promptly said, "Please tell me about that." She responded with, "We have only been married three weeks."

This young couple, both in their early thirties, he an attorney and she a school teacher by profession, were still honeymooning, and their deep, newly found love for each other was most evident. When I said, "I want to talk to the two of you about your husband becoming a bishop," she said, "Some nights ago I had a dream indicating Randy would be a bishop. I just hoped it wouldn't come too soon." She continued with, "Even though we are newlyweds [and incidentally, they told me the reason they had waited until their thirties to marry was because they had spent a long time finding each other] if you are impressed to call Randy to be a bishop, he will be a good one, and I will help him."

Respect and appreciation for good women

What a beautiful attitude. What sustaining support. Her commitment to

her husband, Church, and self was made long before I asked my questions. She had resolved to choose the good part, reminding me of the meaningful statement made about Mary in Luke 10:42: "One thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

The more I become involved in the Church and in communities worldwide, the greater becomes my appreciation and respect for good women. Today I would like to pay sincere tribute and give encouragement to these special ladies. My personal definition of a good woman is any woman who is moving in the right direction. I humbly thank God constantly for their courage, strength, and commitment. Through you noble sisters, each in different circumstances in life, by your example, encouragement, conduct, and personal integrity, God's work goes forward with greater purpose and accomplishment.

Single women in the Church

Let me share with you some recent experiences, correspondence, and observations, particularly with the single women in the Church. Most of them are doing well in the situations in which they find themselves. They, however, sincerely need our love, encouragement, and respect. They, along with all of the rest of us, need not be resigned to their present status or role. Eternal progression is a basic part of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Happiness, enthusiasm, and joy in daily living are mandatory if we would move forward and choose the good part.

The principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ will never change, but environment, circumstances, institutions, and cultural patterns do. Our challenge is to move forward in our present realms with commitment and enthusiasm. We must do our part to progress

and enjoy life while we are in the process of meeting our situations.

The mother of a Filipino missionary recently wrote to her son's mission president: "Thank you so much for the spiritual support and counsel that you give to my son. . . . Being a lone parent for almost eight years would have been very hard for me, were it not for the gospel's truthfulness. I know God lives and He loves me. He hears and answers my earnest and sincere prayers. I still have seven children, including our missionary, under my care. The Lord has blessed me with a talent that has helped me through the years to support my family. I earn a living by serving as a dressmaker. I'm indeed grateful for my 'Church family'—members who have inspired me and helped me to accept cheerfully and confidently my single parenthood."

Here is a sister who has learned that God is well pleased with families of one or more if they include Him and adhere to His teachings.

Oh, how powerful are good women who choose the good part.

Use power of choice wisely

And although He will always be at our side if we will but invite Him, never will He take from His children the great gift of agency—the power to choose. Young mothers (single or otherwise) must learn to use this power wisely. There may be times when more than one course of action is placed before us. Each is right. It is then that wise and prudent decisions must be made, taking into consideration the season of life and the pertinent facts.

Some mothers seem to have the capacity and energy to make their children's clothes, bake, give piano lessons, go to Relief Society, teach Sunday School, attend parent-teacher association meetings, and so on. Other mothers look upon such women as models and feel inadequate, depressed, and think they are failures when they make comparisons.

We should not allow ourselves to be trapped into such damaging inferiority feelings. This is another tool of Satan. Many seem to put too much pressure on themselves to be a "supermom" or "superwoman."

Choose the best way

Sisters, do not allow yourselves to be made to feel inadequate or frustrated because you cannot do everything others seem to be accomplishing. Rather, each should assess her own situation, her own energy, and her own talents, and then choose the best way to mold her family into a team, a unit that works together and supports each other. Only you and your Father in Heaven know your needs, strengths, and desires. Around this knowledge your personal course must be charted and your choices made.

Let me share another example of a courageous single mother who has chosen the good part and effectively lives within her situation. She is in her mid-thirties and has suffered much heartache in her life. Shortly after she and her husband were married in the temple, he became inactive. This man chose to spend most of his time with male companions. There was no concern for the welfare of his family nor any desire to build a meaningful relationship with his wife. Church activities became nonexistent in his life, and soon he was led down the path of transgression.

Of necessity this lovely woman is providing financially for herself and her children. Her paramount goal is to make a happy home environment in which her boys and girls can feel emotional, financial, and spiritual security. For ten years their home was deprived of these ingredients of happiness.

Even though she hopes that marriage may come again sometime in the future, for the present she is concerned with the needs of her children and is working to build a strong family unit centered around the Church and its teachings.

As a single parent she has chosen the good part.

In times of hurt and discouragement, it may be consoling for her and for all of us to recall that no one can do anything permanently to us that will last for eternity. Only we ourselves can affect our eternal progression.

"Live richly, fully, joyfully"

There is a temptation on the part of some of our sisters who have never married to give up, to stop trying, to think of what they don't have in life instead of what they do have. It is important for them to never give up, to never cease living. As Sister Carol Clark has so beautifully stated: "The personal challenge is not to wait successfully but to live richly, fully, joyfully. The goal is not to wait for the right person but to *be* the right person" (*A Singular Life: Perspectives for the Single Woman* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1974], p. 9). May I emphasize the word *live*. Live richly, fully, joyfully. Be excited about your chance to grow and develop your potential. Be excited about life and the opportunities and privileges that the Lord has given you.

Develop good self-image

Make a decision as to the kind of person you want to be regardless of external circumstances. The first challenge in life is to learn, accept, and internalize "Who am I?" If this question is researched carefully in the scriptures and in Church teachings, the importance of each and every soul will be verified. A good self-image is one of the most important and necessary steps in facing life. So often we believe about ourselves only the things that others have implanted. There is no woman in or out of the Church who is not a loved child of God—no one!

In Psalm 8:4-5 we read:

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

"For thou has made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour."

But Satan is ever present, trying to destroy our glory and remove our crown. One of his most powerful tools is discouragement. Single sisters, don't let your discouragement make Satan rejoice.

Widen circles of activity

Sometimes singles are inclined to become wrapped up in themselves rather than searching for a way to affect the future. Become success oriented. Know that you can succeed. Believe that you can succeed. Step into auxiliary organizations of the Church and into community organizations and make your presence felt.

Thinking and acting women today are taking part in making history in one of the greatest periods of mankind. Their personal contributions not only make the difference today, but their good works have mighty import upon the future. As circles of activity widen, so will the number of friends and acquaintances widen. And then the influence of good women will have an even greater impact on those with whom they associate.

We must constantly remember it is not our situation or problems that make us unhappy; it is our failure to properly resolve them.

Someone has said that happiness is like a butterfly. The more you chase it, the more it will elude you. But if you turn your attention to other things, it comes and sits softly on your shoulder. (See Nathaniel Hawthorne, quoted in *Reader's Digest*, Apr. 1982, p. 148.)

Consider impact of changes

In the Church our leaders have a great desire and spend much thought and prayer in trying to offer guidelines that may help with solutions. In reference to a recent letter in which the First Presidency gave guidelines for membership in singles wards, let me

emphasize it is contemplated that no abrupt changes in existing programs be made without considering their impact on the lives of those who are presently involved in singles wards. Stake presidents are now authorized to make exceptions to the general policy after consultation and joint agreement with the bishop involved.

No one should be asked to leave. While there are definite advantages, with other things being equal, to an older single person being active in his or her own conventional ward, no one should be displaced or left to feel unwanted when proper marriage opportunities fail to develop. Certain age restrictions are prescribed by policy guidelines for good reasons, but no one should feel displaced or terminated, if you please, through abrupt changes.

Opportunities for growth, development, happiness

Programs are planned and implemented with love and concern for each person in the Church. The desire is to offer opportunities for growth, development, and happiness for all members. With each passing year, the value of our sisters who are living without companions becomes more apparent. Strong leaders, good teachers, and dedicated mothers constantly emerge from this group of sisters. They live and serve with courage and ingenuity. Through perseverance they are finding success.

To be in control of your life, to be a success regardless of your situation, whether happily married, unhappily married, a single parent, a widow, or a wife of an inactive husband, I recommend that you come to know your Father in Heaven. Come to love Him, and always remember that He loves you and will give you guidance and support if you will but give Him the chance. Include Him in your decision making. Include Him when you take inventory of your personal worth. "For behold,

this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men [and women] to perform their labors" (Alma 34:32).

Set your goals—without goals you cannot measure your progress. But don't become frustrated because there are no obvious victories. Remind yourself that striving can be more important than arriving. If you are striving for excellence—if you are trying your best day by day with the wisest use of your time and energy to reach realistic goals—you are a success.

God bless valiant women

Commune daily with your Heavenly Father who knows you best of all. He knows your talents, your strengths, and your weaknesses. You are here on the earth at this time to develop and refine these characteristics. I promise you He will help you. He is aware of your needs. He is aware of your unanswered prayers.

God bless our valiant women members. You are choice in His and our eyes. We pray that with His help and our personal efforts happiness will be achieved. Certainly when we choose the good part, regardless of our current circumstances or situations, life will be lived to the fullest.

May God help us to so do, I pray in the worthy name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and Friend, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Marvin J. Ashton has just spoken to us.

The Choir and congregation will join in singing "Now Let Us Rejoice," following which we shall hear from Elder David B. Haight, a member of the Council of the Twelve.

The Choir and congregation sang "Now Let Us Rejoice."

Elder David B. Haight

I pray for the companionship of the Holy Spirit, that my remarks will be in harmony with revealed truth and will be received and understood by that same heavenly influence.

Assault on traditional family

For more than twenty-five years we have witnessed an unending assault on the traditional family. Sacred values of human goodness, discipline, and love and honor for God our Eternal Father have been challenged.

A new self-centered generation has made the family a prime target of continuing belittlement. Marriage is downgraded or shunned, parenthood degraded and avoided. These, with other disturbing influences, have resulted in a torrent of evil temptations for so-called instant gratification and the demeaning of marriage and the sacred roles of wife and mother.

Divine intent for marriage

Unfortunately, there are many good human beings who would live differently, but they do not know of God's eternal plan for His children. We learn from the scriptures that the divine intent is that marriage is to be an eternal union with enduring family relationships throughout eternity.

Scripture reveals that, after the earth was developed, God created man in His own image and gave him dominion over the earth. By the side of man stood the woman, sharing with him the divinely bestowed honor and dignity of supremacy over all other creations. God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18).

"In the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Genesis 1:27).

The Lord also instructed, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto

his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24), thereby giving sanction to the union of male and female in authorized marriage, which is heaven-planned for the creation of mortal bodies.

The Lord's program for the family

The earliest recorded commandment to Adam and Eve was to "be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Genesis 1:28).

We regard children as gifts from God, committed to our care for loving, nurturing, and careful training.

The Lord also instructed, "And they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord" (D&C 68:28).

They are not to be mistreated or abused, for, with their parents, they are part of a family with the potential of eternal relationship.

President Spencer W. Kimball explained:

"The Lord organized the whole program in the beginning with a father who procreates, provides, and loves and directs, and a mother who conceives and bears and nurtures and feeds and trains. The Lord could have organized it otherwise but chose to have a unit with responsibility and purposeful associations where children train and discipline each other and come to love, honor, and appreciate each other. The family is the great plan of life as conceived and organized by our Father in Heaven" (*Ensign*, July 1973, p. 15).

Marriage was meant to be and can be a loving, binding, and harmonious relationship between a husband and wife.

Divorce always tragic and painful

As we contemplate our Lord's declaration to Moses, "This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man"

(Moses 1:39), we reflect with sadness upon the present serious trend of families and homes being torn apart through divorce.

It would seem that a major underlying cause of divorce is in not understanding that marriage and families are God-given and God-ordained. If we understood the full meaning we would have less divorce and its attendant unhappiness. Couples would plan for a happy marriage relationship based on divine instruction. If couples understood from the beginning of their romance that their marriage relationship could be blessed with promises and conditions extending into the eternities, divorce would not even be a considered alternative when difficulties arise. The current philosophy—get a divorce if it doesn't work out—handicaps a marriage from the beginning.

The ever-increasing rise in divorce is ample evidence of how acceptable divorce has become as the popular solution to unhappy or "not-quite-up-to-expectation" marriages.

But no matter how acceptable divorce has become—how quick and easy to obtain—divorce is tragic and painful, not only at the outset, but also in the years to come.

Divorce can never really be final. How can mothers and fathers really divorce themselves from their own flesh and blood children, or from the memories of days and years of shared experiences which have become part of their very lives.

Divorce rarely occurs without immense emotional, social, and financial upheaval. Most people underestimate the alienation, bitterness, disruption, and frustration between a divorcing couple, and among their children, friends, and relatives. Some never adjust to the resulting emotional consequences.

Perhaps most tragic of all is that more than 60 percent of all divorces involve children under eighteen years of age. Children of divorce all too often have a higher delinquency rate and less self-confidence, and tend to be more

promiscuous and themselves more likely to have unhappy marriages.

Prepare for success

Considering the enormous importance of marriage, it is rather astonishing that we don't make better preparation for success. Usually, young couples date for a few months or for a year or two, enjoying romance and getting acquainted, and then get married. Once married, they soon learn that romance must blend with spiritual beliefs, in-law relationships, money issues, and serious discussions involving ethics, children, and the running of a home.

Too many people are inadequately prepared for this lofty responsibility.

"People go to college for years to prepare for a vocation or profession . . . not [nearly] as . . . rewarding [or as important] as marriage." (See Lowell S. Bennion, "Conference on Utah Families," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 6 Apr. 1980, p. F-9.)

Seek good counsel

Serious transgressions, as well as injured lives that sometimes are revealed in bishop's offices, all too frequently make it clear that husband and wife relationships deserve a great deal more prayerful attention than many are giving it. Fewer marriages would get in trouble, and more would be happier, if couples visited a warm-hearted bishop who might suggest ways of avoiding pitfalls, and encourage husbands and wives to thoughtfully use self-discipline and needed restraint and develop the loving attribute of unselfishness.

A few years ago, President Harold B. Lee received this letter from a married woman: "When we thought that the end was here and that there was only one thing to do and that was to get a divorce, we had been told that we should counsel with our bishop. At first . . . we hesitated, because he was just a young man. . . . But he was our

bishop so we went to see him. We poured out our souls to our young bishop. He sat and listened silently, and when we ran out of conversation he said, simply, 'Well, my wife and I, we had problems, too, and we learned how to solve them.' That is all . . . he said. But you know there was something that happened as a result of that young bishop's statement. We walked out of there and we said, 'Well, if they can solve their problems, what is the matter with us?'" (*Ensign*, Jan. 1974, p. 100).

Protect and nurture marriage

A prominent producer recently stated:

"In movies and on television there is . . . reluctance to deal with marriage, . . . [except as] a comic turn or in soap operas. We prefer to stress . . . [sexual involvement] and leave [alone] . . . the happily-ever-after, . . . as in children's fairy stories" (Karl E. Meyer, *The Wife of Your Youth* [Palos Heights, Illinois: Np, 1977], np).

Our concern is not just that media producers and writers don't portray happy, fruitful marriage, but that many married couples don't take their marriages seriously enough—to work at them, protect them, nurture them, cultivate them day in and day out, week in and week out, yearlong, quarter-century long, half-a-century long, forever.

Middle-age divorce is particularly distressing, as it indicates that mature people, who are the backbone of our society, are not working carefully enough to preserve their marriages. Divorces granted to people over forty-five have increased at an alarming rate. When middle-aged people even consider breaking up their marriage—a couple who may have reared their children, who possibly have grandchildren—and now decide to go their separate ways, they need to realize that every divorce is the result of selfishness on the part of one or both.

In Malachi we read:

"The Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. . . .

"Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth" (Malachi 2:14–15).

The ideal marriage

Marriage is a covenant. Two of the Ten Commandments deal directly with preserving the sanctity of marriage: "Thou shalt not commit adultery" and "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife" (Exodus 20:14, 17).

Jesus magnified the law against adultery: "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:28).

The ideal marriage is the faithfulness of a man and a woman to each other, a faithfulness that began when each had chosen the other. In Proverbs we read, "Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth" (Proverbs 5:18). Let her affection fill you at all times with delight, and be infatuated always with her love. (See Proverbs 5:19.)

It is a privilege indeed to live our life with the wife of our youth, to enjoy the golden years together—neither objecting to the wrinkles nor the gray hair—but to continue acquiring a depth of love, oneness, and wisdom which can be shared with each other now and throughout all eternity.

Marriage is sustained by faith and knowledge of its divine establishment, and is sustained daily by the energy of love. A wise man explained, "When the satisfaction or the security of another person becomes as significant to one as one's own satisfaction and security then the state of love exists" (Harry Stack Sullivan, *Concepts of Modern Psychiatry*, 2d ed. [New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1961], p. 42).

Ask God for help

A strong, shared conviction that there is something eternally precious about a marriage relationship builds faith to resist evil. Marriage should be beautiful and fulfilling, with joy beyond our fondest dreams, for "neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 11:11).

Latter-day Saints need not divorce—there are solutions to marriage problems. If, as husband and wife, you are having serious misunderstandings or if you feel some strain or tension building up in your marriage, you should humbly get on your knees together and ask God our Father, with a sincere heart and real intent, to lift the darkness that is over your relationship,

that you may receive the needed light, see your errors, repent of your wrongs, forgive each other, and receive each unto yourselves as you did in the beginning. I solemnly assure you that God lives and will answer your humble pleas, for he has said, "Ye shall ask whatsoever you will in the name of Jesus and it shall be done" (D&C 50:29). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have just listened to Elder David B. Haight of the Council of the Twelve.

Elder G. Homer Durham of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy will be our next speaker.

Elder G. Homer Durham

Meaning of *Jesus*

Recently, while I was driving on the highway, a car passed. This was not unusual. The bumper sticker was a little different, saying, "Save the Humans." One sees many bumper stickers these days. This one turned my thoughts to something fundamental, the word *save*. I thought of the plan of salvation. I thought of the world of scholarship, and of Professor Arnold Toynbee's analysis of the many so-called "saviours" found in history (*A Study of History*, abridgement, vols. 7–10, D. C. Somervell, chap. 20 [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957], np). We know that one Savior truly saves—the Lord Jesus Christ. This is His church. We have taken upon ourselves His name.

What does the average person mean when he testifies that Jesus is the Christ? Of course, it is the witness of the Spirit that counts. But what do the words *Jesus* and *Christ* mean?

A brief excursion into the meaning of these two words may be useful, especially to young people, in these times.

The *Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933) tells us that the word *Jesus* came into the English language from Middle English, adapted from the Latin *Iesus*, which in turn was adapted from the Greek *Iesous*. This in turn was adapted from the Hebrew or Aramaic word *Yeshua* or *Yehoshua*. The earlier root was *Joshua*. This dictionary goes on to explain that the word *Joshua* derived from the *Jah* of *Jahveh*, meaning that "Jehovah is salvation." Thus, the word *Jesus* has parallel meaning with *Savior*. Dr. David Flusser of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem puts it simply: "Jesus is the common Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua" (*Encyclopedia Judaica* [Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, Ltd., 1971], 10:10).

Webster's New 20th Century Dictionary of the English Language (Cleveland: World Publishing Co.,

1968), unabridged, sets forth a comparable definition, noting that the Latin-Greek derivation from the Hebrew *Joshua* means literally, "help of Jehovah." But in addition, this source states that the word derives from the Hebrew word for *Lord God*, he who is available to help, to save. In this sense, then, the word *Jesus* means simply, "God is help." How "Save the Humans," as the bumper sticker read? The dictionaries and the gospel give the answer.

Meaning of Christ

What of the word *Christ*? It also comes to the English-speaking world from Middle English, derived from the Latin *Christus*, in turn from the Greek *Christos*, which meant "the Anointed"—a noun made from the past participle of the Greek verb "to anoint."

Webster also states that the word *Christ* was originally Jesus' title. Thus, proper usage of the two words in English would be as Elder James E. Talmage titled his book, *Jesus the Christ*. Usage and revelation have joined the two as part of a sacred, revered name.

Savior and Messiah

Elder Talmage defined the two words as follows:

"*Jesus* is the individual name of the Savior, and as thus spelled is of Greek derivation. . . . In the original the name was well understood as meaning 'Help of Jehovah,' or, 'Savior.'"

Elder Talmage emphasized that the word *Christ* is a sacred title, not "an ordinary . . . common name; it is of Greek derivation, and . . . is identical with its Hebrew equivalent *Messiah* . . . , signifying the *Anointed One*" (*Jesus the Christ* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1973], pp. 35–36).

Father and the Son

What was the earliest documented mention of the sacred name *Jesus Christ* now available to us? Dr. Joseph Armitage Robinson, one-time Norris Professor of Cambridge University, held that it is probably found in the opening verse of First Thessalonians (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th ed., vol. 15, sv "Jesus"). Imagine the impact of those words then, as we read them today in English, as received by the Thessalonians possibly two decades after the Crucifixion:

"Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 1:1).

Note that the phrase *God the Father* is separated by the conjunction *and* from the phrase *the Lord Jesus Christ*. This demonstrates first-century belief in the separate individuality of the Father and the Son, as restored by the Prophet Joseph Smith.

"Behold the Lamb of God"

The opening verse of the Gospel according to St. Mark also comes with great force as a historical document fraught with meaning:

"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mark 1:1).

The gospel of John the Beloved is even more eloquent. He records the witness of the Savior's forerunner, John the Baptist, as follows:

"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

"Save the Humans"? Think of the Baptist's testimony: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!"

Scriptures confirm dictionary meaning

How did the Savior of mankind acquire his name in mortality? By revelation. To Joseph of Nazareth, the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream, saying:

"Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:20-21).

Here is confirmation of the dictionary meaning of the name, as recorded by Matthew: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

Mary also had angelic confirmation of the name, as recorded by Luke:

"And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

"And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus" (Luke 1:30-31).

The formal naming of the child when eight days old is recorded by Luke:

"His name was called Jesus, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb" (Luke 2:21).

The name which means "God is help," "the Anointed One," "the Promised Messiah," has thus come to us.

Mankind's quest for a Savior

Some three decades ago, Professor Arnold Toynbee concluded one of the most extensive studies of history ever undertaken. He recorded mankind's quest for "saviours," for "the way out." He identified four categories: (1) the "Creative Genius"; (2) the "Saviour with a Sword"; (3) the "Saviour with a Time Machine," one dreaming of a utopia or an archaic past which never existed; (4) the saviour as

a "Philosopher, Masked as a King." All these history rejects. Finally, Toynbee pointed to "the God Incarnate in a Man," the Lord Jesus Christ. And then he wrote:

"This is in truth the final result of our survey of saviours. When we set out on this quest we found ourselves moving in the midst of a mighty host, but, as we have pressed forward, the marchers, company by company, have fallen out of the race. The first to fail were the swordsmen, the next the archaists and the futurists, the next the philosophers, until only gods were left in the running. . . . And now, as we stand and gaze with our eyes fixed upon the farther shore, a single figure rises from the flood and straightway fills the whole horizon. There is the Saviour" (*A Study of History*, abridgment, vols. 1-6, D. C. Somervell [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957], p. 547).

We know that Savior to be the Lord Jesus Christ. From many, many experiences over my lifetime, I can truly testify to you that He truly is our Savior; and if the Father is approached in prayer, as His Son has commanded us, doors will open to help us move forward without fear in life. That all men everywhere may come to realize and know the significance of *Jesus the Christ*, the One chosen before the foundation of the world, is my faith and witness. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Tabernacle Choir sang "Jesus, Once of Humble Birth" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Elder G. Homer Durham of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy has just spoken to us, following which the Choir sang "Jesus, Once of Humble Birth."

Elder Thomas S. Monson of the Council of the Twelve will be our concluding speaker.

Elder Thomas S. Monson

When Jesus walked the dusty pathways of towns and villages that we now reverently call the Holy Land and taught His disciples by beautiful Galilee, He often spoke in parables, in language the people understood best. Frequently, He referred to home building in relationship to the lives of those who listened.

"Establish a house"

He declared: "Every . . . house divided against itself shall not stand" (Matthew 12:25). Later He cautioned: "Behold, mine house is a house of order, . . . and not a house of confusion" (D&C 132:8).

In a revelation given through the Prophet Joseph Smith at Kirtland, Ohio, December 27, 1832, the Master counseled: "Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God" (D&C 88:119).

Where could any of us locate a more suitable blueprint whereby we could wisely and properly build a house to personally occupy throughout eternity?

Building code in Matthew

Such a house would meet the building code outlined in Matthew—even a house built "upon a rock" (Matthew 7:24), a house capable of withstanding the rains of adversity, the floods of opposition, and the winds of doubt everywhere present in our challenging world.

Some might question: "But that revelation was to provide guidance for the construction of a temple. Is it relevant today?"

I would respond: "Did not the Apostle Paul declare, 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that

the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?' (1 Corinthians 3:16)."

Perhaps if we consider these architectural guidelines on an individual basis, we can more readily appreciate this divine counsel from the Master Builder, the Creator of the world, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

A house of prayer

Our inspired blueprint first cautions that our house should be a *house of prayer*. The Master taught:

"And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray . . . , that they may be seen of men. . . .

"But thou, when thou prayest, . . . pray to thy Father which is in secret. . . .

"Use not vain repetitions. . . .

"After this manner . . . pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

"Give us this day our daily bread.

"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever" (Matthew 6:5-7, 9-13).

This element of our blueprint can be taught to children when they are yet young. When our oldest son was about three, he would kneel with his mother and me in our evening prayer. I was serving as the bishop of the ward at the time, and a lovely lady in the ward, Margaret Lister, lay perilously ill with cancer. Each night we would pray for Sister Lister. One evening our tiny son offered the prayer and confused the words of the prayer with a story from a nursery book. He began: "Heavenly Father, please bless Sister Lister, Henny Penny, Chicken Licken, Turkey Lurkey, and all the little folks." We held back the smiles that evening. Later

we were humbled as Margaret Lister sustained a complete recovery. We do not demean the prayer of a child. After all, our children have more recently been with our Heavenly Father than have we.

Let our house be a *house of prayer*.

A house of fasting

Our house should also be a *house of fasting*. This portion of the blueprint is personified in the account found in Isaiah titled the "True Fast": "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? . . .

"To deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?"

The reward is then announced: "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rereward.

"Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. . . .

"And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday:

"And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, . . . and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not" (Isaiah 58:6-11).

Let our house be a *house of fasting*.

A house of faith

Our house is to be a *house of faith*. James recorded:

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

"But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like

a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed" (James 1:5-6).

A practical application of such abiding faith is found in the spirit of Nephi and his stirring declaration: "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded" (1 Nephi 3:7). He did not waver; he believed. Is there a counterpart application even today?

Some years ago I accompanied President Hugh B. Brown on a tour of the Samoan Mission. The members and missionaries in American Samoa had advised us that a severe drought had imperiled their water supply to the point that our chapels and our school would of necessity be closed if rain did not soon fall. They asked us to unite our faith with theirs.

Signs of the drought were everywhere as we left the airport at Pago Pago and journeyed to the school at Mapasaga. The sun was shining brightly; not a cloud appeared in the azure blue sky. The members rejoiced as the meeting began. He who offered the opening prayer thanked our Heavenly Father for our safe arrival, knowing that we would somehow bring the desired rainfall. As President Brown rose to speak, the sun was soon shaded by gathering clouds. Then we heard the clap of thunder and saw the flash of lightning. The heavens opened. The rains fell. The drought ended.

Later at the airport, as we prepared for the short flight to Western Samoa, the pilot of the small plane said to the ground crew, "This is the most unusual weather pattern I have ever seen. Not a cloud is in the sky except over the Mormon school at Mapasaga. I don't understand it!"

President Brown said to me, "Here's your opportunity. Go help him understand." I did so.

Our house surely is a *house of faith*.

A house of learning

Let our house be a *house of learning*. Said the Lord: "Seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek

learning, even by study and also by faith" (D&C 88:118). He counseled: "Come . . . learn of me . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11:28-29). No other quest for learning promises such a profound reward.

Let our house be a *house of learning*.

A house of glory

Our house is to be a *house of glory*. For our house to be such, we need to be square with God, fair with others, and honest with ourselves. One cannot be one person and pretend to be another. Samuel Clemens, better known as Mark Twain, had Huckleberry Finn teach us this vital lesson. Huckleberry Finn is talking:

"It made me shiver. And I about made up my mind to pray, and see if I couldn't try to quit being the kind of a boy I was and be better. So I kneeled down. But the words wouldn't come. Why wouldn't they? It warn't no use to try and hide it from Him. . . . I knowed very well why they wouldn't come. . . . It was because I was playing double. I was letting on to give up sin, but away inside of me I was holding on to the biggest one of all. I was trying to make my mouth say I would do the right thing and the clean thing, . . . but deep down in me I knowed it was a lie, and He knowed it. *You can't pray a lie—I found that out*" (*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* [New York: Washington Square Press, Pocket Books, 1973], pp. 271-72; italics added).

Someone once philosophized, "Consistency, thou art a jewel" (*The Home Book of Quotations*, sel. Burton Stevenson [New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1934], p. 304). By being consistently good, we can ensure a *house of glory*.

A house of order

Our house is to be a *house of order*. "To every thing there is a season,

and a time to every purpose under the heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1), advised Ecclesiastes, the Preacher. Such is true in our lives. Let us provide time for family, time for work, time for study, time for service, time for recreation, time for self—but above all, time for Christ.

Then our house will be a *house of order*.

A house of God

Finally, let our house be a *house of God*. Clean thoughts, noble purpose, a willing heart, and ready hands are all features of a house of God. He does not leave us to struggle alone but stands ever ready to help.

A few years ago, I was afforded the privilege to serve as a mission president and became intimately acquainted with more than four hundred missionaries. We had one young missionary who was very ill. After weeks of hospitalization, as the doctor prepared to undertake extremely serious and complicated surgery, he asked that we send for the missionary's mother and father. He advised there was a possibility the patient would not survive the surgery.

The parents came. Late one evening, the father and I entered a hospital room in Toronto, Canada, placed our hands upon the head of the young missionary, and gave him a blessing. What happened following that blessing was a testimony to me.

The missionary was in a six-bed ward in the hospital. The other beds were occupied by five men with a variety of illnesses. The morning of his surgery, the missionary's bed was empty. The nurse came into the room with the breakfast these men normally ate. She took a tray over to the patient in bed number one and said, "Fried eggs this morning, and I have an extra portion for you!"

The occupant of bed number one had suffered an accident with his lawn mower. Other than an injured toe, he

was well physically. He said to the nurse, "I'll not be eating this morning."

"All right, we shall give your breakfast to your partner in bed number two."

As she approached that patient, he said, "I think I'll not eat this morning."

Each of the five men declined breakfast. The young lady exclaimed, "Other mornings you eat us out of house and home, and today not one of you wants to eat! What is the reason?"

Then the man who occupied bed number six answered: "You see, bed number three is empty. Our friend is in the operating room under the surgeon's hands. He needs all the help he can get. He is a missionary for his church, and while we have been patients in this ward, he has talked to us about the principles of his church—principles of prayer, of faith, of fasting wherein we call upon the Lord for blessings." He continued, "We don't know much about the Mormon church, but we have learned a great deal about our friend; and we are fasting for him today."

The operation was a success. When I attempted to pay the doctor, he countered, "Why, it would be dishonest for me to accept a fee. I have never before performed surgery when my hands seemed to be guided by a Power which was other than my own. No," he said, "I wouldn't take a fee for the surgery which Someone on high literally helped me to perform."

Such is a *house of God*.

Builders of eternal houses

This, then, is our building project. We are master builders of eternal houses, even "temples of God." (See 1 Corinthians 3:16.)

"Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God" (D&C 88:119).

Then the Lord, even our building inspector, may say to us, as He said when He appeared to Solomon, a builder of another day: "I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually" (1 Kings 9:3).

May we follow this divinely provided blueprint. May we be successful builders of our eternal homes, in my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Thomas S. Monson of the Council of the Twelve has been our concluding speaker.

We express appreciation to the managers and owners of the many television and radio stations and cable systems who have offered their facilities as a public service.

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "Sweet Is the Peace the Gospel Brings." The benediction will then be given by Elder Charles Didier of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and this conference will be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The Choir sang "Sweet Is the Peace the Gospel Brings."

Elder Charles Didier offered the benediction.

FIRST DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

SECOND SESSION

The second general session of the 154th Annual General Conference began at 2:00 P.M. on Saturday, April 7, 1984. President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, conducted this session.

Music for this session was provided by a combined Salt Lake Institute Choir and single adult choir from the Ensign, Rose Park, Liberty, Pioneer, Monument Park, Granite, Holladay, Olympus, Bonneville, and Millcreek Utah regions directed by Ronald Horton with Clay Christiansen at the organ.

At the beginning of the meeting, President Benson made the following remarks:

President Ezra Taft Benson

My beloved brethren and sisters, the First Presidency has asked that I conduct this session of the conference.

We are most pleased to have President Spencer W. Kimball with us. We are sorry that President [Marion G.] Romney cannot be with us.

We are pleased to welcome those who are gathered here in the Tabernacle for this, the second general session of the 154th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We also welcome those who are participating by means of television or radio; also the many who are watching in over six hundred stake centers throughout the United States and Canada to which the conference is being carried by satellite transmission.

We note that Elders Marion D. Hanks and Jack H. Goasland, Jr., are presiding at the overflow session in the Assembly Hall.

We are pleased to acknowledge especially our guests who are present

this afternoon, along with general and local Church leaders and members from many parts of the world.

We express our appreciation to the owners and operators of many radio and television stations and to the owners and operators of cable systems for their cooperation in making these proceedings available to members and friends of the Church in many countries.

The music for this session will be provided by a combined Salt Lake Institute Choir and single adult choir from the Ensign, Rose Park, Liberty, Pioneer, Monument Park, Granite, Holladay, Olympus, Bonneville, and Millcreek Utah regions, under the direction of Ronald Horton with Clay Christiansen at the organ.

The choir will begin this service by singing "O Sons of Zion." The invocation will be offered by Elder Loren C. Dunn, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The combined choir sang "O Sons of Zion."

Elder Loren C. Dunn offered the invocation.

President Benson

The choir will now sing "Beautiful Savior."

The choir sang "Beautiful Savior."

President Benson

Brother Wilford G. Edling will now read the auditor's report. Afterward, Brother Francis M. Gibbons will present the statistical report of the Church for the year 1983.

Auditor's Report 1983

Wilford G. Edling

We have reviewed the annual financial report of the Church as of 31 December 1983 and operations for the year then ended. The financial statements and operations reviewed by the committee include the general funds of the Church and of other controlled organizations, the accounts of which are maintained by the Finance and Records Department of the Church. We have also examined the budgeting, accounting, and auditing procedures employed and the manner in which funds are received and expenditures are controlled. We determined that expenditures of general Church funds were authorized by the First Presidency and by budgetary procedures. The budget is authorized by the Council on Disposition of Tithes, comprised of the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, and the Presiding Bishopric. The Budget and Appropriations Committee, in weekly meetings, administers the expenditure of funds under the budget.

Modern accounting technology and equipment are employed by the Finance and Records Department and other departments in keeping abreast of rapid Church expansion and changing methods of electronic data processing.

The Auditing Department, which is independent of all other departments, functions in the threefold capacity of performing financial audits, operational audits, and audits of computer systems employed by the Church. These services are conducted on a continual basis and include all Church departments, other Church-controlled organizations (the accounts of which

are maintained in the Finance and Records Department), and worldwide operations including missions, administrative offices, and departmental activities conducted in foreign countries. The extent and scope of the Auditing Department in safeguarding the resources of the Church are expanding to encompass the growth and widening activities of the Church. The audit of local funds of wards and stakes is assigned to stake auditors, the reports of which are now reviewed by the Church Auditing Department. Incorporated businesses owned or controlled by the Church, for which accounts are not maintained in the Finance and Records Department, are audited by professional auditing firms or by government regulatory agencies.

Based on our review of the annual financial report and other accounting data, and our study of the accounting and auditing methods by which financial operations are controlled, together with continuing discussions with personnel of the Finance and Records Department, the Auditing Department, and Church legal representatives, we are of the opinion that the general funds of the Church received and expended during the year 1983 have been properly accounted for in accordance with the established procedures outlined herein.

Respectfully submitted,

Church Audit Committee
Wilford G. Edling
David M. Kennedy
Warren E. Pugh
Merrill J. Bateman
Ted E. Davis

Statistical Report 1983

Francis M. Gibbons

For the information of the members of the Church, the First Presidency has issued the following statistical report concerning the growth and status of the Church as of 31 December 1983. (Membership figures include estimates based on 1983 reports available prior to conference.)

Church Units

Number of stakes	1,458
Number of districts	343
Number of missions	178
Number of wards	9,329
Number of branches in stakes	2,641
Number of branches in missions	2,024
(These statistics reflect an increase of 66 stakes and 378 wards and branches during 1983.)	
Number of sovereign countries with organized wards or branches	90
Number of territories, colonies, and possessions with organized wards or branches	17

Church Membership

Total membership at the close of 1983	5,400,000
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Church Growth during 1983

Increase in children of record	112,000
Children of record baptized	69,000
Converts baptized	189,419

Social Statistics

Birthrate per thousand	24.5
Number of persons married per thousand	11.1
Death rate per thousand	4.0

Priesthood

Deacons	229,000
Teachers	169,000

Priests	335,000
Elders	444,000
Seventies	32,000
High Priests	190,000

Missionaries

Full-time missionaries	26,565
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Genealogical

Names cleared in 1983 for temple endowments	4,288,303
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Temples

Number of endowments performed during 1983:	
For the living	52,116
For the dead	4,364,928
Temples in operation	25
Temples planned or under construction or renovation	17
Six temples were dedicated in 1983, and six are planned to be dedicated in 1984. (If problems arise, one or more might be delayed until 1985.)	

Church Educational System

Total enrollment during 1982-83 school year:	
Seminaries and Institutes, including special programs	389,258
Church schools, colleges, and continuing education	68,707

Welfare Services

Persons assisted by LDS Social Services	118,672
Persons placed in gainful employment	25,460
Man-days of labor donated to Welfare Services	399,375
Bishops' orders from storehouse	305,891

Prominent Members Who Have Passed Away Since Last April

Elder Mark E. Petersen, member
of the Council of the Twelve Apostles;
Clara May Jeffs Hunter, wife of Elder

Howard W. Hunter of the Council of the Twelve Apostles; Lucille Thurman Buehner, widow of Carl W. Buehner, Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric; Margaret Ann Newman Wells, widow of John Wells, Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric; Blanche Black Stoddard, former general Relief Society secretary; and Paul Benjamin Tanner, former general Sunday School treasurer.

President Benson

Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our first speaker. He will be followed by Elder A. Theodore Tuttle, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

My public and warm welcome to Elder Nelson and Elder Oaks, choice friends of many years, as they now enter into an even deeper friendship.

Great plan of the Eternal God

One of the great blessings flowing from amplifying, latter-day revelations is the crucial, doctrinal framework known as the marvelous plan of salvation, the plan of happiness, or the plan of mercy. (See Alma 42:5, 8, 15.) However designated, it represents what Amulek called the "great plan of the Eternal God" without which mankind would unavoidably perish (Alma 34:9).

The plan is a most stunning example of the precious perspective of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, full faith in the Lord Jesus Christ includes and requires full faith in His Father's plan of salvation.

President Brigham Young declared: "The Spirit of revelation must be in each and every individual, to know the plan of salvation and keep in the path that leads them to the presence of God" (*Journal of Discourses*, 9:279).

Jesus Christ at the center of the Father's plan

So vital is this framework that if one stays or strays outside it, he risks provinciality and misery. In fact, most human misery represents ignorance of or noncompliance with the plan. A cessation of such mortal suffering will not come without compliance to it. Hence, the Lord, who has freely shared this vital knowledge with us, has urged us to teach the fundamentals of this plan "freely" (Moses 6:58).

At the center of the Father's plan is Jesus Christ, mankind's Redeemer. Yet, as foreseen, many judge Jesus "to be a thing of naught" (1 Nephi 19:9), or "consider him" merely "a man" (Mosiah 3:9). Whether others deny or delimit Jesus, for us He is our Lord and Savior! Comparatively, brothers and sisters, it matters very little what people think of us, but it matters very much what we think of Him. It matters very little, too, who others say we are; what matters is who we say Jesus is. (See Matthew 16:13-17.)

For instance, we appreciate not only the towering divinity of Jesus Christ, but His breathtaking mobility and the scope of His shepherding. The resurrected Jesus revisited the Middle East scene of His mortal messiahship. Then some souls in the Americas. (See 3 Nephi 11.) And then His other lost sheep. (See 3 Nephi 17:4.)

God's paternal purpose

In His selfless plan, the Lord doeth nothing save it be for the benefit of the children of men. (See 2 Nephi 26:24.) He labors, lovingly and constantly, as Moses and Jeremiah declared, "for our good always" (Deuteronomy 6:24; see also Jeremiah 32:38-40). In His grand design, His "work" and "glory" are "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). Thus, even when we truly learn to love God, we must humbly acknowledge that He loved us first. (See 1 John 4:19.)

Meanwhile, Shakespeare was not very wide of the mark in writing, "All the world's a stage" (*As You Like It*, act 2, scene 7). But not for playacting!

The very word *plan* confirms God's paternal purpose, a realization so desperately needed by the confused and despairing on the world's stage.

The "plan of happiness" not only ensures the immortalization of our individual identities, but can yield bettered and reborn individuals. Fittingly, one appreciative prophet declared, "O how great the plan of our God!" (2 Nephi 9:13). Enoch wept when he saw the sweep of history and the unnecessary human misery. (See Moses 7:41.) But he also saw the triumph of God's plan. Another prophet exclaimed: "God . . . made these things known unto us that we might not perish . . . because he loveth our souls . . . ; therefore, in his mercy he doth visit us by his angels, that the plan of salvation might be made known unto us" (Alma 24:14).

It took visits by angels in our day, too, in order to instruct us anew regarding God's plan of salvation and to reassure us that mortality is not a conclusive and massive mausoleum, and that death is not extinction.

Longing for a heavenly home

Alma faced an awful and anguished moment when he felt that he might actually "become extinct both

soul and body" (Alma 36:15). Then he remembered his father's prophecies "concerning the coming of one Jesus Christ, a Son of God, to atone for the sins of the world" (Alma 36:17). In a moment of deep intellectual humility, his "mind caught hold upon this thought." Out came Alma's great soul cry: "O Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy on me"! (Alma 36:18).

Purpose replaced pain. Joy swallowed up despair as Alma apparently viewed God upon His throne, and he longed to join God! (See Alma 36:22.)

Such longing for a heavenly home is real, especially in view of how this life is designed. After all, brothers and sisters, when we rejoice in beautiful scenery, great art, and great music, it is but the flexing of instincts acquired in another place and another time.

Plan of mercy

Life turns out, however, to be just what one would expect of a deliberately constructed proving and tutoring experience which features opportunities, choices, and deprivations. Furthermore, there is no way *around*—the only way to go is *through*!

And what a "through" it is!

Even so, for us mistake-prone mortals, this plan of mercy provides for recognition and redress of error and for the resumption of interrupted individual development.

Redemptive and refining provisions are made: For a brave Peter faltering and sinking on the churning waves—and yet knowing to whom to look to live, and crying out, "Lord, save me" (Matthew 14:30). For a meek Moses struggling with people, fatigued and with all the burdens of leadership. (See Numbers 11:11, 14, 29.) For a Jonah seeking to substitute Tarshish, but still reaching Nineveh and, thereby, receiving a great lesson in compassion. For erring Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, and Thomas B. Marsh to recover their spiritual poise and vote with their feet by traveling westward to rejoin, in reconciliation, and to sustain

the plan and its enunciating latter-day prophets.

Hence, brothers and sisters, for the faithful, our finest hours are sometimes during or just following our darkest hours.

God sees end from beginning

It is an incredible irony, therefore, that some complainingly attempt to use the very tutoring process of the Lord against Him. Or resent the reality that we are to walk by faith during this mortal experience. Yet, as practical and spiritual President Brigham Young said, "There is no saving faith merely upon . . . acknowledging a fact" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1941], p. 154).

Furthermore, since this life is such a brief experience, there must be regular exit routes. Some easy. Some hard. Some sudden. Others lingering. Therefore, we cannot presume, even by faith, to block all these exits, all the time, and for all people. Nor, if possessed of full, eternal perspective, would we desire so to do.

Since certain recollections are withheld, we do not now see the end from the beginning. But God does. Meanwhile, we are in what might be called "the murky middle." Therein, however, we can still truly know that God loves us, individually and perfectly, even though we cannot always explain the meaning of all things happening to us or around us. (See 1 Nephi 11:17.)

Christ's doctrines mark the way

Enclosed in this mortal cocoon, or classroom, we would be totally provincial in outlook except for faith in, and knowledge of, the "great plan of the Eternal God."

Hence, Christ's doctrines pertaining to the plan of salvation stand like sentinel scriptures to mark and light the way. His gospel guardrails line the strait and narrow path to steady us,

nudge us, and even jar us for the sake of our spiritual safety!

So much more than a matter of abstract theology, this great plan can focus daily life. Its truths are crucial to how we see ourselves, others, life, the Lord, and even the universe. Or how we view a baby. Or death. Or the praise and honors of the world. This plan constitutes the mother lode of meaning and can cradle us, conceptually, amid any concern.

Its truths and perspectives permit us to distinguish between a great book and mere want ads, between vengeance and justice, rage and righteous indignation, and pleasure and happiness.

Unconditional surrender to God's plan

With an understanding of God's plan of salvation, we know that the rejoicing, the striving, the suffering, the tutoring, and the enduring experiences of life all play their part in an intelligible process of helping us, if we will, to become, as the Savior beckoningly invited, "even as I am" (3 Nephi 27:27).

This individual development sometimes requires the march of a Zion's camp, or an arduous Hole in the Rock trek, or special classrooms like the settlements in northern Mexico, wherein special individuals were fashioned. Those episodes, however, had nothing to do with real estate but everything to do with our second estate!

Hence, in submitting knowingly and meekly to this plan, we cannot say to the Lord that we are willing to surrender but only on our terms. There are no conditions in unconditional surrender!

Freedom to choose

Even with all of its interior consistency, however, the plan cannot bring true happiness to anyone whose life is grossly inconsistent with its standards. It cannot fully enfold him who is too worried about being taken in. It has no

place of honor for one too concerned with losing his place in the secular synogue. (See John 12:42-43.)

Though the plan reflects a caring Father and a Savior, believers in the plan are not automatically immune to the consuming cares of the world.

The plan places a striking emphasis on present human freedom to choose. (See 2 Nephi 2:27.) Yet some of our present circumstances may reflect previous agreements, now forgotten, but once freely made.

The plan always points the way, but does not always smooth the way, since individual development requires an "opposition in all things" (2 Nephi 2:11).

Intellectual and spiritual confirmation about plan

The Lord will give us the needed intellectual and spiritual confirmation concerning His plan, but on His terms and in His own way.

"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John 7:17).

Truly, of all the errors mortals could make, God's plan of salvation is the wrong thing to be wrong about!

No error could be more enormous or more everlasting in its consequences!

No wonder this Church and its people go to such great lengths and expense to share the fulness of the gospel concerning this plan.

No wonder the Lord wants the plan taught plainly and repetitively.

And why not? It is God's plan—not ours! And, given the unimpressive outcomes of man's plans to solve the world's problems, aren't we glad! Furthermore, of all the things about which we might converse, as Jacob wrote, "Why not speak of the atonement of Christ?" (Jacob 4:12). Why not, brothers and sisters? This event arches over all of human history, as a Redeeming God and Savior Son pressed onward with the great plan of happiness.

Yes, in the plan, God would have us be happy, but first we had to be free to choose.

God's gift to us of this moral agency tells us wonderful things about His beneficial and developmental purposes. Our abuse of that agency tells us awful things about ourselves!

Yet, on this mortal stage, we see great moments of mercy, stirring celebrations of compassion, striking selflessness, and quiet and constant heroism among people of all creeds and colors and cultures.

This should not surprise us. After all, whose spirit children are we? (See Hebrews 12:9.)

The school, the curriculum, the Schoolmaster

Unsurprisingly, therefore, this mortal school produces some soaring triumphs but also a history filled with individual mistakes. But we should not blame the school, nor the curriculum! Least of all, the Schoolmaster! Furthermore, we dare not lecture Him on the plight of His students!

Meanwhile, brothers and sisters, no one ever promised us that discipleship in the last days would be a picnic in the park.

Former periods of stress can guide us. When the earlier coming of Jesus was imminent, signs abounded. Still, for some, there were "doubtings" (3 Nephi 8:4). But the faithful prevailed and were vindicated.

There were determined detractors then, mocking the faith of believers, briefly creating "a great uproar," even rejoicing over the seeming prospect that the faith of Christ's followers would be in vain. (See 3 Nephi 1:5-7.) It was not. Members kept the faith, and the faith kept them!

Reassurances today

For today's spiritually attuned, the reassurances will be there, as with Elisha's young servant. Encircled by an outnumbering enemy, the young man

rightly sought reassurance from the prophet and seer, who told him, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them" (2 Kings 6:16). But the young man could count, and, clearly, it did not look that way to him—until after the prophet's prayer in his behalf. Then, the young man's eyes were opened, and he saw the mountain filled with horses and chariots of fire. (See 2 Kings 6:17.)

All will be well now, as anciently, because the Lord's covenant keepers have His echoing assurance:

"And they shall be my people, and I will be their God:

"And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them:

"And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good" (Jeremiah 32:38–40).

I so testify and assure in apostolic authority and in the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder A. Theodore Tuttle, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He will be followed by Sister Elaine Cannon, who was released this morning as general president of the Young Women.

Elder A. Theodore Tuttle

Covenants, ordinances, and service

I have served in past years as both a mission president and as a temple president. I have watched the young people as they have come to the missions in South America and come to the temple for their endowments and sealings.

I have seen those who were well prepared, and those who were not so well prepared for these blessings. But, most of all, I watched anxiously for those who were not prepared—those who did not come at all—and wondered why.

A few of them were from families where every effort had been made to prepare them for missionary service and for the blessings of the temple. Most of them, however, were from homes where they did not receive what was required to qualify them and to give them a desire to serve.

In order to prepare youth for missionary service and for the temple blessings, parents must have more in mind than schooling. They must have

more in mind than preparing for a career. They must have more in mind, really, than just to be a missionary—as though attendance was all that was required.

There are three words which must be kept in mind: *covenants*, *ordinances*, and *service*.

The training for covenants, for ordinances, and for service *belongs in the home*. If these are paramount in the minds of the parents, the youth will be prepared. And they will not, because of this, miss any essential training for their careers.

A new challenge for parents

Fathers and mothers are under divine instruction to take care of their parental responsibilities. The things we have done in past years are not now sufficient to protect our children in these critical times. It has long been taught in this Church that the day will come when no one will be able to stand without an individual testimony of the divinity of this work. That day is here.

We are seeing some who lack testimonies turn away from the truth and become prey to error. While we mourn their loss, sorrow will come to those who, by failure to put true principles solidly into place, or by creating doubts in the faith of the weak, or openly teaching falsehoods, caused them to stray. Too many of our youth fail to receive their covenants and ordinances and give service. The onslaught of wickedness against our homes is at once more subtle and more brazen than it has ever been. It is taking its toll among our families. It will be difficult to escape these influences.

However, if we act more wisely, we will be safe. "If ye are prepared, ye shall not fear" (D&C 38:30). The solution is simple. The results are certain. *No longer can we expect the Church to assume the major role in teaching our children—parents have this prime responsibility.* Parents will be held fully accountable by the Lord to teach their children the principles and ordinances of the gospel and inspire them to serve. The Church, of course, will support parents through home teachers, visiting teachers, classes, counseling, and other assistance. No single parent in this Church needs to feel abandoned in carrying out the duties imposed by the Lord.

Recent studies by the Church have identified some things that parents can do to achieve our goals. Elder Dean Larsen reported the results:

"The factor that has by far the greatest effect on the private, religious life of our youth and upon their achievement of the desired outcomes is *home religious observance*. If a young person lives in a home situation where there is *regular family prayer, regular family study of the gospel and the scriptures, and agreement on basic values*, the likelihood of going on a mission and being married in the temple is greatly enhanced. This home and family influence is much more significant than that exercised by peer groups or by programmed participation. In fact, the influence of the home, whether it be

positive or negative, is overwhelming" (Regional Representatives' seminar, 1 April 1983).

Did you notice that the three key elements are regular family prayer, regular family study of the gospel from the scriptures, and agreement on basic values between parents and children? These are the things, more than anything else, that will lead to a proper understanding of covenants, ordinances, and service.

Family prayer

Parents, we must start each day by kneeling in family prayer. Children need to pray and gain knowledge for *themselves* from the Holy Ghost. Nephi said, "For if ye would hearken unto the Spirit which teacheth a man to pray ye would know that ye must pray; for the evil spirit teacheth not a man to pray" (2 Nephi 32:8).

Scripture study

Our opportunity to study the scriptures as a family has been strengthened by the consolidated meeting schedule. A good part of the Sabbath can very appropriately be used for both personal and family scripture study.

Few things sponsor spiritual growth more than studying from the scriptures. The Savior said, "He that hath the scriptures, let him search them, and see . . ." (3 Nephi 10:14). The Lord has promised that if you will search, you shall see marvelous spiritual truths that will persuade you to turn to Christ as your great exemplar. You will be strengthened in your desire to make covenants with the Lord, to receive the ordinances, and to serve. Alma taught a great principle when he said to Helaman, "My son, . . . see that ye look to God and live" (Alma 37:47).

Parents, when you desire to really teach, what do you do? Should we not do as the Savior did? He used questions. He quoted the scriptures, used parables, told stories, and he testified.

He drew on everyday experiences to teach spiritual truths, using all kinds of occasions for teaching. He created an environment for learning—drawing out instead of pouring on.

I know a man who teaches his children at mealtimes. He has a habit of asking two or three gospel questions. He says he can always get the attention of his teenagers when he says, "I have a dollar question for you."

Covenants defined

As we seek to teach by the Spirit, we set a high priority on the importance of covenants, ordinances, and service.

A covenant is a mutual exchange of enforceable promises. "I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise" (D&C 82:10).

Gospel covenants are made between God and man. The terms are stipulated by the Lord. Gospel covenants have been given to us by revelation. He has given us those covenants and ordinances that are essential to bring us back into his presence.

Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins is an essential covenant to make with the Lord. Faith and repentance precede this ordinance. Confirmation and the gift of the Holy Ghost follow baptism. Acceptance of these first principles and ordinances may obtain for us a remission of our sins and assure our salvation. In the ordinance of the sacrament, we regularly renew this and other covenants, and by complying with our part of the covenant, we receive the Spirit of the Lord to be with us.

The holy priesthood is likewise received by covenant. In essence, priesthood is power—to serve. Additional covenants are made with the Lord when we receive our endowment and when we are sealed in the temple. These are the covenants of exaltation. Teach your children that only by receiving these

ordinances and making these covenants can they be exalted and become like our Heavenly Father. As we endure in faith to the end and serve and love our fellowmen, we can develop the virtues and qualities necessary to qualify us to live with the Lord.

Summation

Service, then, becomes one of the highest virtues. The Savior is our example of unselfish service. Service is a divinely appointed duty. King Benjamin taught that service to others is the same as service to our God. (See Mosiah 2:17.)

Parents, if you will keep in mind that you are preparing your sons and daughters to make covenants, receive ordinances, and render service, you will do things differently. You will have different priorities. You will teach with clearer vision and more productive effort. Missions and temples will see youth coming, not only in greater numbers, but also better qualified for these blessings. And they will embark early on a lifetime of service.

And when your children do these things, they shall be lifted up at the last day, and shall arise and call you blessed—because you led them to eternal life.

When we as parents have a genuine *desire* to teach the gospel to our children, the Lord will give us entrance into their hearts. Then may we know that as we enter there we stand on holy ground. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder A. Theodore Tuttle, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has addressed us.

Sister Elaine Cannon, released this morning as general president of the Young Women, will be our next speaker.

Sister Elaine Cannon

President Kimball, it is a great blessing to all of us to have you here, President Hinckley, President Benson, and Brethren. I want to pay a special tribute to Elder Tuttle, who just spoke, because he has been the adviser to the Young Women for this past period of time, and we love him very dearly.

It is a great thrill for me to stand at this pulpit in this Tabernacle where I have come to conference all the years of my life. I have a birthday at this season of the year, and I can remember very clearly spending my ninth birthday here in the Tabernacle listening to the great speeches, and I am thrilled to have this part today.

We are gathered here in the name of the Lord. We are engaged in the work that is true, and I am, like you, grateful for the privilege of membership in this church. Yesterday I had an interesting experience. There has been talk lately in some circles about ordaining women to the priesthood, and someone asked me how I felt about holding the priesthood. I said very stoutly, "I love holding the priesthood when he comes for dinner." I know that isn't very original, but that was my answer. Now with this release from sweet but demanding service, I have every intention of being there when my fine husband comes home and our precious family members gather.

Heart full of deep appreciation

The remarks that I want to make today stem from a heart full of deep appreciation and a heart full of concern. I will talk about appreciation first. Sister Darger and Sister Smith and I, with Sister Palmer, who has been the executive secretary in the Young Women General Presidency, have loved this service with your beautiful young women. We have loved every minute of it, and we feel a great sweetness in the work that we have enjoyed together.

We have served in peace. We have served in faith, and we have sought the help of the Lord and have felt great support. We appreciate that privilege of having been guided in these ways. We have loved serving, and greatly appreciate the remarkable and attractive and faithful members of the general board and staff in the Young Women who have been released this day.

We have appreciated working with the organizations, the other auxiliary leaders, the departments, and the great machinery that operates this institution of the Church. We appreciate all of them, and we will miss those close ties.

But we are comfortable with the new callings that have been made. We love Sister Ardeeth Kapp and are proud that she is able to take the helm of this important work in this day.

Over the years, as I have mentioned, we have had special guidance from great priesthood leaders whom we have come to love very, very much, and we appreciate them. My great tenderness goes toward President Kimball, whose hands were placed upon my head nearly six years ago to set me apart, to give me a special blessing to serve in this capacity. This great, loving, beloved servant of God is indeed a prophet. This fine gentleman, who has said, "Do it," on one occasion, and I say this here in the Tabernacle with great joy, said to me as we talked about the youth of the Church, "Tell them, don't do it—especially if it is something wrong."

Tithes, offerings, and services

The other day in the dedicatory prayer for the new Church Museum, President Hinckley reminded us of all that is made possible by the tithes of faithful Saints. He asked Heavenly Father to look with favor upon the tithe-payers, to open the windows of heaven

and shower down upon them choice blessings.

At that moment, within me, my own heart turned over. I have come to value in a new way all that has been made possible for the young women, for example, through the tithes of all you good people—manuals and handbooks and opportunities and guides for their personal progress. How we appreciate your tithes and the offerings and the services!

Good and gifted people to guide and lead

Brothers and sisters, there are good and gifted people in this church. This is another powerful lesson that I have learned and that I am deeply grateful for. In each place that we have traveled in these years of service, I have repeatedly marveled at the able women leaders and the strong priesthood leaders who have been raised up in the far places where the Church is established. One gets off a plane, and there, among a sea of strangers, is one face of light. We recognize each other as disciples of Christ, as members of this church. It is wonderful. Again and again Heavenly Father has raised up good people who will guide the youth of the Church today to be accountable, responsible, and faithful people.

Concern for the coming generation

Now, this brings me to my concern as I leave this very fine opportunity that has been ours. We must raise up a generation that is prepared to make wise choices, to stand and to withstand. We must raise up people who will desire to make the holy covenants and keep them, and learn the word of God and share it. This has been a deep feeling within us as a presidency.

We have reestablished a wonderful, old tradition that many of us here grew up with in the old MIA. The young people are given a new scripture theme every year, and the girls memorize it and recite it each week. They

speak of it, they set their goals by it, and we hope they try to live by it. This year's scripture is the theme of commitment taken from 1 Nephi 3:7: "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded." "I will go." We say it over and over again.

You parents listening to this conference have more responsibility than we do as church workers. I echo what has been said by the Brethren. This recitation of 1 Nephi 3:7 should become a reality in the lives of the coming generation, who must be prepared, as President Kimball told us several years ago, as a covenant generation to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord.

Those of you who are gathered here in this historic Tabernacle or tuned into the conference listen to the messages translated into your own languages. This is so you can understand the word of God. It would warm your heart to see the numerous translators in their booths below us here in the Tabernacle. Many of them are youth. The Lord promised his children that they would be taught the gospel in their own language. This Church is making that happen. My concern is that families need to teach the gospel to each other *in the language of God*, our Heavenly Father. In the home, when direction is needed, when a problem or misunderstanding arises, I pray that we may open the scriptures with our youth beside us and find the law irrevocably decreed upon which blessings are predicated. Reading the will of God in the language of God builds reverence and witness and commitment, and we will all live more purely.

I love the gospel. I love the Lord. I am grateful that there is not a doubt in my mind that these men here are his special servants. I am happy to have served in whatever way I have. And I am grateful that there are people like you who will take up the concerns that we have had, who will prepare these young ones, who are so precious. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Sister Elaine Cannon, released this morning as general president of the Young women, has just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

The choir and congregation sang "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

President Benson

Elder William Grant Bangerter, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now speak to us. He will be followed by Sister Barbara B. Smith, who was released this morning as general president of the Relief Society.

Elder William Grant Bangerter

President Kimball, I know that I echo the feelings of everyone here in telling you that we love you, as you have so often told us.

Coming through the mists

I believe I have a good subject, since so many have already used it today. I would like to say something about coming through the mists.

As I approach this assignment, I am brought back to some guidelines, an expression made years ago by President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., who said:

"There are, for the Church and for each and all of its members, two prime things which may not be overlooked, forgotten, shaded, or discarded:

"First: That Jesus Christ is the Son of God. . . .

"Second . . . : That the Father and the Son actually . . . appeared to the Prophet Joseph in a vision . . . ; that the Gospel and the holy Priesthood . . . were . . . restored to the earth from which they were lost by the apostasy of the Primitive Church" ("The Charted Course of the Church in Education," an address delivered in Aspen Grove, Utah, 8 Aug. 1938, p. 3).

I testify that these stipulations are true because this knowledge has been

revealed to me by the unquestionable Spirit of God.

Warning against unrighteousness

In a time described in the scriptures as being filled with "wickedness and vengeance" (Moses 7:60), the First Presidency has sent out the special message to the Church in our stake conferences: "Staying on the strait and narrow path by keeping our covenants."

For us who claim leadership through prophets called of God, it is a good time to pay attention. For those who ignore the commandments, you may not receive many other warnings, "for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat" (Matthew 7:13).

The warning is against unrighteousness. That means sin and wickedness. This is defined by Peter as if he were speaking of this present time. He speaks of "denying the Lord," of covetousness to "make merchandise of you," of the example of the iniquity of Sodom and Gomorrah, and of "the filthy conversation of the wicked, . . . having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin" (2 Peter 2:1, 3, 6, 7, 14).

Displays of wickedness

A moment's reflection on the displays in the media and in advertising, the inducement to use drugs, alcohol, and so forth, makes it very plain that for the sake of making money there is an attempt to buy or sell our souls, making "merchandise of you."

Newspaper articles and public expressions often carry the "filthy conversation of the wicked" (2 Peter 2:7). We call it what it is: "A wicked and adulterous generation."

We are indeed constantly bombarded by a display of wickedness as it flashes before us, sometimes in ways that we cannot avoid.

Our society maintains the fiction that the display of such things as adultery, pornography, nudity, and licentiousness should be kept from the young people. Of course it should, but to set an age limit is pure hypocrisy. Perhaps greater corruption is being administered to the older and married generation. They are those who commit the adulteries. They are those who destroy the homes and violate the sanctity of families. The married ones obtain the divorces, break the covenants, cheat their spouses, and become dishonest in their commitments.

And, of course, in doing these wicked things they suggest that it is not so bad anymore. Since so much of the world accepts these actions, if we resist them or speak out against them, we will be scoffed at. We will be called prudish, Victorian, puritan, and self-righteous, as if we had become the sinners. We will be accused of being evil-minded in our failure to appreciate the "beauty and naturalness" of the human body.

Reaching out to boy in prison

A vivid example of the position of members of the Church in relation to the world was portrayed to us one evening in our sacrament meeting, now many years ago, when a man named Brother Smith came to speak. He told

us of his experience in working to rehabilitate men in the state penitentiary. A mother had asked him to reach out to her boy who was in prison.

In approaching the young man, Brother Smith was rudely rebuffed: "Leave me alone," was the tone. However, Brother Smith noticed a rather crude painting in the prison one day and on inquiry learned that this young man had drawn it. This inspired a new approach:

"Did you paint that picture?"

"Yes, I did it."

"I was impressed with it. I wonder if you would paint something for me."

"I don't know. What picture do you want?"

"I have never seen it," said Brother Smith. "I have only read about it."

"Where is it?" inquired the young man.

"It is here in this book," responded Brother Smith. "The Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi, chapter 8. Will you read it and see if you can see the picture?"

Later Brother Smith inquired if the young man had read it.

"Yes, I read it," he said.

"Did you see the picture?"

"Yes, I saw it."

"Will you paint it for me?"

"I don't know if I will or not."

Brother Smith then obtained the necessary materials for painting a picture and presented them to the young man, who for the first time responded with warmth and appreciation to be able to use good equipment, and he painted the picture. Brother Smith brought it with him to our sacrament meeting, and so I have seen it. It is, of course, the picture of Lehi's dream.

A vivid warning

Now, will you try to see the picture in your own imagination? All you who have read 1 Nephi, chapter 8, will recall the scene. If you have not read it, I wish you would do so and get the feeling and the vision of this picture.

The description is as follows: First, Lehi wandering through a dreary waste, then coming to a spacious field; the tree with the most desirable fruit to be happy, the love of God; Lehi's desire to share the fruit with his family; the rebellion of two of his sons; the pressing forward of many people to receive the fruit; the mists of darkness, which arose to obscure the path; the river of water along the path which could mean destruction; the rod of iron, which represented security in staying on the path; the huge building across the river filled with scoffing people; the susceptibility of those who had followed the path to succumb to the scorn and pride of those of the world; and the wandering away of those who had partaken of the fruit of the tree of life into forbidden paths of destruction.

I know of no more graphic description of the condition of those who call themselves Latter-day Saints in relation to the influences of the world than this great vision. This story is reality. It is a great prophecy. It is a vivid warning.

"It is my angel"

Let me complete the story of the young man in prison. Brother Smith pointed to an angel the young man had painted hovering over the chasm of filthy water and asked him: "Where did you get that angel? I don't remember any angel when I read about the picture."

The young man replied: "I know. I put it there. It is my angel. As I painted the picture, I began to realize that God had placed an influence in my way which could bring me to safety and redeem me from the course I have been pursuing."

This experience, of course, was the beginning of his recovery.

Experience teaches reality

Yes, the voices and enticements of the world make good seem evil and

evil, good. The false attractions to engage in immorality, to view that which is forbidden on your home video, to seek unbounded pleasure as if God did not exist, are, in reality, the yawning pit of hell, set there by the one who will try to bind you with his awful chains.

I learned once upon a time to fly airplanes. The instructor was flying straight and level. On the horizon was a range of mountains. Then he did something like this [demonstration of snap roll and spin] and I saw the mountain rise up and stand on end. It turned upside down and then continued to its normal position. He put the plane into a spin, and as we were falling and gyrating, I looked below and saw the whole earth turning as if it were a huge wheel. The vision was vivid. It looked so real. I have performed these maneuvers many times since: the snap roll and the spin. If I were to do them today, I could no longer make the mountain turn over or the earth gyrate. Why? Because experience has taught me reality, and now I cannot be deceived.

Hold fast to the iron rod

Reality for members of the Church is: "Jesus Christ is the Son of God. The Father and the Son actually appeared to the Prophet Joseph. The gospel has been restored to the earth."

We have no excuse to deviate from the paths of righteousness. If we hold fast to the iron rod, we cannot be deceived.

In one of the hymns, we sing of Nephi, a seer of olden time. Nephi, of course, also saw the vision of his father Lehi.

To Nephi, seer of olden time,
A vision came from God.
Wherein the holy word sublime,
Was shown an iron rod.

While on our journey here below,
Beneath temptation's power,
Through mists of darkness we
must go,
In peril every hour.

And when temptation's power is
nigh,

Our pathway clouded o'er,
Upon the rod we can rely,
And heaven's aid implore.

Hold to the rod, the iron rod;
'Tis strong, and bright, and true;
The iron rod is the word of God,

'Twill safely guide us through.
(*Hymns*, no. 186.)

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Sister Barbara B. Smith will now
address us.

Sister Barbara B. Smith

President Kimball, President Hinckley, Brethren, and my dear brothers and sisters, this afternoon I feel somewhat like a former Chief Justice who explained his feelings on his ninety-fifth birthday anniversary. In his mind he rationalized, "It's just another birthday like all the others." But as he stood to acknowledge the occasion, his words revealed a love of life, a love of his work and of his fellowmen. He said:

"I have warmed both hands before the fire of life. . . . The rich spoils of memory are mine. . . . Mine, too, are the precious things of today. . . . The best of life is always further on. Its real lure is hidden from our eyes somewhere behind the hills of time" (Lillian Eichler Watson, ed., *Lights from Many Lamps* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1951], pp. 267-68).

Like that grand old man, I love life. I love the work in which I have been engaged for the past nine and one-half years—the demanding, intense, but beautiful work of Relief Society. It has been so sweet to me that it has seemed but a fleeting moment in time.

Montage of memories of Relief Society

As I stand at this point of transition, a montage of memories crowd my mind—of family, my good husband supporting and patiently waiting for me, of my children and their mates struggling to arrange their busy sched-

ules to meet mine, and of grandchildren often being my examples; of the women with whom I have worked—a kaleidoscope of images, experiences, and impressions come to me of them.

I see my devoted, talented, loyal counselors, Marian R. Boyer, Janath R. Cannon, Shirley W. Thomas, and Ann S. Reese, and my secretary-treasurer, Mayola R. Miltenberger, all of whom I dearly love. I see the brilliant, gifted women who have served with me on the Relief Society General Board. And there is my personal secretary and the dear women of our staff, the hostesses who serve in the Relief Society Building, our public communications representative, Moana B. Bennett.

I also see the faithful stake and ward Relief Society leaders and the many, many sisters who comprise the membership of the Relief Society throughout the Church whom I have come to know and appreciate.

Warmed by fire of their lives

At this moment, I can only echo President Kimball's words: "God bless the women—the wonderful, wonderful women!" ("Women, Wonderful Women!" *Relief Society Magazine*, Jan. 1958, p. 8).

Certainly I have warmed both my hands at the fires of their lives.

I have seen nobility emerge as I have observed them overcome personal

sorrows, disappointments, and tragedies. I have witnessed their compassion and loving ministrations toward their families and toward their neighbors.

I have savored their creativity, rejoiced in their achievements, and shared their joyous moments.

I have felt the strength of our sisterhood as we have met in Sunday Relief Society meetings, in women's area conference meetings, in socials, and in significant historical events such as the memorable occasion in Nauvoo, the birthplace of our beloved organization, where we memorialized that event with a beautiful garden of monuments to women.

"This is the day I saw"

I have read how Relief Society observed its fiftieth year with a great gathering of sisters in this Tabernacle. President Zina D. H. Young addressed the congregation and exclaimed:

"O that my words could be heard by all people, not only by you my brethren and sisters in this Tabernacle but that they might be *heard* and *understood* by all the people of this continent, and not only this continent, but the continents of Asia, Africa, Europe and the islands of the sea" (Minutes of the Relief Society General Board, vol. 1, 17 Mar. 1892, p. 225).

I have come to feel that this may have been more than just a wistful expression of a great former leader. Perhaps it was instead a pleading with the Lord for a time such as this. Let me explain:

When I was a little girl I participated in a program here in the Tabernacle. At that time an impression came to me that I have never forgotten, even though I did not understand it then. I was filled with an awareness that sometime I would stand before a vast congregation of the Church in this building.

I thought this vision of my childhood was realized in the 1974 Relief Society conference when I was sustained as the general president of the Relief Society. But now I feel certain

that *this* is the day I saw. And perhaps because of prayerful people like President Zina Young our voices are heard proclaiming the truths of the gospel to all the world, truths that can be transmitted into the very hearts and minds of people who will listen and try to understand.

Testify of divine direction

In that spirit I am proud to testify today that our prophets and Apostles are men called of God. They will always lead the Church aright by divine direction and by the power of the Holy Ghost.

The women of the Church have an important work to do. That work requires great strength of character, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and a pure heart that will be a light unto the world and a bulwark of righteousness against the darkness that covers the earth with contention and evil.

Testimony

In all humility I declare my ever-expanding love for you. I assure you, too, that I deeply love our newly called and sustained general president of the Relief Society. I know Relief Society is in good hands. It will continue to grow and move forward in countless ways to bless the lives of all of the daughters of God.

I know this is true. I feel it with every fiber of my being, just as I know that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, our Savior and our Redeemer.

May we all make the most of every moment of our lives, that somewhere beyond the hills of time we will be with them again, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

We have just listened to Sister Barbara B. Smith, recently released as the general president of the Relief Society.

Elder Gene R. Cook will be our next speaker. He will be followed by

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Gene R. Cook

Thank you, Sister Smith, from all the sisters of the Church, and certainly all the brethren as well. We appreciate your service and that of Sister Cannon.

The meaning of home

Some years ago a fire erupted in the middle of the night and completely destroyed a family's home. A neighbor came by to console a seven-year-old, not knowing that he was about to be taught a great principle. "Johnny, it's sure too bad your home burned down." Johnny thought a moment and then said, "Oh, that's where you're mistaken, Mr. Brown. That was not our home; that was just our house. We still have our home, we just don't have any place to put it right now."

What a great principle taught by a child about home. What does that word bring to your mind—*home*? To some, an edifice. To others, a place to sleep, a place to eat, a place where worldly goods are stored.

Yet to others more spiritually inclined, it might mean where family is, where my heart is, a sacred place, a peaceful place, an escape from a wicked world.

Yet a deeper meaning

The still small voice whispers yet a deeper meaning. Home is heaven. We are strangers here on earth. My real home is not here, but there. My challenge is to learn how to bring about a home here on earth similar to the celestial one I left. The Lord said that we were taught "even before [we] were born." We "received [our] first lessons in the world of spirits and were prepared to come forth . . . to labor in his

vineyard for the salvation of the souls of men" (D&C 138:56).

Thus, we were taught to labor in the vineyard, a good part of which, perhaps the most important part, was to know how to labor at home. We were taught by the Lord, by the best of all teachers. Perhaps, therefore, the re-learning here on earth, with our agency, is to largely experience and rediscover the teachings in the flesh.

How might I remember and rediscover what I once knew? The Lord answers, "Pray and I will make known unto you things from the foundation of the world according to your faith and holy works." (See Alma 12:30.) "I will bring all things back to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (see John 14:26 and Alma 12:30) "and will enlarge the memory of this people" (see Alma 37:8).

All are members of a family

At times when one speaks of home and family, some who are single, widowed, a single parent, or a grandparent might be tempted to feel these teachings don't apply to them. But may I remind all that when the Lord sent us here for our individual growth, he sent us to live with and be nurtured spiritually and temporally by a family. The Lord organized the whole earth this way. There is no other way to enter mortality.

Yet some still say, "I don't have a family. I'm all alone." May I remind you that you always were and ever will be a member of the family of God. You are his son or his daughter. It doesn't matter if your *parents or spouse or brothers or sisters are members, non-members, living, or dead*, they are still your family. And if you are righteous

and faithful to the end, no matter what your present status, you ultimately will be blessed as part of a family unit. Thus, it behooves all of us to learn and live, to the degree we can in our present situation, the principles governing family life in preparation for exaltation, whether we're a parent, grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, or a child—whether we are *single or married*. This is the Lord's pattern, His expanded view of the word *family*.

Premortal family council

Thus, hearken all ye families of the earth, immediate and extended families, yea, every living soul, and the Lord will teach you of the sacredness of that heavenly organization called *family*, called *home*.

Brothers and sisters, for just a moment, please imagine yourselves as if you were in the premortal existence, in that council in heaven, yes, even a council of the Father's own family. Could the Father not have spoken words such as these to all of us: "My children, my children,

1. "Marriage on earth will be ordained of God unto man." (See D&C 49:15–16; D&C 131:1–4.)

2. "By divine decree, you will be copartners with God in bringing children to earth." (See Genesis 1:22, 28; 2 Nephi 2:22–23; D&C 132:63.)

3. "The family unit will be the principal agency for the spiritual and temporal nurturing of the individual." (See Mosiah 4:14–15; D&C 68:25, 28.)

The Father, perhaps continuing, might have said: "When you go to earth—

4. "Teach your children to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart" (see Deuteronomy 6:5–7),

5. "And to love and to serve one another" (see Mosiah 4:15).

6. "Pray in your families both morning, mid-day, and evening, and I will quicken your memory of these

teachings." (See 3 Nephi 18:21; Alma 34:21, 27; D&C 68:28.)

7. "On earth, teach them repentance, faith in Christ, baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost, priesthood covenants, and temple ordinances." (See D&C 68:25, 27; D&C 132:19.) Grandparents, uncles and aunts, you can help.

8. "Consecrate your family resources to the Lord. Be free with your substance." (See D&C 42:30–31; Jacob 2:17; D&C 119:1–7.)

9. "Provoke not your children to wrath" (see Ephesians 6:4),

10. "Neither suffer that they fight and quarrel one with another, thus sowing seeds of contention." (See Mosiah 4:14.)

Perhaps He continued, saying:

11. "*Fathers* to be, you will learn what *true spiritual leadership* is mostly at home, not so much in the world.

"*Mothers*, yours will be a sacred call unlike any other, to *raise these little children so that they will be like I am*. Unless you all become as little children, you will not be able to return home to me."

12. "*Learn your duty from living prophets and from the scriptures*."

13. "Lastly, because of the sacred nature of parenthood, I will *personally* teach you, through the Holy Ghost, those things that matter most. Stay close to me; humbly ask for help."

Cautions from the Father

Perhaps the Father continued, saying, "My children, there are also a number of cautions I would give you, because the influence of the world will be so strong.

1. "There will be *heavy influence to maintain families small*. However, remember, 'As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children. . . . Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them' " (Psalm 127:4–5).

2. "On earth, remember to keep your family responsibilities as

a *priority*. There will be many who will want to encroach upon your responsibility for *teaching and providing activities* for your family. Never forget that yours is the primary responsibility and that your ultimate success in all other endeavors will be in direct proportion to the attention given these *divinely appointed relationships*." (See D & C 88:119.)

3. "*Strive to be together*. Avoid activities and those that would pull you apart. Remember, where love runs deep, so can hurt feelings and frictions, as love may become frustrated." (See 2 Nephi 1:14, 21.)

4. "As children, be sure to *give heed to your father and mother*, remembering that I, the Lord, have placed them over you. Honor them." (See Exodus 20:12.)

5. "When you go to earth, children, remember that *once you are a parent you will always be a parent*. Whether it be a grandparent, a great-grandparent, or a parent as I am. Your responsibilities to preside go on through the generations to assist in turning the hearts of the children to their fathers. Resist the temptation to be uninvolved, retiring from your family and doing your own thing. As grandparents, your wisdom and vision will allow you to draw together your whole family which I, the Lord, have given you." (See Mosiah 2:5.)

Brothers and sisters, perhaps he concluded,

6. "My children, don't be too concerned about remembering these things. You will find that when these things are taught to you they will seem strangely familiar, as if you always knew them. You did, because you experienced it all here in your heavenly home." (See 1 Nephi 15:8, 11.)

"You will suffer affliction with your children in allowing them to grow and develop, just as I have suffered affliction with you. (See D & C

133:52-53.) But don't be afraid; I have given mine angels charge concerning you. Those sent from my very presence to be round about you, to bear you up. (See D&C 84:42, 88; 133:53.) This is your opportunity to experience what we have taught you. Follow the promptings. We love you."

Exalt concept of home

Brothers and sisters, in conclusion may I say, where possible:

Parents, whatever you are doing, *return home*.

Children, wherever you are, no matter what your failure, problem, or sin, you will always be loved by your family. *Go home*.

Grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, draw your families together. *Return home*. May the concept of home be exalted, because the Lord so organized it in the beginning.

I pay tribute to my grandparents, to my parents, especially to my wife, and to my children, in having made my home the best place in all the world. There's no place in all the earth I would rather be than at home.

And lastly, may the day come when these praises about home and family we will all sing:

O my Father, Thou that dwellest
In the high and glorious place,
When shall I regain thy presence,
And again behold Thy face?

In the heavens are parents single?
No; the thought makes reason
stare!

Truth is reason, truth eternal
Tells me I've a mother there.

When I leave this frail existence,
When I lay this mortal by,
Father, Mother, may I meet you
In your royal courts on high?
Then, at length, when I've
completed

All you sent me forth to do,
With your mutual approbation

Let me come [home] and dwell with you.

("O My Father," *Hymns*, no. 139.)

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie spoke without further announcement.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie

I rejoice in the call of Russell Nelson and Dallin Oaks to stand from this time forth as special witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ. They were called by the Lord through the spirit of inspiration and will stand as pillars of righteousness in his house from this time onward forever.

Gratitude for blessings

I am quite overwhelmed by deep feelings of thanksgiving and rejoicing for the goodness of the Lord to me.

He has permitted me to suffer pain, feel anxiety, and taste his healing power. I am profoundly grateful for the faith and prayers of many people, for heartfelt petitions that have ascended to the throne of grace on my behalf.

It is pleasing to that God whose we are when we fast and pray and seek his blessings; when we plead with all the energy of our souls for those things we so much desire; when, as Paul says, we "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

Prayer moves mountains and saves souls

Prayer is the way and means, given us by our Creator, whereby we can counsel and communicate with him. It is one of the chief cornerstones of pure and perfect worship.

In prayer we speak to the Lord and he speaks to us. It is our privilege to have our voices heard in the courts above and to hear the answering voice of the Lord conveyed by the power of his Spirit.

Prayer changes our lives. Through it we draw near to the Lord, and he reaches out his finger and touches us, so we never again are the same.

Prayer is a great tower of strength, a pillar of unending righteousness, a mighty force that moves mountains and saves souls. Through it the sick are healed, the dead are raised, and the Holy Spirit is poured out without measure upon the faithful.

In prayer we bind ourselves by solemn covenants to love and serve the Lord all our days. In it we pay our devotions and offer our sacraments to the Most High.

Now, there are special prayers reserved and offered for those who drink the still waters and lie down in green pastures, prayers which are not uttered for those who yet dwell in the deserts of sin.

With these things in mind, may I tell you some of the prayers in my heart, prayers that I think will join with like feelings in your hearts, and will unite in one mighty chorus of praise and petition, of adoration and thanksgiving, as they ascend and are heard in the courts above.

Patterns of prayer

We do not give memorized, ritualistic, or repetitious prayers. We seek the guidance of the Spirit and suit every prayer to the needs of the moment, with no thought of using the same words on successive occasions. But it would be appropriate for us to use words that convey such thoughts as these in our prayers:

Father, we ask thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, to hear the words of our

mouth, to discern with thy all-seeing eye the thoughts and intents of our heart, and to grant us our righteous desires.

We feel it is a great privilege to come into thy presence, to bow before thy throne, to address thee as Father; and we know thou wilt hear our cries. May we speak by the power of thy Holy Ghost.

Thanks for life and hope of eternal life

Then, in thanking the Lord for the blessings of mortal life, and the hope of immortality and eternal life, we might properly say such things as:

Father, we thank thee for life itself, for this mortal probation in which we as pilgrims, far from our heavenly home, are gaining experiences that could be gained in no other way.

We thank thee that thou didst ordain and establish the great and eternal plan of salvation whereby we, as thy spirit children, are given power, if faithful and true in all things, to advance and progress and become like thee.

We thank thee for sending thy Holy Son Jesus to be the Savior and Redeemer; to put into full operation all of the terms and conditions of thy great and eternal plan of salvation; to save us from death, hell, the devil, and endless torment.

O how we glory in him and in his blessed name, rejoicing everlastingly that he has ransomed us from temporal and spiritual death; that he is the one Mediator between us and thee; that he has reconciled us unto thee, not imputing unto us our sins, but healing us with his stripes!

We thank thee, O our Father, that thou gavest thine Only Begotten Son so that we, believing in him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life; that he, amid the blood and agonies of Gethsemane, and the blood and cruelties of Calvary, bore our sins on condition of repentance.

O how we love the Lord Jesus, who is called Christ and who is the Holy Messiah; who also is our Lord, our God, and our King, whom we worship in the full majesty of his godhood; and in whose blood we shall yet wash our garments, so as to stand spotless before him and thee in that great day!

Thanks for restoration of the gospel

With reference to the restoration of the glorious gospel in our day, prayers might include expressions along these lines:

And now, O thou God of our Fathers, we are grateful and rejoice in what thou hast done for us in our day.

With all our hearts we thank thee for the restoration of the gospel; that the voice of God is heard again; that the heavens, long sealed, have been rent; that holy angels, bringing priesthoods and keys and light and truth, now minister among us.

We stand in reverent awe at the realization that thou and thy Beloved Son came to Joseph Smith in the spring of 1820 to usher in the dispensation of the fulness of times.

We marvel that thou didst send Moroni to reveal the Book of Mormon; Moses to empower us to gather Israel from the Egypt of the world into the Zion of God; and Elijah to confer upon us the power to bind on earth and have our acts sealed everlastingly in the heavens.

How grateful we are that Elias brought back the gospel of Abraham, so that we, as children of the covenant, might have a continuation of the family unit in eternity!

Thanks for reconciliation with the Father

Of our reconciliation with the Father, through the atonement of his Son, it would be proper to say such things as:

Father, thou hast given us the word of reconciliation and hast poured

out revelations and visions upon us. We are thy people, and we desire to be worthy of the calling and election that is ours.

Thou hast wrought miracles in our midst; given us the holy scriptures, particularly thy word manifest in our day; conferred upon us the gift of the Holy Ghost by which we are guided into all truth, and by which our souls are sanctified.

For all these things we are grateful beyond any measure of expression, and because of them we shall praise thy holy name forever.

We confess our sins before thee and seek remission thereof, lest anything stand between us and thee in receiving a free flow of thy Spirit.

Prayer for building up the kingdom of God on earth

With reference to building up the kingdom of God on earth, our needs might be expressed somewhat along this line:

Wilt thou bless thy Church and kingdom on earth. May we be effective instruments in thy hands to build anew the Zion of old, even the New Jerusalem that is to be.

May we gather the lost sheep of Israel into the stakes of Zion in all nations as thine ancient prophets foretold.

Give us thy power in preaching thy restored gospel to every nation and kindred and tongue and people. Open the doors of all nations.

Let us fulfill our divine commission to prepare a people for the coming of thy Son. May we discover who our ancestors are and perform the ordinances of salvation and exaltation for them in sacred sanctuaries dedicated to thy holy name.

O have mercy on us; bear with us in our weakness, for our trust is in thee. Thou art our God, and there is none other like unto thee; and it is unto thee we turn in worship and adoration and thanksgiving.

Prayer for our temporal needs

As to our own temporal needs, I would feel no hesitancy in saying such things as:

We cry unto thee over our flocks and our herds, over the fruits of our fields and the increase of our vines and trees. Wilt thou temper the elements and preserve us from disasters, that our basket and store may be full.

We need food, clothing, and shelter; we need schooling and proper employment; we need wisdom in our business and professional enterprises.

Grant us according to our needs, giving us neither poverty nor riches, but feeding us with food convenient for us.

Prayer for blessings that lead to salvation

As to the personal blessings that prepare us for salvation, our thoughts might be couched in expressions along this line:

Bless us in our families that husbands and wives may love each other and cleave unto each other; that parents may bring up their children in light and truth; that children, thus brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, may honor their fathers and their mothers by living as their righteous ancestors lived.

O Father, there are those among us, not a few in number, who desire and are worthy to have eternal companions. Wilt thou prepare the way before them that they may have the desires of their hearts in righteousness.

There are those among us who are sick and afflicted, who suffer from disease, and who are not appointed unto death. O thou Great Physician, pour out thy healing power upon thy Saints.

O Lord, increase our faith, and let the sick be healed and the dead raised even in greater numbers than at present.

But above this, O thou God of healing, wilt thou cause him who came with healing in his wings also to heal us spiritually.

We would be clean; we desire to be a pure people; we need and desire and seek, above all, the companionship of thy Holy Spirit. We pray, as did they of old, that we might receive the Holy Ghost.

O Father, we rejoice in the gifts of the Spirit and seek them in greater abundance. Let testimony and revelation and visions and miracles multiply among us.

Let us know the wonders of eternity, even those things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have yet entered into the heart of man.

Prayer of covenant and petition

And then by way of capstone, covenant, and petition, it would be appropriate for us to choose words that express these thoughts:

And finally, Father, we would be one with thy Son, even as he is one with thee. We seek salvation; we desire eternal life; we long to return to thy presence, and there, sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets and holy men of old, go no more out forever.

Let us see the face of thy Son while we dwell here as mortals. Let us hear him say: Come ye blessed of my Father; ye shall enter into the joy of thy Lord; thy calling and election has been made sure; thou art a joint-heir with me, and shall yet receive, possess, and inherit all that my Father hath.

And now, O our God, thou Everlasting Elohim, knowing thy mind and will with reference to all these expressions of thanksgiving and all these petitions for blessings, we covenant before thee that we will keep thy commandments and love and serve thee all our days.

Let this, then, be our covenant, that from this hour we will walk in all thy ways, blameless, obedient, faithful, true to every trust, having love one for another, testifying in word and in deed that we are thy people, the

sheep of thy pasture, thine elect and chosen children.

The reward— peace and eternal life

Language along these lines sets forth feelings and desires that well might be expressed to the Lord in prayer.

It is my faith that all who join in such choruses of praise and petition, of adoration and thanksgiving, and who strive to live as they pray, will gain peace in this life and eternal life in the world to come.

And such is my prayer for myself and my family and for all Israel. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has been our concluding speaker. May I say, Bruce, we are grateful to the Lord that he has heard our prayers for the restoration of your health—first, the prayers of your family, then the ward, and the stake, and then the quorums of the priesthood, including your beloved members of the Twelve. And we pray that this restoration will continue in all the days to come.

We remind the brethren of the general priesthood meeting which will convene here in the Tabernacle this evening at 6:00 P.M.

The nationwide CBS Radio Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those desiring to attend this broadcast must be in their seats no later than 9:15 A.M.

The singing for this session has been furnished by the combined single adult choir and Salt Lake Institute choir. We are grateful for this lovely music this afternoon and for the beautiful spirit your music has added to this meeting.

The choir will now sing in closing "The Lord's Prayer." Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder William R. Bradford, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The combined choir sang "The Lord's Prayer."

Elder William R. Bradford offered the benediction.

GENERAL PRIESTHOOD MEETING

THIRD SESSION

The general priesthood meeting convened in the Tabernacle at 6:00 P.M. on Saturday, April 7, 1984.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for this session was provided by a father-son priesthood choir from the Cache Utah, Cache Utah South, Logan Utah, Logan Utah University, and Smithfield Utah regions, directed by Willard R. Kesling and Brent Farley with Clay Christiansen at the organ.

President Hinckley opened this session with the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Brethren, we welcome you to this great general priesthood meeting of the Church. President Spencer W. Kimball is watching the proceedings on television in his apartment and has asked that we go forward.

He asked that we extend his love and best wishes to all of the brethren participating in this session. He was with us in the conference this afternoon.

We excuse this evening President Marion G. Romney, who is watching at his home.

For the information of the brethren in the outlying areas, we announce that at the first general session this morning Elders Russell M. Nelson and Dallin H. Oaks were sustained as members of the Council of the Twelve Apostles to fill the vacancies created by the deaths of

Elders LeGrand Richards and Mark E. Petersen. Also sustained as non-lifetime members of the First Quorum of the Seventy were the following, and I wish these Brethren would stand as I read their names so that you can see them over here on my left: John K. Carmack, Russell Taylor, Robert B. Harbertson, Devere Harris, Spencer H. Osborn, Philip T. Sonntag. Thank you, Brethren. Someone said this afternoon that he had not heard of any of these Brethren, and I said, "You will."

Also Sisters Barbara B. Smith, Marian R. Boyer, and Ann S. Reese were released as the general presidency of the Relief Society; and Sisters Elaine Cannon, Arlene B. Darger, and Norma B. Smith were released as the general presidency of the Young Women. Sister Barbara Ann Winder was sustained as the new general president of the Relief Society, and Sister Ardeth Greene Kapp was sustained as the new general president of the Young Women.

These services this evening are being relayed by closed-circuit transmission and will reach members of the priesthood gathered in the Assembly Hall, the Marriott Center on the BYU Campus, and in at least 892 locations in many countries around the world. Also, they are being carried by satellite transmission to some six hundred and fifty stake centers extending from coast to coast in the United States and Canada.

We extend our greetings and blessings to our brethren wherever you may be.

We note that Elder John H. Groberg and Bishop Victor L. Brown

are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall, and Elders Paul H. Dunn and F. Enzo Busche preside at the BYU Marriott Center.

The singing during this session will be furnished by a unique choir, the father-son priesthood choir from the Cache Utah, Cache Utah South, Logan Utah, Logan Utah University, and Smithfield Utah regions, under the direction of Willard R. Kesling and Brent Farley with Clay Christiansen at the organ.

We shall begin this service by the choir singing "See, the Mighty Angel Flying!" Following the singing, Elder Rex D. Pinegar, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "See, the Mighty Angel Flying!"

Elder Rex D. Pinegar offered the invocation

President Hinckley

The choir will now favor us with "Almighty God of Our Fathers." Following the choir number, Brother Devin Durrant, a tremendous basketball champ from Brigham Young University, will speak to us all, and particularly to the boys, about the importance of missionary work in his life. He is just as much a winner at the pulpit in bearing testimony of this work as he is on the basketball court.

The choir sang "Almighty God of Our Fathers."

Brother Devin Durrant

Brethren, I am honored to stand before you tonight. First, I would like to talk about a much-discussed topic in the Church—referees.

Referees make tough decisions

Before each game at BYU the captains of the two teams meet at the center circle with the referees and go through a meaningless ritual where nothing of real significance is said. But on the day we played Notre Dame, a referee friend of mine said something during that meeting that really hit home with me. He said, "Men, we referees are going to work hard tonight. We're going to make some mistakes, but you work hard too."

I remembered his words, and the game began. During the last few minutes, I went up for a rebound, and a bigger Notre Dame player knocked me

to the floor. As I lay there, I looked up, and the referee pointed down and indicated that the foul was on me. Surprised at his decision, I got up off the floor. I smiled at the referee and said, "You know, you were right in what you said before the game." He looked at me with a puzzled expression. I continued, "You said you were going to make some mistakes tonight, and you just made a big one." We looked at each other, and we both had a good laugh and continued to play.

Decisions under pressure

I have great respect for referees because they make many tough decisions which must be made in a split second and which are open to public view. But there are decisions in life that are much more important than those made by referees—decisions made in a

slow, deliberate, prayerful, private manner. One such decision is whether or not to go on a mission. While I was growing up I had a desire to serve a mission. But when it finally came time to send in the papers, I was hesitant. The decision became filled with pressures. I didn't know whether to leave after my freshman year, after my sophomore year, or after I had completed my college education. I fought with a multitude of inward thoughts and feelings. I also wondered if I had enough knowledge to go out there and give what was so precious to me to somebody else. I talked to a lot of people, and most of them willingly shared their opinions with me. Some said that I should go immediately, others said later, and some said I shouldn't go at all. I wonder, if I had asked you, should I go now or later or not at all, what would you have told me?

Perhaps you would have been like one of our great priesthood leaders. I went to him, and we talked about my situation. He listened with patience and concern. After I expressed my feelings about being able to play basketball when I returned, he said, with words that sank deep into me, "Devin, if you serve a mission and serve faithfully, when you return you will be a better basketball player than you are now."

Only you can decide

I had great confidence in that man, and I felt that he was moved by the Spirit to say what he did. I felt he was talking to me personally and not to all athletes who serve missions, because each case is different. He could advise me, my parents could advise me, my friends could advise me, but they couldn't serve for me. I was the one who was going, and no one else could make my decision. I had to make that myself.

One reason I desired to serve a mission was that I had seen the impact that serving a mission had on my father and mother. Many times in our family home evenings Dad would mention his

mission. He told us about his call. He had a desire to serve a mission, but when he expressed that desire to his father, his father discouraged him from going. My dad grew up on a chicken farm in American Fork, Utah. Because of failing health, his father didn't feel that he would be able to maintain the farm, and there would be no money to finance a mission.

Bishop Melvin Grant came to discuss the matter with my dad's family. When Dad's father told the bishop that his son couldn't go, Dad's mother stood right up from her chair and said, "I'll take care of the chickens. My son George is going on a mission."

And so he went to England. My dad told me that a few months into his mission he received a letter from his mother that said, "I think the chickens know where you are, because they've never laid as many eggs as they are laying now."

"Elder Durrant"

In April of 1980 I entered the Missionary Training Center and began to learn Spanish to prepare to serve in Madrid, Spain. While in the MTC, I knew that I was doing the right thing. In my heart I wanted to someday return to play basketball. Yet at the same time I decided that even if I never played another game of collegiate ball I wouldn't regret the decision that I had made.

In Spain I had the honor of wearing a little name tag that said "Elder Durrant." That title, *Elder*, was a greater honor than any I had ever before known. I had many experiences as a missionary. When someone accepted the gospel, I felt indescribable joy. When people rejected the message of the gospel, it brought me great sorrow.

Jose Manuel

One of my most joyous memories began during the summer of 1981. We had walked the city streets all morning talking to businessmen about the

Church. By noon we were hot and tired and ready to take a break. We decided to walk through a nearby park, and as we did so, we could see off to the side a group of young people. We decided to see if they would listen to our message.

As we approached, they looked at us with some suspicion. We told them we were missionaries of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They laughed a little and made a few mocking comments. It seemed obvious that they didn't want to listen to us. But there was one young man in the group who looked at us with a sincere interest. So we focused our attention on him. He had a guitar. We asked, "Would you play something for us?" He smiled, lifted his guitar, and began to play.

When he finished, we told him more about ourselves and our message. He told us his name was Jose Manuel. We talked for a few more minutes and then ended the conversation by asking if we could talk to him another day about our church. He replied he would be glad to listen to us and that we could find him in the park most every day taking his dog for a walk or playing his guitar.

As we left, we couldn't imagine this young man ever being baptized. A few days later we were in that same area. To our pleasant surprise, there he was. We asked if he would listen to us. He consented, and we pulled two park benches together, and my companion and I sat on one and he sat on the other. We looked into Jose Manuel's eyes and told him about Jesus Christ. Near the end of our message we told him about the Book of Mormon and that Jesus Christ had visited America after his resurrection. We challenged him to read about this great event. He said he would. We left the book, yet we had our doubts if Jose Manuel would ever even open it.

A few more days went by, and we decided to see how he had done on his reading assignment. To our surprise, he told us that he had read the part in the Book of Mormon that we had assigned

him. He explained that he had told his friend about what he had read. His friend also wanted to read the book, so Jose Manuel had given it to him. He asked us if he could possibly get another copy. We told him that we could probably work something out.

After that we continued to teach him the gospel. We saw him change his appearance and his heart. He wanted to be baptized.

Nearly three years have passed since we first met Jose Manuel in that park in Madrid, Spain. He is now a member of the Church. A few months ago he, like you and me, had a decision to make. He had to decide whether or not to serve a mission. Jose Manuel had every reason in the world not to go. He was just a recent convert. His knowledge of the gospel wasn't that extensive. He had lost his father a few years before, and his mother didn't want him to go. Other family members didn't want him to go either. He didn't have the finances to be able to serve for eighteen months. He also had to complete his military service before he would be able to even think about serving a mission. Everything was against his going on a mission.

Look for reasons to go

Every one of us, as we think about a mission, can find a number of reasons why we shouldn't go. We must each look beyond those reasons. The key is to look for reasons to go. And Jose Manuel had some reasons to go. He knew that Jesus Christ was the Son of God and the Savior of the world. He knew that Joseph Smith had seen a vision. He knew that the Church was true. He knew that it had changed his life, and he wanted to go out and share that knowledge with others.

Jose Manuel had a desire to serve. He was called to the work. With the help of the Lord, he was able to work things out. That always seems to happen. He overcame the obstacles, and he's now serving in the Spain Barcelona mission.

You can do it

We're all faced with different obstacles that sometimes make serving missions seem difficult. In my dad's case, his father was ill. Jose Manuel's family didn't want him to go. I wondered about my basketball future. Many of the obstacles we face are those within our own minds. For just a minute I want to talk directly to you—just you. You who might say, “I have this girlfriend”; or, “I’ve got a good job and a car”; or, “I’ve never been good at schoolwork, and I know I could never memorize scriptures and all those discussions”; or, “I can’t talk to people who I don’t even know”; or, “I couldn’t be obedient to all the rules missionaries follow”; or, “I don’t really know the Church is true, so how could I tell others about it?”

To those who have such thoughts and feelings: if you don’t now have a testimony, you can gain one on a mission. Your girlfriend will be all right. You can learn the scriptures and discussions well enough to be effective. You’ll have the courage you need to talk to strangers. You can be obedient. You can do it.

Some of you may be fearful about your ability because to this point in your life you have struggled. Perhaps you’ve not been academically gifted or socially prominent. I agree that being socially graceful, well educated, experienced in leadership, and able to speak well are useful talents for doing missionary work. But there is something beyond these which can give a missionary his real power.

Love, faith, testimony

I was told recently of two missionary companions—one had many outward talents, the other didn’t. They had received a letter from a man and his family to whom they had taught several discussions. The letter told the elders to come by and pick up the Book of Mormon because the family had decided

they were not interested in continuing the discussions.

The more outwardly talented elder felt confident that by using all his social skills and all his learning he would be able to change the man’s mind. During the meeting he used every persuasive skill he could think of. The other elder listened. Finally the man agreed to continue the discussions.

Later, at the family’s baptism, the talented elder remembered the night with some degree of pride. After the baptism the man told him, “The night I changed my mind and continued to have you teach me was the most important night of my life. As you talked to me, my mind was so determined to not listen that there was nothing you could have said that would have caused me to continue. But then I looked at your companion. His eyes were focused on me. I saw in his face more love than I had ever known before. My heart felt a spirit that made it so I could not resist his silent message. I decided then that if this church could cause someone to love like that, then I wanted to be part of it.”

Outward social and educational talents help, but more needed than these are the inward talents of love and faith and testimony. In these talents we can all be equal.

Decisions, decisions, decisions

If your health will allow, make yourself worthy to serve. Push aside the obstacles and go.

I pray that the Lord will bless us in all of our decisions—decisions about missions, decisions about marriage, decisions about character, about dedication, about morality.

I’m grateful for the honor that I had of being Elder Durrant while in Spain. I know that Jesus Christ lives, that while he was on the earth he taught us the way that we ought to live. I know that he expects us as holders of the priesthood to take what he has given us and go out and share it with others. And as we do this, he not only blesses the

lives of the people we come in contact with, but he also blesses us. I know that the gospel he has given us is true. That's why I wanted to share it—because it means so much in my life.

I testify of these things in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

I never felt so short, as I was looking at the length of his legs. Thank you, Devin, for that tremendous testimony.

I know that every boy here tonight was lifted by reason of what you have said, knowing something of what you have done.

We shall now hear from Elder J. Thomas Fyans, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy—also rather tall. He will be followed by Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, who is built for football instead of basketball.

Elder J. Thomas Fyans

Attaining physical excellence

Major league teams hire scouts whose job it is to continually survey the young upcoming players. Their trained eyes look for players who have consistently superior performances. It is not by chance that these young men are singled out from the rest. There is much preparation that goes into the attaining of excellence.

Such an athlete spends many years in training, trying to perfect every part of his performance. He exercises for long hours. He is careful to eat nutritional foods that build muscle tone, recognizing that what he takes into his body will have an effect upon his physical stamina. He obtains the proper amount of rest and observes other health laws. Attaining physical excellence in his life has been given top priority. Daily, weekly, and yearly goals are set and given great dedication. He listens carefully to his coach, who watches every movement he makes and knows his performance better than he does. Together they study videotapes of his plays and even analyze the minute details of his abilities through the graphics of a computer. He is careful to keep up with any new innovation or philosophy. As he retires at night, his thoughts turn once again to scrutinizing his performance with an

ever-constant vision of the day when he will receive an invitation to become a member of one of those elite teams that constitute the world of professional athletics.

Who's on the Lord's team?

We sing a hymn, "Who's on the Lord's Side?" What does the word *side* mean? The definition of the word *side* is one of the contesting parties in a game or sport; one of a group of players; a *team*.

Based on this definition, the question "Who's on the Lord's *side*?" could appropriately be rephrased "Who's on the Lord's *team*?" Some of the lyrics that might be appropriately applied to the priesthood are:

Who's on the Lord's team? Who?
Now is the time to show;
We ask it fearlessly:
Who's on the Lord's team? Who?

We serve the living God,
And want his foes to know
That if but few, we're great;
Who's on the Lord's team? Who?
We're going on to win,
Nor fear must blanch the brow;
The Lord of hosts is ours;
Who's on the Lord's team? Who?
(See *Hymns*, no. 175.)

Serving on the Lord's team does not happen by chance. President Spencer W. Kimball has told us, "This is something we are heir to; we were born to it, and all we need to do is qualify for it to obtain this blessing" (*Priesthood* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1981], p. 2).

An eternal calling

In Alma 13:1 we learn that "the Lord God ordained priests, after his holy order."

In verses 3 and 4 we are told that "this is the manner after which they were ordained—being called and prepared from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God, on account of their exceeding faith and good works; in the first place being left to choose good or evil; therefore they have chosen good, and exercising exceedingly great faith, are called with a holy calling. . . .

"And thus they have been called to this holy calling on account of their faith, while others would reject the Spirit of God on account of the hardness of their hearts and blindness of their minds, while, if it had not been for this they might have had as great privilege as their brethren."

In Alma 13:9 we are told, "Thus they become high priests forever."

As you participate on a basketball team, or are part of a drama presentation, or sing in a quartet, or join a Scout troop, you are aware that membership in these groups usually lasts just a few months, or at most a few years. As there is a beginning to participation in these groups, there is also an end. And yet, as Alma taught us, we are high priests forever. The priesthood is eternal.

Example of President Joseph Fielding Smith

Now, you young men, let's carefully consider some examples from the

lives of our prophets as they have spiritually prepared for the priesthood. President Joseph Fielding Smith shares with us his feelings in these words: "When I was a small boy, too young to hold the Aaronic Priesthood, my father placed a copy of the Book of Mormon in my hands with the request that I read it. I received this Nephite record with thanksgiving and applied myself to the task which had been assigned to me. There are certain passages that have been stamped upon my mind and I have never forgotten them.' By the time he was ten years old he had read the Book of Mormon through not just once but twice. His brothers remembered of his hurrying to get through his chores as quickly as possible, and sometimes even leaving a ball game early, and secluding himself in the hayloft or in the shade of a tree to get back to his reading of the book" (Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr., and John J. Stewart, *The Life of Joseph Fielding Smith* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1972], p. 57).

President David O. McKay

President David O. McKay tells: "I remember as a deacon chopping wood for the widows on Saturday. We met as a group of nine boys, held a short meeting, took our axes, went to the widows, and chopped enough wood for each to last that week."

And President McKay continues: "As a priest, I recall administering the sacrament and my failure the first time I offered the prayer. We did not have the prayer on a printed card before us then as is frequently the case now. We were supposed to memorize it. The sacrament table was just under the pulpit, and my father, the bishop, always stood right over the one who asked the blessing upon the bread and water. I thought I knew the prayer, but I had memorized

it privately, and when I knelt and saw the congregation before me, I became flustered" (*Cherished Experiences*, comp. Clare Middlemiss [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976], p. 190). This challenge did not cause him to become discouraged, my young friends. He made additional preparation and lifted himself to a level of excellence.

President Kimball and the Bible

President Kimball recites the following story about a goal he made when he was still a young boy: "When I heard a Church leader from Salt Lake City tell us at conference that we should read the scriptures, and I recognized that I had never read the Bible, that very night at the conclusion of that very sermon I walked to my home a block away and climbed up in my little attic room in the top of the house and lighted a little coal-oil lamp that was on the little table, and I read the first chapters of Genesis. A year later I closed the Bible, having read every chapter in that big and glorious book.

"I found that this Bible that I was reading had in it 66 books, and then I was nearly dissuaded when I found that it had in it 1,189 chapters, and then I also found that it had 1,519 pages. It was formidable, but I knew if others did it that I could do it.

"I found that there were certain parts that were hard for a 14-year-old boy to understand. There were some pages that were not especially interesting to me, but when I had read the 66 books and 1,189 chapters and 1,519 pages, I had a glowing satisfaction that I had made a goal and that I had achieved it.

And he continues: "I am not telling you this story to boast; I am merely using this as an example to say that if I could do it by coal-oil light, you can do it by electric light. I have always been glad I read the Bible from cover to cover" (*Ensign*, May 1974, p. 88).

Reached Book of Mormon goal

Nearly every week I attend a stake conference somewhere in the world, so I am not able to attend the Gospel Doctrine class in my ward where the Book of Mormon is being taught this year. It really pained me to miss this privilege of catching the spirit of this very sacred other testament that Jesus is the Christ. So my wife and I set a goal to study the Book of Mormon at home. We determined to finish the 1984 course of study for the Gospel Doctrine class before this April general conference. We began in January; and on Monday, March 12, we finished the last of the forty-six lessons of the Book of Mormon course. It really felt good to accomplish this goal.

Spiritually exercise for priesthood fitness

You young men from all over the world are preparing to become members of a team. You have looked forward to this day with great anticipation. Hands have been laid upon your head to bestow the priesthood of God, in the name of Jesus Christ, that you might stand in His place in administering the sacred ordinances to the children of men. Think about it for a minute.

My companions in the priesthood, I love you with all my heart; the General Authorities all love you. We would invite you to spiritually exercise each day. This you would do at the level of your choosing. For example, read the Book of Mormon a few verses a day, or a chapter a day, fifteen minutes a day, or thirty minutes a day. You will know the amount of spiritual tone that you need to gain. You can accept this challenge, can't you?

You've made the team, the Lord's team, because of your superior, dedicated performance. What a privilege is now yours as you *exercise* with service and love, *build your endurance* as you prayerfully confront life's challenges, and *partake of nutritional spiritual food* as you read and ponder the scriptures to

build and maintain your spiritual stamina and muscle tone. Make your priesthood fitness a priority, applying the constant dedication of a professional athlete until it consumes your life, until it flows from you with nerves and mind conditioned.

And as you too retire at night, your hearts and thoughts and prayers will automatically turn, once again, with great desire to the perfecting of your

performance on the Lord's great priesthood team. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Brother Fyans.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder Boyd K. Packer.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

My beloved brethren, as a former counselor to Brother Nelson on two occasions, I add my gratitude for the call of Elder Russell M. Nelson, and affirm the nobility of his character and the greatness of his work in the kingdom. Likewise, I attest to the noble character of Elder Oaks.

"Give me air!"

I would like to tell you a story of a young man who sought out a wise man who was recognized far and near for his good judgment. He asked for his expert advice on how to attain new heights of achievement in his field of endeavor.

"Come with me," said the wise man. Taking the youth to a nearby stream, he immersed him and held him under the water. When the young man was released, he was nearly drowned and came up fighting for breath, gasping, "Air, air, give me air!"

"There," said the wise man, "that's the first lesson. When you want to succeed as badly as you wanted air, you will attain your goal. You will succeed!"

Desire essential for achievement

Desire, burning desire, is basic to achieving anything beyond the ordinary.

Why do I begin with this story? Because desire in everyone involved is the first step in the subject of my talk tonight, "helping inactive Church members to become active."

What I say, however, won't do any good unless what is said fits in with what the listener wants for himself and has a profound hunger to attain. In every instance, those who are successful love what they are doing. It is a well-known fact that the attitude, the thinking of each of us, must be right before we can do what's right.

Elder Dean L. Larsen beautifully summarized this idea in these words: "When we understand what is right and what is wrong, we are in a position to exercise our freedom in making choices. In so doing, we must stand accountable for our decisions, and we cannot escape the inevitable consequences of these choices. Such freedom to exercise moral agency is essential in an environment where people have the highest prospects for progress and development" (*Ensign*, May 1980, p. 76).

Fundamental principles

Jesus concerned himself primarily with the teaching of fundamental principles, and these principles had to do with the spiritual and mental condition of the individual. For the Savior knew that if one's mental state is right, most

everything else would be right. But if the mental state is wrong, little can be accomplished in a person's life.

It is no wonder, then, that Nephi admonished his people to "feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do" (2 Nephi 32:3).

Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

"Enter ye in at the strait gate" (Matthew 7:13).

President Marion G. Romney expressed most clearly what is meant as follows: "It is not enough to do our best. Unless we do all we can, we do less than we ought. We must succeed in doing what is necessary. Unless we get the job done, it is not enough."

When I attended the university, I was involved in athletics, and since then have maintained my interest, even reading articles on the Winter Olympics. A sports editor wrote that for such a small country, East Germany, or as the world knows it, the German Democratic Republic, was doing exceedingly well. He said that they were not that much better trained than their competitors, but just a lot better prepared mentally, spending many hours in the preparation of the mind and the will. "Just good old-fashioned positive mental attitude" is all that is favoring the athletes from that country. (See Lee Benson, *Deseret News*, 16 Feb. 1984, p. D-2.)

General groups of inactives

In seeking to strengthen the inactive, we are concerned with four general groups:

1. Lifetime members who have never been active and, as a result, oftentimes raise their families in inactivity.

2. New converts who become spiritually disaffected and fall away, usually in their first few years of membership.

3. Active members who slip into transgression or have other problems that cause them to fall away. Often their problems include lack of knowledge and testimony of the gospel, hurt feelings that result in attitudes of unworthiness and guilt, and sometimes fear of participation in Church assignments.

4. Youth who are caught up by the philosophies or behavior of the world and stray from their Church commitments. Some of these youth are persuaded by worldly attitudes of instant pleasure. Some are influenced by peer groups that take nothing seriously until the realities of life force them to.

Spiritual conversion and social integration

This work of reclaiming the lost sheep, as Jesus so vividly expressed it, must receive top priority by every stake, ward, branch, and quorum leader. All inactive members should be considered candidates for activation regardless of their response to any previous approach. We must use kindness, patience, long-suffering, love, faith, and diligence. They must feel our genuine concern and untiring love.

For individuals to become fully active in the Church, they generally must experience a spiritual conversion and a social integration. We should strive to teach them the gospel and to extend warmth and genuine friendship and fellowship to them.

Sawing logs, but much more

Recently, I attended a stake conference and heard a story of member activation that moved me deeply. The bishop of one of the wards in the stake took a keen interest in arousing inactive brethren to Church activity. He knew that the first step was one of communication, that he must have a meaningful visit with each inactive brother.

So he began by telephoning one of them. The wife answered the phone and said, "Bishop, I surely appreciate your

call. My husband is outside, but I will have him come to the phone."

When the husband heard that it was the bishop that wished to speak to him, his reaction was as expected. He attempted to sidestep this phone call and responded, "Tell the bishop that I'm out sawing logs," and with a humorous touch, "Tell him I'm dead."

The brother spoke the truth more literally than he realized. It was true. He was sawing logs, and tragically, he was dead to the spiritual things of his life.

A good wife, however, is a mighty force in any man's life, and, in a kindly manner, she persuaded her husband to come to the phone.

Then the bishop, using the power of suggestion and in a friendly voice, said, "I should very much appreciate having a visit with you for a few moments this evening in my office." The brother couldn't refuse so warmhearted an invitation, and a meeting took place.

The testimony of the bishop and his deep concern kindled a fire in the heart of the inactive brother, and he agreed to join the temple preparation class that was about to begin.

Each session, taught by a tactful teacher with a great knowledge of the truth and an inspiring testimony, motivated the inactive brother. He resolved to strengthen his family and bind them together eternally through the blessings of the temple.

This good brother may still be sawing logs, but there is now much more. He has added for himself an indescribable dimension of happiness, as well as joy to the lives of each and every family member.

Change of life-style

In another ward, the bishop assigned his two best home teachers to work with one specially selected inactive family. The husband and father had been inactive for many years, even though he held the office of elder in the Melchizedek Priesthood. The couple was approached and asked if the special

teachers could come and teach them the gospel in weekly visits to their home. The family agreed, and the teachers proceeded to bring gospel lessons tailored to the needs and desires of the family.

The bishop also helped by interviewing the couple every few weeks. The husband usually went golfing on Sundays and had no desire to change his life-style at first. During one interview, the bishop said to the husband, "You've got to get going on spiritual matters so that you won't lose your fine family." This caused the inactive brother to think deeply about important issues, and within a couple of weeks he asked for another interview with the bishop and said that he had started paying tithing and that he and his wife wanted to set a goal of being sealed in the temple.

As this family became active, their whole attitude changed, and they seemed to be very happy to embrace the gospel principles and make the necessary change in life-style.

Strong testimony and change

In the case of yet another inactive family, the specially assigned teachers lived in the same neighborhood. The teachers first showed genuine friendship and neighborly concern until they felt they could talk with the inactive family in a serious manner. They sat down with the family one day and asked if they could begin teaching them the gospel in weekly sessions in their home. The teachers assured the family that they would not pressure them in any way and that their visits would be designed to teach the doctrines of the Savior and answer questions the family might have. Within a few weeks, the home teachers took the family to church, and soon the family began to attend on their own. The bishop interviewed the couple and helped them to set goals for the husband to be ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood and for them to be sealed in the temple.

The bishop reports that it was touching to see this family with their five children sealed for time and eternity. The sealing room in the temple was filled with friends and members of the ward.

The family now bears strong testimony to the truth of the gospel, and many in the ward say they have never seen people change so much. The husband now serves in the presidency of the elders quorum.

Reactivation in Brazil

The president of an elders quorum in one of our outstanding stakes in Brazil—I love that great people, our members in Brazil—reported phenomenal success in reactivating fifteen elders in his quorum last year. I asked the question, “How did you accomplish this?” He said, “We and the home teachers visited them often. These inactive elders knew that we really cared for them.” Their testimonies were strengthened. They and their families are now active members of the Church.

The gospel is everlasting

The Lord has promised great rewards for those who reach out to strengthen their brothers and sisters.

The Lord has said in modern revelation, “And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!” (D&C 18:15).

I wish I could engrave on every heart what I so keenly know and feel. I bear unwavering testimony that our Heavenly Father and His Divine Son, Jesus Christ, rule and reign, and that we must all understand that the gospel is everlasting. It is forever and applicable to all, and each of us is to be held accountable.

May the Lord bless us in this important work, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you Brother Wirthlin.

Elder Boyd K. Packer will now speak to us.

Elder Boyd K. Packer

I want to talk to my young friends of the Aaronic Priesthood. And I begin with a parable; and then I have a test for you.

A parable

Imagine that our bishop has appointed you and me to plan a picnic for all of the ward members. It is to be the finest social in the history of the ward, and we are to spare no expense.

We reserve a beautiful picnic ground in the country. We are to have it all to ourselves; no outsiders will interfere with us.

The arrangements go very well, and when the day comes, the weather is perfect. All is beautifully ready. The tables are in one long row. We even have tablecloths and china. You have never seen such a feast. The Relief Society and Young Women have outdone themselves. The tables are laden with every kind of delicious food: cantaloupes, watermelon, corn on the cob, fried chicken, hamburgers, cakes, pies—you get the picture?

We are seated, and the bishop calls upon the patriarch to bless the food. Every hungry youngster secretly hopes it will be a short prayer.

Then, just at that moment there is an interruption. A noisy old car jerks into the picnic grounds and sputters to a stop close to us. We are upset. Didn't they see the "reserved" signs?

A worried-looking man lifts the hood; a spout of steam comes out. One of our brethren, a mechanic, says, "That car isn't going anywhere until it is fixed."

Several children spill from the car. They are ragged and dirty and noisy. And then an anxious mother takes a box to that extra table nearby. It is mealtime. Their children are hungry. She puts a few leftovers on the table. Then she nervously moves them about, trying to make it look like a meal for her hungry brood. But there is not enough.

We wait impatiently for them to quiet down so that we can have the blessing and enjoy our feast.

Then one of their little girls spies our table. She pulls her runny-nosed little brother over to us and pushes her head between you and me. We cringe aside, because they are very dirty. Then the little girl says, "Ummm, look at that. Ummm, ummm, I wonder what that tastes like."

What would you do?

Everyone is waiting. Why did they arrive just at that moment? Such an inconvenient time. Why must we interrupt what we are doing to bother with outsiders? Why couldn't they have stopped somewhere else? They are not clean! They are not like us. They just don't fit in.

Since the bishop has put us in charge, he expects us to handle these intruders. What should we do? Of course, this is only a parable. But now for the test. If it really happened, my young friends, what *would* you do?

Three choices

I will give you three choices.

First, you could insist the intruders keep their children quiet while we have the blessing. Thereafter we

ignore them. After all, we reserved the place.

I doubt that you would do that. Could you choke down a feast before hungry children? Surely we are better than that! That is not the answer.

The next choice. There is that extra table. And we do have too much of some things. We could take a little of this and a little of that and lure the little children back to their own table. Then we could enjoy our feast without interruption. After all, we earned what we have. Did we not "obtain it by [our own] industry," as the Book of Mormon says? (See Alma 4:6.)

I hope you would not do that. There is a better answer. You already know what it is.

We should go out to them and invite them to come and join us. You could slide that way, and I could slide this way, and the little girl could sit between us. They could all fit in somewhere to share our feast. Afterward, we will fix their car and provide something for their journey.

Could there be more pure enjoyment than seeing how much we could get those hungry children to eat? Could there be more satisfaction than to interrupt our festivities to help our mechanic fix their car?

Is that what you would do? Surely it is what you *should* do. But forgive me if I have a little doubt; let me explain.

Feasting before the hungry

We, as members of the Church, have the *fullness* of the gospel. Every conceivable manner of spiritual nourishment is ours. Every part of the spiritual menu is included. It provides an unending supply of spiritual strength. Like the widow's cruse of oil, it is replenished as we use it and shall never fail. (See 1 Kings 17:8-16.)

And yet, there are people across the world and about us—our neighbors, our friends, some in our own families—who, spiritually speaking, are undernourished. Some of them are starving to death!

If we keep all this to ourselves, it is not unlike feasting before those who are hungry.

We are to go out to them, and to invite them to join us. We are to be missionaries.

It does not matter if it interrupts your schooling or delays your career or your marriage—or basketball. Unless you have a serious health problem, every Latter-day Saint young man should answer the call to serve a mission.

Even mistakes and transgressions must not stand in the way. You should make yourself *worthy* to receive a call.

The gospel is for everyone

The early Apostles at first did not know that the gospel was for everyone, for the Gentiles. Then Peter had a vision. He saw a vessel full of all kinds of creatures and was commanded to kill and to eat. But he refused, saying they were common and unclean. Then the voice said, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common" (see Acts 10:9–16). That vision, and the experience they had immediately following, convinced them of their duty; thus began the great missionary work of all Christianity.

Almost any returned missionary will have a question: "If they are starving spiritually, why do they not accept what we have? Why do they slam the door on us and turn us away?"

One of my sons was serving in Australia and was thrown off a porch by a man who rejected his message.

My son is big enough and strong enough that he had to be somewhat agreeable to what was happening or the man never could have done it.

All will not accept the gospel

Be patient if some will not eat when first invited. Remember, all who are spiritually hungry will not accept the gospel. Do you remember how reluctant you are to try any new food? Only after your mother urges you will

you take a little, tiny portion on the tip of a spoon to taste it to see if you like it first.

Undernourished children must be carefully fed; so it is with the spiritually underfed. Some are so weakened by mischief and sin that to begin with they reject the rich food we offer. They must be fed carefully and gently.

Some are so near spiritual death that they must be spoonfed on the broth of fellowship, or nourished carefully on activities and programs. As the scriptures say, they must have milk before meat. (See 1 Corinthians 3:2; D&C 19:22.) But we must take care lest the only nourishment they receive thereafter is that broth.

Work in Japan reopened

But feed them we must. We are commanded to preach the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. That message, my young friends, appears more than eighty times in the scriptures.

I did not serve a regular mission until we were called to preside in New England. When I was of missionary age, when I was your age, young men could not be called to the mission field. It was World War II, and I spent four years in the military. But I did do missionary work; we did share the gospel. It was my privilege to baptize one of the first two Japanese to join the Church after the mission had been closed twenty-two years earlier. Brother Elliot Richards baptized Tatsui Sato. I baptized his wife, Chio. And the work in Japan was reopened. We baptized them in a swimming pool amid the rubble of a university that had been destroyed by bombs.

Shortly thereafter I boarded a train in Osaka for Yokohama and a ship that would take me home. Brother and Sister Sato came to the station to say goodbye. Many tears were shed as we bade one another farewell.

Symbol of Japanese suffering

It was a very chilly night. The railroad station, what there was left of it, was very cold. Starving children were sleeping in the corners. That was a common sight in Japan in those days. The fortunate ones had a newspaper or a few old rags to fend off the cold.

On that train, I slept restlessly. The berths were too short anyway. In the bleak, chilly hours of the dawn, the train stopped at a station along the way. I heard a tapping on the window and raised the blind. There on the platform stood a little boy tapping on the window with a tin can. I knew he was an orphan and a beggar; the tin can was the symbol of their suffering. Sometimes they carried a spoon as well, as if to say, "I am hungry; feed me."

He might have been six or seven years old. His little body was thin with starvation. He had on a thin, ragged shirt-like kimono, nothing else. His head was shingled with scabs. His one jaw was swollen—perhaps from an abscessed tooth. Around his head he had tied a filthy rag with a knot on top of his head—a pathetic gesture of treatment.

When I saw him and he saw that I was awake, he waved his can. He was begging. In pity, I thought, "How can I help him?" Then I remembered. I had money, Japanese money. I quickly groped for my clothing and found some yen notes in my pocket. I tried to open the window. But it was stuck. I slipped on my trousers and hurried to the end of the car. He stood outside expectantly. As I pushed at the resistant door, the train pulled away from the station. Through the dirty windows I could see him, holding that rusty tin can, with the dirty rag around his swollen jaw.

A battle scar

There I stood, an officer from a conquering army, heading home to a

family and a future. There I stood, half-dressed, clutching some money which he had seen but which I could not get to him. I wanted to help him, but couldn't. The only comfort I draw is that I did want to help him.

That was thirty-eight years ago, but I can see him as clearly as if it were yesterday.

Perhaps I was scarred by that experience. If so, it is a battle scar, a worthy one, for which I bear no shame. It reminds me of my duty!

Warriors of the Restoration

Young brethren, I can hear the voice of the Lord saying to each of us just as He said to Peter, "Feed my lambs. . . . Feed my sheep. . . . Feed my sheep" (see John 21:15-17).

I have unbounded confidence and faith in you, our young brethren. You are the warriors of the Restoration. And in this spiritual battle, you are to relieve the spiritual hunger and feed the sheep. It is your duty!

We have the fullness of the everlasting gospel. We have the obligation to share it with those who do not have it. God grant that we will honor that commission from the Lord and prepare ourselves and answer the call, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Boyd K. Packer has just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "High on the Mountain Top," following which President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will speak to us.

The choir and congregation sang "High on the Mountain Top."

President Ezra Taft Benson

My beloved brethren, it is a joy and an honor to greet you tonight. I have enjoyed the program very much thus far. Brother Durrant, I am grateful for men like you. I love basketball. I was never very good, but I played for the Utah Aggies. And Father, who had seven sons, challenged Franklin County for a family competition. If there were any teams that had enough men, he challenged them. I guess, fortunate for us, we never had a taker. But in any event, I love what you said.

To every nation, kindred, tongue, and people

Tonight I would like to talk a bit about the great missionary work of the Church. Today the Church needs missionaries as never before! We are required to carry the gospel of Jesus Christ to every nation of the world. The Lord commanded it in these words:

"Send forth the elders of my church unto the nations which are afar off; unto the islands of the sea; send forth unto foreign lands; call upon all nations, first upon the Gentiles, and then upon the Jews" (D&C 133:8).

This commission to take the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people is one of the signs by which believers will recognize the nearness of the Savior's return to earth. Concerning this sign of His second coming, Jesus prophesied:

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in *all the world* for a witness unto *all* nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14; italics added).

Need thousands of missionaries

This task will require thousands of missionaries, many more than are presently engaged in worldwide missionary service today.

Many of you young men in the listening audience have decided to

serve a mission for the Church. We commend you for your preparation and worthiness and are confident you will receive immeasurable blessings, both in the mission field and in the years to come.

Some others of you have not yet made the decision to serve a mission. I would like to talk to you as well as to some of you older brethren who, with your wife, could serve.

You are needed in the service of the Lord today as never before. "The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few" (Luke 10:2).

Increased faith, devotion, and leadership

Those who serve a faithful mission return from that experience with increased faith, devotion, and leadership. They learn by their sacrifice what only personal experience and devoted service to others can teach.

A missionary learns, for example, that God can use him as an instrument to accomplish His work. He can say, as did Ammon, a Book of Mormon missionary, "This is [a] blessing which hath been bestowed upon us, that we have been made instruments in the hands of God to bring about this great work" (Alma 26:3).

A missionary learns that he must be humble and dependent on the Lord. He learns to pray with fervor and sincerity, not only for himself but for others, and to be led and directed by the Spirit.

Experiences from first mission

It was while I was on my first mission that I discovered the constant need for dependence on the Lord.

I was a young missionary in northern England in 1922. Opposition to the Church became very intense. It became so strong that the mission president asked that we discontinue all street

meetings, and in some places tracting was also discontinued. The opposition started largely among the ministers, and it became very, very severe. They didn't know anything about us to speak of. I remember tracting one day when a lovely lady came to the door. We were having a nice conversation and the name *Mormon* was mentioned by my companion. Her husband came to the door in a Navy uniform, and he said, "Oh, you can't tell me anything about those old Mormons. I've been in the British Navy for twenty years. We sailed right into Salt Lake port, and they wouldn't even let us land." That was so typical of what they knew about us in those days.

My companion and I had been invited to travel over to South Shields, on the northwest coast, and speak in the sacrament meeting.

In the letter of invitation, we were promised there would be a number of nonmembers present. They said, "Many of our friends do not believe the lies that are printed about the Church."

We fasted and prayed sincerely and went to the sacrament meeting. The hall was filled. My companion had planned to talk on the first principles, and I had studied hard in preparation for a talk on the Apostasy. There was a wonderful spirit in the meeting. My companion spoke first and gave an excellent inspirational message. I followed and talked with a freedom I had never before experienced in my life. When I sat down, I realized that I had not mentioned the Apostasy. I had talked about the Prophet Joseph Smith and had borne my witness of his divine mission and of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. I couldn't hold back the tears.

After the meeting ended, many people came forward, several of whom were nonmembers, and said to us, "Tonight we received a witness that Mormonism is true. We are now ready to consider baptism."

This was an answer to our prayers, for we had prayed to say only those

things which would touch the hearts of the investigators.

Joy in bringing souls into the Church

Yes, a missionary discovers the indescribable joy of bringing other souls into the Church. I have just recently had three grandchildren return from the mission field; two more are on their way to the field. I believe in missionary work with all my heart. It's good for any young man to have the experience of a mission.

One of the most inspiring missionary stories recorded in scripture concerns the fourteen-year mission of the four sons of Mosiah to their Lamanite brethren. They brought thousands into the Church, the record tells us, which caused one of them, Ammon, to exclaim: "My joy is full, yea, my heart is brim with joy" (Alma 26:11).

Brethren, no joy is equal to bringing another to the light of the gospel, for the Lord promised:

"If it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!

"And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!" (D&C 18:15-16.)

Power of God and answers to prayer

A missionary learns that the priesthood conferred upon him is the power of God. Opportunities are presented for exercise of the priesthood through the ordinances of baptism, confirmation, and administrations to the sick. Almost without exception, our missionaries testify that God has not ceased to be a God of miracles! (See Mormon 9:15.)

A missionary learns that God, our Heavenly Father, can and does answer

prayers. He learns to recognize the promptings of the Holy Spirit and to be directed by that Spirit. He prays for his own welfare—to be humble and susceptible to the influence of the Holy Ghost—as well as for the people with whom he is laboring. Through these experiences of prayer and service, he learns to love the Lord with all his heart and to more fully love his fellowmen.

Every young man should serve a mission

The question is frequently asked, Should every young man fill a mission? The answer to this inquiry has been given by the Lord. It is yes. *Every* young man should fill a mission.

While every young man should serve a mission, we realize that every young man is not physically, emotionally, or morally prepared. As a consequence, some may be deprived of missionary opportunities. But all should prepare to go—to be worthy to serve the Lord. The Lord has said:

“And . . . every man [notice the words *every man*] should take righteousness in his hands and faithfulness upon his loins, and lift a warning voice unto the inhabitants of the earth; and declare both by word and by flight that desolation shall come upon the wicked” (D&C 63:37).

Prepare physically, morally, spiritually, emotionally

Some young men, because of transgression, say they are not interested in serving a mission. The real reason, of course, is feelings of unworthiness. If such young men would go to their bishop, confide to him their problem, and sincerely repent, they may yet fill honorable missions.

We, your Brethren, sincerely invite you to prepare. Prepare now to serve the Lord. Prepare yourself physically, morally, spiritually, and emotionally.

Visit with your bishop. Tell him your desires. Confide your problems.

Seek his counsel. Then pray to your Heavenly Father about this important decision in your life.

One of the Church's great missionaries, Elder LeGrand Richards, said, “I have had many people ask me what my greatest Church experience has been, and I unhesitatingly say, My first mission! That is where I began to really love the Lord and His Church and developed a desire to help build His kingdom.”

I hope that each of you young men in the audience tonight has a savings account and is looking forward to a mission.

Recently, in Dallas, Texas, I had the pleasure of addressing nearly two hundred missionaries. Among them were several young sisters. As I spoke to them, I had the feeling that they are a good example of a group of young people who are living in this wicked world and yet are not partaking of the sins of the world.

I rejoice in our youth. I am proud of them and grateful for them and know that the Lord is blessing and magnifying them. It is my great joy to meet with them whenever we go to a mission headquarters. They are choice young people.

Older members should serve

Now I want to say a few words to some of you older brethren. We have need for select missionary couples.

My father was called on a mission and left mother at home with seven young children, and the eighth was born four months after he arrived in the field. There came into our home a spirit of missionary work that never left it, for which I am deeply grateful.

Some of you who are grandparents can have more influence on your grandchildren by letters from the mission field than by any other means.

I remember so well, after the chores were done, sitting around the kitchen table as mother read letters from father. It seemed as though it was halfway around the world as she

mentioned the towns where he was laboring; but it was only Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Chicago and Springfield, Illinois; and other towns in the great Midwest.

Two of my sisters, widows—one the mother of ten, and the other the mother of eight—after sending their children on missions, talked to their bishops about going on missions themselves.

I well remember the day they called me on the telephone and said, "Guess what? We've received our missionary calls."

I said, "What missionary calls?"

They replied, "Don't you know?"

I said, "No, I hadn't heard."

They responded, "Yes, we're both going to your old field of labor in England."

The mission president assigned them to work as companions—twenty months without a transfer. I think that is some kind of a record.

My father's family later grew to eleven children. All eleven of us have now had the joy of filling missions. The last one recently returned from filling a mission with her husband in San Diego.

The Lord's service

To you young men and some of you older brethren, I again emphasize: you are needed in the Lord's service—missionary service—today.

I testify to all of you brethren within the sound of my voice that this Church—The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—is "the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth" (D&C 1:30). We are privileged through the covenants and ordinances of baptism and confirmation to be members of His church. Membership in this Church is the only means by which others may have the opportunity for eternal life. We have the truth, and we invite you to share that truth and the privilege of introducing His gospel to others who do not have it.

Learn to love Book of Mormon and missionary work

I encourage you to become familiar with the Book of Mormon, particularly. I remember an incident with my own son. He called me one day to ask if I wouldn't come up to his bedroom. When I got there, I found he had several books on the bed. He said to me, "You know, I have a job with my uncle herding turkeys this summer. I once heard you say that the turkey is the dumbest animal on the farm, so I assume I'm going to have time on my hands." Then he asked me to pick out the books I would recommend.

I picked up a little military edition of the Book of Mormon. I said, "This will fit in your hip pocket."

He said, "You mean to tell me I'm to take only one book?"

I said, "Yes, and you'll learn to love it, and you'll learn to love missionary work"—and he did.

Yes, this is His work. I know that as I know that I live.

May God bless us all with the Spirit and the desire to bring souls unto Him. It is our duty.

God bless, my brothers, that we may respond to this great need. It is the Lord's will that we do more in the great work of missionary proselyting. This I know and bear humble witness of, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

President Ezra Taft Benson has just spoken to us.

Before giving my closing remarks, I call your attention to the fact that the nationwide CBS Radio Tabernacle Choir broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 Sunday morning. Those desiring to attend must be in their seats before 9:15 A.M.

As you leave this meeting tonight, we remind you to drive carefully and to obey traffic rules for your safety.

The beautiful music which we have enjoyed has been furnished by a father-son priesthood choir from the re-

gions of northern Utah. We express appreciation to all who have spoken tonight, and to those who have sung for us.

Following my closing remarks, the choir will sing "Sweet Is the Work, My God, My King" and Elder Jacob de Jager of the First Quorum of the Seventy will offer the benediction.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Brethren, I think I would like first to express my appreciation for your presence, wherever you are gathered, and particularly thanks to the boys, the young men. Those who are in the Tabernacle came here very early and have been seated here now for three hours, in many cases. I know you are a little weary. It will not last much longer.

Report to shareholders

It is customary for an executive officer of an organization to make an annual report to the shareholders. I look upon you brethren as shareholders in this great work of the Lord, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I think I would like to give you a report, as shareholders.

I do so humbly and not in any spirit of boasting or arrogance, with the hope that the Lord will inspire me in that which I say. I do so further because there is an insidious effort going on to try to undermine the Church and destroy its credibility, even among its own members.

I am pleased to tell you that the Church is in good health. Many of you heard the statistical report read this afternoon by Brother Francis Gibbons, secretary to the First Presidency. I should like to mention again some of the figures given by him and make brief comment.

Membership increase and convert baptisms

As of last December 31, the membership of the Church stood at 5,400,000. This represents a gain of

239,000 over the previous year. How wonderful it is to be part of a growing, advancing organization. Some of our critics and enemies challenge us to give the number of those who have left the Church during the year. I assure you that they are relatively few in number. Each time I see such a request I feel sorry for the individual. I wish with all my heart that he or she might have felt otherwise. However, we do not stand in their way. We will labor with them and encourage them to remain. But if they wish to forfeit all of the many marvelous blessings which come of membership in the Church, that is their prerogative. Some few have left, and of those who have left, some have tasted new doctrine. After a short time they have found it unpalatable, and have asked to be permitted to come back. We welcome them.

You may be interested to know that convert baptisms by missionaries dropped some during 1983. We fully expected that this would happen when we reduced the term of service for most missionaries from twenty-four months to eighteen months. This meant a 25 percent reduction in the time of young men serving in the field. I assure you that the drop in convert baptisms has been not nearly that great. All of this indicates that while our young men are serving for a shorter time, they are working more vigorously and effectively.

Share the gospel

At the end of 1983 there were 26,565 missionaries in the field. What a remarkable army of faithful and

devoted servants of the Lord, giving of their time and their means to the advancement of this great work of salvation.

But, as has been said, more are needed, many more, for the field is white and ready for harvest, and the laborers are still relatively few. Every man or woman who goes forth in this service blesses the lives of all he teaches. Furthermore, his or her own life is enriched by this selfless labor. Who has not witnessed the miracle of a missionary who has grown in a wondrous way while engaged in the work of the Master?

Priesthood leaders and fathers and mothers should begin while a boy is very young to point him in the direction of missionary service. Our sacrament meetings should be enriched with the enthusiastic testimonies of those who have returned from the field.

Further, we all need to be reminded to share the gospel with our associates. I emphasize the word *share*. I like it. I deprecate the use of what might be perceived as force and pressure upon those who live among us. I think it unnecessary. Neighborliness, and exemplary living of the gospel of Jesus Christ, with an awareness of opportunity to quietly and graciously lead them in the direction of the Church, will accomplish much more, and will be resisted less and appreciated more by those we seek to help.

Finances and building

I mention financial matters next in my report to you.

The finances of the Church are in sound condition. Because of the tremendous growth of the work across the world the demands upon the tithing funds are great. We have 896 buildings under construction at this time. This is a tremendous undertaking. Think of it—nearly 900 buildings. I know of nothing else like it. It is made possible by the consecrations of the Saints in obedience to the commandments of God. As you know, we have changed

the ratio of participation for construction of buildings. A 70 to 30 percent ratio was in effect until recently in most areas, and this has now been changed to a 96 to 4 ratio. The funds for most building construction come from the tithes of the Church. We are pleased that this change is possible.

The Council on the Disposition of the Tithes, established by revelation and consisting of the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, and the Presiding Bishopric, has determined that the expenditures of the Church in any given year shall not exceed the income of the Church.

Temples

Six new temples were dedicated during 1983. We anticipate the dedication of an additional six in 1984, and yet another six new temples in 1985. This morning we announced the construction of five additional temples to be located in the areas of Bogotá, Colombia; Toronto, Ontario, Canada; Portland, Oregon; San Diego, California; and Las Vegas, Nevada.

This is a tremendously significant thing. It has been a remarkable and wonderful experience to meet, along with my Brethren, with worthy and faithful Latter-day Saints in new temples in Atlanta, Georgia; in Tonga, Samoa, and Tahiti; in Santiago, Chile; and in Mexico City. One has to have that experience to fully appreciate it. In each instance people gathered from far and near—well dressed, clean, radiant men, women, and children, with great faith in their hearts and a living conviction concerning the sacred nature and purposes of these holy houses.

I have looked into their faces. I have seen the tears running down their cheeks as strong men and women have wept with love and thanksgiving to God for the blessings of the house of the Lord. They know—these tens and tens of thousands—that only in temples does the authority of the Holy Priesthood become effective in sealings that reach beyond life to all eternity. They

know that only through the ordinances of these sacred houses can the prison doors be opened for their forebears to enjoy all the blessings of the eternal gospel that a loving Father has in store for his children.

Miracle of tithing

It is a miracle to me that the Church is able to accomplish so much. It is a miracle made possible by faith, under a plan which the Lord himself established for the financing of his kingdom.

Tithing is so simple and straightforward a thing. The principle, as it applies to us, is actually set forth in one verse of section 119 of the Doctrine and Covenants. That fourth verse consists of thirty-five words. Contrast that with the cumbersome and complex tax codes enacted and enforced by governments. In the one case it is a brief statement from the Lord, the payment left to the individual and motivated by faith. With the other it is a tangled web created by men and enforced by law.

Conserving Church resources

The Church will live within its means. You may be assured of that. You may be further assured that we shall make every effort to safeguard these sacred funds to see that they are spent wisely to fill those needs which are in harmony with the great mission of the Church.

As a means of conserving Church resources, while at the same time expanding the opportunity for volunteer service, we are pursuing a program under which many retired brethren and sisters are serving on a volunteer basis in the temples and the departments and offices of the Church. You may be interested to know that the number so serving is approximately 5,000, which equates to approximately 500 full-time employees, with a consequent saving to the Church in annual dollar value of salary and benefits in excess of ten million dollars. These wonderful and dedi-

cated people work expertly and with love in their hearts to advance the cause.

By way of personal testimony, while speaking of the financial resources of the Church, we reiterate the promise of the Lord given anciently through the prophet Malachi that he will open the windows of heaven upon those who are honest with him in the payment of their tithes and offerings, that there shall not be room enough to receive the promised blessings. Every honest tithe payer can testify that the Lord keeps his promise.

Church education, Book of Mormon, satellite network

Our great program of Church education moves forward. The work of training students through the seminary and institute program is constantly being enlarged. As of the end of the year there were 389,258 students enrolled in seminaries and institutes. You who have been the recipients of this program know of its tremendous value. We urge all for whom it is available to take advantage of it. We do not hesitate to promise that your knowledge of the gospel will be increased, your faith will be strengthened, and you will develop wonderful associations and friendships with those of your own kind.

I reflect at times on the faith that went into the translation and first printing of the Book of Mormon. There were 5,000 copies in that first edition that came off the press in Palmyra in March of 1830. In recent years the Book of Mormon has been printed in editions of more than a million copies a year, and either all or substantial parts of the book are printed in sixty-seven languages.

I read these words from that sacred volume:

"O that I were an angel, and could have the wish of mine heart, that I might go forth and speak with the trump of God, with a voice to shake the earth, and cry repentance unto every people!" (Alma 29:1).

We have not reached that state, but we have taken a giant step forward in that direction. Many thousands of you brethren across this land are joined with us this night with both voice and picture through the remarkable satellite network which the Church has established. Through its facilities we can declare the word of the Lord to our people from coast to coast and beyond to Alaska and the islands of Hawaii. We constantly are at work to expand the reach of this remarkable facility.

1,458 stakes, 14,000 wards and branches

Now another matter: It was my privilege to preside over the 150th stake of the Church which was created in 1945, 115 years after the Church was organized. Now, less than forty years later, there are 1,458 stakes, almost a tenfold increase in the number of stakes in Zion; 378 new wards and branches were organized during 1983, bringing the total at the close of the year to nearly 14,000. Small wonder that we must construct so many new buildings in which to house the Latter-day Saints for worship and instruction.

All of these matters that I have commented upon are statistical in their nature. For the most part they may be classified as temporal. But there is an even more important element with which we are concerned, and that is the spiritual quality of the lives of our people.

This work will not fail

We know that an increasing number are attending their sacrament meetings, there to renew their covenants with the Lord and to take upon themselves anew the name of Christ. We know that an increasing number are holding their family home evenings and spending a part of each Sabbath together as families, learning of the ways of the Lord. We have reason to believe that more and more are involved in the regular practice of family prayer. We

are confident that an increasing number are reading from the scriptures and drawing inspiration therefrom.

In recent months I have had the opportunity of speaking with sixty-three men and extending to them calls to serve as presidents of missions. One cannot have such an experience without coming to recognize the depth of faith found in the hearts of this people. Husbands and wives and children, at the call of the Church, are willing to leave the comforts of their homes, the association of their friends and loved ones, and their employment to go out to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Brethren, the work of the Lord is advancing as much as at any time in its history and ever more rapidly. As individuals we may fail in our part in it, but if we do so God will raise up others to take our places, for he will not permit this work to fail.

The cause of the Master

We are familiar with stories that the work would fail. When the Book of Mormon came from the press, the crude critics said it would soon be forgotten. When troubles grew in Kirtland, the enemies said the work would fail. When the Saints were driven from Missouri, those who drove them said the Church would soon expire. When the Prophet and Hyrum were killed in Carthage, their murderers said it was the end of this thing. When in February of 1846 the wagons crossed the river into the Iowa winter, the enemies of the Church said that it could not survive. When the Saints found themselves in this lonely valley, with crickets devouring their crops, there were even some of them who thought it was all over.

But the work has gone forward. The Church has never taken a backward step since it was organized in 1830—and it never will. It is the cause of the Master. It is the church of God. It is his work established in this latter day. It is the little stone which was cut out of the mountain without hands,

which should roll forth to fill the whole earth. (See Daniel 2:44-45.) God bless it as it moves forward on its great advancing course. And may each of us be found faithful and true and doing our part in advancing it, I humbly pray as I leave you my witness and testimony

of its truth and divinity in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "Sweet Is the Work, My God, My King."

Elder Jacob de Jager offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY MORNING MEETING

FOURTH SESSION

The fourth session of the general conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 8, 1984. President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger directing and John Longhurst at the organ.

Prior to the opening of the session, the Choir sang "Father, Thy Children to Thee Now Raise" without announcement.

President Hinckley made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

As those of you in the Tabernacle noted, President Spencer W. Kimball just came in. We are pleased and honored and delighted to have him here this morning. I said to him, "Shall we go ahead with the conference?" He said, "Yes, go ahead." We do so.

We welcome all who are present this morning in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on Temple Square in this fourth general session of the 154th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We acknowledge those tuned to this conference by radio and television,

those who are seated in the overflow congregation in the Assembly Hall where Elders Dean L. Larsen and George P. Lee preside, and those participating through satellite transmission assembled in over 650 stake centers in the United States and Canada.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders, and officers and members of the Church from many lands who have assembled to worship and to counsel together in this conference.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger with John Longhurst at the organ, is providing the music for this session.

The Choir opened these services by singing "Father, Thy Children to Thee Now Raise." It will now sing "God Loved Us, So He Sent His Son," following which Elder Robert D. Hales, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The Choir sang "God Loved Us, So He Sent His Son."

Elder Robert D. Hales offered the invocation.

The Choir sang "Rejoice, the Lord Is King" without announcement.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Those great words sung by the Tabernacle Choir "Rejoice, the Lord Is King" become somewhat of a prologue to what I would like to say today.

Testimony that Jesus is the Christ

This is a glorious occasion. It is April, the season of spring in this hemisphere, when there is a new stirring of life in all of nature. Soon it will be Easter, the time when the Christian world commemorates the resurrection from the dead of the Son of God.

We who are assembled in this great general conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints give our testimony to all the world that Jesus is the Christ, the living Son of the living God; that he came to earth in the meridian of time, the offspring of Deity; that he walked the roads of Palestine, declaring the truths of the eternal gospel, healing the sick, raising the dead, causing the blind to see, and bringing the transcendent messianic message of hope to all who would hear; that he was taken by evil men, condemned, and crucified on Calvary's Hill; that he rose the third day, the firstfruits of them that slept, the conqueror of death, the master of eternal life; that "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22); that he and his Father, the great Elohim, appeared to the boy Joseph Smith in the spring of 1820, ushering in this the dispensation of the fullness of times; that he stands at the head of this church which bears his name; that in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, the government of the kingdom of God is upon his shoulder, and his name is "called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

I bear solemn witness of him and of his unique and singular place in the plan of eternal salvation of God our Eternal Father. I bear witness of these

things by the power and authority of the holy apostleship in me vested.

Office of Apostle

If the Spirit will guide me, I wish to say something this morning of this wonderful and sacred office in the holy priesthood, the office of Apostle.

Yesterday we sustained two of our Brethren in this sacred calling, thus, after they are ordained, filling the Council of the Twelve Apostles. I want to give you my testimony that they were chosen and called by the spirit of prophecy and revelation. There was much of prayer concerning this matter. There was discussion with President Kimball, the prophet of the Lord in our day, and a clear statement from him, for his is the prerogative in these matters. There was a clear and distinct impression, what I choose to call the whisperings of the Holy Spirit, concerning those who should be selected to assume this most important and sacred responsibility. These who have been called are men of experience in the world and in the Church. They are men of learning and achievement in their respective professions, who have received the accolades of praise from their peers and from many who have admired them from near and far. But this is not why they were chosen.

Their service in the Church has been noteworthy. Since they were boys, each has been faithful and active. Each has served in a stake presidency. Each has served as a Regional Representative. They have been involved in many capacities of Church service, and have performed with excellence in each instance. But this is not why they were called.

Called as special witnesses for Christ

They were called because the Lord wanted them in this office as men who

have a witness of his divinity, and whose voices have been and will be raised in testimony of his reality.

Each is a man of faith. After they are ordained to the holy apostleship and are set apart as members of the Council of the Twelve, they will be expected to devote themselves primarily to the work of the ministry. They will place first in their lives, above all other considerations, the responsibility to stand as special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world.

Some will ask, why has the Church taken such competent men out of public service in their professions when they are doing so much good where they now are? I do not know. The Church has not done it. Rather, the Lord has made clear that these are they who should serve as his witnesses. There are others, well trained and equally qualified, to carry on what they have been doing. These two have now received a peculiar and unique calling to which the Lord, in his better wisdom, has beckoned them.

As with all of us, they are men who are human. They have their strengths and their weaknesses. But henceforth, for the remainder of their lives, as long as they remain faithful, their one chief concern must be the advancement of the work of God in the earth. They must be concerned with the welfare of our Father's children, both those within the Church and those out of the Church. They must do all that they can to give comfort to those who mourn, to give strength to those who are weak, to give encouragement to those who falter, to befriend the friendless, to nurture the destitute, to bless the sick, to bear witness, not out of belief but out of a certain knowledge of the Son of God, their Friend and Master, whose servants they are.

"One sent forth with certain authority and responsibility"

It has always seemed a remarkable thing to me that, although the Lord

chose twelve Apostles to assist him in the work of the ministry, and to extend it following his death; and that although Paul, who was an Apostle, declared that the Church should be "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Ephesians 2:20)—notwithstanding all of this, the office of Apostle, and certainly a Council of Twelve Apostles, is not found to my knowledge in other Christian churches.

Nor is the office of Seventy, to which a number of men have been called at this conference. This is likewise an office that carries with it the responsibility of bearing apostolic witness of the name of Christ.

The word *apostle*, in its origin, literally means "one sent forth." If that definition were stated to say "one sent forth with certain authority and responsibility," it would properly describe the calling as it was given at the time our Lord walked the earth, and as it has been given in our time.

Luke records concerning the Master "that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

"And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles" (Luke 6:12-13).

It is significant to me that the Lord chose those who should walk next to him only after he had prayed all night concerning the matter.

Matthew records:

"And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. . . .

"These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them: . . .

"As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

"Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. . . .

"For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you" (Matthew 10:1, 5, 7, 8, 20).

Apostles restored through revelation

This same office of Apostle was restored to the earth when the Church was reestablished in this dispensation. In the revelation on Church organization received in April of 1830, Joseph Smith was spoken of as one "who was called of God, and ordained an apostle of Jesus Christ, to be the first elder of this church;

"And to Oliver Cowdery, who was also called of God, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to be the second elder of this church, and ordained under his hand" (D&C 20:2-3).

Brigham Young recounts the interesting circumstances associated with the organization of the first Quorum of the Twelve in this dispensation. In 1834 a group of the leading brethren in Ohio traveled to Missouri to assist their associates there, and then returned to Ohio. It was a long and difficult journey, most of it on foot. It was a time of severe testing. Brigham Young said:

"After we returned from Missouri, my brother Joseph Young and myself had been singing after preaching in a meeting; and when the meeting was dismissed, Brother Joseph Smith said, 'Come, go down to my house with me.' We went and sang to him a long time, and talked with him. He then opened the subject of the Twelve and Seventies for the first time I ever thought of it. He said, 'Brethren, I am going to call out Twelve Apostles. I think we will get together and select Twelve Apostles, and select a Quorum of Seventies from those who have been up to Zion.' . . . In 1835, the last of January or in February, or about that time," President Young says, "we held our meetings from day to day, and brother Joseph called out Twelve Apostles at that time. He had a revelation when we were singing to him. Those who were acquainted with him knew when the Spirit of reve-

lation was upon him, for his countenance wore an expression peculiar to himself while under that influence. He preached by the Spirit of revelation, and taught in his council by it, and those who were acquainted with him could discover it at once, for at such times there was a peculiar clearness and transparency in his face" (*Journal of Discourses*, 9:89).

Importance of Twelve Apostles

The Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon—Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris—were given the responsibility of nominating the first members of the Twelve in this dispensation. When they were selected, they were convened in a meeting held in Kirtland on February 27, 1835. Oliver Cowdery served as clerk in that meeting and wrote this in the minutes:

"President Smith proposed the following question: What importance is there attached to the calling of the Twelve Apostles, different from the other callings or officers of the Church?"

"After the question was discussed, . . . President Joseph Smith, Jun. gave the following decision:

"They are the Twelve Apostles, who are called to the office of the Traveling High Council, who are to preside over the churches of the Saints, among the Gentiles, where there is no presidency established; and they are to travel and preach among the Gentiles, until the Lord shall command them to go to the Jews. They are to hold the keys of this ministry, to unlock the door of the Kingdom of heaven unto all nations, and to preach the Gospel to every creature. This is the power, authority, and virtue in their apostleship" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 74).

Great and sacred ministry

As set forth in the further revelations, they are to work under the direc-

tion of the First Presidency and to go forth as "special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world" (D&C 107:23).

When they need assistance in this duty they are to call upon the Seventy and then upon others as circumstances dictate.

Since the opening of the work in this dispensation there have been some eighty-four men serve as members of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. Elders Nelson and Oaks become the eighty-fifth and eighty-sixth men so chosen and ordained and set apart, as will be the case when that is completed. Great and sacred is their ministry. As one who for twenty years served as a member of that unique and remarkable quorum, I give witness to their brotherhood, to their devotion, their faith, their industry, and their tremendous service in advancing the kingdom of God.

Unity in leading councils

If I may speak now for a moment in a personal vein, I wish to express before you my appreciation for them. It is now almost three years since I was called by President Kimball to serve as a Counselor in the First Presidency of the Church. During a substantial part of that period I have humbly tried to carry a great and awesome responsibility. I have known something of loneliness and worry and deep concern. I have prayed earnestly for direction and strength and guidance. I have called on these my beloved Brethren of the Twelve. They have freely and generously given of support, assistance, and inspired counsel.

There is unity in the First Presidency of the Church. There is unity between the Presidency and the Twelve, perfect unity. There is unity among the members of the First Quorum of the Seventy and the Presiding Bishopric. I am somewhat familiar with the history of this Church, and I do not hesitate to say that there has never been greater unity in its leading coun-

cils and the relationships of those councils one to another, than there is today.

I love my Brethren. To a man they are loyal. They are supportive. Without hesitation they respond to every call regardless of personal convenience. They are true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now again, when these two are ordained and set apart, the quorum will be full. Two remarkable and wonderful men were lost with the passing of Elder LeGrand Richards and Elder Mark E. Petersen. Two remarkable and wonderful men have been called to take their places, called under the direction of the Lord, and sustained by the faith of the membership of the Church.

Holy Ghost bears witness to faithful members

The work goes on in majesty and power. The kingdom grows, solidly and consistently. Testimony strengthens in the hearts and lives of the members of the Church across the world. Herein lies the great strength of this kingdom. It is the conviction, solid and real and personal, that is found in the hearts of millions of Latter-day Saints who live in many lands and who speak a variety of tongues. Each is a part of a great society of believers. Each faithful member knows that God our Eternal Father lives. Each knows that Jesus is the Christ, the Redeemer and the Savior of mankind. They know these great salient truths because of the power of the Holy Ghost which bears individual witness to them.

God be thanked for the wonder of his work and for the mysterious and certain way in which it moves forward.

Appreciation for support

I express deep, sincere appreciation, not only for the support of my Brethren of the General Authorities, but of the Latter-day Saints throughout the world. I have felt the power of your prayers. I am aware of your sustaining hands and hearts. Most sincerely I

thank you for the manner in which you labor, unselfishly and with a great and moving faith, to advance the work of God and to assist in bringing to pass his eternal purposes with reference to his sons and daughters.

May God bless each of you wherever you may be. May your faith strengthen as you serve in righteousness. May your testimonies grow ever stronger as you drink of the fountain of eternal truth. May you be blessed in your basket and in your store as you walk honestly with the Lord in the support of his great kingdom. May the peace of Christ abide in your hearts and in your homes, I humbly pray in his holy name, even the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "We'll Sing the songs of Zion," following which Elder Russell M. Nelson, who was sustained as a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles yesterday, will address us. He will be followed by Sister Barbara Ann Winder, who was sustained yesterday as general president of the Relief Society.

The Choir sang "We'll Sing the Songs of Zion."

Elder Russell M. Nelson

A significant day

Saturday of April conference of 1984 has been circled on our calendar for many years, for that date was targeted as the first time in my life that our only son would be old enough to attend general priesthood meeting with me. Last night, that long awaited goal became a reality. Brothers and sisters, little did we know that on that day my name would be presented as a member of the Council of the Twelve.

Since we didn't know, our children didn't know either. Our married daughters telephoned us between sessions. One, who was expecting a baby, said, "Daddy, I was so shocked by that announcement—I think I am going into labor."

That she did.

So President Hinckley, your announcement from the First Presidency should get credit at least for "an assist." Our twenty-second grandchild arrived safely last evening!

Feelings of inadequacy and faith

A wide array of feelings has flashed through my heart since I heard the call that will change my life. The first feeling is that of personal inadequacy. That feeling is intensified as I think of the incomparable power of Elders LeGrand Richards and Mark E. Petersen, whose absence we keenly sense. They were, to me, dear friends as well as esteemed leaders. Then, as I look about and see the strength of those more qualified and able than I, I truly am humbled by this calling.

Fortunately, these feelings are blanketed by feelings of faith, for I know the words of Nephi are true: "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them" (1 Nephi 3:7). I have implicit faith in the Lord and in His prophets. I have learned not to put question marks but to use exclamation points when calls are issued

through inspired channels of priesthood government.

About twenty years ago, two members of the Council of the Twelve were assigned to select a new president of the Bonneville stake in which we lived. They were Elders Spencer W. Kimball and LeGrand Richards. That call they extended to me. Now, I am to be ordained an Apostle under the hand of President Spencer W. Kimball, to fill a chair vacated by the passing of Elder LeGrand Richards.

Commitment and gratitude

Feelings of commitment well up from the depths of my soul. My sweetheart, Dantzel, and I first made those covenants in the temple of the Lord over thirty-eight years ago, to consecrate our lives to the service of the Lord. Today, I reaffirm that promise, to give all I have to the building of the kingdom of God on the earth. In accepting this call, knowing that challenges, charges, and keys will be conferred and that buffetings will likewise come, I commit my effort, my energy, and my all.

Feelings of gratitude emerge as I acknowledge the goodness of my parents, and of all eight of my pioneer great-grandparents who were converted to the Church in the populous nations of Europe. All eight of them ultimately immigrated to the little town of Ephraim, Utah. I know they are watching the events of this day from their celestial windows.

To my dear Dantzel, I acknowledge my debt, as well as my eternal love. She is the fountain from whom flows the nourishing love in our home. Her sacrifices to bring our ten wonderful children into this world, teaching and training them, while always supporting me without a murmur through my responsibilities in the Church and in my profession, are monumental. We love our eight sons-in-law as our own, and are so grateful for an unbroken string of temple marriages that link them to us forever. For those precious

grandchildren already here and for the others on the way, we express our gratitude.

The discipline of divine law

While nominally I come to you from the science of surgery and its mother of medicine, in a truer sense, I have been forged from the stern discipline of law—not the laws of men, as mastered by our brethren of the legal profession, but the eternal and unchanging laws of our Divine Creator. The surgeon soon learns the incontrovertibility of divine law. He knows that hopes and wishes are sometimes simply powerless sham. Desired blessings come only by obedience to divine law, and in no other way. My lifetime thus far has been focused on learning those laws. Only as the laws are known, and then obeyed, can the blessings we desire be earned. To this extent, there will be little difference for me in the activities of the past and those of the future. The endless laws of the Lord are the doctrines taught by His Apostles.

I am grateful to my colleagues in the medical profession who have permitted me to assist them in the care of their patients and who now will continue to care for them. Their selfless service satisfies the two great commandments, to love God and neighbor. They have learned that one loves best who serves best.

Sustaining the servants of the Lord

I sustain the servants of the Lord, from Isaiah and Ezekiel to Joseph Smith and Spencer W. Kimball. For their confidence in me, I am deeply appreciative. To them and all mankind they serve, I express my love.

Now, I understand fully that the call to the Holy Apostleship is one of witness to the world of the divinity of the Lord Jesus the Christ. I know that salvation is centered in Him! Said the angel to King Benjamin: "Salvation was, and is, and is to come, in and

through the atoning blood of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent" (Mosiah 3:18).

The Prophet Joseph Smith was asked, "What are the fundamental principles of your religion?" He answered: "The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it" (*History of the Church*, 3:30).

The *creation* of the earth and all that dwell therein, the necessary *fall* that enabled men to be, and the *atonement* of the Lord are three fundamental components of God's eternal plan. Without that atoning sacrifice, there would be neither immortality nor eternal life.

Testimony and responsibility

His message is the restored gospel of Jesus Christ; and it is administered by the Church that bears His name. He directs the affairs of His church by the power of the priesthood and by revelation through prophets who proclaim His doctrine to all people of the world.

The testimony that I bear is but an echo of the resounding testimonies of the eighty-four who previously have received this call to the Twelve since the spring of 1820. I know that God the

Father and the Son appeared to usher in this last great dispensation of eternal truth. I testify that we are of the house of Israel, specifically of the lineage of Joseph, bearing the birthright and charged with the irrevocable responsibility to prepare the world for the second coming of the Savior. Then, numberless multitudes among every nation, kindred, tongue, and people will eventually join in proclaiming that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. So I solemnly testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have just listened to Elder Russell M. Nelson, a new member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. Some of you may not know that Brother Nelson is an internationally recognized surgeon, with a specialty in heart surgery. He has been a pioneer in his field and has taught his medical colleagues his skills across the world—in the United States, in Europe, in Russia, in China—and is scheduled to go to China for a month on a second trip to teach medical associates there the skills which he has acquired. I assure you, those who think you may need bypass surgery, that he has trained some colleagues who he told me are even better than he is.

Sister Barbara Ann Winder

This is very, very awesome. I think coming to a general conference of the Church and meeting here in the Tabernacle is such a great honor and a privilege at any time, but to have the privilege of being here in the presence of the prophet, when we know that his health has not enabled him to always be with us, is such a special thrill. And to hear the words of these great leaders has so touched and so moved me—I do acknowledge my gratitude to you. How

marvelous was the address of President Hinckley today as he bore witness!

More than an airplane trip

I know that it was more than an airplane trip that brought my husband, President Richard Winder, and me to this point. My husband has been serving as the mission president of the great California San Diego Mission, and we had to slip quietly away to come to this

conference this weekend. I have a testimony of the revelation and inspiration that the Lord gives. In spite of the inadequacies that I feel, I know that the Lord does help and cause his work to move forward.

Yes, I am the same Sister Winder, my dear elders and sisters in San Diego, who was with you less than a week ago helping you to remember those skills your mothers have taught you—keeping your shirts ironed and white and the buttons sewn on, carrying your scriptures. Even the little white handbook is still with me. I am that same Sister Winder. I am the same Sister Winder who, just two short years before that, sat in the councils with these great sisters whom you heard yesterday, learning and being tutored by them, my great teachers, along with their boards and their counselors, many of whom have been my dear, dear friends and teachers. I am so grateful to them and to the many wonderful brethren with whom I have had the opportunity to serve and learn. How I appreciate you.

Expressions of gratitude

We women are under the direction of the priesthood. I feel that I have been taught by those who have followed that direction to help bring women today through troubled times, to the point of being caring wives and mothers, faithful members of the Lord's kingdom, and contributing members of the communities in which they live. These are strengths that have been given to our Latter-day Saint women.

May I also express my gratitude today to my parents and to my husband's parents for their teaching of righteous principles and for the worthy examples that they have given us. It was a hard, hard asphalt that our plane landed on, but it didn't matter because there were our four children and their mates and our wonderful little grandchildren letting me know that home was here. How grateful I am to them for their support.

I want to express gratitude also to a husband with whom I have served for over thirty years in sweet bonds of marriage, having been married in the Salt Lake Temple, sealed together by President Harold B. Lee. We, too, have made commitments, and we have served together in harmony and unity of purpose, supporting one another through these years in various Church callings and assignments. I couldn't help thinking of the words of Paul as he admonished the Church to serve in unity and purpose, and as he taught that all parts must function for the good of the whole. So it is in a marriage and in a family that we must function together. I think we were taught so beautifully yesterday.

Love for sisters and desire for unity

I love the sisters of the Church, and I think I would like to relate a little from that wonderful priesthood section of the eighty-fourth section of the Doctrine and Covenants. It also says the body has need of every member, that all may be edified together and that the system may be perfect. In a way similar to the words of Paul, the members of the Lord's Church today have been asked to have the same care one for another that they have for themselves.

And so it is that I feel for the sisters of the Church this love, and sense the worth of each individual. I want so, and desire so, that we be unified, one together with the priesthood, serving and building the kingdom of God here today and spreading the joy of the gospel to those who are so in need of it. This is His kingdom. We have a great responsibility to share it. I know that God lives, that he loves us. This is my testimony to you, and I pledge my service to you, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Sister Barbara Ann Winder, sustained yesterday as general president of the Relief Society, has spoken to us,

followed by the Choir singing, "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing."

The Choir and congregation will now join in singing "The Spirit of God Like a Fire," following which we shall hear from Elder Robert L. Simpson, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Choir and congregation sang "The Spirit of God Like a Fire."

Elder Robert L. Simpson

Yesterday morning Elder Durham introduced his theme by quoting a bumper sticker message. From a graffiti wall in Los Angeles comes this one: "You can beam me up now, Scotty. I find no evidence of intelligent life down here."

Beauty of the gospel

Now, brothers and sisters, there is indisputable evidence of intelligent life down here because, thank goodness, Heavenly Father has told us that "the glory of God is intelligence, or in other words, light and truth" (D&C 93:36). Those who accept and live the simple light and truth of the gospel are indeed living an intelligent life. And that theme—of simple light and truth—which I would like to share with you this morning, was brought to my attention while serving as a young missionary under President Matthew Cowley, later to become an Apostle of the Lord. He taught us on frequent occasion that "the gospel of Jesus Christ is beautifully simple and simply beautiful."

In the Holy Land

The truth of that statement was reamplified earlier this year as some of our family and a few friends had the privilege of walking where Jesus

walked. We marveled at the city of Old Jerusalem. Shepherds were still tending their flocks near Bethlehem. We strolled along those very same paths on the Mount of Olives. Then, after traveling north, we beheld peaceful Galilee. What had transpired here two thousand years ago suddenly took on rich, new meaning, as we paused to reread and ponder anew each appropriate scripture reference along the way.

The "living water" that Jesus talked about at Jacob's well with the woman from Samaria became current and real. (See John 4:10.)

There were tears as we stood in Gethsemane and pondered again those immortal words: "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42).

Also that simple but profound teaching at Calvary: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

As we stood by beautiful Galilee, we marveled at the simplicity of His unique but meaningful invitation to those being called. "Follow me," he said, "and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19).

Such quotes are typical of the Master Teacher, He who taught pure and plain truth, spoken in humility and with beautiful simplicity.

This reawakening to the superb teachings of the Savior while we were in Israel was most reassuring. How simple and pure are the concepts he left us. Indeed, Paul held the same view as he wrote to the Saints of Corinth, "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace" (1 Corinthians 14:33).

James said it another way: "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy" (see James 3:16-17).

Indeed Elder Cowley was right: the gospel of Jesus Christ is beautifully simple and simply beautiful. Even simple enough that a Primary child can have a good idea of gospel basics by the time of that eighth birthday and the privilege of baptism comes along.

Become as little children

The faith of children was the center of some of the Savior's most significant teachings. Remember that occasion recorded in Matthew when the disciples asked him, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

"And Jesus called a little child unto him." (I can just see the Savior as he tenderly lifted that child onto his knee in order to lend power to that teaching moment.)

Then he answered them: "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:1-4).

Without doubt the Savior had in mind the implicit faith and sincerity of a little child as he answered his disciples on that occasion.

Perhaps we should all take heed as we listen to our children pray. I remember well Elder Monson's story yesterday. When our daughter, Christine, was still very young she was always invited to take her turn praying in the family circle. We as a family always prayed that we might be a healthy fam-

ily. Some of her words came with difficulty. She couldn't say "healthy," and it always came out, "Bless us, Heavenly Father, to be a wealthy family." That sounded good to me—we just let her go on like that—but Heavenly Father knew what she meant, and wealth has eluded us.

That wise and noble prophet and teacher King Benjamin taught his people about putting off the natural man and becoming a Saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord. Then he added that we must become as a child, "submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things . . . , even as a child doth submit to his father" (Mosiah 3:19).

Simplicity of truth in chemistry, physics, and religion

We have always been taught that the gospel of Jesus Christ embraces all truth, wherever that truth is found. This should also include truth found in science. The simplicity of basic truth in the fields of chemistry and physics has always intrigued me. For example, there is the simple expression that H_2O is the chemical formula for water. Also fascinating is the fact that Einstein could express his mind-expanding theory of relativity by the simple equation $E = mc^2$. It almost appears that the closer we approach a basic truth, the more simply it can be expressed.

The best example of this in religious truth is perhaps the oft-repeated scriptural passage found in Moses in the Pearl of Great Price, wherein God states in a single sentence the total objective of all eternity: "For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39).

Imagine, just twenty words to summarize the entire plan of eternal progression and salvation. I like that, because it is true. The statement is fundamental; it makes perfect sense. It isn't superfluous; it establishes a goal by which everyone can achieve success. All of Heavenly Father's children

become candidates for exaltation, and in the process Deity is glorified by our success.

Simple gospel truths

Most eternal truths are so simply stated that no one should misunderstand them, except perhaps a few like those of Jacob's day who "despised the words of plainness, and killed the prophets, and sought for things that they could not understand" (Jacob 4:14).

Please consider for a moment these simple gospel truths, which are paraphrased in the interest of time:

The contribution of tithes and offerings will open the windows of heaven. (See Malachi 3:10.)

Conformity to the Word of Wisdom ensures better health, wisdom, and well-being. (See D&C 89.)

Confession to one's priesthood authority and then doing the sin no more can provide total repentance for all who are willing. (See D&C 58:43.)

"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church" (James 5:14).

A celestial glory can be the reward for all who repent, are baptized, and continue in faith. (See D&C 18:22.)

As Paul declared so firmly and simply, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5). Nothing has ever been able to alter these simple truths.

And finally one of my very favorites: "And the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

Everyone wants to be free—free from guilt, free from selfishness, free from the bondage of bad habit. Yes, even political freedom is possible through God's plan of simple truth.

Gospel brings joy, fulfillment, and hope

But, of course, all of the foregoing about the importance of simplicity and plainness would be meaningless unless the end result were joy and fulfillment

for Heavenly Father's children. How thrilling it is to observe newly baptized Church members who have caught the Spirit—to see them respond to the gospel plan and, through their obedience to simple teachings, reap the promised blessings. This is especially apparent in so-called developing areas of the world.

Oh, that I could take each of you to Coimbatore, India, to meet with more than one hundred members of the Church who live in the most meager of all circumstances. They possess hardly any of this world's goods. Some days there is not enough food. Most have little or no education, but their lives have been changed for the better in a very short period of time through the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Their general health level is improved; more are now attending school. They are singing the songs of Zion with enthusiasm, and they are smiling much more than before. They have found hope. These are deprived people being taught simple truths about the Savior. The gospel is not complicated. They can comprehend it, and they're responding to it.

As we met with them recently in their little one-room meetinghouse (with a clean dirt floor, I might add), they seemed so anxious and eager to be taught. Curious neighbors could not resist the urge to linger nearby while meetings were in progress. They watched through open windows and through the open doorway. We were impressed by the contrast of those inside and those looking in. It was evident that gospel teaching had influenced not only the spirit that the members radiated, but also such things as personal hygiene, grooming, personal attitude, and a countenance that reflected a new-found something that was indeed beautifully simple and simply beautiful.

Deeper teaching through pure love

Few are aware of the pure Christian service being administered at refu-

gee camps in Thailand and in the Philippines by our missionary sisters. Basically, these sisters are restricted to teaching the English language and Western culture, but there is a deeper teaching that takes place through their pure love and sweet attitude toward these displaced people.

The story is told of a young camp refugee from Cambodia who was relocated in California. He found his way into one of our Church meetinghouses because the name of the Church on the sign out front corresponded with the one he used to look at each day on the name tag of the wonderful missionary sister who taught him at the camp. People don't soon forget acts of simple kindness. Pure love can transcend all differences.

Do you love the Lord?

Yes, the Spirit giveth light in this church. I am thinking of a wonderful new convert in England. In response to my asking, he told me about his conversion. He explained how he was kneeling at his flower bed on a Saturday morning preparing the soil for spring planting. All of a sudden an unseen voice from behind asked the simple question, "Sir, do you love the Lord?"

He said that he turned around, fully expecting to see an angel standing there; instead there were two angels, two Mormon missionaries. And his response was, "Of course I love the Lord. Please come in the house so we can talk about it." It was all so simple, so genuine. It was an approach that the Savior might have used.

The honest in heart

Not long ago a young American woman living in Taiwan felt that her taxi driver was taking her the long way around in order to increase the fare. She was in the process of venting her feelings in unmistakable terms when the young Chinese driver, obviously hurt by the accusation, stopped the cab, turned off the ignition, then turned around and said simply, "I would not do that. I am a Mormon." Calmed down and totally disarmed by the sincerity of his statement, she then asked what a Mormon was. She obviously found out, as she joined the Church just three weeks later. It all happens so simply when the honest in heart are involved.

Nephi, in foretelling the ministry of the Apostle John, described his teachings as "plain and pure, and most precious and easy to the understanding of all men" (1 Nephi 14:23). That our understanding and interpretation of truth may always be beautifully simple and simply beautiful is my sincere prayer for each of us, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, amen.

President Hinckley

We have just listened to Elder Robert L. Simpson, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Bishop J. Richard Clarke, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric.

Bishop J. Richard Clarke

The practice of truth

In the book of John, we read the famous dialogue between Pontius Pilate and Jesus of Nazareth. The Savior was an enigma to the Roman. He

asked, "Art thou a king . . . ?" Jesus answered, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth" (John 18:37).

Pilate turned away, asking the question of the ages, "What is truth?" (John 18:38). He did not wait for an answer. I doubt he expected one. Pilate was aware that "truth" had been a favorite subject for debate by Roman and Greek philosophers for centuries, and remained the quest of philosophy.

It is not my purpose today to discuss truth in the abstract. I would speak of the practice of truth. It is both principle and application.

As William George Jordan taught: "Truth . . . is loyalty to the right as we see it; it is courageous living of our lives in harmony with our ideals; it is always—power.

"Truth . . . defies full definition. Like electricity it can only be explained by noting its manifestation. It is the compass of the soul, the guardian of conscience, the final touchstone of right. Truth is the revelation of the ideal; but it is also an inspiration to realize that ideal, a constant impulse to live it" (*Power of Truth* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1935], p. 3).

Harmony between principles and practice

As Latter-day Saints, we are committed to the principles of truth. We seek the truth; we believe the truth; and we know the "truth will make us free." (See John 8:32.) To be genuine disciples, we must have harmony between the principles that we profess and the truths we practice.

We must be like the people of Ammon, who were "distinguished for their zeal towards God, and also towards men; for they were perfectly honest and upright in all things; and they were firm in the faith of Christ, even unto the end" (Alma 27:27).

Be what God expects

Our souls must be more than "whited sepulchres," which appear praiseworthy but inside are hollow chambers bereft of goodness. (See

Matthew 23:27.) We must not only *seem* but also *be* what God would expect of His sons and daughters.

The practice of truth, the acid test of our commitment, is known by many terms—for example, *honesty*, *integrity*, *uprightness*, and *probity*. I especially like *probity*. It is taken from the Latin *probus*, meaning good, and *probare*—to prove, signifying tried and confirmed integrity. A person who has mastered probity by discipline, until it has become part of his very nature, is like a moral compass which automatically points "true north" under all circumstances. This individual strives for instinctive honesty, acting on impulse toward the right, without having to weigh the merits of advantage or disadvantage.

"[One] who makes Truth his watchword," wrote Jordan, "is careful in his words, he seeks to be accurate, neither understating nor overcoloring. . . . What he says has the ring of sincerity, the hallmark of pure gold. . . . His promise counts for something, you accept it as being as good as his bond, you know that no matter how much it may cost him to verify and fulfil his word by his deed, he will do it" (*Power of Truth*, p. 5).

"Keep your agreement"

Perhaps you remember the story told by President N. Eldon Tanner. A young fellow came to him and said, "I made an agreement with a man that requires me to make certain payments each year. I am in arrears, and I can't make those payments, for if I do, it is going to cause me to lose my home. What shall I do?"

President Tanner looked at him and said, "Keep your agreement."

"Even if it costs me my home?" the man asked.

President Tanner replied, "I am not talking about your home. I am talking about your agreement; and I think your wife would rather have a husband who would keep his word, meet his

obligations, keep his pledges or his covenants, and have to rent a home, than to have a home with a husband who will not keep his covenants and his pledges" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1966, p. 99).

Mormon standard of integrity

I had an interesting experience a few years ago while attending general conference. I went to purchase some merchandise at ZCMI and to cash a check. Being from out of state, I was sent to the cashier. She asked for some identification. I reached into my wallet and took out some credit cards. Inadvertently, my temple recommend came out. The cashier said, "I'll accept that." I said, "You'll accept what?" She said, "Your temple recommend. It's current, isn't it?" I said, "Yes, it's current." She said, "That will do."

Well, I pondered that all the way home. I thought, Wouldn't it be a great idea if we had a Mormon credit card? A card-carrying Mormon could be depended on to keep his word, to be honest with his employers, and to pay his bills as agreed. Then our professionals, tradesmen, and business people would perform without compromising their ethics for profit, each putting his signature on his work with pride; all of us striving for excellence in every way. Wouldn't it be wonderful to be a "peculiar" people known for our honesty and the quality of our services? The Mormon standard of integrity should be the highest standard in all the world, for we are the covenant people of God. The Lord makes no special concessions for culture, race, or nationality; He expects all His Saints to live according to gospel standards.

The individual of probity

I believe for every law of truth we keep, there is a compounding effect. Our character is a complex of coordinated support systems, just like a

well-engineered bridge. Each truss, column, or girder contributes to the strength or weakness of the whole structure.

The individual of probity has integrated his virtues into a pattern of consonance, whereas one who practices selective honesty, to fit time and circumstance, is never quite balanced.

General David Shoup, former commandant of the United States Marine Corps, felt very strongly about consistency in practicing moral values. Commenting upon marines who were untrue to their wives, he said:

"It is not the actual act of adultery that is of so great a concern to me; that's merely the by-product, so to speak. The vital thing is this: A man who can somehow rationalize breaking the oath he gave before God and man when he repeated the marriage vows, is also a man who could, if he so desired, or when subjected to sufficient pressure, rationalize breaking the oath he took when he became a commissioned officer in the United States Marine Corps. A man who can betray his wife and children for lustful purposes is a man who could betray his country for his own ends."

Integrity and honor not without price

Brothers and sisters, we often perform below our ideals, but our aim must exceed our grasp if we would rise to a higher standard of integrity. We all have old habits to break and new ones to form. Surely it takes a long time to perfect character, and we probably won't achieve it totally in this life. But success must be measured by effort and small improvements until we eventually reach our goals. Norman Cousins described integrity as "no luxury for the pious: it is the bread of life for the truly human . . . for the man who seeks not length of days, but quality of spirit."

The love for truth and the practice of truth are best learned in the home. The Lord has laid the responsibility with parents to "teach their children

to . . . walk uprightly before the Lord" (D&C 68:28). And again, "I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth" (D&C 93:40), for "light and truth forsake that evil one" (D&C 93:37.)

Children gain a love for truth by watching parents practice truth; they learn to emulate noble character. They need models of consistency, not just sermons alone. I believe one of the most important lessons a parent can teach a child is that integrity and honor are not practiced without price. They usually require sacrifice, almost always inconvenience, and often embarrassment.

Example of truth in action

With the permission of President Jeffrey Holland and his lovely daughter, Mary, I'd like to share their story of several years ago. It is an example of what I have tried to say today—not truth in theory, but truth in action.

Brother Holland begins:

"One night I came home quite late from work. My nine-year-old daughter Mary seemed visibly distressed. . . . I asked if she felt all right; she nodded that she did; but I guessed otherwise. I waited as she got ready for bed. Sure enough, she walked softly into the living room and said, 'Daddy, I have to talk to you.' I held her hand and, as we walked into her bedroom, she started to cry.

"I was at Grand Central this morning and saw a ladies' compact I knew Mother would love. I was sure it was quite expensive, but I picked it up just to admire it.' More tears and struggle to get it all said: 'It fell out of my hands onto the floor. I quickly picked it up, but Daddy, the mirror was cracked. I didn't know what to do! I didn't have enough money to pay for it, and I was all alone. . . . I put the compact back on the shelf and left the store. Oh, Daddy, I think I've been dishonest.' And then she wept and wept.

"I held her in my arms as that little nine-year-old body shook with the pain

of sin being expelled. She said, 'I can't sleep and I can't eat and I can't say my prayers. What will I do? I won't ever get it out of my mind.'

"Well, Mother joined us and we talked quite a while that night. We told her that we were very, very proud of her honesty . . . and we would have been disappointed if she had been able to eat or sleep very well. I told her . . . the compact probably wouldn't cost *too* much, and that we would go back to the store manager, tell him of the problem, and, between the two of us, cover the cost. If the compact was still there, [perhaps we could] buy it for Mom. That little cracked mirror could be a reminder for as long as she owned it that her little girl was unfailingly honest and spiritually sensitive. . . .

"The tears gradually stopped, her little body began to relax, and Mary said, 'I think now I can say my prayers' " ("The Excellence of the Actors," unpublished manuscript, BYU faculty assembly, 1978).

Walk uprightly and work righteousness

We have tried to teach our children that the practice of truth is the premier virtue. If they master that great principle, all else will fall into place.

As Jesus of Nazareth was the embodiment of truth, so should we bear witness. We may talk about our religion, we may discuss marvelous manifestations and revealed gifts and powers, we may profess high ideals and noble values; but the proof of our commitment lies in our performance in the daily transaction of our life.

Let us covenant as did Job, even in his extremity: "Till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me.

"My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live" (Job 27:5-6).

The Psalmist posed the question: "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" (Psalm 15:1).

The answer: "He that walketh up-rightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart" (Psalm 15:2).

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "Come, Ye Disconsolate" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Bishop J. Richard Clarke, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, spoke to us, followed by the Choir singing "Come, Ye Disconsolate."

Elder Howard W. Hunter of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now address us, and he will be our concluding speaker of this session.

Elder Howard W. Hunter

I would like to refer to one of the parables of the Savior found in the book of Luke, the parable commencing with this verse: "Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican" (Luke 18:10).

Simple yet profound parables of Christ

These words begin one of the many stories told by the Master Teacher during the three years of his earthly ministry. There is nothing in all literature equal to the parables of Christ. His teachings were as impressive to his listeners then as they are today to those who read his words. They are so simple a child can understand, yet profound enough for the sage and philosopher. The similitudes he used were taken from pictures of human life and commonplace incidents that could be understood by every listener—the sower, the lost sheep, a woman baking bread, the fig tree, a good Samaritan, the prodigal son.

Each of the parables spoken by the Savior seems to teach a principle or give an admonition regarding the attributes necessary to qualify for exaltation. Some of these are faith, repentance, baptism, development of talents, forgiveness, perseverance in doing good, being a profitable steward, charity, mercy, and obedience. These parables were usually given by him to add to the knowledge of persons already spiritually enlightened, particu-

larly the disciples, although they were sometimes directed to other persons and audiences.

To self-righteous who lack humility

The parable from which I read the first verse was directed to more than just his disciples. Even though the subject matter was a Pharisee and a publican, it was not intended for Pharisees or publicans expressly, but for the benefit of the self-righteous who lack the virtues of humility and who use self-righteousness as a claim to exaltation. In this parable the Savior spoke few words, yet the lesson taught is clear. This is the whole story he told, as recorded by Luke:

"Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

"The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

"I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

"And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

"I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every man that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that

humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 18:10-14).

Pharisees, strictest of Jewish sects

Apparently the scene is laid in Jerusalem at the temple, where two men had gone to pray during the time of day for private prayers. It is interesting that the Master selected a Pharisee and a publican as the actors in the story, representing the two religious extremes in Jewish society.

The Pharisees were the largest and most influential of the three sects of Judaism at the time of Christ. The Pharisaic movement in the Jewish state rose from the ranks of the lay lawyers of the Greek period to become the leading religious and political party. The main characteristics of the Pharisees were their legalism and their legalistic inflexibility. They were known for their strict accuracy in the interpretation of the law and their scrupulous adherence to living the law in every minute detail. This caused them to be known as the strictest of Jewish sects in observing their tradition. They shunned the non-Pharisee as being unclean, thereby keeping themselves separated from those they considered to be the common people.

Paul was a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee, and he was educated by Gamaliel, a Pharisee. On three different occasions he declared himself to be a member of the sect. The first was at the time he was on trial, then in his plea before Agrippa, and later in writing to the Philippians. This training as a Pharisee made him an extremist in his devotion to the Jewish law, which answers the question as to why he was such a zealous persecutor of the Christians prior to his experience on Damascus Road.

Publicans, despised tax collectors

Publicans were tax collectors and were looked down upon with contempt. Ordinary taxes, such as land taxes, were collected by the Roman officials;

but toll taxes for transporting goods were usually collected by Jews under contract with the Romans. These collectors, or publicans, made a profit on the transactions. Their fellow countrymen had no higher regard for them than for thieves and robbers. The trade lent itself to graft and extortion, and the publicans had the reputation of having some of the tax money stick to their own fingers.

The Jews were smarting under Roman occupation and domination, and they considered the payment of taxes as a tribute to Caesar. Jews who made such collections for the Romans were regarded as traitors and as despicable for selling their services to a foreign conqueror. Publicans and members of their families were considered so contemptible that they were not allowed to hold public office or give testimony in a Jewish court. We remember that Matthew was a publican, a gatherer of taxes, until his calling to be a disciple, and, of course, he too was despised by the Jews, as were the others who followed that occupation.

Boastful spirit and pride

To know the background of these two men who came from the opposite extremes of Jewish society helps us to understand this parable of the Pharisee and tax collector and why they prayed as they did in the temple.

After the two men entered the temple, the Pharisee stood by himself, apart from the tax collector, and thanked God that he was "not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers" who fail to live the commandments of the law, "or even as this publican," he said (Luke 18:11). Though he was in form thanking God, his self-centered thoughts were on his own self-righteousness. In justification he added: "I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess" (Luke 18:12). His prayer was not one of thankfulness, but of boastfulness. The boastful spirit and pride of this Pharisee is not unlike that of Rabbi Simeon ben

Jochai, mentioned in the Talmud, who said: "If there were only thirty righteous persons in the world, I and my son should make two of them; but if there were but twenty, I and my son would be of the number; and if there were but ten, I and my son would be of the number; and if there were but five, I and my son would be of the five; and if there were but two, I and my son would be those two; and if there were but one, myself should be that one" (Bereshith Rabba, s. 35, vol. 34).

Appeal for mercy and forgiveness

The tax collector standing afar off, feeling the weight of his iniquities pressing down upon him, and being conscious of his sins and unworthiness to stand before God, cast his eyes to the ground and "would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven" when he prayed (Luke 18:13). In deep distress he beat upon his breast and pleaded, "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13).

Could there be greater contrast in the prayers of two men? The Pharisee stood apart because he believed he was better than other men, whom he considered as common. The publican stood apart also, but it was because he felt himself unworthy. The Pharisee thought of no one other than himself and regarded everyone else a sinner, whereas the publican thought of everyone else as righteous as compared with himself, a sinner. The Pharisee asked nothing of God, but relied upon his own self-righteousness. The publican appealed to God for mercy and forgiveness of his sins.

Continuing the story, Jesus then said: "I tell you, this man," referring to the publican, the despised tax collector, "went down to his house justified, rather than the other" (Luke 18:14). In other words, the Lord said he was absolved, forgiven, or vindicated.

This statement gives meaning to what the Savior said on another occasion: "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes

and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:20).

Humility—attribute of godliness

The Master then concluded the parable with these words: "For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 18:14). These are almost the same words spoken by him in the house of one of the chief Pharisees. (See Luke 14:11.)

Humility is an attribute of godliness possessed by true Saints. It is easy to understand why a proud man fails. He is content to rely upon himself only. This is evident in those who seek social position or who push others aside to gain position in fields of business, government, education, sports, or other endeavors. Our genuine concern should be for the success of others. The proud man shuts himself off from God, and when he does he no longer lives in the light. The Apostle Peter made this comment:

"Be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" (1 Peter 5:5-6).

From the beginning of time there have been those with pride and others who have followed divine admonition to be humble. History bears record that those who have exalted themselves have been abased, but the humble have been exalted. On every busy street there are Pharisees and publicans. It may be that one of them bears our name.

May the Lord bless us as we strive to understand and follow his teachings in my prayer, in his holy name, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Howard W. Hunter of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has been our concluding speaker.

We express appreciation to the owners and operators of the many radio and television stations and cable systems who have offered their facilities as a public service to make the proceedings of this conference available to a large audience in many areas of the world.

The Tabernacle Choir will sing in closing "Benediction." The benedic-

tion prayer will then be pronounced by Elder James M. Paramore, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and this conference will be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The Choir sang "Benediction."

Elder James M. Paramore offered the benediction prayer.

SECOND DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

FIFTH SESSION

The fifth and final general session of the 153rd Annual General Conference commenced at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, April 8, 1984.

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve, conducted.

Music was provided by the Tabernacle Choir directed by Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger with Robert Cundick at the organ.

President Benson made the following remarks at the outset of the meeting:

President Ezra Taft Benson

The First Presidency has asked that I conduct this concluding session of the conference.

It is wonderful to have President Spencer W. Kimball with us. He is constantly surprising us. Our love goes to President Marion G. Romney, who is watching at home.

We extend a sincere welcome to all assembled this afternoon in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, in the fifth and concluding session of the 154th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We also welcome those seated in the Assembly Hall where Elders Richard G. Scott and Robert E. Wells preside.

We send our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere who are participating in these proceedings by radio, television, and satellite transmission.

The Tabernacle Choir, with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger directing and Robert Cundick at the organ, is providing the music for this session.

The Choir will begin this service by singing "Jehovah, Lord of Heaven and Earth." The invocation will be offered by Elder Adney Y. Komatsu, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Choir sang "Jehovah, Lord of Heaven and Earth."

Elder Adney Y. Komatsu offered the invocation.

President Benson

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "A Song of Praise." Following the singing, we shall hear from Elder

James E. Faust, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The Choir sang "A Song of Praise."

Elder James E. Faust

I welcome all of the new General Authorities. I rejoice in the calls of Elder Oaks and Elder Nelson to the Council of Twelve Apostles. Brother Nelson has touched my heart deeper than any other man. He has held my heart in his hands and has cut into it and sewn in eight bypasses. He and the Lord literally gave me a new heart. And that heart is full of love for him and for Brother Oaks and for all of you.

Most singular event since the Resurrection

Many years ago, I visited for the first time a wooded area of extraordinary natural beauty near Palmyra, New York. This area is known to members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as the Sacred Grove. On the day of our visit, the bees were kissing the wildflowers, and the soft zephyrs gently rustled the leaves of the great trees. It is a place of perfect peace and serenity. It was easy to believe that the heavens were opened and that the magnificent vision took place there.

I refer to the awesome experience of Joseph Smith when he beheld God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, in the spring of 1820. There has been no event more glorious, more controversial, nor more important in the story of Joseph Smith than this vision. It is possibly the most singular event to occur on the earth since the Resurrection. Those who do not believe it happened find it difficult to explain away. Too much has happened since its occurrence to summarily deny that it ever took place. Some years later, still suffering under the impact of that happening, Joseph said, "If I had not

experienced what I have, I should not have known it myself" (*Millennial Star*, Nov. 1844, p. 93).

The First Vision

Young Joseph Smith, fourteen years of age, lived with his family near Palmyra, New York. In the spring of 1820, Joseph, like many others, was caught up in the religious excitement of the day. Desiring to know the truth for himself, and encouraged by the epistle of James, he knelt in solitary, fervent prayer in that beautiful grove not far from his home. He was at first violently seized by "the power of some actual being from the unseen world" (Joseph Smith—History 1:16). In an effort to extricate himself, he exerted all his powers to call upon God for deliverance from this tremendous evil power. At this point he said:

"Just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

"It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*" (Joseph Smith—History 1:16–17.)

The message that Joseph received from the Father and the Son was that the full truth was not upon the earth and that he should not affiliate with the religions of the day, as well as other

things of transcending importance which were not written.

Joseph stated in that account: "Many other things did he say unto me, which I cannot write at this time" (Joseph Smith—History 1:20). Obviously, Joseph was overwhelmed by the occasion and the instructions he received.

Joseph soon declared this marvelous experience to others outside his family. As a result, much ridicule, contempt, and even hatred were visited upon him. His mother, Lucy Mack Smith, relates that after the First Vision, "from this time until the twenty-first of September, 1823, Joseph continued, as usual, to labor with his father, and nothing during this interval occurred of very great importance—though he suffered every kind of opposition and persecution from the different orders of religionists" (*History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, ed. Preston Nibley [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1958], p. 74). The prejudice and the hatred pursued Joseph until his martyrdom.

Of this experience, Joseph said: "I had actually seen a light, and in the midst of that light I saw two Personages, and they did in reality speak to me; and though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true; and while they were persecuting me, reviling me, and speaking all manner of evil against me falsely for so saying, I was led to say in my heart: Why persecute me for telling the truth? I have actually seen a vision. . . . I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it; at least I knew that by so doing I would offend God, and come under condemnation" (Joseph Smith—History 1:25).

There are several other accounts of the magnificent vision near Palmyra recorded by the Prophet's associates or friends before the Prophet's death, who, at various times, heard the Prophet recount the First Vision. These accounts corroborate the First Vision as written by Joseph Smith himself.

In the accounts of the Prophet and his mother, Lucy Mack Smith, there is also considerable historical background which has been confirmed by secondary sources as being accurate. As an example, the Prophet refers in the published account of the First Vision to the religious fervor in the area where the Smith family was living at the time. Among others, Brigham Young later affirmed: "I very well recollect the reformation which took place in the country among the various denominations of Christians—the Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and others—when Joseph was a boy" (*Journal of Discourses*, 12:67).

The angel Moroni and the Book of Mormon

Three years following the vision near Palmyra came the visit of the angel Moroni. Later, Joseph received the plates of gold and translated the Book of Mormon from them. He subsequently received the keys and powers of the holy priesthood of God, and established The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Joseph Smith's stated purpose in relating his history was "to disabuse the public mind, and put all inquirers after truth in possession of the facts, as they have transpired" (Joseph Smith—History 1:1).

What was learned?

What was learned from the First Vision?

1. The existence of God our Father as a personal being, and proof that man was made in the image of God.
2. That Jesus is a personage, separate and distinct from the Father.
3. That Jesus Christ is declared by the Father to be his Son.
4. That Jesus was the conveyer of revelation as taught in the Bible.
5. The promise of James to ask of God for wisdom was fulfilled.

6. The reality of an actual being from an unseen world who tried to destroy Joseph Smith.

7. That there was a falling away from the Church established by Jesus Christ—Joseph was told not to join any of the sects, for they taught the doctrines of men.

8. Joseph Smith became a witness for God and his Son, Jesus Christ.

Vision confirms revelation through Jesus Christ

The First Vision confirms the fact there are three separate Gods: God the Father—Elohim, to whom we address our prayers; Jesus the Christ—Jehovah; and the Holy Ghost—the Comforter, through whose spirit we may know the truth of all things.

In the account of that profound theophany, the instruction came from Jesus. President Joseph Fielding Smith said:

“I would like to call your attention to one little thing in the first vision of the Prophet Joseph Smith. It is very significant, and Joseph Smith did not know it. If he had been perpetrating a fraud, he would not have thought of it. You will recall in your reading that the Father and the Son appeared, and the Father introduced the Son and told the Prophet to hear the Son.

“Now suppose the Prophet had come back from the woods and had said the Father and the Son appeared to him, and the Father said, ‘Joseph, what do you want?’ and when he asked the question and told him what he wanted, the Father had answered him; then we would know that the story of the Prophet could not be true.

“All revelation comes through Jesus Christ. I have not time to go into the scriptures and give references for that, but that is the fact” (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, 5 vols. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co.], 1957–66, 1:16).

What resulted from First Vision?

What resulted from the First Vision, which opened the prophesied dispensation of the fulness of times?

1. The Book of Mormon, another witness for Christ, was received.

2. The priesthood, or authority to perform saving ordinances, was restored, including the sealing powers of the priesthood.

3. The Church of Jesus Christ was again organized on the earth.

4. Revelations came to the Prophet Joseph Smith for the building of the kingdom of God upon the earth, declaring the universal salvation of mankind.

5. Keys, principles, and powers were restored for the carrying out of the three great missions of the Church—the preaching of the gospel, the means of perfecting the Saints, and temples and ordinances therein for the redemption of the living and the dead.

What of Joseph Smith?

What of this man Joseph Smith who communed with deity? What was his reputation? What effect, if any, did the great vision near Palmyra seem to have upon him? As promised by the angel Moroni, both good and evil have been spoken of him since. The *New York Sun* in the late summer of 1843 said:

“That Joe Smith, the founder of the Mormons, is a man of great talent, a deep thinker, an eloquent speaker, an able writer, and a man of great mental power, no one can doubt who has watched his career. That his followers are deceived, we all believe. . . .

“Few in this age have done such deeds, and performed such apparent miracles. It is no small thing, in the blaze of this nineteenth century, to give to men a new revelation, found a new religion, establish new forms of worship, to build a city, with new laws, institutions, and orders of architecture,—to establish ecclesiastic, civil

and military jurisdiction, found colleges, send out missionaries, and make proselytes in two hemispheres: yet all this has been done by Joe Smith, and that against every sort of opposition, ridicule and persecution" (*History of the Church*, 6:3).

A Mr. Reed, a nonmember of the Church, said of him:

"The first acquaintance I had with Gen. Smith, was about the year 1823. He came into my neighborhood, being then about eighteen years of age, and resided there two years; during which time I became intimately acquainted with him. I do know that his character was irreproachable; that he was well known for truth and uprightness; that he moved in the first circles of community, and he was often spoken of as a young man of intelligence, and good morals, and possessing a mind susceptible of the highest intellectual attainments" (*Times and Seasons*, 1 June 1844, p. 549).

Josiah Quincy, mayor of Boston, said of him, "A fine-looking man is what the passer-by would instinctively have murmured upon meeting the remarkable individual" (*Figures of the Past* [Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1883], p. 381).

Joseph's personal magnetism

William M. Allred, one of his followers, stated that some straitlaced people had problems with the Prophet Joseph playing ball with the boys. Said Allred, referring to the Prophet:

"He then related a story of a certain prophet who was sitting under the shade of a tree amusing himself in some way, when a hunter came along with his bow and arrow, and reproved him. The prophet asked him if he kept his bow strung up all the time. The hunter answered that he did not. The prophet asked why, and he said it would lose its elasticity if he did. The prophet said it was just so with his mind, he did not want it strung up all the time" (*Juvenile Instructor*, 1 Aug. 1892, p. 472).

William Taylor, President John Taylor's brother, said of Joseph Smith's personality: "Much has been said of his geniality and personal magnetism. I was a witness of this—people, old or young, loved him and trusted him instinctively." He explains, "My devotion to the Prophet was akin to that felt by all who came under his influence" (*Young Women's Journal*, Dec. 1906, p. 548).

Joseph's personal magnetism was confirmed by his wife Emma in a letter written to one of their sons after the Prophet's death: "I do not expect you can do much more in the garden than your father could, and I never wanted him to go into the garden to work for if he did it would not be fifteen minutes before there would be three or four or sometimes a half dozen men round him and they would tramp the ground down faster than he could hoe it up" (*Emma Smith Papers*, 1 Aug. 1868 or 1869, p. 4, Independence, Missouri: RLDS Library and Archive).

Witnesses to the fruits of his work

The practical sage, Brigham Young, died with the name Joseph upon his lips. He previously had said: "I honor and revere the name of Joseph Smith. I delight to hear it; I love it. I love his doctrine. . . .

"I feel like shouting Hallelujah, all the time, when I think that I ever knew Joseph Smith, the Prophet whom the Lord raised up. . . .

" . . . I am bold to say that, Jesus Christ excepted, no better man ever lived or does live on this earth. I am his witness" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, ed. John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954], pp. 458–59).

My associates and I are also his witnesses. We are eyewitnesses of the fruits of this work worldwide. The followers of the restored gospel of Christ can be found in over one hundred countries of the world. In the main they are decent, sober, chaste, honest, law-abiding, family-oriented, patriotic

members of the countries in which they live.

"For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes" (Luke 6:44).

At the very heart of this great work of teaching and establishing the gospel of Christ is the First Vision of the boy Joseph near Palmyra, New York, in 1820. Too much has happened to dismiss this magnificent vision as a non-event.

Since no one was with Joseph when this great vision took place in the wooded grove near Palmyra, a testimony concerning its reality can come only by believing the truthfulness of Joseph Smith's own account or by the witness of the Holy Ghost, or both. I have such a conviction. It is a sure

conviction that lies deep in my soul. As a special witness of the same Christ who appeared with the Father and instructed the boy Joseph Smith, I bear witness of the truthfulness of the magnificent First Vision near Palmyra. I declare this in all soberness and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder James E. Faust, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder Angel Abrea, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He will be followed by Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Angel Abrea

The power of example

A few years ago I found myself in a small city park which was covered with trees and adorned with monuments, a plaza typical of many found throughout Argentina. I was watching a sculptor as he used a hammer and chisel to put the finishing touches on his project. His artwork portrayed a mother holding a child in her arms.

The artist was working to perfect the hands of the mother, which were fashioned of marble, and the results appeared to me to be masterful strokes in the sculptor's own style.

As I stood there fascinated, eager to grasp knowledge of the artist's skills, a shoeshine boy passing by stopped and stood by me. After attentively watching the progress of the final touches for a few moments, the industrious young boy turned to me and in amazement asked, "Sir, tell me, why is he breaking it now?"

The youth's naive and unexpected query gave me cause to contemplate the

examples which we constantly set, the impressions we give by our actions and our behavior. It made me realize how extremely important our examples can be, as is the force or weakness with which we convey our personal convictions in our everyday life.

The words of Paul came to my mind: "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" (1 Corinthians 14:8).

According to the radius of our activity, or within our sphere of responsibility, each one of us influences a certain number of God's sons and daughters. Our attitudes, actions, and words convey messages to others which in some way affect their lives, either positively or negatively.

Our actions are the results of our ignorance or the fruits of our knowledge, the results of our disbelief or of the testimony which we possess. We cannot escape from ourselves or from that which we hold in our hearts. We become that which we pursue. The ex-

ample which we set and the life we live are a reflection of all that we truly are.

Negative and positive examples

In the words of counsel which Alma gave to his son, Corianton, we see an illustration of how ill feelings that are harbored in our hearts lead to actions which set bad examples, with consequent adverse effects in the lives of others.

"Suffer not yourself to be led away by any vain or foolish thing; suffer not the devil to lead away your heart. . . for when they saw your conduct they would not believe in my words" (Alma 39:11).

On the other hand, Nephi gives us a very meaningful example of the power of a testimony which produces an attitude of certainty and leaves no room for doubt when he was faced with the request from his father, Lehi. He answered, "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded" (1 Nephi 3:7).

He did not say, "I will go and see what happens," or, "I will go and see what the circumstances are," which would have caused confusion and uncertainty; but, rather, his attitude was one of a person who does not doubt, and one who acts accordingly. It is interesting to note that Nephi did not only express his decision and determination to be obedient in carrying out his father's request, but he further explained the reason for acting in this manner when he said, "For I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them" (1 Nephi 3:7).

On another occasion Nephi received the following assignment from the Lord: "Thou shalt construct a ship, after the manner which I shall show thee, that I may carry thy people across these waters" (1 Nephi 17:8).

After receiving this commandment, Nephi's reaction was not the usual one that many people would ex-

pect, or that would be a logical response for some: "Look, Lord, I have never before built a ship. I don't know how to do it. That which you ask of me is more than I can do. Furthermore, my brothers will certainly be opposed to this, which will make the task much more difficult. Is there not some other way to accomplish this project?"

No such thoughts were alternatives used by Nephi when he made a decision. His answer was simply, "Lord, whither shall I go that I may find ore to smelt, that I may make tools to construct the ship?" (1 Nephi 17:9). In these words, Nephi's firm determination and his decision to do what was asked of him are reflected in carrying out the mission which the Lord had assigned to him. Then, in the course of events, when his brothers began to murmur against him and opposed building the ship, he confronted them with the mighty strength of his testimony saying: "If God had commanded me to do all things I could do them. If he should command me that I should say unto this water, be thou earth, it should be earth; and if I should say it, it would be done.

"And now, if the Lord has such great power, and has wrought so many miracles among the children of men, how is it that he cannot instruct me, that I should build a ship?" (1 Nephi 17:50-51.)

What we treasure in our hearts

Attitudes and actions which produce teaching examples are those which are motivated by a strong testimony.

The convictions which we treasure in our hearts are more important than our very lives if those convictions and treasures are the results of a fervent testimony, one received through revelation. They give us the kind of courage which allows us to face the trials of life with the assurance that our Father in Heaven will approve our actions regardless of the circumstances which

surround us, the ignorance of many, or the hardship of the trials.

In the world today there are millions of people who are ready to do what seems possible, but the prize is for those who are ready to do what seems impossible. If certain things can be done, personal efficiency and skill can carry them through. If it cannot be done, faith and testimony can do it.

Obedience, a constant principle

As sons and daughters of God we have not received the commandments, which show us the way to return to him on a conditional basis, to fulfill only if it seems possible or if ideal circumstances permit.

To be obedient, to do that which the Lord requires of us, has been and always will be a constant principle in the lives of those whom the Lord has called to be his prophets. As an example, we might mention that at one time the Prophet Joseph Smith said, "I made this my rule, 'When the Lord commands, do it'" (*History of the Church*, 2:170).

Without any doubt, Joseph Smith was a prophet with a great spirit of accomplishment and tenacity. On one occasion he said to his cousin, George A. Smith: "Never be discouraged. If I were sunk in the lowest pit of Nova Scotia, with the Rocky Mountains piled on me, I would hang on, exercise faith, and keep up good courage, and I would come out on top" (John Henry Evans, *Joseph Smith, an American Prophet* [New York: MacMillan Co., 1946], p. 9).

The life of the prophet of whom I bear testimony was an example of that which he proclaimed, having always given a clear message of his convictions and testimony.

This kind of determination, an exemplary way of life, is not reserved for only a small minority, as some would believe, but rather it should be the constant attitude of those who desire to follow the Lord's counsel in order to attain the promised blessings: "Be thou

faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10).

Parents can lead to darkness or salvation

In the scriptures we find examples of how, through their actions, parents can send "messages" into the lives of their children which will lead them into paths of darkness or, on the other hand, which can teach them clearly those things which will lead them into salvation.

Jacob, speaking to the Nephites, told them, "Wherefore, ye shall remember your children, how that ye have grieved their hearts because of the example that ye have set before them; and also, remember that ye may, because of your filthiness, bring your children unto destruction, and their sins be heaped upon your heads at the last day" (Jacob 3:10). The dramatic power of example by parents in the lives of children is clearly demonstrated in those words.

"The uncertain sound of the trumpet"

Sometimes bad examples, or "the uncertain sound of the trumpet," which children receive in the home comes in the form of criticism of Church authorities, or in speaking kind words and thoughts outside the home but within it speaking words which are harsh and brusque. The sound is unclear if children observe the payment of tithing when and if it is convenient, or if they hear justifications for not paying it in moments when faith weakens. It is a distorted sound when they see that observance of the Sabbath depends on which sport event is scheduled for the day, or if the weather is ideal for an outing.

Those who act in this manner can be compared to the person whom President Hugh B. Brown described when he said, "He who knows the precepts and neglects to obey them is like one that lights a candle in the darkness and

then closes his eyes" (*Relief Society Magazine*, Oct. 1969, p. 725).

The sure sound of the trumpet

Now let us consider the sure sound of the trumpet, the other side of the issue, in the example of Joshua. When it became necessary for his people to make a firm commitment and take a definite stand, he said to them in his final speech, "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

Imagine the impact it would have if every parent took the same attitude and the same determination which Joshua took! What a loud and clear sound the message would have when carried into the lives of the children.

In the building of eternal families, we need more models, we need more guiding lights, and certainly we need fewer excuse-makers and fewer advocates of darkness.

To be saviors of men

It is one thing to talk about the gospel, but it is quite another to live it. It is one thing to preach about Christ, but it is another to follow in his footsteps.

When the gospel is incorporated in the life of each one of us, it molds our decisions and determines our actions.

We become models and examples who can teach others the path to follow leading to life eternal only when we live the principles of the gospel.

In the great mission to which we have been called, to be saviors of men, may we follow the admonition of the Lord:

"Verily I say unto you all: Arise and shine forth, that thy light may be a standard for the nations" (D&C 115:5).

We cannot fail in that trust because our Savior, Jesus Christ, has shown us by example: "Behold I am the light; I have set an example for you" (3 Nephi 18:16).

We know the goal; we have the example; now let us put forth the effort and make the decision to follow in that path.

"And now, my beloved brethren, I know by this that unless a man shall endure to the end, in following the example of the Son of the living God, he cannot be saved" (2 Nephi 31:16).

In the name of the Redeemer, Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Angel Abrea, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi

The trauma of death

My friend, Milton, has six children. His lovely wife died in a traffic accident and left him with their beautiful children. One day his six-year-old daughter came to his bedside in tears. Milton thought she had had a fight with her brothers. "No, no, Daddy," she said, "I feel lonely. Where is Mom? I

want to see Mom." Father embraced her and told her, "Your mom is with Heavenly Father now. We will meet Mom again."

The other day, his four-year-old daughter came to her grandma and said, "Will my mom ever come home?" Her grandma embraced and kissed her, saying, "She is with Heavenly Father."

The mother of an eleven-year-old boy became very seriously ill. His father brought her to Salt Lake from Arizona. A few days later, this young boy wrote:

"We all feel now we will take better care of Mama if she comes home soon."

Later he wrote: "We are very lonely without you. . . . We are very busy around here. We received the telegram and were very glad to know that mama was out of danger. . . . I think I will close for it is getting bed time. Sister Allen told us in Religion Class that we should go to bed at eight o'clock so we could have enough sleep. Now it is nearly half past eight. Good bye. Your loving Son, Spencer Kimball" (quoted in Edward L. Kimball and Andrew E. Kimball, Jr., *Spencer W. Kimball* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1977], p. 45).

The very next day after he mailed this letter his mother passed away. The next day their bishop received a telegram, and all of the Kimball children were called out of school. They all ran home, and the bishop told them, "Your Ma is dead." President Kimball later told of that incident:

"It came as a thunderbolt. I ran from the house out in the backyard to be alone in my deluge of tears. Out of sight and sound, away from everybody, I sobbed and sobbed. Each time I said the word 'Ma' fresh floods of tears gushed forth until I was drained dry. Ma—dead! But she couldn't be! Life couldn't go on for us. . . . My eleven-year-old heart seemed to burst" (*Spencer W. Kimball*, p. 46).

Why adversity?

Why death? Why sickness? Why tragedies? Why must I have suffering, and disappointment? Why must I have to face the "deep waters" of life? Why must I go through "the rivers of sorrow"? (See "How Firm a Foundation," *Hymns*, no. 66.)

When I was five, my father passed away, and we four children became fa-

therless, because of World War II. Our lives drastically changed; we became so poor. One day I clearly remember: I was playing at the park, and every boy was playing with his father, but I didn't have one. I said to myself, "I wish I could have my father."

We know little of the will of the Lord, yet we judge the Lord often with our small wisdom. I speak to those who now walk the deep water of life or the rivers of sorrow. I testify to you that the Lord loves you, and Jesus Christ will never forget you! The Lord has said, "My son [or daughter], . . . all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good" (D&C 122:7).

Elder Spencer W. Kimball said: "Being human, we would expel from our lives physical pain and mental anguish and assure ourselves of continual ease and comfort, but if we were to close the doors upon sorrow and distress, we might be excluding our greatest friends and benefactors. Suffering can make saints of people as they learn patience, long-suffering, and self-mastery" (*Faith Precedes the Miracle* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1972], p. 98).

I repeat: "Suffering can make saints of people as they learn patience, long-suffering, and self-mastery," as long as we live righteously.

Let's all learn from my friend Mick. One day he was swimming at a party given by the company for which he was working that summer in Nebraska. He dove into the water and hit a shallow spot very hard. A broken neck was his diagnosis, and his whole body was immediately paralyzed. He even lost the capacity to breathe. The doctor said, "He may not make it through the night."

He had earned a B.A. degree in political science after serving a mission in Japan. At the time of this tragic accident he had just one year left in law school at BYU. He was married and had two children. This tragic accident changed his whole life, as if from day to night. He wasn't sure whether he would make it until the next day. It was

inconceivable, the emotional and physical pain that he must go through as a quadriplegic.

Even though he was in this condition in the University of Utah Medical Center, he was determined to graduate from law school. It was an almost impossible task, but good friends, true Samaritans, brought him notes and taped lectures from Provo. Oh, God bless these true Christians. He turned pages by a mouthstick, and if his book flipped shut, he waited for a long time until someone came to help him.

Finally, he graduated from law school, passed the Utah bar exam, and became a licensed attorney. While he was studying, exercising, and maintaining doctor's contact to gain strength, his wife took his two sons and divorced him. This was the most "sorrowful and very heavy" period of his life. (Matthew 26:37.) But he never complained and even blessed the leaving loved ones. In his heart he prayed, "Thy will be done, O Lord!" (Matthew 26:42). It was his own Garden of Gethsemane, and he took his own cup and drank it as his blessing.

In the hymn "How Firm a Foundation" we sing these words:

When through the deep waters I
call thee to go,
The rivers of sorrow shall not thee
o'erflow,
For I will be with thee, thy
troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest
distress.
(*Hymns*, no. 66.)

My friend Mick met a most beautiful lady, Cheryl. They married and now the greatest joy has come to their lives. His wife is expecting a baby. It is a miracle. The Lord said, "I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless." Last Friday, they were sealed in the temple for time and for all eternity. It was my privilege to perform the ceremony for this beautiful couple.

His stake president, President Banks, described him as "a most

humble person with strong faith," and his secretary said of him, "Time has always been important to him. A span of a few brief seconds means the difference. He has no wasted time. He has accomplished more than ever."

The power to love

The Lord said, "The power is in us." (See D&C 58:28.) You and I have that power, the greatest power, the power of love. We can feel the Lord's love if we but listen. Our kindly Heavenly Father gave us—

The power to love!
The power to think!
The power to have faith!
The power to pray!
The power to create!
The power to see!
The power to feel!
The power to touch!
The power to speak!
The power to care!
The power to have concern!
The power to share!
The power to give!
The power to thank!
(Yoshihiko Kikuchi, "Blessings," 1978.)

Especially the power to love! Love is the greatest gift of God. Brothers and sisters, if you and I have this power, the power of love, we can walk with His Spirit, even through the "troubled waters."

Count your blessings

Let us count our blessings:

When upon life's billows you are
tempest-tossed,
When you are discouraged,
thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings; name
them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the
Lord has done.

Count your blessings;
Name them one by one.

Count your blessings;
See what God hath done.
Count your blessings;
Name them one by one.
Count you many blessings;
See what God hath done.

Are you ever burdened with a load
of care?
Does the cross seem heavy you are
called to bear?
Count your many blessings; every
doubt will fly,
And you will be singing as the
days go by.

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So amid the conflict, whether great
or small,
Do not be discouraged; God is
over all.
Count your many blessings; angels
will attend,
Help and comfort give you to your
journey's end.
("When Upon Life's Billows,"
Hymns, no. 202.)

Let us not judge the Lord's great
wisdom with our small minds.

The Savior is extending his loving hands

Are you unloved? Are you unhappy? Are you handicapped? Divorced? Are you paralyzed like my friend? Are you angry? Do you hate someone? Do you have bitterness toward someone? Are you a single mother because your husband just took off? Are you lonely because your husband passed away? The Savior said:

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

"For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28–30.)

I bear you my testimony that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. He himself testified of his great, sacred mission when he appeared to the Nephites: "Arise and come forth unto me, that ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet, that ye may know that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world" (3 Nephi 11:14).

I know that he lives; I know that he loves us; and I bear you my witness in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us.

The Choir and congregation will now join in singing "Redeemer of Israel," following which Elder John K. Carmack, who was sustained yesterday as a new member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will represent his associates in addressing us.

The Choir and congregation sang
"Redeemer of Israel."

Elder John K. Carmack

Expressions of love, gratitude, and support

What makes it possible for me to stand here, I think, is that you are all great friends.

In the Lord's special revelation on government in the Church, he says that the First Presidency is upheld by the confidence, faith, and prayer of the Church. (See D&C 107:22.) On behalf of these six who have just been called,

I would like to express to the First Presidency our confidence, our faith, and our prayers. We love the First Presidency, and we appreciate the confidence they have in us. I would also like to thank those of you who have expressed your confidence to us. It's the only possible way we can do this work. We have felt a rich outpouring of your love, and that has been an outstanding experience.

I would like you also to know that we have felt the love of the Saints throughout the Church. And especially on behalf of myself, I feel the love of my fellow California Saints, who are here in such great number, and of those great Saints in Idaho—and if I could be allowed a point of personal privilege, of those great missionaries of the Idaho Boise Mission. I feel their strength. Of course, our families are the essential cornerstone of that sustaining love. It's tremendous to belong to this great church.

Qualification for the work

Now, as to the calling, the awesome calling which has come. The Seventy are called to preach the gospel and to be especial witnesses unto the Gentiles and all the world. As I have searched my heart, I think the only qualification I can think of—and I believe I speak on behalf of my brethren—is that we have an especially strong witness of this work.

I testify to two things. One is that there is a real Jesus the Christ. He has a personal interest in each one of us. And secondly, if we seek him, he brings to us the peace which passeth all understanding.

Witness of First Vision

Last October I was on a trip across the mission. I was near a little town called Fairfield, Idaho, and I was reviewing the scriptures. I was reviewing the account of the First Vision, which I had asked all of our missionaries to memorize, found in the Pearl of Great

Price. And as I reviewed that beautiful account from memory, I had a singular experience.

There came to me a very, very special witness that what was recounted by Joseph Smith in those words which he wrote in the Pearl of Great Price was exactly what happened. In a sense, I experienced, as it were, the First Vision myself. And I became a witness to it, a personal witness, through the power of the Holy Ghost. I bear you that witness that the Father and the Son did appear to Joseph Smith the Prophet. I imagine that my experience was very similar to that which many of you have had.

When President Hinckley called Thursday afternoon (that's when we had the first inkling that some change was coming up in our lives), he said, "Brother John, I'd like to interview you and Sister Carmack. I'd like to have you take the first flight out tomorrow morning and meet me in my office." Then he added, "Don't worry about this." That was a big, big help.

Peace through early morning prayers

The medicine didn't work. We worried. But during the early morning hours, the Savior's Holy Spirit reached us and comforted us. We felt peace. It became possible to rest.

May I suggest to all of the Church, and particularly to you young people and you missionaries throughout the world, don't neglect those early morning prayers to our Heavenly Father. Through those prayers, you reach him, and through that, you can have peace.

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

Preparation for godhood

I think it was C. S. Lewis—I believe he was quoting George MacDonald—who said that we are like

a house. When Christ comes in, it hurts abominably. We knew the roof and the gutters needed fixing, Lewis said, but all of a sudden we find that he starts putting up a new story here, and he shoots out a new wing there. We knew that the cottage needed fixing and those things needed doing, but this? (See *Mere Christianity* [New York: Mac-Millan Publishing Co., 1943], p. 174.) Well, Christ's love can be tough. What is he trying to do with us? In his best seller, *The Road Less Traveled* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), Dr. M. Scott Peck said that no matter how much we may pussyfoot around it, all who ask the question "What is God's love leading to?" come to a single terrifying conclusion: God wants us to become like himself. We are being prepared for godhood, and it hurts; it hurts abominably, but there is peace.

In those early morning hours, there came to my mind the theme from Ralph Rodgers's play *III Nephi*:

I feel my Savior's love in all the
world around me. . . .
He knows I will follow him, give
all my life to him.
I feel the Savior's love, the love
He freely gives me.
("I Feel My Savior's Love," *The
Choirbook*, pp. 36-37.)

On behalf of these brethren who have joined me, we pledge our energy, our love, our prayers, our faith, in humble obedience to a call we did not seek, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

We have just listened to Elder John K. Carmack, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Sister Ardeth G. Kapp, general president of the Young Women, will now speak to us. She will be followed by Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Sister Ardeth G. Kapp

Desire to know and do Lord's will

My brothers and sisters, my heart is full of joy today, and I commend the great and noble leadership of those in the past who have done so much to put the foundation in place for the youth of today. My heart resounds to the heritage left us by those in years gone by, and now, on the threshold of today, I feel my heart saying, "O youth of the noble birthright, Carry on, carry on, carry on!" (Firm As the Mountains Around Us," *Hymns*, no. 42).

In times of great joy and struggle and disappointment, my great companion, Heber, and I have come to know the Lord and felt his Spirit in our home and in our lives. We have known that peace "which passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7) in times of disappointment and in times of

great blessings. In our home, I think perhaps the phrase used most frequently by my husband is, "I want to know the Lord's will, and I want to carry it out." And I repeat that and add my commitment to what he has taught me by his example.

Heritage and parents' testament

Today I reflect on my early ancestor, John P. Greene, who received the Book of Mormon from Samuel Smith, the Prophet Joseph Smith's brother. John gave it to his wife, Rhoda Young, who then passed it on to her brothers, Phineas Young and Brigham Young. I remember that John was the marshal in Nauvoo, and I rejoice in the heritage of faithful Latter-day Saints down through the years.

I am grateful to my father and my mother, who, before passing on, wrote in their last will and testament not what you would expect—of material things, for they had few—rather, they left with us in their last will and testament a statement of their testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ, their most precious possession. And now I think of the lines of that poem which says:

To every young woman: we love you, we believe in you

If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies
grow
In Flander's fields.
(John McCrae, "In Flanders
Fields," quoted in Bartlett's
Familiar Quotations, p. 912.)

We'll not break faith, none of us. This is a generation of hope and faith and aspirations, and as leaders of young women throughout the world, our prayer is to live so that God's divine intervention will be felt in our hearts, in our actions, in our attitudes, and in our deeds, and that our receptivity to the priesthood power and direction will be sensitive and responsive. The forces of evil are so real today, and the subtleties of deceit would strive to divert us from the promises and blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

To the young women of the Church, and to a little Beehive girl who came up today and shook my hand and said, "I'm twelve years old and I'm a

Beehive," to every young woman in every corner of the Church, I say, we love you, we need you, we care about you, we believe in you, and the goal of eternal life is not beyond our reach.

Expression of commitment

It has been my privilege to know of the power and strength of the Brethren who sit in the councils of the Church, guiding this great work in these latter days. And we're part of that great work. We'll work to have every young woman throughout the Church stand in the valiant ranks of loyalty, commitment, and dedication. Mothers, stand firm; and fathers, have courage to be strong. Leaders, support those great parents. And together in unity we'll prepare a generation that will be prepared for the Lord's commendation, that he may have a house of worthy members when he returns.

To this solemn and sacred trust, I commit all of my energies and my efforts. I rejoice in the opportunity to be a part of this great work, and bear my testimony in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Sister Ardeth Kapp, the new general president of the Young Women, has just spoken to us.

Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us.

Elder L. Tom Perry

Before I begin my prepared message, I would personally like to thank two great women for their devoted years of service. Sister Smith and Sister Cannon, you have been like great beacons of light to guide the women of the

Church and many, many others from troubled seas into a safe harbor. May God continue to bless you that your inspiration and encouragement will continue to be felt by the women of the world.

Sharing, serving, teaching, praying together

The Savior had such a short time to prepare those who would carry on His work after His earthly ministry. He must have felt the pressure of this responsibility. His teachings during those final hours have always been special to me. They represent His final instruction to those who would now be responsible to carry on the work.

Throughout His ministry, the Savior encouraged us to do the things that we had seen him do. After celebrating the feast of the Passover at the Last Supper, He went to each of His disciples and washed their feet. After this act of service, His instructions were:

"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

"For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:14-15).

It is evident, then, that if the Master served, we should serve. If He taught, we should teach. If He prayed, we should also pray. He knew that if we would catch the spirit of His ministry, our hearts and our souls would be so full of that which we had received that we could not be content unless we were sharing, serving, teaching, and praying together.

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations"

As Matthew completed His Gospel, he recorded this instruction of the Lord to His disciples:

"Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

"And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:16-20).

When light of gospel permeates the soul

The scriptures are replete with examples of what happens to individuals when the light of the gospel really permeates their souls. Let us just consider two examples. The first is from the New Testament. There is a story in the book of John about two disciples who followed John the Baptist. Again from the scripture:

"Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;

"And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

"And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

"Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, . . . Master, where dwellest thou?

"He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.

"One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

"He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the . . . Christ" (John 1:35-41).

When Andrew had received something special in his life, he wanted to share it with his brother, and could not rest until he had found him and told him he had found the Lord.

Book of Mormon example

There is another great example in the Book of Mormon about Alma and the sons of Mosiah. They were numbered among those who were seeking to destroy the Church, and were using much flattery of speech to lead the people into doing all manner of iniquity.

uity. After the pleadings of Alma's father, the Lord interceded and called Alma to repentance.

It is most interesting to see what occurred when the light of the gospel came into his life. From the Book of Mosiah we read:

"And now it came to pass that Alma began from this time forward to teach the people, and those who were with Alma at the time the angel appeared unto them, traveling round about through all the land, publishing to all the people the things which they had heard and seen, and preaching the word of God in much tribulation, being greatly persecuted by those who were unbelievers, being smitten by many of them" (Mosiah 27:32).

And then, speaking of the four sons of Mosiah, the scripture says:

"And they traveled throughout all the land of Zarahemla, and among all the people who were under the reign of king Mosiah, zealously striving to repair all the injuries which they had done to the church, confessing all their sins, and publishing all the things which they had seen, and explaining the prophecies and the scriptures to all who desired to hear them.

"And thus they were instruments in the hands of God in bringing many to the knowledge of the truth, yea, to the knowledge of their Redeemer.

"And how blessed are they! For they did publish peace; they did publish good tidings of good; and they did declare unto the people that the Lord reigneth" (Mosiah 27:35-37.)

Older couples who share

After conversion comes the desire to share—not so much out of a sense of duty, even though that responsibility falls on the priesthood, but out of a sincere love and appreciation for that which has been received. When such a "pearl of great price" comes into our lives, we cannot be content just to admire it by ourselves. It must be shared! And here is the great joy and happiness of the gift!

I have especially been impressed with the older couples who, after fulfilling a life of service in their wards and stakes, have the desire to spend a period of time as missionaries in full service to the Lord. I have found them in all corners of the world, and they are, I guess, the happiest people I have ever met because of what they are accomplishing.

Let me just share parts of some letters written by those who have had this great privilege. These quotations are from a composite of letters. They were written to their mission president and his wife after the couples had been serving in the mission field for some time.

"We never asked to be sent on a mission. We didn't feel qualified. My husband had had only four years of formal education, and was very sensitive about that. He read a lot and was very successful in business. He had a special personality which drew people to him. Several couples we knew had gone on missions, and we were happy for them. When the bishop called us into his office and said that he had been praying for two weeks and that the Lord wanted us to go on a mission, we were overwhelmed. We accepted, as we knew it was from the Lord.

"My husband's back was in poor condition. He had asked for a little time to see if he could find a doctor who could help him in some way. The doctor's response was, 'Just go home and learn to live with the pain.' When we were set apart for our mission, my husband was promised that he would be blessed with better health. The promise was literally fulfilled.

"We entered the Missionary Training Center. Those few weeks we spent were very special to us. It was difficult for us to learn the discussions, but we found a close relationship with the Lord. As we did the very best we could, He blessed us. We knew we would have to rely on the Lord to help us after we had done all we could.

"There is a feeling of love and closeness at the MTC that cannot be

found in any other place. We went to the temple each week. We found that, next to the temple, the MTC was the closest to being near our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, that you could possibly find here on earth.

"The privilege of serving a full-time mission together was an outstanding time in our lives. It was a time during which we drew close together as we studied and prayed so much together. We learned more fully to depend upon one another. We found great joy in becoming more aware of one another's strengths. We anticipated the opportunity of helping each other overcome our weaknesses. In the autumn of our lives, it was a time of ripening and cementing together. This is an experience every couple should have if they are physically able and can financially afford it.

"If they can't afford it, their families would be greatly blessed if they would assist them. It would be much better than giving them a trip to Hawaii or Europe."

One couple then reported, as they concluded their mission, that in the final testimony meeting these words were spoken of them: "Dear elder and sister, you just can't imagine what our life was like before you came."

Challenge of returning home

Of course, returning home after such an experience is a challenge. I met a good brother coming out of the Mormon Handicraft store just before Christmas. He had been in buying his wife a Christmas present. As I was coming down the street, he ran up to me and said, "Don't you remember me?" I had to be prompted a little. When we last met, it was in the mission field. Living conditions were certainly not like home. But there was a radiance about him and his wife as we had opportunity to be with them for a day and witness their work.

I said to him, "It must be great to be back home." He hesitated a minute, and then said, "You know, I've had a

difficult time adjusting. I feel that we should be back among the Saints in the Philippines. They needed us so much. I don't find that same need here. Can't you send us back on another mission?"

Climax golden years with gospel service

Mission presidents always respond the same when I ask them the following question: "What can I do for you?" The response invariably is, "Send us more missionary couples."

Now, to all you great couples who are hearing my voice today, I want you to listen especially to these words. Life has been hard. I know that. You have worked diligently for the security you now enjoy. You have struggled, reared a family, and saved something to have and to enjoy during this golden period of your life. But just sitting around will not give you what you really desire. Climax these golden years with the soul-satisfying experience of full-time gospel service.

I hear you stand and bear your testimonies, acknowledging your love for your companion and for the gospel. If that is really true, you will be like Andrew or Alma—not content until you have shared the fulfillment you have found in the gospel of Jesus Christ in missionary service.

President Heber J. Grant has said:

"I feel sorry for the man or the woman who has never experienced the sweet joy which comes to the missionary who proclaims the gospel of Jesus Christ, who brings honest souls to a knowledge of the truth, and who hears the expressions of gratitude and thanksgiving that come from the hearts of those who have been brought by his labor to a comprehension of life eternal. So also do I feel sorry for those who have never experienced the sweet joy resulting from reaching out their hands and helping those who were needy. Assuredly there is more blessing comes to us from giving than in accumulating; there is no question of this in my mind. There is also more

blessing comes to us in going forth to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, and laboring for the salvation of the souls of men, than can possibly come to us by merely having a knowledge of the truth of our religion, and then remaining at home to mingle and labor in the ordinary affairs of life, and accumulate the wealth of this world that perishes with the using. One great trouble is that we oftentimes lose sight of what is the most valuable labor for us to perform, the labor that will be most pleasing in the sight of our Heavenly Father" (*Gospel Standards*, comp. G. Homer Durham [Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1969], p. 104).

Need their maturity, wisdom, and experience

Bishops, will you please give more encouragement to the healthy, retired, or soon-to-be retired couples who are considering missions? Many are awaiting your call, reluctant to come forward and ask. How we need their maturity, their wisdom, and their experience in our rapidly growing Church!

Bishops, instill in these couples a desire and the confidence that they will need for this exciting service. They will not be expected to learn the same program as our young missionaries. Let them know that we want to utilize the talents they already possess after a lifetime of growth and development.

May the Lord bless you great, mature couples in the Church with an earnest desire to be anxiously engaged in His service.

I leave you my witness of the truthfulness of this great work, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Thank the Lord for a powerful voice at the right time. We have just heard from Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Before hearing President Hinckley's concluding remarks, we should like to express, on behalf of all who have listened to the singing during these sessions of this general conference, appreciation and our sincere gratitude to the Tabernacle Choir, the combined single adult and Salt Lake Institute choir, and the father-son priesthood choir that we enjoyed so much last evening, and to their conductors and organists.

We thank our city officials for the cooperation given this conference, the Relief Society and Church Health Unit nurses who have been on hand to render service throughout the conference, and the ushers and interpreters.

We express appreciation to the local and national press representatives for the coverage given to the conference and to the owners and managers of the many radio and television stations and cable systems who have given public service time to carry sessions of this conference to many countries.

We shall now be pleased to listen to President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, who will be the concluding speaker of the conference, after which the Tabernacle Choir will sing "Come, Follow Me."

The benediction will be offered by Elder F. Burton Howard, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

This conference will then stand adjourned for six months.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

"I love them"

My brethren and sisters, President Benson said, with a slip of the tongue, that we would hear from President Kimball. I wish with all my heart that we might do so. I wish that he were standing here addressing us as the prophet of the Lord.

As you know, he is now in his ninetieth year. His life has been rich and fruitful, and we have been the beneficiaries of his great and dedicated leadership.

I said to him, a little bit ago, as we looked over this vast congregation, "President, these people all love you."

He said, "I love them." I hope that you will accept that as his address to you this afternoon as we come to the conclusion of this great general conference. "I love them."

A remarkable conference

We have enjoyed a conference that has been remarkable, I think, in a number of ways. The naming of two men to the Council of the Twelve on one occasion is something that has not happened in a long while. The last time it happened was forty years ago, when President Kimball and President Benson were so named.

We have added to the First Quorum of the Seventy a group of tried and tested men of faith and leadership who will greatly assist the work. I wish that we might have heard from each of them. We have announced the construction of five new temples. That will make a total of twenty-five new temples either recently completed or in course of construction. There has been nothing like it ever before in the history of the Church or of the world.

While President Kimball is unable to stand at this pulpit and speak to us, we are on occasion able to converse with him, and he has given his authori-

zation to that which has been done. We would not have proceeded without this.

Great things grow from small acts

Now we are ready to return to our homes. We have been counseled by the Brethren and have been strengthened in our faith. As we are about to separate, I should like to emphasize the importance of watching the little things in our lives. Have you ever noticed a large gate in a farm fence? As you open it or close it there appears to be very little movement at the hinge. But there is great movement at the perimeter.

Speaking to the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1831, the Lord said: "Out of small things proceedeth that which is great" (D&C 64:33). It is so with good or evil, my brothers and sisters. Small, kind acts can grow into mammoth good institutions. The Boy Scout movement is an example of this as is known by anyone acquainted with the history of this great institution. It is so likewise with evil things. Small acts of dishonesty, small acts of an immoral nature, small outbursts of anger can grow into great and terrible things.

Drama of great tragedy

There stood once on the grounds right here, before ever this building was constructed, a bowery—a rather crude structure in which the Saints met in those days of their poverty. In September of 1857, there was presented in that old bowery on a Sunday afternoon, what was really the concluding act of a drama of great tragedy.

On that Sunday Brigham Young was conducting a meeting and introduced to the congregation a man who appeared to be old and infirm and weary of life.

Said President Brigham Young to the congregation:

"Brother Thomas B. Marsh, formerly the President of the Quorum of

Sunday, April 8

Second Day

the Twelve Apostles, has now come to us, after an absence of nearly nineteen years. He is on the stand to-day, and wishes to make a few remarks to the congregation. . . .

"He came into my office and wished to know whether I could be reconciled to him, and whether there could be a reconciliation between himself and the Church of the living God. He reflected for a moment and said, I am reconciled to the Church, but I want to know whether the Church can be reconciled to me.

"He is here," said President Young, "and I want him to say what he may wish to. . . . Brethren and sisters, I now introduce to you Brother Thomas B. Marsh. When the Quorum of the Twelve was first organized, he was appointed to be their President."

Brother Marsh rose to the pulpit. This man, who was named the first President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles and to whom the Lord had spoken in so marvelous a manner, as recorded in section 112 of the Doctrine and Covenants—which I wish you would read—said to the people:

"I do not know that I can make all this vast congregation hear and understand me. My voice never was very strong, but it has been very much weakened of late years by the afflicting rod of Jehovah. He loved me too much to let me go without whipping. I have seen the hand of the Lord in the chastisement which I have received. I have seen and known that it has proved he loved me; for if he had not cared anything about me, he would not have taken me by the arm and given me such a shaking.

"If there are any among this people who should ever apostatize and do as I have done, prepare your backs for a good whipping, if you are such as the Lord loves. But if you will take my advice, you will stand by the authorities; but if you go away and the Lord loves you as much as he did me, he will whip you back again.

"Many have said to me," he continued, "'How is it that a man like you, who understood so much of the revela-

tions of God as recorded in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, should fall away?' I told them not to feel too secure, but to take heed lest they also should fall; for I had no scruples in my mind as to the possibility of men falling away."

He continued, "I can say, in reference to the Quorum of the Twelve, to which I belonged, that I did not consider myself a whit behind any of them, and I suppose that others had the same opinion; but, let no one feel too secure; for, before you think of it, your steps will slide. You will not then think nor feel for a moment as you did before you lost the Spirit of Christ; for when men apostatize, they are left to grovel in the dark" (*Journal of Discourses*, 5:206).

Speaking in a voice that was difficult to hear, and appearing as an old man when he was actually only fifty-seven years of age, he spoke of the travails through which he had passed before he had finally made his way to the valley of the Great Salt Lake and asked that he might be baptized again into the Church.

I wondered, as I read that story so filled with pathos, what had brought him to this sorry state. I discovered it, in the *Journal of Discourses*, in a talk given to the Saints in this same bowery the year before by George A. Smith. I think, if you'll bear with me for a minute or two, it is worth the telling to illustrate to all of us the need to be careful in dealing with small matters which can lead to great consequences.

According to the account given by George A. Smith, while the Saints were in Far West, Missouri, "the wife of Thomas B. Marsh, who was then President of the Twelve Apostles, and Sister Harris concluded they would exchange milk, in order to make a little larger cheese than they otherwise could. To be sure to have justice done, it was agreed that they should not save the strippings [to themselves], but that the milk and strippings should all go together. . . ."

Now for you who have never been around a cow, I should say that the

strippings came at the end of the milking and were richer in cream.

"Mrs. Harris, it appeared, was faithful to the agreement and carried to Mrs. Marsh the milk and strippings, but Mrs. Marsh, wishing to make some extra good cheese, saved a pint of strippings from each cow and sent Mrs. Harris the milk without the strippings."

A quarrel arose, and the matter was referred to the home teachers. They found Mrs. Marsh guilty of failure to keep her agreement. She and her husband were upset and, "an appeal was taken from the teacher to the bishop, and a regular Church trial was had. President Marsh did not consider that the bishop had done him and his lady justice for they [that is, the bishop's court] decided that the strippings were wrongfully saved, and that the woman had violated her covenant.

"Marsh immediately took an appeal to the High Council, who investigated the question with much patience, and," says George A. Smith, "I assure you they were a grave body. Marsh being extremely anxious to maintain the character of his wife, . . . made a desperate defence, but the High Council finally confirmed the bishop's decision.

"Marsh, not being satisfied, took an appeal to the First Presidency of the Church, and Joseph and his Counselors had to sit upon the case, and they approved the decision of the High Council.

"This little affair," Brother Smith continues, ". . . kicked up a considerable breeze, and Thomas B. Marsh then declared that he would sustain the character of his wife, even if he had to go to hell for it.

"The then President of the Twelve Apostles, the man who should have been the first to do justice and cause reparation to be made for wrong, committed by any member of his family, took that position, and what next? He went before a magistrate and swore that the 'Mormons' were hostile towards the state of Missouri.

"That affidavit brought from the government of Missouri an exterminating order, which drove some 15,000 Saints from their homes and habitations, and some thousands perished through suffering the exposure consequent on this state of affairs" (*Journal of Discourses*, 3:283-84). Such is George A. Smith's account.

What a very small and trivial thing—a little cream over which two women quarreled. But it led to, or at least was a factor in, Governor Boggs' cruel exterminating order which drove the Saints from the state of Missouri, with all of the terrible suffering and consequent death that followed. The man who should have settled this little quarrel, but who, rather, pursued it, troubling the officers of the Church, right up to the Presidency, literally went through hell for it. He lost his standing in the Church. He lost his testimony of the gospel. For nineteen years he walked in poverty and darkness and bitterness, experiencing illness, and loneliness. He grew old before his time. Finally, like the prodigal son in the parable of the Savior (see Luke 15:11-32), he recognized his foolishness and painfully made his way to this valley, and asked Brigham Young to forgive him and permit his rebaptism into the Church. He had been the first President of the Council of the Twelve, loved, respected, and honored in the days of Kirtland, and the early days of Far West. Now he asked only that he might be ordained a deacon and become a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord.

Admonition to live gospel

We have all seen cases somewhat similar in our own time. I mention the matter only as a reminder to each of us that as we leave this great and inspirational conference we go with resolution in our hearts to live the gospel, to be faithful and true, to have the strength to look above small things that could lead to argument and trouble, to be forgiv-

ing one to another, to "look to God and live" (Alma 37:47).

It is so easy to stumble. It is sometimes so hard to keep our voices low when small things provoke us.

Let us rather remember always that we are sons and daughters of God, children born with a divine birthright, partakers of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, the beneficiaries of the priesthood restored by the Almighty for the blessing of his sons and daughters. Let us, my brethren and sisters, walk with integrity and honesty in all of our dealings one with another. Let us subdue any arrogance or pride and walk humbly before God, and with apprecia-

tion and respect for all with whom we associate.

May the blessings of the Lord attend you, beloved associates. May the peace of the Lord be in your homes and love for him reside in your hearts. God be with you, till we meet again, I humbly pray as I give you my testimony of the truth and divinity of this work, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "Come, Follow Me."

Elder F. Burton Howard offered the benediction.

SALT LAKE TABERNACLE CHOIR AND ORGAN BROADCAST

The following broadcast, announced by J. Spencer Kinard and originating with KSL Radio and Television, Salt Lake City, Utah, was presented from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 8, 1984, through the courtesy of the Columbia Broadcasting System's network throughout the United States, parts of Canada, and through other facilities to several points overseas:

Announcer: Once more we welcome you within these walls with Music and the Spoken Word from the crossroads of the West.

CBS and its affiliated stations bring you at this hour the Mormon Tabernacle Choir from Temple Square in Salt Lake City, with Jerold Ottley conducting the Choir, John Longhurst, Tabernacle organist, and the Spoken Word given by Spencer Kinard.

Today's broadcast opens with Robert Manookin's festival anthem for organ, choir, and congregation based on Psalm 149:

"Praise ye the Lord. Sing unto the Lord a new song. . . .

Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: . . . let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. . . .

Let them praise his name. . . ."

(Choir: "Psalm 149"—Manookin)

Announcer: With Robert Cundick now joining John Longhurst to provide four-hand organ accompaniment, the remainder of today's broadcast is devoted with narration to excerpts from Felix Mendelssohn's oratorio *Elijah*.

The story revolves around one of the great miracles of the Old Testament, as the people of Israel try to decide which God to worship—Baal, the Sun-god or the Lord God Jehovah. We first hear the people crying for help to end a terrible drought and famine.

(Choir: "Help, Lord"—Mendelssohn)

Announcer: And it came to pass that during the time of famine, the prophet Elijah stood before King Ahab, and Ahab accused Elijah, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?"

And Elijah answered, "I have not troubled Israel; it is thou Ahab and thy

father's house. Ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and followed Baal."

Elijah asked the people of Israel and all the prophets of Baal to gather unto Mount Carmel, "Then we shall see whose God is Lord."

And when they were all gathered and the altar prepared, Elijah challenged the priests. "Lift up your voices and call ye on the name of your Gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord Jehovah; and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God." And the priest began to cry unto Baal their God.

(Choir: "Baal, we cry to thee"—Mendelssohn)

Announcer: And it came to pass, after nothing happened, Elijah mocked the priests and told them to cry louder to their God, that perhaps "he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or, peradventure, he sleepeth; so awaken him. Call him louder!"

(Choir: "Call Him Louder"—Mendelssohn)

Announcer: Then Elijah said unto all the people, "Come near unto me." And he prayed: "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel; O hear and answer me." And the people bowed in supplication.

(Choir: "Cast Thy Burden upon the Lord"—Mendelssohn)

Announcer: And after Elijah had repaired the altar, he implored the Lord to accept his sacrifice saying that "I have done all these things at thy word." Then the fire of the Lord fell. And when the

people saw it they said, "The Lord, he is God." Then Elijah prayed again. "O thou, who makest thine angels spirits; Thou, whose ministers are flaming fires; Let them now descend!"

(Choir: "The Fire Descends from Heaven"—Mendelssohn)

Announcer: And after the prophets of Baal were destroyed, the people of Israel marveled at the might and power of God. Elijah again prayed for relief from the terrible drought that lay upon the land. When at length his prayer was answered, the rains came, the people rejoiced and praised God saying:

(Choir: "Thanks Be to God!"—Mendelssohn)

Announcer: Again we leave you from within the shadows of the everlasting hills. May peace be with you this day . . . and always.

Announcer (on radio): This concludes the two-thousand, eight-hundred, fifty-first performance continuing the fifty-fifth year of this traditional broadcast from the Mormon Tabernacle on Temple Square, brought to you by CBS and its affiliated stations, originating with Station KSL in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Jerold Ottley conducted the Choir, Robert Cundick and John Longhurst were at the organ, the Spoken Word was given by Spencer Kinard.

In another seven days at this same hour, Music and the Spoken Word will be heard again from the crossroads of the West.

This is the CBS Radio Network.

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE MUSIC

The Tabernacle Choir furnished the choral numbers for the Saturday morning, Sunday morning, and Sunday afternoon sessions of the conference with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducting.

The music for the Saturday afternoon session was provided by a combined Salt Lake Institute Choir and single adult choir from the Ensign, Rose Park, Liberty, Pioneer, Monument Park, Granite, Holladay, Olym-

pus, Bonneville, and Millcreek Utah regions, directed by Ronald Horton.

At the general priesthood meeting a father-son priesthood choir from the Cache Utah, Cache Utah South, Logan Utah, Logan Utah University, and Smithfield Utah regions furnished the music, directed by Willard R. Kesling and Brent Farley.

Prelude, postlude, and interlude music and accompaniments on the Tabernacle organ throughout the conference sessions were played by Robert Cundick, John Longhurst, and Clay Christiansen, Tabernacle organists.

Francis M. Gibbons
Clerk of the Conference

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THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY
SAINTS

Official Report of the
One Hundred Fifty-fourth
Semiannual General

CONFERENCE

of The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints

held in the Tabernacle
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October 6 and 7, 1984

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THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-FOURTH SEMIANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The 154th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, October 6, 1984, at 10:00 A.M.

The general sessions of the conference were held at 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday, October 6 and 7, 1984. The general priesthood meeting was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, October 6, 1984, at 6:00 P.M.

President Spencer W. Kimball attended and presided at the Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning and afternoon sessions of the conference and watched the other sessions on television. President Marion G. Romney, First Counselor in the First Presidency, attended the Sunday afternoon session of the conference and watched the other sessions on television. President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday morning, general priesthood, and Sunday morning sessions. President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, conducted the Saturday afternoon and Sunday afternoon sessions.

Television and radio stations carried portions or all of some of the conference sessions to large audiences throughout the world. The general sessions and the general priesthood session were also carried via satellite transmission to over nine hundred stake centers. The general priesthood session was carried by closed-circuit transmission to over seven hundred locations in many different countries.

General Authorities present

The following General Authorities of the Church attended one or more of the general sessions:

The First Presidency: Spencer W. Kimball, Marion G. Romney, and Gordon B. Hinckley.

The Council of the Twelve: Ezra Taft Benson, Howard W. Hunter, Thomas S. Monson, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, Bruce R. McConkie, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, and Dallin H. Oaks.

The First Quorum of the Seventy: Presidents: J. Thomas Fyans, Carlos E. Asay, M. Russell Ballard, Dean L. Larsen, G. Homer Durham, Richard G. Scott, and Marion D. Hanks. *Additional Members of the Seventy:* A. Theodore Tuttle, Franklin D. Richards, Theodore M. Burton, Paul H. Dunn, Hartman Rector, Jr., Loren C. Dunn, Robert L. Simpson, Rex D. Pinegar, Wm. Grant Bangerter, Robert D. Hales, Adney Y. Komatsu, Joseph B. Wirthlin, Gene R. Cook, Charles Didier, William R. Bradford, George P. Lee, John H. Groberg, Jacob de Jager, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Royden G. Derrick, Robert E. Wells, James M. Paramore, Hugh W. Pinnock, F. Enzo Busche, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Ronald E. Poelman, Derek A. Cuthbert, Robert L. Backman, Rex C. Reeve, Sr., F. Burton Howard, Ted E. Brewerton, Jack H. Goasland, Jr., Angel Abrea, John K. Carmack, Russell C. Taylor, Robert B. Harbertson, Devere Harris, Spencer H. Osborn, Philip T. Sonntag, John Sonnenberg, F. Arthur Kay, and Keith W. Wilcox.

The Presiding Bishopric: Victor L. Brown, H. Burke Peterson, and J. Richard Clarke.

Emeritus General Authorities: Eldred G. Smith, Sterling W. Sill, Henry D. Taylor, Bernard P. Brockbank, James A. Cullimore, Joseph Anderson, John H. Vandenberg, and O. Leslie Stone.

Other authorities present

Other authorities of the Church in attendance included Regional Representatives, presidents of stakes and their counselors, presidents of temples,

bishops of wards, and presidencies and members of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood quorums.

Many general, stake, and ward auxiliary officers also attended.

FIRST DAY MORNING MEETING

FIRST SESSION

The first general session of the 154th Semiannual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah on Saturday, October 6, 1984, at 10:00 A.M. President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The music for the opening session was provided by the Tabernacle Choir with Jerold Ottley conducting and John Longhurst at the organ.

Before the commencement of the meeting, the Tabernacle Choir sang "For All the Saints" without announcement.

President Hinckley then made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Good morning, brothers and sisters. We are pleased to greet those in the Tabernacle, and those participating by radio, television, or satellite transmission to this first general session of the 154th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We regret that President Spencer W. Kimball is unable to be with us this morning. He is in his apartment in the Hotel Utah where he will watch the conference on television. We anticipate that he will be with us in one or more of the later sessions of the conference.

We also regret that President Marion G. Romney, First Counselor in

the First Presidency, is not well this morning. We excuse him; he will watch the conference proceedings on television at his home.

In addition to those seated in the Tabernacle there is an overflow session in the nearby Assembly Hall where Elders Carlos E. Asay and Robert D. Hales preside. Also we note that these proceedings are being carried by satellite transmission to over nine hundred stake centers throughout the United States and Canada.

We acknowledge the General Authorities of the Church and Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary general presidencies and the Activities Committee, who are seated on the stand. We warmly welcome government, education, and civic leaders who are present.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Jerold Ottley with John Longhurst at the organ, is providing the music for this session. The choir opened this session by singing "For All the Saints." The choir will now sing, "How Beautiful upon the Mountains."

Following the singing, the invocation will be offered by Elder Dean L. Larsen, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "How Beautiful upon the Mountains."

Elder Dean L. Larsen offered the invocation.

President Gordon B. Hinckley spoke without announcement.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Sustaining of General Authorities and general officers

Since the April general conference, Elder Royden G. Derrick has been called as the president of the Seattle Temple. Because that necessitates his absence from Salt Lake City, it has been felt advisable to release him as a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy. All who wish to join in extending a sincere vote of thanks to Elder Derrick for his outstanding service in this capacity and his tremendous service in the management of the genealogical program of the Church may do so by the uplifted hand.

It is proposed that Elder Marion D. Hanks be called as a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy. All in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed, by the same sign.

In view of the continual expansion of the work of the Church, including the creation of Area Presidencies, it is deemed necessary to call three additional members of the First Quorum of the Seventy who will serve on a non-lifetime basis, as was established last April in the call of other Brethren to this Quorum, and who will serve ordinarily for periods of three to five years. It is proposed, therefore, that we sustain the following as members of the First Quorum of the Seventy in these circumstances: Elder John Sonnenberg of Chicago, who has served as a bishop, a stake president, and is currently serving as a Regional Representative and chairman of the Chicago Temple committee; Elder F. Arthur Kay of Seattle, who has served as a bishop, as a stake president, as a Regional Representative, and who was recently released as president of the Seattle Temple; and Elder Keith Wilson Wilcox of Ogden, who has served as a bishop, as a stake president, as a mission president, as a Regional Representative, and who currently is serving as president of the Ogden Temple. All in favor, please manifest

it. Any who may feel otherwise may so indicate. We ask these Brethren to make their way to the stand where seats are reserved down here, wherever you see a vacancy.

Sisters Barbara W. Winder and Ardeth G. Kapp were sustained at the last general conference as the new general presidents of the Relief Society and Young Women, respectively. Since then, Sisters Joy Frewin Evans and Joanne Bushman Doxey have been called as the first and second counselors, respectively, to Sister Winder in the Relief Society presidency. Sisters Patricia Terry Holland and Maurine Johnson Turley have been called as the first and second counselors, respectively, to Sister Kapp in the Young Women presidency. Will those of you who can sustain these sisters in these positions please indicate in the usual manner? Any opposed, by the same sign.

With the exceptions noted, there have been no changes in the General Authorities or the general officers of the Church since the last conference. It is proposed, therefore, that we sustain all of the General Authorities and general officers of the Church as at present constituted. Those in favor, please manifest it. Those opposed, by the same sign.

It appears that the voting has been unanimous in favor of the General Authorities and general officers of the Church.

Christ's Church and his prophet

My beloved associates in this great work, my heart is touched this morning as I look out over this vast congregation and then think of many times more of you who are assembled in stake centers scattered over the continent from sea to shining sea. These semiannual conferences of the Church are unique and remarkable occasions when Latter-day Saints gather with lis-

tening ears and understanding hearts to counsel together and to hear those who have been called of God with a responsibility for the work in this dispensation. We are united with a common bond of faith and testimony. Jesus Christ stands at the head of the Church of which we are members. The Church bears his name. It is his Church. We are honored to be a part of it.

We have a prophet appointed by him, and we express gratitude for this our leader. Although he is old in years, and his body weakened, we look to him with love and appreciation.

Organization of Christ's Church

Some people, most of them not members of the Church, worry because the President of the Church is an elderly man. I want to assure you that under the organization put in place by the Lord himself, there is no need to worry. The President has two counselors. So long as either of them is able to function, there will be an active First Presidency with full powers of decision in all matters affecting the Church.

Associated with the Presidency is the Council of the Twelve Apostles. At times in the history of the Church, when there was no First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve governed its affairs. As a matter of fact, these were some of the most difficult and demanding times in the history of the Church, notably, when our people left Nauvoo, crossed Iowa, established Winter Quarters on the Missouri, and then made their historic odyssey to this valley in 1847. It was not until Brigham Young returned to Winter Quarters that he was

sustained as the President of the Church.

Priesthood of God and strength of the Church

The Lord will not allow his work to suffer. He will not allow it to be led astray. He has made that clear. There is much of flexibility and resiliency in this inspired organization. It can accommodate almost any imaginable set of circumstances. It is moving forward in a remarkable and wonderful way. The priesthood of God is upon the earth, and the strength of the Church lies in the power that comes therefrom and in the personal faith and testimony which reside in the hearts of its members.

We welcome you to this great world conference. We pray that the Lord will inspire all who speak, all who sing, all who offer prayers, and in a particular way all who participate as members in the many congregations who are joined together this day. May we all be edified thereby. I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

The choir will now sing "Come, All Ye Saints Who Dwell on Earth." We shall then be pleased to hear from President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The choir sang "Come, All Ye Saints Who Dwell on Earth."

President Ezra Taft Benson spoke without further announcement.

President Ezra Taft Benson

Neglect of Book of Mormon

My beloved brethren and sisters, for some years now I have been deeply

concerned that we are not using the Book of Mormon as God intends.

As I participated in the Mexico City Temple dedication, I received the distinct impression that God is not

pleased with our neglect of the Book of Mormon.

In the eighty-fourth section of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord decreed that the whole Church was under condemnation, even all the children of Zion, because of the way they treated the Book of Mormon. And they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent," said the Lord, "and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon" (D&C 84:57).

Zion cannot fully arise and put on her beautiful garments if she is under this condemnation. (See D&C 82:14.)

This prompts five critical questions to which each of us must respond: Is the Book of Mormon the word of God? For whom was it meant? How important is this volume of scripture? What is its major purpose? How are we to use it?

Is it the word of God?

First, is the Book of Mormon the word of God? Yes. God has so testified. (See D&C 20:8–10.) So have its writers (see 2 Nephi 33:10; Moroni 7:35), so has its translator (see Articles of Faith 1:8), so have its witnesses, and so do all those who have read it and received a personal revelation from God as to its truthfulness.

For whom was it meant?

Second, for whom was the Book of Mormon meant? Moroni, the book's last writer, speaking to us said, "Behold, I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not. But behold, Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing" (Mormon 8:35). God inspired Mormon, its chief compiler, to put into the book what we would need in our day.

How important is it?

Third, how important is the Book of Mormon? Joseph Smith called it "the keystone of our religion" (*History of the Church*, 4:461).

"Take away the Book of Mormon and the revelations," he said, "and where is our religion? We have none" (*History of the Church*, 2:52).

"This generation," said the Lord to Joseph Smith, the translator, "shall have my word through you" (D&C 5:10). And so it has.

"And those who receive [the Book of Mormon] in faith," the Lord states, "and work righteousness, shall receive a crown of eternal life;

"But those who harden their hearts in unbelief, and reject it, it shall turn to their own condemnation" (D&C 20:14–15).

What is purpose of Book of Mormon?

Fourth, what is the major purpose of the Book of Mormon? To bring men to Christ and to be reconciled to him, and then to join his church—in that order. (See 2 Nephi 25:23; D&C 20:11–14, 35–37.)

The title page of the Book of Mormon states the book is for "the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God."

The Lord further instructed that the Book of Mormon proves that "God does inspire men and call them to his holy work in this age and generation, as well as in generations of old" (D&C 20:11).

The Book of Mormon being true, then God did inspire his prophet Joseph Smith to translate it and did call him to do the holy work of restoring His church, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

How are we to use it?

Finally, how are we to use the book?

We must first read it and gain a testimony for ourselves. Men may deceive each other, but God does not deceive men. Therefore, the Book of Mormon sets forth the best test for determining its truthfulness—namely, read it and then ask God if it is true.

Moroni, in the book's final chapter, issued that divine challenge to every reader in these words:

"And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost" (Moroni 10:4).

This, then, is the supreme assurance for the honest in heart—to know by personal revelation from God that the Book of Mormon is true. Millions have put it to that test and know, and increasing millions will yet know.

Feast from the book

Now the spirit, as well as the body, is in need of constant nourishment. Yesterday's meal is not enough to sustain today's needs. So also an infrequent reading of "the most correct of any book on earth," as Joseph Smith called it, is not enough. (See *History of the Church*, 4:461.)

Not all truths are of equal value, nor are all scriptures of the same worth. What better way to nourish the spirit than to frequently feast from the book which the Prophet Joseph said would get a man "nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book?" (*History of the Church*, 4:461).

President Marion G. Romney understood this. Years ago he started a daily procedure, which he recommended to us, of reading the Book of Mormon each morning for thirty minutes. "I know that it kept me in harmony," he said, "so far as I did keep in harmony, with the Spirit of the Lord." Then he added, "It will hold us as close to the Spirit of the Lord as anything I know" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1949, pp. 36, 41).

Teaches vital truths

The Book of Mormon is to be "a standard unto my people, which are of

the house of Israel," said the Lord (2 Nephi 29:2). It is a standard we should heed and follow.

In the twentieth section of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord devotes several verses to summarizing the vital truths which the Book of Mormon teaches. (See D&C 20:17–36.) It speaks of God, the creation of man, the Fall, the Atonement, the ascension of Christ into heaven, prophets, faith, repentance, baptism, the Holy Ghost, endurance, prayer, justification and sanctification through grace, and loving and serving God.

We must know these essential truths. Aaron and Ammon and their brethren in the Book of Mormon taught these same kinds of truths to the Lamanite people (see Alma 18:22–39), who were "in the darkest abyss" (Alma 26:3). After accepting these eternal truths, the Book of Mormon states, those converted Lamanites never did fall away. (See Alma 23:6.)

If our children and grandchildren are taught and heed these same truths, will they fall away? We best instruct them in the Book of Mormon at our dinner table, by our firesides, at their bedsides, and in our letters and phone calls—in all of our goings and comings.

Some spiritually alert parents hold early-morning devotionals with their families in their homes. They have a hymn, prayer, and then read and discuss the Book of Mormon.

"The elders, priests and teachers of this church shall teach the principles of my gospel, which are in . . . the Book of Mormon," says the Lord in the forty-second section of the Doctrine and Covenants (D&C 42:12).

A tool of conversion

The Book of Mormon is for both member and nonmember. Combined with the Spirit of the Lord, the Book of Mormon is the greatest single tool which God has given us to convert the world. If we are to have the harvest of souls that President Kimball envisions,

then we must use the instrument which God has designed for that task—the Book of Mormon.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie stated, “Men can get nearer to the Lord, can have more of the spirit of conversion and conformity in their hearts, can have stronger testimonies, and can gain a better understanding of the doctrines of salvation through the Book of Mormon than they can through the Bible. . . . There will be more people saved in the kingdom of God—ten thousand times over—because of the Book of Mormon than there will be because of the Bible” (address at Book of Mormon Symposium, Brigham Young University, 18 Aug. 1978).

The record of Joseph

The Christian world has the Bible—and so do we. The Bible speaks of a people, the Jews; their land, the Holy Land; their prophets; and the birth and ministry of Jesus Christ.

But was there only one tribe of Israel? What of Joseph, the birthright son, who saved all of Israel’s family from famine? What of Joseph, whose sons Israel blessed and said, “Let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac”? (Genesis 48:16). What of Joseph, whom Israel blessed and promised that he would be “a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall”? (Genesis 49:22). Where is the record of Joseph?

We testify to the world that we have the record of Joseph—even the Book of Mormon. Like Judah, Joseph had a people—the Nephites and Lamanites. Like Judah, Joseph had a land—the Americas. Like Judah, Joseph had prophets, and his descendants also had a visitation from Jesus Christ, even the resurrected Lord.

“Know ye not,” the Lord says in the Book of Mormon, “that there are more nations than one? . . .

“Know ye not that the testimony of two nations is a witness unto you that

I am God, that I remember one nation like unto another?”

“ . . . And because that I have spoken one word ye need not suppose that I cannot speak another” (2 Nephi 29:7–9).

A new witness for Christ

We invite all men everywhere to read the Book of Mormon, another testament of Jesus Christ.

The Bible sits on the pulpit of hundreds of different religious sects. The Book of Mormon, the record of Joseph, verifies and clarifies the Bible. It removes stumbling blocks, it restores many plain and precious things. We testify that when used together, the Bible and the Book of Mormon confound false doctrines, lay down contentions, and establish peace. (See 2 Nephi 3:12.)

We do not have to prove the Book of Mormon is true. The book is its own proof. All we need to do is read it and declare it! The Book of Mormon is not on trial—the people of the world, including the members of the Church, are on trial as to what they will do with this second witness for Christ.

I testify that the Book of Mormon is the word of God; and therefore Jesus is the Christ, Joseph Smith is a prophet, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is true, with its authorized servants to perform the ordinances of salvation today, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang “Go Forth with Faith” without announcement.

President Hinckley

President Ezra Taft Benson has just addressed us, followed by the choir singing “Go Forth with Faith.”

We shall now be pleased to hear Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Council of the Twelve.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

"Out of obscurity"

My brothers and sisters, the Church is at one of those hinge points in its history—the ending of one era and the beginning of another, each with its blessings and its challenges. If we are prepared, we shall neither fear nor fail in our particular time. (See D&C 38:30.)

Among other things, the past obscurity of the Church is giving way to visibility. Obscurity denotes that which is "generally unknown" and "withdrawn from the centers of activity": hence, the obscure is often misunderstood.

The Lord described how He will bring His latter-day work "forth out of obscurity and out of darkness" (D&C 1:30; see also 1 Nephi 22:12; 2 Nephi 1:23; 27:29). Thus, as foreseen, Christ and His work are becoming a light which can no longer be hidden. (See D&C 14:9.) This emerging reality brings with it its own set of challenges and opportunities. For instance, though the gospel light is small, the adversary knows what it signifies, hence his disproportionate efforts to dim it.

Confounding the wise

Furthermore, God has chosen to work through those whom the world regards as weak and foolish. (See 1 Corinthians 1:27; D&C 1:19, 28; 133:58–59.) With heightened visibility, this fact, too, then creates its own set of challenges. Nevertheless, "God hath chosen the foolish . . . to confound the wise; . . . the weak . . . to confound the . . . mighty" (1 Corinthians 1:27).

Disciples need not be embarrassed by considerations of scale any more than by the infrequency of prestigious converts, since, as Paul said, "Not many wise men after the flesh, not

many mighty, not many noble, are called" (1 Corinthians 1:26).

A humble and pure people

But there is still more to be allowed for!

As if comparative obscurity, smallness as to scale, and ample human imperfection in the membership of His Church were not enough, the Lord wants a humble as well as a pure people. Thus, the lesson taught ancient Israel is still relevant: only three hundred warriors were used by Gideon to triumph over Israel's enemies, "lest Israel vaunt themselves." (See Judges 7:2.)

The Lord chastens so that we will remember Him (see Helaman 12:3), trying our patience and our faith until we, too, learn that "none could deliver [us] but the Lord [our] God" (Mosiah 23:23).

Great messages from small sites

As to scale, what occurred in the gardens of Eden and Gethsemane is of enormous significance to all mankind, but it was inversely proportioned to the tiny plots of earth on which those eternity-shaping dramas were played out!

Truth, as Mount Sinai showed, transcends the importance of the terrain on which it is given. The Holy Land was a comparatively small strip of sand, about two hundred by seventy-five miles! Even so, therein occurred the central drama of all human history.

Yet consider: the wondrous four Gospels tell us vital, salvational truths, but not what the Persians, Chinese, and Indians were about during Jesus' mortal ministry. Yet these, and all other peoples, will be indelibly and irrevocably blessed by Jesus and His atonement. They, no less than we, are children of an Almighty God and are fully included in His redemptive plans.

Ancient history and spiritual events

However, unlike our time, ancient nations and cultures were often unaware of each other. Furthermore, secular history is usually silent concerning spiritual things.

The Chinese in the Ch'in Dynasty were busy with stones and the Great Wall of China. They could scarcely be expected to know about Daniel's stone cut out of the mountain without hands. (See Daniel 2:31-45.)

About when Lehi and his pioneering party landed in the Americas, Solon, the Greek reformer, was striving to end economic distress caused, partly, by an 18 percent interest rate.

As Pompey conquered Jerusalem, two thousand stripling warriors were fighting for Nephite liberty. Approximately when Jacob was tediously engraving on the plates, a physician in India reportedly performed cataract surgery.

About when Ammaron hid the sacred records witnessing of God's introducing His resurrected Son, Jesus Christ, to the Nephites—Constantine convened a council to discuss whether or not God and Christ were of the same substance. As lonely Mormon, whose only music was in his soul, moved toward culminating Cumorah, Bishop Ambrose of Milan instituted hymn singing in church.

Japan began its recorded history about when Nephite history was winding down, and likewise the Roman presence in Britain.

A few examples of the secular silence about spiritual things will suffice.

Secular silence

Precisely which pharaoh was in power during the time of the great and tumultuous events associated with Moses and the Exodus? There is little in the secular record to affirm those events which Christians and Jews alike regard as being of major significance.

There appears to be precious little secular history which records the drama associated with the arraignment, trial, and crucifixion of Jesus—for Pilate, just more trouble but temporary political gain:

"And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves" (Luke 23:12).

Besides, important as Pilate was, locally and briefly, he was not Caesar!

And why no secular confirmation by historians such as Tacitus, concerning Paul's part in the drama of the Christians, Rome, and Nero?

Significant spiritual events

Mostly, brothers and sisters, these great spiritual events went unseen by eyes spiritually untrained; therefore, they were lost in the swollen sea of worldly cares, a sea which never rests. One day, the historical record will be complete: but, meanwhile, the scriptures will be our guide concerning those transcending spiritual events in human history which are saturated with significance.

In any event, world leaders are busy with the world's business. In 1910-11 a young Home Secretary defended, in Parliament, the proselyting rights of LDS missionaries in Britain. Amid parliamentary pressures, Winston Churchill held fast for religious tolerance. Major biographies on Churchill are silent on those episodes, the outcome of which was vital to us, but not the stuff of secular history.

God's chosen leaders

The same general disregard attends those whom God chooses as His leaders; moreover, their imperfections are duly noted.

Moses was described as the most meek man upon the face of the earth. (See Numbers 12:3.) Yet Moses had a brief moment when he rashly declared, "Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?"

(Numbers 20:10; italics added). Even so, the Lord readied remarkable Moses for later service, including that atop the Mount of Transfiguration. (See Matthew 17:1-4.)

After Paul wrote his touching epistle on love to the Saints at Corinth (see 1 Corinthians 13), he wrote to Galatian members, using some stinging and sarcastic language. Furthermore, companion Barnabas apparently heard Paul's tongue when it was not the tongue of an angel. (See Acts 15:2.)

Paul even noted his tendency to boast (see 2 Corinthians 10:8, 13, 15; 11:1, 16, 21; 12:1), reminding us of the wisdom of yet another prophet who wrote: "I do not boast in my own strength, nor in my own wisdom; . . .

"But I will boast of my God" (Alma 26:11-12).

Proving, reproofing, improving

Only Jesus was perfect in all things, including love and meekness. Even the greatest of mortal prophets fall short of Christ's high and perfect standards.

Thus, as members of the Church, if we can see the life of discipleship, whether for ourselves or for the prophets, as a combination of *proving*, *reproofing*, and *improving*, we will be much better off.

Throughout scriptural history, we see recurring efforts to demean prophets in order to dismiss them—to label them in order to diminish them. Mostly, however, they are simply ignored by their contemporaries and by secular history. After all, early Christians were merely called "the sect of the Nazarenes" (Acts 24:5).

Like his predecessors, Joseph Smith reflected some of the anxieties and activities of his time and period. Yet a torrent of truth came through that good, but imperfect, conduit—more than Joseph could communicate, as he once declared:

"It is my meditation all the day and more than my meat and drink to know how I shall make the saints of God to

comprehend the visions that roll like an overflowing surge, before my mind" (Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds. and comps., *The Words of Joseph Smith* [Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980], p. 196).

Some followers became disaffected, but later returned—including once-statusful men like Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, and Thomas B. Marsh. Yet these men voted with their feet to rejoin and reconcile with the kingdom. The true doctrines drew them back, however, and the only status sought or conferred was membership, once again, in the Lord's church.

Hope and gratitude

In all this, there is great cause for hope and even gratitude. Moroni prescribed:

"Condemn me not because of mine imperfection, . . . but rather give thanks unto God that he hath made manifest unto you our imperfections, that ye may learn to be more wise than we have been" (Mormon 9:31).

And Lorenzo Snow practiced:

"I can fellowship the President of the Church," he said, "if he does not know everything I know . . . I saw the . . . imperfections in [Joseph Smith] . . . I thanked God that He would put upon a man who had those imperfections the power and authority He placed upon him . . . for I knew that I myself had weakness, and I thought there was a chance for me . . . I thanked God that I saw these imperfections."

From Elder B. H. Roberts, who loved the Prophet dearly, there were these words:

"Joseph Smith . . . claimed for himself no special sanctity, no faultless life, no perfection of character, no infallibility for every word spoken by him. And as he did not claim these things for himself, so can they not be claimed for him by others. . . .

"Yet to Joseph Smith was given," said Brother Roberts, "access to the mind of Deity, through the revelations of God to him" (*Comprehensive History*, 2:360-61).

In fact, brothers and sisters, the Prophet Joseph, just a few days before his martyrdom, confirming said,

"I never told you I was perfect; but there is no error in the revelations which I have taught. Must I, then, be thrown away as a thing of naught?" (*History of the Church*, 6:366).

"In this way"

Should we be surprised that prophets and people alike experience this next reality?

"For he will give unto the faithful line upon line, precept upon precept; and I will try you and prove you herewith" (D&C 98:12).

Herewith means "in this manner" or "in this way." The same gradual unfolding will pertain to the history of God's work. (See Isaiah 28:10; D&C 98:12; 128:21.)

Meanwhile, Winston Churchill's imagery about history is helpful for us to remember: "History with its flickering lamp stumbles along the trail of the past, trying to reconstruct its scenes, to revive its echoes, and kindle with pale gleams the passion of former days" (Tribute to Neville Chamberlain, House of Commons, 12 Nov. 1940).

Why patience and faith?

Since living in the present, however, disciples should heed those imperial scriptures which "spread themselves over all occasions," and in one of these we read of stern, divine purpose:

"Nevertheless the Lord seeth fit to chasten his people; yea, he trieth their patience and their faith" (Mosiah 23:21).

Why those two particular trials?

Also, why not give us a lengthier Book of Mormon?

"Behold, I was about to write them, all which were engraven upon the plates of Nephi, but the Lord forbade it, saying: I will try the faith of my people" (3 Nephi 26:11).

Again we must wait for our full answer.

Some lie in wait

So the process of proving, reproofing, and improving unfolds; it should neither offend us nor surprise us. Meanwhile, unevenness in the spiritual development of people means untidiness in the history of people, and we should not make an individual "an offender for a word" (Isaiah 29:21; 2 Nephi 27:32), as if a single communication could set aside all else an individual may have communicated or stood for!

Some lie in wait in our day, as during the ministry of Jesus, seeking to "provoke him to speak of many things," seeking to "catch something out of his mouth that they might accuse him" (Luke 11:53-54). The Pharisees actually "took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk" (Matthew 22:15).

The finished mosaic of the history of the Restoration will be larger and more varied as more pieces of tile emerge, adjusting a sequence here or enlarging there a sector of our understanding.

The fundamental outline is in place now, however. But history deals with imperfect people in process of time, whose imperfections produce refractions as the pure light of the gospel plays upon them. There may even be a few pieces of tile which, for the moment, do not seem to fit. We can wait, as we must, to learn later whether, for instance, Matthew's or Luke's account of Jesus' Davidic descent is correct. (See Matthew 1; Luke 3.) Meanwhile, the Father has, on several occasions, given us Jesus' crucial genealogy: "This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" (See Matthew 3:17; 17:5; 3 Nephi 11:7;

Joseph Smith—History 1:17; italics added.)

Granted, there is not full correlation among the four Gospels about the events and participants at the empty garden tomb. (See Matthew 28:1–8; Mark 16:1–8; Luke 24:1–9; John 20:1–10.) Yet the important thing is that the tomb was empty, because Jesus had been resurrected! Essence, not tactical detail! Moreover, the faithful, then and now, understand why the resurrected Jesus did not appear to the Sanhedrin, to Caiaphas, or Pilate—but, instead, to the bands of believers at Bethany and Bountiful.

At the perfect day

Why, for instance, did not ancient Church leaders more carefully record the fulfillment of certain prophecies of Samuel, the Lamanite? (See 3 Nephi 23:9–14.) Belatedly, at Jesus' direction, it was written fully and precisely.

So, belatedly, the fulness of the history of the dispensation of the fulness of times will be written!

The final mosaic of the Restoration will be resplendent, reflecting divine design and the same centerpiece—the Father's plan of salvation and exaltation and the atonement of His Son, Jesus Christ.

At the perfect day, we will see that we have been a part of things too

wonderful for us. Part of the marvel and the wonder of God's "marvelous work and a wonder" will be how perfect Divinity mercifully used us—imperfect humanity.

Meanwhile, amid the human dissonance, those with ears to hear will follow the beckoning sounds of a certain trumpet. (See 1 Corinthians 14:8.)

Besides, whatever the present, do we not rightly sing of our God "We've proved him in days that are past"? (*Hymns*, no. 196).

This is the Lord's work! It will roll on until all His purposes are fulfilled (see Mormon 8:22), of which I gladly testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir and congregation sang "Let Us All Press On" without announcement.

President Hinckley

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Dallin H. Oaks, who was sustained a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles at the general conference last April. He will be followed by Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks

In the service of the Lord

My dear brothers and sisters, because it was not appropriate for me to commence my Church service until I had concluded my judicial duties in state government, I did not speak at the April conference where I was sustained. Consequently, this semiannual conference is my first opportunity to speak to the general membership of the

Church, to express acceptance of my calling to the Council of the Twelve.

I am thrilled with this calling. Having been "called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority" (Articles of Faith 1:5), I have gladly forsaken my professional activities to spend the rest of my days in the service of the Lord. I will devote my whole heart, might, mind, and strength to the great trusts placed in me, especially to the respon-

sibilities of a special witness of the name of Jesus Christ in all the world.

Why do we serve?

Many men and women were called to Church service last April. Eight men were called as General Authorities. Six women were called to the presidencies of the Relief Society and Young Women. Over two hundred men were called to serve as bishops, and over seventeen hundred men and women were called as full-time missionaries. In that same month, tens of thousands of others were called as officers and teachers and other workers in the many Church organizations throughout the world. Those called in April joined millions of others already serving in similar capacities in the restored Church.

As I contemplated my own calling and the callings of millions of others already in service, I was led to consider this question: Why do we serve?

Service—an imperative

Service is an imperative for those who worship Jesus Christ. To followers who were vying for prominent positions in his kingdom, the Savior taught, "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" (Matthew 20:27). On a later occasion, he spoke of ministering to the needs of the hungry, the naked, the sick, and the imprisoned. He concluded that teaching with these words: "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40).

In latter-day revelation the Lord has commanded that we "succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees" (D&C 81:5). In another section of the Doctrine and Covenants, he instructed us to be "anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of [our] own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness" (D&C 58:27). Holders

of the Melchizedek Priesthood receive it upon a covenant to use its powers in the service of others. Indeed, service is a covenant obligation of all members of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Whether our service is to our fellowmen or to God, it is the same. (See Mosiah 2:17.) If we love him, we should keep his commandments and feed his sheep. (See John 21:16-17.)

"The Lord looketh on the heart"

When we think of service, we usually think of the acts of our hands. But the scriptures teach that the Lord looks to our thoughts as well as to our acts. One of God's earliest commandments to Israel was that they should love him and "serve him with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deuteronomy 10:10). When the prophet Samuel was sent to Bethlehem to choose and anoint one of the sons of Jesse as a new king for Israel, the Lord told him to reject the first son, though he was a man of fine appearance. The Lord explained, "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

We are familiar with the proverb which states that as a man "thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). We also read in Proverbs: "All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits" (Proverbs 16:2).

Latter-day revelation declares that the Lord requires not only the acts of the children of men, but "the Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind" (D&C 64:34).

Numerous scriptures teach that our Heavenly Father knows our thoughts and the intents of our heart. (See D&C 6:16; Mosiah 24:12; Alma 18:32.) The prophet Moroni taught that if our works are to be credited for good, they must be done for the right reasons. If a man "offereth a gift, or prayeth unto

God, except he shall do it with real intent it profiteth him nothing.

"For behold, it is not counted unto him for righteousness" (Moroni 7:6-7).

Similarly, the prophet Alma taught that if we have hardened our hearts against the word of God, we will "not dare to look up to our God" at the final judgment because "all our works will condemn us; . . . and our thoughts will also condemn us" (Alma 12:14).

Why we serve

These scriptures make clear that in order to purify our service in the Church and to our fellowmen, it is necessary to consider not only *how* we serve, but also *why* we serve.

People serve one another for different reasons, and some reasons are better than others. Perhaps none of us serves in every capacity all the time for only a single reason. Since we are imperfect beings, most of us probably serve for a combination of reasons, and the combinations may be different from time to time as we grow spiritually. But we should all strive to serve for the reasons that are highest and best.

What are some of the reasons for service? By way of illustration, and without pretending to be exhaustive, I will suggest six reasons. I will discuss these in ascending order from the lesser to the greater reasons for service.

For riches or honor?

Some may serve for hope of earthly reward. Such a man or woman might serve in Church positions or in private acts of mercy in an effort to achieve prominence or cultivate contacts that would increase income or aid in acquiring wealth. Others might serve in order to obtain worldly honors, prominence, or power.

The scriptures have a word for gospel service "for the sake of riches and honor"; it is "priestcraft" (Alma 1:16). Nephi said, "Priestcrafts are that men preach and set themselves up for a

light unto the world, that they may get gain and praise of the world; but they seek not the welfare of Zion" (2 Nephi 26:29). In these latter days, we are commanded to "seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion" (D&C 6:6). Unfortunately, not all who accomplish works under that heading are really intending to build up Zion or strengthen the faith of the people of God. Other motives can be at work.

Service that is ostensibly unselfish but is really for the sake of riches or honor surely comes within the Savior's condemnation of those who "outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within . . . are full of hypocrisy and iniquity" (Matthew 23:28). Such service earns no gospel reward.

"I would that ye should do alms unto the poor," the Savior declared, "but take heed that ye do not your alms before men to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father who is in heaven" (3 Nephi 13:1; see also Matthew 6:1-2). The Savior continued:

"Therefore, when ye shall do your alms do not sound a trumpet before you, as will hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward" (3 Nephi 13:2; see also Matthew 6:2).

In contrast, those who serve quietly, even "in secret," qualify for the Savior's promise that "thy Father, who seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly" (3 Nephi 13:18; see also Matthew 6:4).

To obtain good companionship?

Another reason for service—probably more worthy than the first, but still in the category of service in search of earthly reward—is that motivated by a personal desire to obtain good companionship. We surely have good associations in our Church service, but is that why we serve?

I once knew a person who was active in Church service until a socially prominent friend and fellow worker

moved away. When the friend moved from the ward, this person ceased to serve. In this case, a Church worker was willing to serve only when the fellow workers were acceptable.

Persons who serve only to obtain good companionship are more selective in choosing their friends than the Master was in choosing his servants or associates. Jesus called most of his servants from those in humble circumstances. And he associated with sinners. He answered critics of such association by saying, "They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:31-32).

The first section of the Doctrine and Covenants, which speaks of people in the last days, gives a description that seems to include those who serve for hope of earthly reward of one sort or another: "They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god, whose image is in the likeness of the world, and whose substance is that of an idol" (D&C 1:16).

These first two reasons for service are selfish and self-centered and unworthy of Saints. As the Apostle Paul said, we that are strong enough to bear the infirmities of the weak should not do so "to please ourselves" (Romans 15:1). Reasons aimed at earthly rewards are distinctly lesser in character and reward than the other reasons I will discuss.

Out of fear of punishment?

Some may serve out of fear of punishment. The scriptures abound with descriptions of the miserable state of those who fail to follow the commandments of God. Thus, King Benjamin taught his people that the soul of the unrepentant transgressor would be filled with "a lively sense of his own guilt, which doth cause him to shrink from the presence of the Lord, and doth fill his breast with guilt, and pain, and anguish, which is like an un-

quenchable fire, whose flame ascendeth up forever and ever" (Mosiah 2:38). Such descriptions surely offer sufficient incentive for keeping the commandment of service. But service out of fear of punishment is a lesser motive at best.

Duty or loyalty?

Other persons may serve out of a sense of duty or out of loyalty to friends or family or traditions. These are those I would call the good soldiers, who instinctively do what they are asked without question and sometimes without giving much thought to the reasons for their service. Such persons fill the ranks of voluntary organizations everywhere, and they do much good. We have all benefited by the good works of such persons. Those who serve out of a sense of duty or loyalty to various wholesome causes are the good and honorable men and women of the earth.

Service of the character I have just described is worthy of praise and will surely qualify for blessings, especially if it is done willingly and joyfully. As the Apostle Paul wrote in his second letter to the Corinthians:

"But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:6-7).

"It is obeying God willingly that is accepted," an anonymous writer has said. "The Lord hates that which is forced—it is rather a tax than an offering."

Hope of an eternal reward?

Although those who serve out of fear of punishment or out of a sense of duty undoubtedly qualify for the blessings of heaven, there are still higher reasons for service.

One such higher reason for service is the hope of an eternal reward. This hope—the expectation of enjoying the fruits of our labors—is one of the most powerful sources of motivation. As a reason for service, it necessarily involves faith in God and in the fulfillment of his prophecies. The scriptures are rich in promises of eternal rewards. For example, in a revelation given through the Prophet Joseph Smith in June 1829, the Lord said: “If you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God” (D&C 14:7).

The highest motive for service

The last motive I will discuss is, in my opinion, the highest reason of all. In its relationship to service, it is what the scriptures call “a more excellent way” (1 Corinthians 12:31).

“Charity is the pure love of Christ” (Moroni 7:47). The Book of Mormon teaches us that this virtue is “the greatest of all” (Moroni 7:46). The Apostle Paul affirmed and illustrated that truth in his great teaching about the reasons for service:

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. . . .

“And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, . . . and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing” (1 Corinthians 13:1–3).

We know from these inspired words that even the most extreme acts of service—such as giving all of our goods to feed the poor—profit us nothing unless our service is motivated by the pure love of Christ.

If our service is to be most efficacious, it must be accomplished for the love of God and the love of his children. The Savior applied that principle in the Sermon on the Mount, in which he commanded us to love our enemies, bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us, and pray for them that despitefully use us and perse-

cute us. (See Matthew 5:44.) He explained the purpose of that commandment as follows:

“For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?”

“And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?” (Matthew 5:46–47).

Ideal of perfection

This principle—that our service should be for the love of God and the love of fellowmen rather than for personal advantage or any other lesser motive—is admittedly a high standard. The Savior must have seen it so, since he joined his commandment for selfless and complete love directly with the ideal of perfection. The very next verse of the Sermon on the Mount contains this great commandment: “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48).

This principle of service is reaffirmed in the fourth section of the Doctrine and Covenants:

“Therefore, O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with all your heart, might, mind and strength, that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day” (D&C 4:2).

Serve with heart and mind

We learn from this command that it is not enough to serve God with all of our *might and strength*. He who looks into our hearts and knows our minds demands more than this. In order to stand blameless before God at the last day, we must also serve him with all our *heart and mind*.

Service with all of our heart and mind is a high challenge for all of us. Such service must be free of selfish ambition. It must be motivated only by the pure love of Christ.

If we have difficulty with the command that we serve for love, a Book of

Mormon teaching can help us. After describing the importance of charity, the prophet Moroni counseled:

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ" (Moroni 7:48).

The service of persons filled with that love will meet the high test expressed in the Twenty-fourth Psalm:

"Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?

"He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart" Psalm 24:3-4).

I know that God expects us to work to purify our hearts and our thoughts so that we may serve one an-

other for the highest and best reason, the pure love of Christ.

Most of all, I know that God lives, and I know that his Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, died for our sins and is our Savior. And I know that God has restored the fulness of the gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith in these latter days. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have just listened to Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy will now speak to us.

Elder M. Russell Ballard

I pray that my message might be received in the spirit of the address of Elder Oaks.

Challenge of missionary work

Recently, the First Presidency and the Twelve assigned me to work with the Missionary Department. Missionary work is a great challenge, especially when we realize that approximately 4.7 billion people live on the earth today. The earth's present population gain is "150 new persons per minute, 9,100 per hour, 218,100 per day and 79.6 million per year. . . .

"If you are 50 years old, the world's population has more than doubled in your lifetime" ("Global Population Growing by More Than 200,000 a Day," *U.S. News and World Report*, 23 July 1984, p. 52).

"Teach all nations"

At the present time, more people are born in one day than are baptized

into the Church in one year. The magnitude of our missionary task can appear to be overwhelming. Yet the assignment to the members of the Church is very clear. We are to take the gospel of Jesus Christ to every human soul.

Jesus taught, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19-20).

The truth shall go forth

With faith we shall do as the Lord directed, for the Prophet Joseph Smith declared, "The truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall

say the work is done" (*History of the Church*, 4:540).

An indication of the faith we need to meet this challenge was expressed by Elder Boyd K. Packer, who said: "Since baptism is essential there must be an urgent concern to carry the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. . . .

"We accept the responsibility to preach the gospel to every person on earth. And if the question is asked, 'You mean you are out to convert the entire world?' the answer is, 'Yes. We will try to reach every living soul.'

"Some who measure that challenge quickly say, 'Why, that's impossible! It cannot be done!'

"To that we simply say, 'Perhaps, but we shall do it anyway.'" (*Ensign*, Nov. 1975, p. 97).

Modern technology and member commitment

Part of the answer may lie in our ability to more fully understand and accelerate the use of modern communication technology to teach the gospel to all the world. We must use to their greatest potential the newspapers, magazines, television, radio, and satellites. But even with all of the technology working for us, there is no power in the Church to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ that can equal what you and I as individuals can do.

I am aware that most members of the Church understand that they should take an active part in proclaiming the gospel. Some have been quite successful, but others have not yet tried. I believe that far too many Church members do not understand the underlying doctrine that governs our Heavenly Father's work.

Joseph Smith taught, "Baptism is a sign to God, to angels, and to heaven that we do the will of God, and there is no other way beneath the heavens whereby God hath ordained for man to come to Him to be saved, and enter into the kingdom of God, except faith in

Jesus Christ, repentance, and baptism for the remission of sins . . . ; then you have the promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost" (*History of the Church*, 4:555). When they are baptized, men and women receive a remission of their sins and become numbered among the Saints to receive the blessings and happiness that membership in the Church can give.

Sharing the gospel

A natural consequence of conversion is the continued remission of sin by living the gospel, which includes sharing the gospel with others. President Spencer W. Kimball declared, "The Lord has told us that our sins will be forgiven more readily as we bring souls unto Christ and remain steadfast in bearing testimony to the world, and surely every one of us is looking for additional help in being forgiven of our sins" (*Ensign*, Oct. 1977, p. 5).

In the Doctrine and Covenants we read: "For I will forgive you of your sins with this commandment—that you remain steadfast in your minds in solemnity and the spirit of prayer, in bearing testimony to all the world of those things which are communicated unto you" (D&C 84:61; italics added). And also in the Doctrine and Covenants: "Nevertheless, ye are blessed, for the testimony which ye have borne is recorded in heaven for the angels to look upon; and they rejoice over you, and your sins are forgiven you" (D&C 62:3; italics added).

A former prophet of God, President George Albert Smith, said, "My understanding is that the most important mission that I have in this life is: first, to keep the commandments of God, as they have been taught to me; and next, to teach them to my Father's children who do not understand them" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1916, p. 50). The doctrine seems quite clear to me; the remission of sins is an ongoing process. As each one of us strives to become clean, pure, and even sanctified, I see no better way for us to do this

than to help others of our Heavenly Father's children find the truth.

When we partake of the sacrament, we covenant that we are willing to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ and that we will always remember Him and keep His commandments. (See D&C 20:77.) Is there any better way that you and I can demonstrate to the Lord our love for Him than to share His gospel? We need not be sent to far-flung cities or set our feet on distant lands to be missionaries. Our next-door neighbors, friends, acquaintances, family members, relatives, and the stranger down the street are all part of the world with whom we should be sharing the gospel message. No member of the Church needs to wait for the ward, stake, mission, or any Church organization, to lead them in doing this work. Each one of us should be actively involved in sharing the gospel because we love the Lord with all of our hearts and because we desire to serve Him.

The worth of souls

The scriptures teach: "Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God;

"For, behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him. . . .

"And how great is his joy in the soul that repenteth!

"Wherefore, you are called to cry repentance unto this people.

"And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!" (D&C 18:10-11, 13-15).

Just think of it, brothers and sisters, Jesus Christ suffered the pain of all men that you and I might have the promise of eternal life. Surely He can expect us to do His work that He has entrusted to us. Our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son have not left us alone in this great work. They have

promised to guide us if we will but ask them for help.

Write down a date

May I suggest a simple way in which each one of us can exercise our faith and start our personal missionary service. Write down a *date* in the near future on which you will have someone ready to be taught the gospel. Do not worry that you do not have someone already in mind. Let the Lord help you as you pray diligently for guidance. Fast and pray, seeking guidance and direction from our Heavenly Father.

Many, if not all, of you will have special spiritual experiences as the Lord inspires you. I know from my own personal and family missionary experience that the Lord will enlighten your mind. He will sharpen your vision of this work by bringing names of non-members to your mind that you have never before regarded as potential members of the Church. As you continue, you will be blessed to know what you should say and how you should approach each person.

Ask for divine guidance

Brothers and sisters, you will notice that I did not suggest that you write down a name, but rather that you write down a specific date. The key to our success will be to ask for divine guidance that we might be directed to those who will accept the gospel.

Because living the gospel is essential to the remission of sins, and because giving missionary service is essential to living the gospel, I believe each one of us must set a definite date at least once each year to have an individual or a family ready to be taught the gospel. We should expect to have wonderful success. We in the Missionary Department would like to hear of your success as you follow this counsel. No joy equals that of bringing the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ into the life of one of Heavenly Father's children. Missionary experiences can bring to

every member of the Church the calm reassurance that his sins are in very deed being forgiven. Our Heavenly Father will love us for proclaiming the gospel of his Son, Jesus Christ, to all of His children on the earth.

Please do not wait for anyone but the Lord to help you. He will help you. Our individual efforts can produce a great increase in building the kingdom of God. If just 30 percent of the active adult members of the Church would follow this simple procedure at least once each year, we would add 200,000 *additional* converts to those we are already baptizing. Compounded, this would mean in ten years an increase of at least 5.4 million more converts than we would have had at our present level of member effort. If 100 percent of the active adults would participate, we would soon start to see that every living soul can receive the message.

May God bless all of us that we will have the courage to commit our-

selves to a specific date for having someone ready to hear the gospel message. Then may we proceed to call upon the Lord to guide our efforts so that thousands of our Heavenly Father's children will receive the gospel of Jesus Christ. May we all look upon this not as a duty but rather as a great privilege. This I pray humbly in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Oh, How Lovely Was the Morning" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Elder M. Russell Ballard has spoken to us, following which the Tabernacle Choir sang "Oh, How Lovely Was the Morning."

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our concluding speaker.

Elder L. Tom Perry

Let me first offer my sincere congratulations to Elder Hanks—we know of your great talent—and to Elders Sonnenberg, Kay, and Wilcox. How you'll enjoy this new association!

Obedience

The Savior taught us in the Gospel of Luke:

"A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

"And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:45-46).

From the very beginning the Lord taught His children the importance of obedience. After Adam and Eve had

been driven out of the Garden of Eden, they sought the Lord in prayer.

"And Adam and Eve, his wife, called upon the name of the Lord, and they heard the voice of the Lord from the way toward the Garden of Eden, speaking unto them, and they saw him not; for they were shut out from his presence.

"And he gave unto them commandments, that they should worship the Lord their God, and should offer the firstlings of their flocks, for an offering unto the Lord. And Adam was obedient unto the commandments of the Lord" (Moses 5:4-5).

Then Adam was tested after many days by an angel, who asked him why he was offering sacrifices. Adam said he did not know, save the Lord had commanded him. And then the angel explained to him the sacrifice of the Only Begotten, and the opportunity

there was for mankind to be redeemed from the dead, and, if obedient, to enjoy life eternal. (See Moses 5:6-9.)

"And in that day Adam blessed God and was filled, and began to prophesy concerning all the families of the earth, saying: Blessed be the name of God, for because of my transgression my eyes are opened, and in this life I shall have joy, and again in the flesh I shall see God.

"And Eve, his wife, heard all these things and was glad, saying: Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient" (Moses 5:10-11).

Willing obedience to the Lord

Then Adam and Eve perpetuated this teaching by making all things known unto their sons and their daughters. Our prophets through the ages have instructed us as to the blessings that come by obedience to the will of the Lord.

President Joseph F. Smith has said:

"Every good and perfect gift comes from the Father of Light, who is no respecter of persons, and in whom there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning. To please him we must not only worship him with thanksgiving and praise but render willing obedience to his commandments. By so doing, he is bound to bestow his blessings; for it is upon this principle (obedience to law) that all blessings are predicated" (*Improvement Era*, Dec. 1917, p. 104).

The gospel is so very simple when we understand it properly. It is always right, it is always good, it is always uplifting. Obedience to gospel principles brings forth joy and happiness. Disobedience has a day of reckoning and will only bring forth heartache, misery, strife, and unhappiness.

The history of mankind bears such strong testimony regarding the bless-

ings which are enjoyed by men and women if they subject themselves to the will of the Lord. And yet, we see in the world so much sorrow and suffering because we are unwilling to be obedient.

Keep the Sabbath holy

There is one of His basic commandments which we see so much violation of in the world today. I guess it is evident to those who violate this principle when they attempt to arise from their beds on Monday morning. I see such widespread disobedience of this law as I travel throughout the world. The Lord instructed ancient Israel:

"Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy.

"Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

"But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

"For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it" (Exodus 20:8-11).

Instructions in our day

The Lord has not withheld instructions from His Saints in this day. In fact, He has given us some pretty specific instructions about what we should do on His holy day. In the Doctrine and Covenants we read:

"And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day;

"For verily this is a day appointed unto you to rest from your labors, and to pay thy devotions unto the Most High;

"Nevertheless thy vows shall be offered up in righteousness on all days and at all times;

"But remember that on this, the Lord's day, thou shalt offer thine oblations and thy sacraments unto the Most High, confessing thy sins unto thy brethren, and before the Lord.

"And on this day thou shalt do none other thing, only let thy food be prepared with singleness of heart that thy fasting may be perfect, or, in other words, that thy joy may be full" (D&C 59:9-13).

Keep unspotted from the world

There appear to be three things that the Lord would require of us in keeping His day holy. The first: to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. Second is to go to the house of prayer and partake of the sacrament. The third is to rest from our labors. When He instructed us to be unspotted from the world, I believe He not only expected us to stay away from worldly places on the Sabbath, but also to dress appropriately on His day. I often wonder what happened to the good old saying, "Sunday best." If our dress deteriorates to everyday attire, our actions seem to follow the type of clothing we wear.

Of course, we would not expect our children to remain dressed in their church clothes all day, but neither would we expect them to dress in clothes that would not be appropriate for the Sabbath.

Go to the house of prayer

Attendance at church and partaking of the sacrament are basic for our observance of the Lord's day. Before Jesus introduced the ordinance of the sacrament, He taught His disciples more about love. In order for them to understand the sacrament, they had to first understand the basic principle of love. His main concern was for His beloved friends at this critical moment.

The first sacrament can be compared to our own weekly experience as

we partake of the sacred emblems of the bread and water. It is, indeed, a privilege to participate in this sacred ordinance each week and to think about the Savior's words to His Apostles, "As oft as ye do this ye will remember this hour that I was with you" (Mark 14:21, Joseph Smith Translation).

Each member of the Church covenants to always remember the Savior as he or she partakes of the sacrament. Weekly we should each seek a personal experience, a closeness to our Lord and Savior, which, when remembered each week, will help us to become more like Him. We have His example always before us.

But because of human weakness, we make mistakes even after baptism. The Lord has, therefore, provided a way for us to renew our baptismal covenants through partaking of the sacrament each week. When we partake of the sacred emblems reverently and worthily, we witness again that we will take the name of Christ upon us, that we do always remember Him, that we will keep His commandments. It is a time to remember Christ's atonement, His love, Gethsemane, Calvary, and the empty tomb.

Elder Melvin J. Ballard suggested, "We want every Latter-day Saint to come to the sacrament table because it is the place for self-investigation, for self-inspection, where we may learn to rectify our course and to make right our own lives, bringing ourselves into harmony with the teachings of the Church and with our brethren and sisters" (Bryant S. Hinckley, *Sermons and Missionary Services of Melvin Joseph Ballard* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1949], p. 150).

I have always been impressed with the renewed strength and dedication which come from weekly participating in the sacrament.

Rest from our labors

The Lord has instructed us to rest from our labors on this day. I am sure

this means that a hay baler stands idle in the field on the Sabbath. The family business has a Closed sign facing a potential customer on Sunday. The cash register does not ring to record one of our purchases on His special day. It is truly a day to rest from our labors.

I met a great little family some time ago while attending a stake conference. They bore a sweet testimony to me of what the sacrament has come to mean to them. The father some years before had lost his job when a factory he had been working in had closed. Rather than move to another city to obtain new employment, he proposed that the family open a family fast-food business. The business was successful for several years; then a chain fast-food business opened up across the street and remained open seven days a week. In family council they determined that they must meet the competition. They would remain open on Sunday and take turns going to Church. After one year of seven-days-a-week operation, they discovered they were worn out, cross with each other, and complained about every little thing that would arise.

Another family council was called and the proposition presented that they close on Sunday to see if they could get back their family spirit. They soon discovered that the Lord's system works. Even though sales were fewer, profits increased.

Proper planning for the Lord's day

What should we do on the Sabbath day? The story is told about a poor woman who faithfully went to Church every week. Her husband, however, was not so devoted. Week after week she urged him to go, but he would not. Finally, tiring of her pestering, he said, "Give me one good reason why I should go to Church."

Her reply was: "I can't explain to you why I go. All I can tell you is that I go in empty and come out full." (See Rick Walton and Fern Oviatt, eds., *Stories for Mormons* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1983], p. 112.)

With the proper planning, we should be able to use the Lord's day in the way that He has intended for us.

From the scriptures, let us remember, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath" (Mark 2:27). And again He has instructed us in the Doctrine and Covenants, "Trifle not with sacred things" (D&C 6:12).

I give you my witness that the greatest joy you can experience here in mortality is being obedient to the will of the Lord. May we always strive to keep His commandments, and may we keep His sacred day holy is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has been our concluding speaker.

We express appreciation to the managers and operators of the many television and radio stations and cable systems for offering their facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this conference to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

The choir will now sing "Father, This Hour Has Been One of Joy," following which the benediction will be offered by Elder Gene R. Cook of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and this conference will be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The choir sang "Father, This Hour has Been One of Joy."

Elder Gene R. Cook offered the benediction.

FIRST DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

SECOND SESSION

The second general session of the 154th Semiannual General Conference began at 2:00 P.M. on Saturday, October 6, 1984. President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve, conducted.

Music for this session was provided by the Mormon Youth Chorus under the direction of Robert C. Bowden with Clay Christiansen at the organ.

At the beginning of the meeting, President Benson made the following remarks:

President Ezra Taft Benson

My beloved brethren and sisters, the First Presidency has asked that I conduct this session of the conference.

We are delighted to have with us this afternoon President Spencer W. Kimball. President [Marion G.] Romney is not able to be with us. We extend our love and blessings to these great leaders who have provided outstanding and much appreciated leadership for so many years, and we are delighted of course that President Kimball can be with us.

We are pleased to welcome those who are gathered here in the Tabernacle for this, the second general session of the 154th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We also welcome those who are participating by means of television or radio; also the many who are watching in over nine hundred stake centers throughout the United States and Canada to which the conference is being carried by satellite transmission.

We note that Elders G. Homer Durham and Adney Y. Komatsu are presiding at the overflow session in the Assembly Hall.

We are pleased to acknowledge especially our guests who are present this afternoon, along with general and local Church leaders and members from many parts of the world.

We express our appreciation to the owners and operators of the many radio and television stations and to the owners and operators of cable systems for their cooperation in making these proceedings available to members and friends of the Church in many countries.

The music for this session will be provided by the Mormon Youth Chorus under the direction of Robert C. Bowden with Clay Christiansen at the organ.

The chorus will begin this service by singing "Our Savior's Love." The invocation will then be offered by Elder William Grant Bangerter, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Mormon Youth Chorus sang "Our Savior's Love."

Elder William Grant Bangerter offered the invocation.

President Benson

The chorus will now sing "Hark, All Ye Nations," following which Elder Marvin J. Ashton, one of the Twelve Apostles, will speak to us.

The chorus sang "Hark, All Ye Nations."

Elder Marvin J. Ashton spoke without further announcement.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

"Why us?"

When tragedy, disappointment, and heartache surface in our lives, it is not unusual for many of us to become self-condemning and resentful. In the stress of the situation we declare, "What have we done to deserve this? Why does the Lord allow this to happen to us?"

With heavy hearts and broken spirits the parents of a wayward child were recently heard to say, "Where did we go wrong? What have we done to displease the Lord? What is the Lord trying to tell us? Is this the reward for trying to be good parents? Why us?"

These were among a flood of questions that came as they agonized over the serious misconduct of their child. Their comments and attitude reflected a frightening blend of resentment, frustration, and self-condemnation.

It was evident that this distraught couple was not to be calmed or reassured by scriptures or personal observations. Because the child had transgressed, they were adamant in their feelings that God was displeased with them. Their attitude reflected bitterness and loss of self-respect. Momentarily they were letting themselves be consumed and destroyed by the trying circumstances.

Prison of failure and self-pity

In their present tragedy they were not seeking counsel or comfort; rather, it appeared, they were looking for someone who would suffer with them and join in the chorus of "If there is a merciful God, why does He allow this to happen?" We must remember that all suffering is not punishment. It is imperative that we do not allow ourselves to be destroyed by the conduct of others.

Sometimes we spend so much time trying to determine what we did wrong in the past to deserve the un-

pleasant happenings of the moment that we fail to resolve the challenges of the present. Og Mandino wrote in his book *The Greatest Miracle in the World*, "If we lock ourselves in a prison of failure and self-pity, we are the only jailers . . . we have the only key to our freedom" ([New York: Frederick Fell Publishers, 1975], p. 61).

Use trials as stepping-stones

We can let ourselves out of such a prison by turning to the Lord for strength. With His help we can use our trials as stepping-stones. The keys are in our hands.

"I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise" (D&C 82:10).

If we are offended and resentful, can we believe that He is bound to help us in our tragedies and disappointments? This scripture does not tell us how or when this commitment will be effective or realized, but His promise is real and binding. Our challenge is to endure. There will always be testings and trials along life's paths. Heartaches and tragedies need not defeat us if we remember God's promise.

A worthwhile attitude for all of us could well be, "Help us, O Lord, to remember Thy love for us and help us to be fortified by Thy strength when our eyes are blurred with tears of sorrow and our vision is limited."

"If thou endure it well"

It is expedient for all of us, particularly those who may be weighed down by grief because of acts of misconduct or misfortune, to recall that even the Prophet Joseph Smith had hours of despair because of his very trying experiences in the Liberty Jail. Perhaps he too was entitled to question, "What did I do wrong? What have I done to displease Thee, O Lord? Where

have I failed? Why are the answers to my prayers and pleas withheld?" In response to the feelings of his heart and mind he cried out:

"O God, where art thou? And where is the pavilion that covereth thy hiding place?" (D&C 121:1).

The reassuring response came:

"My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment;

"And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes" (D&C 121:7-8).

The promise God gave to Joseph Smith is a promise for all of us: "If thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes," and also over heartaches caused by misconduct of loved ones.

Love, patience, understanding

As we are called upon to suffer we need to ask ourselves the question:

"The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he?" (D&C 122:8).

When I think of the Savior's admonition to do cheerfully all things that lie in our power, I think of the father of the prodigal son. The father was heartbroken by the loss and conduct of his wayward son. Yet we have no mention of his lamenting, "Where did I go wrong?" "What have I done to deserve this?" Or, "Where did I fail?"

Instead he seemed to have endured without bitterness his son's misconduct and welcomed him back with love. "For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry" (Luke 15:24).

When family members disappoint us, we especially need to learn endurance. As long as we exercise love, patience, and understanding, even when no progress is apparent, we are not failing. We must keep trying.

Race for eternal life

As we viewed on television some of the Olympic games held this summer in Los Angeles, we thrilled at the abilities of these fine young athletes from all over the world. One might easily compare these races and contests of the Olympics with the great race in which we are all involved—the race for eternal life. One gold-medal winner said his success was achieved by being able to endure the pain of commitment and self-discipline.

The Apostle Paul likened life to a great race when he declared: "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain" (1 Corinthians 9:24).

And before the words of Paul fell upon the ears of his listeners, the counsel of the Preacher, the son of David, cautioned: "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, but he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (see Ecclesiastes 9:11; Matthew 10:22; Mark 13:13).

What does it take to endure in the race for eternal life, to become a champion?

To become a winner in the race for eternal life requires effort—constant work, striving, and enduring well with God's help. But the key is that we must take it just one step at a time.

Personal discipline

The ingredient that is essential in learning to endure is consistent effort. In our race for eternal life, pain and obstacles will confront all of us. We may experience heartaches, sorrow, death, sins, weakness, disasters, physical illness, pain, mental anguish, unjust criticism, loneliness, or rejection. How we handle these challenges determines whether they become stumbling stones or building blocks. To the valiant these challenges make progress and development possible.

I am acquainted with a young woman who has just moved here from the eastern part of the United States

after having gone through a painful divorce. She is in the process of looking for a job. One day an interviewer asked her what her goals were—where did she think she would be five years from now? She said to him, "I can't think that far ahead. For right now I have to just take it one day at a time." This is what we must do when faced with trials and setbacks in our lives. Enduring well is accomplished by personal discipline hour by hour and day by day, not by public declaration.

Take the glory and the knocks

There are many types of disappointments and sorrows with which we may be faced. We have already discussed the pain of sin in our lives and in the lives of our family members. Let me share with you other types of happenings that we may be called upon to endure.

Let me take a few minutes to tell you about a beautiful young lady of whom we are all very proud. I will identify her as Diane because that is her real name. Diane was captain of the University of Utah's first national women's championship gymnastics team. In Miami, Florida, for the first-ever American professional tour, she over-rotated on a practice vault, landed on her neck, and damaged her spinal cord. Her slender, delicate body, which had endured hundreds of hours of demanding routines and the accompanying torturous training, was broken. The gal with the dazzling smile who was recognized as the heart of the team was now faced with the challenge of accepting sympathy as her reward or getting on with her life.

Early in her gymnastics career when someone asked her, "Aren't you afraid of getting hurt?" she replied, "No, you take the glory and you take the knocks. I'll just take whatever comes."

Diane's capacity to cope and get on with her life is best measured by her graduating from college two and one-half years after being paralyzed from

the chest down. Wheelchair-bound, she seldom missed a class, was a good student, and was popular with classmates and instructors.

Just a few weeks ago Diane wheeled herself into a third-grade classroom in a Salt Lake area elementary school, swallowed hard, and faced the curious students as their nervous teacher. "I've always wanted to be a teacher," she says with conviction. "I can't think of anything I'd want to do more." "How about performing in the Olympics?" she was asked. "Yes," she responds wistfully, "I wanted that a lot, too."

How refreshing is her enduring attitude: "I always got around fairly well on campus in my wheelchair alone, but when I came to steep hills I made friends in a hurry."

Diane has taken the knocks and the glory. She cares and she shares. She finds fun where others may not see it: "I'm genuinely happy and content with my life. I'm not bitter or angry. In a way I'm just as athletic as I ever was."

With her superb attitude and self-discipline, and with the help of a loving family, friends, and students, she continues to "go for the gold." Diane, thank you for teaching us what enduring is all about.

"He that endureth to the end"

In whatever circumstance we may find ourselves, whether in the midst of tragedy, the pain of misconduct, or merely the daily struggle to live the life of a faithful Latter-day Saint, we must remember "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."

Sometimes as children we were told everything would be all right. But life is not like that. No matter who you are, you will have problems. Tragedy and frustration are the unexpected intruders on life's plans. Someone has said, "Life is what happens to you while you are making other plans." It is important that we not look upon our afflictions as a punishment from God.

True, our own actions may cause some of our problems, but often there is no evident misconduct that has caused our trials. Just the normal journey through life teaches us that nothing worthwhile comes easy.

Endure and suffer without yielding

Sometimes the most challenging form of endurance is found in trying to stay with our priorities, commitments, and assignments. How easy it is for some of us to lose our way when the unexpected, and seemingly undeserved, surface in our lives. Greatness is best measured by how well an individual responds to the happenings in life that appear to be totally unfair, unreasonable, and undeserved. Sometimes we are inclined to put up with a situation rather than endure. To endure is to bear up under, to stand firm against, to suffer without yielding, to continue to be, or to exhibit the state or power of lasting.

Day by day we can make the effort to gain the power to last and to suffer without yielding. Inspiration and motivation are found in many places—from the cases I have cited and from many other examples to be seen on every hand. We can also receive strength from studying the scriptures and praying constantly.

Endure well

Friends and loved ones often offer strength and support when our own resolve is weak. In turn, our own strength and capacity will be doubled when we help others endure.

I pray that God will help us to endure well, with purpose and power.

When we so do, the meaningful declaration in 2 Timothy 4:7 will take on a new dimension:

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

When heartaches, tragedies, disappointments, injury, unusual attention, fame, or excessive prosperity become part of our lives, our challenges and responsibilities will be to endure them well. God will assist us in our quest to conquer, triumph, and continue if we humbly rededicate ourselves to the meaningful declaration "We have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things" (Articles of Faith 1:13).

God does live. Jesus is the Christ. One of His marks of greatness, His endurance, stands as a constant beacon for us to emulate. During His earthly sojourn He endured well as He suffered agony and rejection in their deepest forms. I bear my witness that God will help us to endure as we put forth the effort to live His teachings, seek His guidance, and keep His commandments. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Marvin J. Ashton, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder Russell C. Taylor, who was sustained last conference as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He will be followed by Elder Robert B. Harbertson, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Russell C. Taylor

Joy and blessings follow service

On this momentous occasion, my first time at this pulpit, I stand humbly and prayerfully. May I share from the testimony of the heart and from the fire of application and experience the personal joy of service in God's kingdom.

I can say unashamedly, I rejoice in the service of God. My experience teaches that the highest goodness attainable is a life of unselfish service to mankind. The Master said, "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Matthew 23:11).

It has been wisely said, "Service is the rent we pay for our own room on earth." We should know that the rent is due on a daily basis and know that the receipt is never stamped "paid in full," because the rent, service in God's kingdom, is again due today and due tomorrow.

Some mistakenly think that a commitment to service comes *after* a great spiritual experience. This is like the man who is cold, standing before the stove, and saying, "Give me heat, and *then* I will put in some wood." The joy and blessings of service *follow* the rendering of service. The missionary who renders eighteen months of faithful missionary service *then* has a lifetime to think about it, while perfecting a life of service to others. Some would want and expect the windows of heaven to open *before* they pay their tithing, even though the prophet Malachi so plainly teaches:

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse . . . and *prove* me *now* . . . saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open *you* the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Malachi 3:10; italics added).

All must certify with actions

There comes a time in the life of all people when they must *certify* with their actions what they believe. Jesus said of his own life, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Matthew 20:28).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie has so eloquently taught us that service is essential to salvation. I have been impressed with the *urgency* of doing. Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Being willing is not enough; we must do. Progress is not created by contented people. It is up to us, you and me, to be uncomfortable in complacency, to refrain from being spectators, and to be players in the game of life. The Lord has chosen His people to perform a mighty work. Our home teaching, our visiting teaching should be more than *going*; it should be *doing* with Christian love. It can be done; you can each do your portion of the work because you desire it.

"To serve one another"

Fathers and mothers, with your strength of example you will influence your sons and daughters for eternity with examples of loving, uncomplaining service far more convincingly by *doing* than only by saying. Show your children a life of love for them by a life of love and service to the Church and to our Father's children in spiritual need.

I recall King Benjamin's instruction to parents as they were counseled in teaching their children:

"But ye will teach them to walk in the ways of truth and soberness; ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve one another" (Mosiah 4:15).

Blessings of unselfish service

As wisely stated, "Until a man learns to think, he is not an educated

man, no matter how many degrees he has." I would also add that a thinking man will want to serve. The greater your service, the closer your access to God. One who serves and sacrifices goes to bed at night with peace of mind.

I think of a dear sister who has crippling arthritis in her hands but faithfully each week, upon entering the genealogical name extraction center in Denver, finds the joints of her fingers limber enough to type the names with efficiency and rapidity—the blessings of unselfish service.

Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, feet that were hot, sweaty, and soiled with dust and dirt. He washed not their hands or face; he washed their feet. He who is the greatest shall be the least—he it is who learns to serve. (See D&C 50:26.)

Well of spirituality has deepened

Within days of arriving in Europe, Sister Taylor and I, still living out of suitcases in a small hotel room in Germany, were scheduled to attend a mission presidents' seminar in Amsterdam, Holland. As we drove to and from the seminar, as arranged by the Regional Representative, we set out to meet our leaders in western Europe. We drove an hour each way into a small village to bless a leader and his family. We went to their homes. In each home we met a lovely wife and handsome children. We ate at their tables, slept as invited, and in each case knelt in prayer and blessed their homes, their families, their callings, and the area for success-

ful missionary service. I now know our leaders there. I felt a genuine love for them, and I felt the same response from them.

You have those feelings of approaching in some small degree the indescribable joy of the celestial glory. He that loses his life shall save it. (See Luke 17:33.) My well of spirituality has indeed been deepened.

I invite those yet to be members of the Church to come off the back rows as spectators and become participants in the Lord's restored Church through baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost, that they might also lose their lives in service and thereby save it.

Through the years my heart has been changed and softened through service. As the least of the Brethren, I invite all to lengthen and strengthen their service in God's kingdom. I bear witness to the divinity of this work. I also bear witness that this Church is led by inspired leaders, whom I sustain with all of my soul, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Russell C. Taylor, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us.

Elder Robert B. Harbertson, who was sustained at the April conference as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will be our next speaker. He will be followed by Elder Devere Harris, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Robert B. Harbertson

Brothers and sisters, I want you to know that I stand before you as a living example of Elder Ashton's definition of endurance. Waiting to stand before these microphones, I have endured pain, anguish, and all the other characteristics he spoke of.

Obedience and willingness to serve

Obedience to God's commands and a willingness to serve have always been requisites for a true disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul teaches us that even the Savior, "though he were a

Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered" (Hebrews 5:8). Our willingness to humble ourselves and shed the shackles of selfishness seems imperative to our progress and true happiness in this life. Isaiah penned these truths:

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

"If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land" (Isaiah 1:18-19).

The great test of time reveals that he who refuses to accept these true principles becomes unhappy and dissatisfied and, as the Prophet Joseph indicated, "is left unto himself, to kick against the pricks, to persecute the saints, and to fight against God" (D&C 121:38).

Alma's story and teaching experience

In the Book of Mormon a great story and teaching experience unfold as Alma, the son of Alma, begins his ministry in establishing the Church among his people. From Zarahemla to Gideon the Church was set in order and the gospel of Jesus Christ taught. After a season Alma took his journeys into the land of Melek. There Alma had great success. The people heard and believed the word of God and were baptized throughout all the land.

With great happiness and joy Alma departed and traveled to Ammonihah, a city to the north of Melek. There he continued his teaching, but without success. Satan had gained a great stronghold among the people of the city. Despite the prayers and labors of Alma, the people of Ammonihah hardened their hearts and would not believe anything he taught them. They even reviled him, spit upon him, and cast him out of their city.

"He returned speedily"

He decided to take his journey to the city of Aaron, being weighed down heavily with disappointment, sorrow, and anguish because of the wickedness of the people of Ammonihah. While Alma was in this state of woe, an angel of the Lord appeared to him and told him to rejoice because he had been faithful in keeping God's commandments since he had received his first divine message. This angel was the same one who had appeared to Alma and the sons of Mosiah when they were being so rebellious and causing so much harm to the Church. Now the angel told Alma he was to return to the city of Ammonihah and to preach unto the people again, telling them that except they repent the Lord God would destroy them.

I wonder what his feelings were at that moment, knowing and feeling so strongly the experience he had just endured with these people. He had been reviled and physically thrown out of the city, and I'm sure his life had been threatened. And now he was being told to return once again to these people.

Alma's reaction to this command is most interesting. The scriptures say this: "Now it came to pass that after Alma had received his message from the angel of the Lord he returned speedily to the land of Ammonihah" (Alma 8:18).

Isn't that interesting, brothers and sisters? It says, "He returned *speedily*." Maybe his earlier experience with the angel caused him not to tarry or question, but to react immediately. But I believe he was motivated by love for the Lord and his desire to be obedient. Alma's reaction and attitude to this request have been of great strength to me as I strive to serve the Lord.

Amulek called to serve

As Alma returned to the city, he met a man who provided him with food and shelter. This man, whose name was Amulek, had received a vision and rec-

ognized Alma as a prophet of God. Alma tarried many days with Amulek before he began to preach to the people. Amulek, though a Nephite, had not been as strong as he might have been in defending the truths of God and had fallen somewhat inactive. He was a man of great reputation and was an industrious man who had acquired many riches.

Alma was a blessing to Amulek and his family while he abided with them, and they loved him deeply. Finally, the word came again to Alma, saying, "Go," and also telling him to call Amulek to travel with him and be his companion in teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. Amulek obeyed and began his missionary labors with Alma.

Here again, brothers and sisters, I am strengthened and guided in how I should live and react to the opportunities the Lord gives me to serve. Amulek had much; he was comfortable and well-to-do, had a good wife and children, had a good position in the com-

munity, and yet he responded without hesitation to the call to serve.

I have recently been called to serve. I am deeply humbled by this calling and responsibility. I know not why I was called, but pledge to you, my brothers and sisters, to react "speedily" to whatever I am commissioned to do, and I will do so without hesitation.

I love the Lord Jesus Christ and bear solemn testimony to you that he lives. He is the resurrected Son of God. He is our Savior. This is his only true church, and it is good, of which I bear testimony in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

We have just heard from Elder Robert B. Harbertson, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Devere Harris, who was also sustained last conference as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now address us.

Elder Devere Harris

Dear brothers and sisters, this is very humbling, and I pray sincerely for the Spirit of the Lord to sustain me. Since being called as a General Authority last April, I have developed a greater love for the gospel of Jesus Christ and a much deeper appreciation and love for a great and wonderful wife who has stood by my side through every facet of married life. I am grateful for our five children, who sustain us and live as they should, and thankful for parents who taught correct principles and set a marvelous pattern for us to follow. I have learned to love and appreciate good men and women who have influenced my life and stood by my side through many Church callings.

Dedication of temple in Australia

I am most thankful to a kind Father in Heaven for the privilege of serving in the Area Presidency of the South Pacific Islands under the leadership and direction of a great and spiritual leader, Elder Robert L. Simpson, and of being one with a counselor, companion, and friend, Elder Philip T. Sonntag. What a thrill it has been in the last month to participate in the dedication of a beautiful temple in faraway Australia, and to see thousands of wonderful Saints as they came from all corners of that great land and raised their voices in song and prayer and appreciation—true evidence that temples are being built in many countries across the face of the earth and that thousands of righteous men and women and children will visit them

to be sealed together in family units for time and for all eternity.

Chapel in Papua, New Guinea

We visited the Saints in New Zealand and felt the same sweet spirit. Our spirits were lifted and our testimonies strengthened. What a privilege to participate in the dedication of the first LDS chapel in Papua, New Guinea—where 450 wonderful native people sat with tear-filled eyes as President Robert L. Simpson dedicated their beautiful building. A handsome young New Guinean stood in that meeting with a Book of Mormon in one hand and a Bible in the other; he held them high above his head and bore a strong witness and testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ to his people. We thrilled after traveling sixty-five miles to a jungle village to witness the faith and testimony of our members there. They gave us gifts that had been handed down from generation to generation because we represented the gospel they love so much. And we gave a prayer and blessing on their village before we left. Tears filled our eyes as we saw President Kimball's picture hanging in a building in far-off New Guinea.

Principles of leadership

We felt the spirit of missionary work as we literally watched the prophecies unfold that the gospel of Jesus Christ should be taken to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. (See Mosiah 15:28.) I am grateful for the spirit of the gospel, the spirit of missionary work, and the spiritual leadership of great latter-day leaders. I support and sustain them with all my heart.

I have observed from many years of activity in the Church that there are some underlying principles of leadership that cause men to become great. There is a certain spiritual ingredient necessary in all areas of activity if we are to reach the pinnacle of performance. George Washington, father of

our country, was on his knees at Valley Forge, seeking the spirit and the direction of God. Abraham Lincoln, as he stood on the platform of the train as it left Springfield, Illinois, for Washington, D.C., where he was to be president of the United States, said this: "Without the assistance of that Divine Being . . . , I cannot succeed. With that assistance, I cannot fail" (Ida M. Tarbell, ed., *Selections from the Letters, Speeches, and State Papers of Abraham Lincoln* [Boston: Ginn and Co., 1911], p. 63).

These same principles of spiritual leadership caused Moses, Nephi, Abraham, and Enoch to become giants in the land. What powers of the spirit did David use as he walked out on the battlefield to meet Goliath? He said, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

"This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand" (1 Samuel 17:45-46).

Powerful resources of the spirit

What source of power did Moses use as he stretched his arm toward the Red Sea and caused the waters to roll back and his people to cross on dry land?

Columbus sailed from Spain, and after several months there was mutiny on the ships Pinta and Nina. He was told that if land was not sighted within so many hours they would turn around and go back. Columbus said that he went into the cabin and prayed mightily to God, and on that dark night, 12 October 1492, a small island was sighted, and they named it San Salvador, meaning Holy Redeemer.

I bear witness that inherent in every member of the Church are powerful resources of the spirit if we righteously seek them. Man's closest communication with his Maker is through the medium of prayer. It is the means offered him to place his prob-

lems before God and receive spiritual strength and sustenance.

Spiritual power

Each of us has a right to revelation as far as it relates to our area of responsibility. I sincerely believe if we should ever lose the power of individual revelation in the Church we would have lost most everything. We could implement programs of the Church, but without that great spiritual ingredient we would fail to redeem the Saints, convert the nations, and accomplish the mission of the Church.

We can each have access to those great spiritual blessings and that great power used by David and Moses—but there is a price to pay. Let me quote: “There are many called, but few are chosen. And why are they not chosen?”

“Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men, that they do not learn this one lesson—

“That the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven” (D&C 121:34–36).

Now, brothers and sisters, what were the powers of heaven? They caused the lame to walk, the blind to see, the dead to rise. And through these same powers the earth was organized. But here is the key—the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness. (See D&C 121:41–42.) The key, then, to the future and to the use of these spiritual blessings is personal righteousness.

As President Romney once said, “May we recognize that prayer is the instrument of miracles,” and may we

use the power and direction of the Holy Spirit and not rely wholly upon our own ability in the work of the Lord.

A yearning, a longing, a reaching up

I bear my witness that God lives, that the gospel of Jesus Christ is true, that a prophet of God leads this Church today, that life is eternal. I believe that man was “overbuilt” for this world. Have you ever seen a man who was totally satisfied with what he has here? There seems to be a yearning, a longing, a reaching up for something not had here. I think a wise man of old described it best when he said, “Surely God has planted the seeds of eternity into the souls of men.”

I bear witness he has planted those seeds, and I pledge all that I have for the building of the kingdom of God in this work in these latter days, and I confirm this witness and this pledge in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Devere Harris, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

The chorus and congregation will now join in singing “We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet,” following which Elder F. Enzo Busche, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will speak to us.

The chorus and congregation sang “We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet.”

Elder F. Enzo Busche

How wonderful to be in the presence of a living prophet!

Not an ordinary day

In one of the large cities of this world there is a man standing at the

window of his apartment, looking at the gray colors of a rainy day. "This is not an ordinary day," he reflects to himself as he watches the two young men, who have just paid him a visit, disappearing on their bicycles at the end of the road. He is becoming aware of how richly his life has been blessed since he began to listen to the spirit radiated by these two humble ambassadors of the Lord from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This truly is not an ordinary day, for on this day he was allowed, by invitation of the two young missionaries, to make a covenant with his Heavenly Father for the remission of his sins through baptism and to receive the Holy Ghost for himself.

"I always thought that I was not a big sinner," he reflects. "I have always provided for my family. I was a good father, and I was a good husband to my beloved late wife."

Understands true purpose

He remembers how his life was brought into a new perspective when he, for the first time in his life, learned from the two young men how to truly pray—not to say just a few nice words, but to open up his heart in sacred communication with his Heavenly Father. Oh, what great joy came into his heart as he learned from the missionaries that he is indeed literally a child of a loving Heavenly Father! With an ever-increasing light within himself, he now understands the true purpose of the pain, frustrations, and strugglings of his earlier life that became an instigating influence to make him think, to make him search, and to make him become an earnest seeker of the truth so that he was ready to listen as these two young men came knocking at his door.

Oh, how much he has learned since that first sacred experience of opening his heart and speaking to his Father! Suddenly he understands the deep, meaningful purpose of his life. He is now aware, in the depths of gratitude, of the many precious blessings of every day with its opportunities to serve

and help. With an ever-increasing awareness of the need for constant repentance, he is able to fill all the hours of his life with the presence of this Spirit and, therefore, with great joy. He feels with each new day as if the sun of a beautiful spring morning is quickening and refreshing his soul after a long, dark, Arctic night.

Blinded through traditions

In the light of this Spirit within him, he sees the people of this world as they are—running around in their vanity, in their vain ambitions, and in their lack of awareness of the greatness of God and His plan of salvation. He is learning to understand that the only burden, the only pain, and the only frustration of a human being is the burden of wrongdoing—the burden of sin. "Oh, what a sacred experience," he reflects, "to learn about myself and the majestic request by the Spirit to grow in the dimensions of honesty, to grow in the dimensions of exercising the pure love of Christ, to be able to forgive, to have patience, to understand, and to overcome laziness, procrastination, and other cravings of the carnal mind."

He understands that God was always there but that he himself was blinded—blinded through the traditions of his environment. He reflects on the truth of the words of the prophet Isaiah:

"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:

"But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isaiah 59:1–2).

"Fit for the kingdom of God"

He can now see that no matter how numerous the sins of a human being can be, they all can be traced back to one single source or origin—the laziness, complacency and blindness that keeps us from looking and searching for our God and King in every phase of our

lives and becoming totally His disciples. For the first time he understands the words of the Lord, Jesus Christ, when He said:

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 16:24-25).

He understands that the Lord knew there could be no compromise made. When we are not fully dedicated, we cannot truly stand in His light and be His disciple.

"And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

"And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:61-62).

Joy of the penetrating light

In light of this Spirit within him, he is not afraid of what his friends and relatives might think of him now that he has taken upon himself Christ's name. Perhaps they will not understand, and maybe they will make fun of him. But he feels now how easy it will be to love them anyway, because he understands them better than ever before; and he will do everything that is in his heart to show real interest in them, that they might be filled with light to penetrate the darkness of their lives.

He understands, in the light and the power of the Holy Ghost, what a privilege it is that the Lord allows and commands us to pay a full tithe and invites us to give service, that we can show through our actions every day how much we love our Heavenly Father.

No, it is not difficult to say goodbye to the world with its craving for lust, its thirst for pleasure, and its quest for power, leaving the world groping in the mire of egoism. He understands that, as he is placing his life in the hand

of Heavenly Father, he has now become a disciple of Christ, and he has experienced the sweetness of the divine light in its fullness—the light and power of the Holy Ghost. No longer can he be satisfied by the light he can find in this world. No, he will not be able to forget his Savior and Master anymore!

He appreciates so much the special privilege of being invited every Sabbath day to renew his covenant in the sacred setting of the sacrament. The power of this light gives him the knowledge that he will always listen to that Spirit that teaches a man to pray, about which Nephi, the prophet of whom he has just learned, testified: "For if ye would hearken unto the Spirit which teacheth a man to pray ye would know that ye must pray" (2 Nephi 32:8).

He now understands that by the authority of this Spirit he was led to grow in reverence, that the words of his prayers became fewer and fewer until he became quiet and was changed from someone who was speaking to someone who was listening—listening to the still, soft, sweet voice whose word is quick and powerful, and "sharper than a two-edged sword" (D&C 6:2).

Are we allowing the Spirit to guide us?

My dear brothers and sisters in the covenant, how blessed are we that *our* eyes have been opened and *our* hearts have been touched with the awareness of this truth!

As we now leave this newly baptized member in his marvelous experience of a new life, I invite you, in the spirit of the love of God, to reflect: How much are you allowing the power of this voice to control your own life? Consider the words of the prophet Alma:

"And now behold, I ask of you, my brethren of the Church, have ye spiritually been born of God? Have ye received his image in your countenances? Have ye experienced this mighty change in your hearts? . . .

"Have ye walked, keeping yourselves blameless before God? Could ye say, if ye were called to die at this time, within yourselves, that ye have been sufficiently humble? That your garments have been cleansed and made white through the blood of Christ, who will come to redeem his people from their sins? . . .

"Behold, he sendeth an invitation unto all men, for the arms of mercy are extended towards them, and he saith: Repent, and I will receive you" (Alma 5:14, 27, 33).

My dear brothers and sisters, let us learn to be always enlightened with the powerful understanding of the need for a constant change of heart, that the light and power of the Holy Ghost can penetrate us always to make us better fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, sons and daughters, more diligent

workers—with a dream and a vision to touch the lives of all of our Heavenly Father's children and to bring about the final revolution to all the people of this world—a revolution under the leadership of the only leader of truth, without whom there will be no peace and no salvation, even the Lord, Jesus Christ.

I say this humbly in His name, amen.

President Benson

Elder F. Enzo Busche, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

Elder Russell M. Nelson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our next speaker. He will be followed by Elder Howard W. Hunter, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Russell M. Nelson

Misused power severs its source

One day while working around our home, trimming the hedges and vines, I had an interesting experience. I was at work with my electric clippers and long extension cord. I had done this often, each time reminding myself of the need to use these clippers with great care in order to avoid cutting things that I shouldn't.

Suddenly the blades became jammed. Caught between them was the power cord itself. Because I had not seen it in the thicket I was trimming, I had cut into the very line that was providing the power to work.

"Isn't that one of life's great lessons?" I thought. *"Power, if misused, can cut into the very source of that power."*

Just as the careless use of electrical power can sever the source of that power, so is it possible to misuse spiritual power to sever our spiritual power line. We would then lose that which

enables us to generate success in our lives. Proper use of our spiritual power line allows us to learn, to labor, to be obedient to law, and to love. While these capabilities lead to fulfillment, at the same time they also carry risk.

Power to learn

Consider the power to learn. How essential it is for progress, whether one's career is professional or that of a salesman, a farmer, or a homemaker.

But learning can be misused! A sharp mind, misdirected, can cut into that line of spiritual power. Some "learned" souls delight in leading others astray, all in the so-called name of learning. Years later their victims may realize that they have climbed their ladder of learning, only to find it leaning against the wrong wall. A prophet of the Lord has counseled us on this point:

"O that cunning plan of the evil one! O the vainness, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men! When they

are learned they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves, wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not. And they shall perish.

"But to be learned is good *if* they hearken unto the counsels of God" (2 Nephi 9:28-29; italics added).

What happens without spiritual learning? What happens to the pilot of a glider when he is cut loose from the power of his tow plane? There may be banks and turns, but ultimately there is only *one* direction he can go, and that is down!

We must gain learning, but we must apply it wisely. Otherwise, we have politics without principle, industry without morality, knowledge without wisdom, science without humanity!

Power to labor

Consider the power of labor. Labor well spent increases our capacity to do. President Heber J. Grant often said, "That which we persist in doing becomes easier for us to do; not that the nature of the thing itself is changed, but that our power to do is increased" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1901, p. 63).

The Lord, through his prophet Lehi, said, "It must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things" (2 Nephi 2:11). So, in reality, competition forces us to improve. It deserves our praise and our gratitude. Without it we could not reach the heights that are otherwise ours to achieve.

But our labor can be misdirected. One can be anxiously engaged in a meaningless cause. Or one can do something wrong a hundred times and call it experience! Some would avoid labor while pursuing the goals of wealth without working for it, or an honored position without preparing for it. The converted Lamanites taught this lesson: "Rather than shed the blood of their brethren they would give up their own lives; and rather than take away from a brother they would give unto him; and rather than spend their days in

idleness they would labor abundantly with their hands" (Alma 24:18).

Power of obedience to law

Next, consider the power of obedience to law. One of the great applications of spiritual power is obeying the laws of both God and man. Freedom to act and mastery of our actions both emanate from law. "When we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated" (D&C 130:21).

I relearned that so well from President Kimball. On one occasion when he needed an operation that I was to perform, he first asked me for a priesthood blessing. Following that, he said, "Now you may proceed to do that which must be done in order to make that blessing possible."

He knew, and I knew, that not even for God's prophet can anyone be exempted from law. Not even for God's Son could divine law be broken!

Power to love

Consider the power to love. I remember a mother I met once as I made a professional house call. This woman was confined in an iron lung. The ravages of polio had effectively destroyed all the breathing muscles so that her life was completely dependent upon this large metal tank and the electrical motor that powered its noisy bellows.

While there, I watched her three children as they related to their mother. The oldest interrupted our work to ask permission to go to a friend's house for an hour. Later the second child asked her mother for help with arithmetic. Finally the youngest child, so small that she couldn't see her mother's face directly, looked up at her image in a mirror that had been placed over the mother's head and asked, "Mommy, may I have a cookie?" I've never forgotten that lesson on the power of love. This woman, virtually disabled and certainly incapable of any degree of physical enforcement of parental au-

thority, sweetly influenced that home solely with the power to love!

The power of love between a man and a woman is special. The love shared with my beloved companion, Dantzel, has increased the power of love for both of us. That love brought us to the altar in the temple of the Lord. Her love for me motivated her to teach school during the early years of our marriage. When things were tight, she held a second job at night. Once when things were exceptionally tight, she even sold her blood in between her two jobs to keep us solvent. (Her dear parents may have wondered what kind of a son-in-law they had on that occasion!) I thought of that many years later when she needed a transfusion urgently and her blood couldn't be matched readily with donor blood from the blood bank. What a privilege it was for me to donate mine directly to her.

Can the power to love be misused? Sadly, yes. The illegitimate union of the sexes has, in my observation, been one of the greatest causes of grief. In some instances, the improper use of this sacred physical endowment has even destroyed its use in later years.

Misused, the power of love can cut off spiritual power. The abuse of the power to love can result in no love at all. Only its cheap facsimiles of lewdness and lust remain in the wake of pleasure without conscience. Instead of feasting at the banquet table of bounteous love with his own posterity, one is left with scraps from the table—only the refuse from what might have been.

The ashes of burned "love" smolder with the smoke of sadness. Yet the embers of evil still burn. But as loud voices argue on, let us remember that those who advocate abortion have already been born! Those who freely deny God with their amoral and agnostic practices will one day find that He may just as freely deny them! (See 3 Nephi 28:34.)

Source of spiritual power

The source of our spiritual power is the Lord! The ultimate source of spiritual power is God our Father. The messenger of this power is the Holy Ghost. This power differs from electrical power. An electrical appliance *consumes* power. The use of His spiritual power *replenishes* our power. While electrical power can be used only for measured *periods* of time, spiritual power can be used for time and *eternity*!

Our spiritual power line is strengthened through prayer. As we counsel with God in all our doings, he will direct us for good. (See Alma 37:37.) Prayer is available whenever we ask for it!

But the Lord places the initiative upon us. He expects us to reach for his power, just as we must insert the plug in the outlet for electricity. He said, "If thou shalt *ask*, thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that thou mayest know the mysteries and peaceable things—that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal" (D&C 42:61; italics added). Personal worthiness and scripture study enable us to do more with this power.

Rewards result from the righteous use of the spiritual power belonging to the priesthood! And they are so great that they are almost beyond human comprehension. To those couples who bear and share that priesthood worthily and remain faithful to the law of the everlasting covenant of eternal marriage, enduring the congested years and trials of diapers and dishes, crowded kitchen and thin pocketbook, service in the Church, education and the burning of the midnight oil, the Lord makes this promise: "Ye shall come forth in the first resurrection; . . . and shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and *powers*, dominions, . . . [and there] shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever" (D&C 132:19; italics added).

The spiritual power line conveys revelation. Revelation is given to the President for the Church, and to leaders and teachers in their respective callings. Personal revelation is provided for the glorification of individual members and families in the Church. These lines are well insulated, and they are not scrambled! Our Father is a God of order! No one else receives revelation to govern the Church; that will be delivered only to the President of the Church. The father in the home next door will not receive revelation for his neighbor's family.

Protect spiritual power line

It is possible to disregard or even misuse spiritual power. Some have misused the power of prayer by making that sacred communication trivial. Some well-meaning Saints even do the right things for the wrong reasons, if they narrowly center on the *percentages* they report rather than on the precious *people* they serve.

Like cutting the cord with clippers, it is possible to use spiritual power so carelessly as to destroy one's very connection to that power. I know a husband who dominates his wife as though she were his possession. He seems to regard her about as he does his automobile or his suitcase, which he uses for his own purposes. And I know a wife who dominates her husband to the point that he has lost all feelings of worth.

Remember, "The rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and . . . the

powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled *only* upon the principles of righteousness" (D&C 121:36; italics added).

The unrighteous use of priesthood authority surely severs the connection to the Source of that authority. (See D&C 121:37.)

Worship strengthens our power line to deity. *There can be no true worship without sacrifice, and there can be no true sacrifice without a cause.* The cause that earns our love and priority is the cause of Jesus Christ.

Speaking of his own atonement, the Savior proclaimed, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world" (John 18:37). His example of worship, sacrifice, and commitment to cause becomes ours! His is the ultimate source of all our power to do good.

As we carefully and prayerfully protect the spiritual power line that links us to the Savior, we become more like him!

Of his sacred name and mission I solemnly bear special witness. Of his divine sonship I proclaim sacred testimony. That this is his church I fervently declare, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Russell M. Nelson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just addressed us.

We will now hear from Elder Howard W. Hunter, also a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, who will be our concluding speaker.

Elder Howard W. Hunter

Sea of Galilee

North of Jerusalem about eighty miles or so lies a beautiful body of water known earlier in biblical times as the Sea of Chinneroth and the Lake of

Gennesaret, but known best to us today as the Sea of Galilee. It is a freshwater inland lake a little over twelve miles long and seven miles wide. The River Jordan flows through it, from north to

south, on its journey toward the Dead Sea.

This was the lake Jesus knew as a child and as a young man, its western shores lying just twelve or fifteen miles from his boyhood home of Nazareth. It was to this lake and the neighboring Galilean hills that Jesus returned so often during those demanding years of his public ministry.

On one journey to Galilee, the Savior taught the multitudes crowded near the water's edge. With the people pressing ever closer, Jesus sought a better teaching circumstance by stepping into a boat and pushing out a few yards into the sea. There, a short distance from the eager crowd, he could be seen and heard by those straining for sight and words of the Master.

"Have ye no faith?"

Following his discourse, the Savior invited his disciples to join him, and they set out together for the other side of the lake. The Sea of Galilee is quite low, about 680 feet below sea level, and the heat becomes quite great. The hills surrounding the water rise up very sharply and to considerable height. The cold air rushing down from the hills meets the warm air rising from the lake in such a way that sudden and temporarily violent storms can occur on the surface of that inland sea. It was just such a storm as this that Jesus and his disciples found as they crossed the lake at evening time. This is the way Mark described it:

"And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships.

"And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.

"And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?

"And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be

still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

"And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?

"And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" (Mark 4:36-41).

He can calm troubled waters in our lives

All of us have seen some sudden storms in our lives. A few of them, though temporary like these on the Sea of Galilee, can be violent and frightening and potentially destructive. As individuals, as families, as communities, as nations, even as a church, we have had sudden squalls arise which have made us ask one way or another, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" And one way or another we always hear in the stillness after the storm, "Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?"

None of us would like to think we have *no* faith, but I suppose the Lord's gentle rebuke here is largely deserved. This great Jehovah, in whom we say we trust and whose name we have taken upon us, is he who said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters" (Genesis 1:6). And he is also the one who said, "Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear" (Genesis 1:9). Furthermore, it was he who parted the Red Sea, allowing the Israelites to pass through on dry ground. (See Exodus 14:21-22.) Certainly it should be no surprise that he could command a few elements acting up on the Sea of Galilee. And our faith should remind us that he can calm the troubled waters of our lives.

Story of Mary Ann Baker

Let me recall for you the story of Mary Ann Baker. Her beloved and only brother suffered from the same respira-

tory disease that had taken their parents' lives, and he left their home in Chicago to find a warmer climate in the southern part of the United States.

For a time he seemed to be improving, but then a sudden turn in his health came and he died almost immediately. Mary Ann and her sister were heartbroken. It only added to their deep grief that neither their own health nor their personal finances allowed them to claim their brother's body or to finance its return to Chicago for burial.

The Baker family had been raised as faithful Christians, but Mary's trust in a loving God broke under the strain of her brother's death and her own diminished circumstances. "God does not care for me or mine," said Mary Ann. "This particular manifestation of what they call 'divine providence' is unworthy of a God of love." Does that sound at all familiar?

"I have always tried to believe on Christ and give the Master a consecrated life," she said, "but this is more than I can bear. What have I done to deserve this? What have I left undone that God should wreak His vengeance upon me in this way?" (Ernest K. Emurian, *Living Stories of Famous Hymns* [Boston: W. A. Widdle Co., 1955, pp. 83-85].

"Master, the tempest is raging!"

I suppose we have all had occasion, individually or collectively, to cry out on some stormy sea, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" And so cried Mary Ann Baker.

But as the days and the weeks went by, the God of life and love began to calm the winds and the waves of what this sweet young woman called "her unsanctified heart." Her faith not only returned but it flourished, and like Job of old, she learned new things, things "too wonderful" to have known before her despair. On the Sea of Galilee, the stirring of the disciples' faith was ultimately more important than the stilling of the sea, and so it was with her.

Later, as something of a personal testimonial and caring very much for the faith of others who would be tried by personal despair, she wrote the words of the hymn we have all sung, "Master, the Tempest Is Raging." May I share it with you?

Master, the tempest is raging!
The billows are tossing high!
The sky is o'ershadowed with
blackness.

No shelter or help is nigh.

Carest thou not that we perish?
How canst thou lie asleep
When each moment so madly is
threatening
A grave in the angry deep?

Master, with anguish of spirit
I bow in my grief today.
The depths of my sad heart are
troubled.

Oh, waken and save, I pray!

Torrents of sin and of anguish
Sweep o'er my sinking soul,
And I perish! I perish! dear
Master.

Oh, hasten and take control!

Then this beautiful, moving refrain:

The winds and the waves shall
obey my will;
Peace, be still! Peace, be still!
Whether the wrath of the
storm-tossed sea
Or demons or men or whatever it
be,
No waters can swallow the ship
where lies
The Master of ocean and earth and
skies.

They all shall sweetly obey my
will.
Peace, be still! Peace, be still!
They all shall sweetly obey my
will.
Peace, peace, be still!

Too often, I fear, both in the living of life and in the singing of this hymn,

we fail to emphasize the sweet peace of this concluding verse:

Master, the terror is over.
The elements sweetly rest.
Earth's sun in the calm lake is
mirrored,
And heaven's within my breast.

Linger, Oh, blessed Redeemer!
Leave me alone no more,
And with joy I shall make the
blest harbor
And rest on the blissful shore.
(*Hymns*, no. 106.)

"Be of good cheer"

We will all have some adversity in our lives. I think we can be reasonably sure of that. Some of it will have the potential to be violent and damaging and destructive. Some of it may even strain our faith in a loving God who has the power to administer relief in our behalf.

To those anxieties I think the Father of us all would say, "Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?" And of course that has to be faith for the whole journey, the entire experience, the fulness of our life, not simply around the bits and pieces and tempestuous moments. At the end of the journey, an end none of us can see now, we will say, "Master, the terror is over. . . . Linger, Oh, blessed Redeemer! Leave me alone no more."

Jesus said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). On the same occasion, he said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you" (John 14:27). Throughout his life and ministry he spoke of peace, and when he came forth from the tomb and appeared unto his disciples, his first greeting was, "Peace be unto you" (John 20:19).

Peace on lips and in heart of Savior

But Jesus was not spared grief and pain and anguish and buffeting. No tongue can speak the unutterable burden he carried, nor have we the wisdom to understand the prophet Isaiah's description of him as "a man of sorrows" (Isaiah 53:3). His ship was tossed most of his life, and, at least to mortal eyes, it crashed fatally on the rocky coast of Calvary. We are asked not to look on life with mortal eyes; with spiritual vision we know something quite different was happening upon the cross.

Peace was on the lips and in the heart of the Savior no matter how fiercely the tempest was raging. May it so be with us—in our own hearts, in our own homes, in our nations of the world, and even in the buffetings faced from time to time by the Church. We should not expect to get through life individually or collectively without some opposition.

One of the wisest of the ancient Romans once spoke a great gospel truth and probably never realized he had done so. Speaking of Roman naval power and the absolute imperative to control the oceans, Cicero said to a military aide, "He who commands the sea has command of everything." (See W. Gurney Benham, *Putnam's Complete Book of Quotations* [New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1926], p. 505.) Of that I so testify.

"Whether the wrath of the storm-tossed sea or demons or men or whatever it be, no waters can swallow the ship were lies the Master of ocean and earth and skies. They all shall sweetly obey [his] will. Peace, be still!" In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The chorus sang "Nearer, My God to Thee" without announcement.

President Benson

Thank you for that special number. I presume it is no secret this song is sung more frequently, I believe, in the meeting of the First Presidency and the Twelve than any other song.

May we remind the brethren of the general priesthood meeting which will convene in the Tabernacle this evening at 6:00 P.M. The nationwide CBS Radio Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those desiring to attend this broadcast must be in their seats no later than 9:15 A.M.

The singing for this session has been furnished by the Mormon Youth Chorus. We are grateful for the singing of this lovely young group. You have stirred our spirits. We thank you.

The chorus will now sing the closing number, "The Spirit of God Like a Fire," following which the benediction will be offered by Elder Ted E. Brewerton, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The chorus sang "The Spirit of God Like a Fire."

Elder Ted E. Brewerton offered the benediction.

GENERAL PRIESTHOOD MEETING

THIRD SESSION

The general priesthood meeting convened in the Tabernacle at 6:00 P.M. on Saturday, October 6, 1984.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for this session was provided by a combined men's choir from the Tabernacle Choir and the Mormon Youth Chorus directed by Donald Ripplinger and Robert C. Bowden with Robert Cundick at the organ.

President Hinckley opened this session with the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Brethren, we welcome you to what is doubtless the largest priesthood meeting ever held in the history of the world. I think it is safe to say that.

President Spencer W. Kimball was with us this afternoon. He is not with us this evening, but is watching the proceedings on television in his apartment. He sends his love and best wishes to all of the brethren participating in this session.

We also excuse President Marion G. Romney who is watching at his home.

These services are being relayed by closed-circuit transmission and will reach members of the priesthood gathered in the Assembly Hall, the Marriott Center on the BYU campus, and in at least seven hundred and fourteen locations in many countries around the world. Also, they are being carried to over nine hundred stake centers by satellite transmission.

We extend our love, our greetings, and our blessings to all you priesthood brethren wherever you may be.

We note that Elders Theodore M. Burton and George P. Lee are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall, and Elders J. Thomas Fyans and Robert L. Backman preside at the BYU Marriott Center.

For those in outlying areas we announce that in the first general session this morning Elder Royden G. Derrick was released as a President of the First Quorum of the Seventy, because he has been called to preside over the Seattle Temple and therefore will be residing in Seattle. He, of course, will remain

a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Marion D. Hanks was sustained to fill that vacancy in the Presidency of the Seventy. He now presides as President of the Salt Lake Temple.

Also, in that session Elders John Sonnenberg of Chicago, F. Arthur Kay of Seattle, and Keith W. Wilcox of Ogden were sustained as members of the First Quorum of the Seventy to serve for three or four years on a rotation basis, as others were called last April.

The singing during this session will be furnished by a combined men's choir of the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth Chorus under the direction of Donald Ripplinger and Robert Bowden with Robert Cundick at the organ.

The men's choir will begin this service by singing "Jesus, My Savior True." Following the singing, Elder Paul H. Dunn of the First Quorum of the Seventy will offer the invocation.

The men's choir sang "Jesus, My Savior True."

Elder Paul H. Dunn offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

The men's choir will now favor us with "What Was Witnessed in the Heavens?"

The men's choir sang "What Was Witnessed in the Heavens?"

President Hinckley

Before we get into the scheduled program of speakers, I would like to introduce to this vast audience two men who hold the priesthood and of whom we are very proud. Peter and Dale, can you come right up here?

Come right over here on my side, and Dale on this side. I like to stand between these two winners. This is Peter Vidmar, who won two golds and a silver at the recent Olympic games in Los Angeles. The best in the world in his category in sports, and a faithful Latter-day Saint and an example to us.

And Dale Murphy of the Atlanta Braves—the best baseball player in the world. We are very, very proud of him. We are honored to have these brethren with us tonight and happy to have them stand before you. Thank you, brethren.

I wish that Charlene Wells were here. I would like to introduce her to you as Miss America and a young woman of intelligence and achievement and faith and goodness; she is a tremendous credit to the Church. We are going to hear from another winner tonight, Coach LaVell Edwards who led his team to a 52 to 9 victory this afternoon over Colorado State. You're all winners! Thank you very much.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Marion D. Hanks of the First Quorum of the Seventy, who was sustained today as a member of the Presidency of that Quorum.

Elder Marion D. Hanks

Eternal marriage

I am assigned to speak on the subject of eternal marriage and am prayerful that my preparation and spirit will

not be inadequate to that very holy subject.

In a beautiful sealing room in the temple I talked one day with a little boy who was dressed in white, ready to join

his parents and brothers and sisters in a sacred ceremony. I said to him, "Why is your family here in the temple?"

He said, "To be sealed."

I said, "What does being sealed mean?"

He said, "We're going to be a forever family."

"Oh," I said, "you are going to be a family forever. You must have a *good* family, a *happy* family, to want to be with them forever. Do you have a happy family?"

"Yes, sir!" he said.

A happy home and family

This fine lad had already begun to understand two of the most important principles anyone could know: that our Heavenly Father has provided that marriage and family ties may be established permanently, to endure forever; and that a marriage that we can joyfully look forward to eternally must be a good marriage here, a marriage that is the heart of a happy home and family.

I also wish to testify that the principles and covenants of the gospel, particularly those of the temple, are the best possible basis on which to build a strong union; and that such a marriage never *just happens*. It is *brought about* not simply by ceremony or circumstance or chance, but by two mature, loving adults who are able and willing to learn the principles upon which a vital and durable marriage may be fashioned and who, day by day, year by year, work on that process.

Vitally important principles

Most of us gathered tonight are married. Many are nearing the time for that vital undertaking.

You younger men who are old enough to attend this meeting are old enough also to begin to think seriously with us of some vitally important principles in your future.

Let me speak, then, of (1) a temple marriage, as the basis for (2) a happy, eternal union, (3) fashioned on

the solid foundation of gospel covenants, (4) by two honest adults who are learning and growing together, and (5) with the priesthood of God as the authority through which the covenants are administered—the priesthood not as a commission of superiority or domination, but of service, of loving leadership and faithful example in the home, through the Spirit of the Lord.

Temple marriage

Honorable marriage is approved of the Lord. Indeed, the scriptures teach that "marriage is ordained of God" for His children (D&C 49:15), and also "whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever" (Ecclesiastes 3:14). His way of everlasting marriage is filled with hope and promise, and is designed to lead to happiness here and to an eternal stewardship like that of God himself.

In the beginning, after the earth was prepared, God brought man and woman together in the Garden, and the first wedding occurred. They were not yet subject to mortal death, and no time limitations were placed upon their marriage. God declared, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24).

When Christ lived on the earth, He quoted this commandment and added, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (see Matthew 19:4-6). He gave His disciples power to bind in heaven that which is bound on earth. (See Matthew 18:18.) Paul declared that "neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 11:11).

When the gospel was restored there came a renewed understanding of temples and temple worship. The power to bind and seal on earth and in heaven has again been entrusted to authorized servants of God. Eternal marriage, marriage of highest promise, is again performed for time and for all

eternity by qualified officiators in the holy temples of the Lord.

A happy marriage—forever

But a marriage designed to last forever will be a good marriage, growing and gracious. Sometimes the distinctive elements of temple marriage are thought of as being exclusive in duration and authority. Of course, everyone who comes to the temple to be married understands that the ceremony is performed by God's authority for time and eternity. But the remarkable revealed ceremony at the altar in a temple contemplates *much more* than this. The quality of the relationship thus established is of highest importance. Wonderful promises are sealed upon a man and woman in temple marriage, and the realization of the promised blessings is related directly to their understanding and keeping the solemn commitments they make to each other and the Lord.

Those commitments in a temple are total and permanent—involving the whole person, *as is*, for the whole journey. Neither will remain as he or she is, of course; they will both grow and develop in a multitude of ways. But this marriage ceremony is without condition or reservation, save only the faithfulness of those who make it. On this solid foundation the newly formed family joyfully undertakes to learn how to live happily forever, to build a strong and loving union that will grow more wholesome and more glorious everlastingly. How do we ensure success in such a vital and great undertaking?

Many new and enduring relationships spring into being with marriage—relationships all of which are vital to the happiness of the family.

For her, the words—sacred words—are wife, mother, homemaker, heart of a home; for him, husband, father, protector, provider, leader in his home in the warm spirit of the priesthood.

Together they enter a *partnership*, sharing and learning and growing.

They join their lives as *companions* in the special sense that married people do. Whether in the same room or a world apart, they are married twenty-four hours a day. They care about the whole person, the whole future of each other. With good humor and good disposition and genuine consideration of the needs of the other, they set out to *make* it a happy life. They laugh a lot and cry a little. They are warm and considerate and thoughtful: the note, the telephone call, the kind word, the sensitive response, the excitement of heading home to her, of having him come home.

Married people are *sweethearts*, in a special creative union, blessed with that powerful chemistry that draws two together, sometimes from next door, sometimes from a world away. This divinely designed power must be sustained by other qualities—by respect and loyalty and integrity—to be what it is meant to be. To be able to give oneself fully with confidence and trust, and to fully receive the other joyfully and gratefully—this is a blessing that grows in meaning year by year and forever.

In six sad words, a brokenhearted wife years ago summed up the disintegration of a marriage and the foolishness of believing that the physical union can stand alone—is enough without kindness and consideration and other essential qualities. She said, "We have nothing left to express."

And married people should be *best friends*; no relationship on earth needs friendship as much as marriage.

I have in my possession a letter written by a young widowed immigrant in the early days of the Church. It was written in 1848 in Honeycreek, Missouri, to her husband's mother and sister in England. He had died on the sailing vessel en route, leaving her and the two boys to make their way west with the Saints, heartsick and alone. She wrote the letter that changed my life a little. Maybe it will yours.

She began, "Dear Mother and dear Hannah, your dearly beloved son and my best friend has gone the way of all

the earth. Dearer to me in life than life itself, he's gone. Oh Mother, Mother, what am I to do?"

And then she told of her love for this, her *best friend*, and that she would rear these two boys in the kingdom and in his image and in the admonition of the Lord.

A tear came as I asked myself if that letter could have been written at my house.

Friendship in a marriage is so important. It blows away the chaff and takes the kernel, rejoices in the uniqueness of the other, listens patiently, gives generously, forgives freely. Friendship will motivate one to cross the room one day and say, "I'm sorry; I didn't mean that." It will not pretend perfection nor demand it. It will not insist that both respond exactly the same in every thought and feeling, but it will bring to the union honesty, integrity. There will be repentance and forgiveness in every marriage—every good marriage—and respect and trust.

And all these and other elements we are not able to mention eloquently declare that such a union doesn't just *happen*.

So the need becomes clear for careful, thoughtful preparation, selection, and courtship. No one should be unwise enough to count on an across-the-crowded-room romanticized live-happily-ever-after marriage made without proper thoughtfulness, preparation, and prayer. Marriage is an everyday and every-way relationship in which honesty and character and shared convictions and objectives and views about finances and family and life-style are more important than moonlight and music and an attractive profile.

A culminating covenant

The surest basis for all of this is to be worthily married in the temple. But temple marriage is not an isolated ordinance. It serves both as a culmination of other ordinances and the foundation for family and the eternal future.

Perhaps some of you young men do not know that no one can enter into a temple marriage until he or she has been to the temple previously to receive his or her own blessings. Two who desire an eternal marriage cannot establish that relationship until each has personally made sacred covenants with the Lord. These covenants center in principles that are basic in a truly Christian life and in the foundation of a good marriage and family.

You see, the covenants we make in the temple, like the other sacred ordinances in the kingdom, relate us to and center in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the temple we make commitments to follow Him in doing God's will and keeping His commandments, in valuing others and in unselfishly serving, in loving God and our fellowmen. Sexual purity and complete fidelity to moral principle are promised, with a sense of self-worth and self-control and whole-souled devotion to the cause of righteousness and truth.

All of this happens through the priesthood, the Holy Priesthood after the Order of the Son of God. (See D&C 107:1-3.) A thoughtful understanding of this should automatically eliminate any false perceptions of superiority or inferiority. Men and women are of equal value before God and must be equally valuable in the eyes of each other. A true devotion to following the example of the Son of God will never permit notions of domination or dictatorship or possession or control. It will never justify unrighteousness or abuse or filth or discourtesy. Christ's way is the way of persuasion, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, love unfeigned. (See D&C 121:41-44.)

Two mature adults

It is simple to see, isn't it, that the kind of marriage we're talking about doesn't just happen? The foundation is laid in the House of the Lord. The marriage is pronounced by authority of God. And then it is fashioned by two

who are wholesome, prepared emotionally and practically, and who are honest. It requires being *ready* to go to a temple, being mature enough to make promises and keep them and to receive holy promises and qualify for them.

So wherever we are with respect to marriage—years from it, close to it, or deeply committed in it—we must be wise, be faithful to the commandments of God, be true. Marriage is the closest and most intimate relationship one makes in this life, and the most serious and sacred decision. If you haven't been to the Lord's house, get ready, be clean, prepare to come to establish the foundation for a special, happy, eternal marriage.

Circle of affection and appreciation

And the inspiration for all of this is the sweet assurance—deeply rooted in the heart of every decent man who is living as he should with his sweetheart wife, or who has so lived, or who is planning and preparing such a union—that heaven will be heaven for us because we know we will be there with the one we love the best. Parley P. Pratt said after he met the Prophet in Philadelphia that “it was from him that I learned that the wife of my bosom might be secured to me for time and all eternity; and that the refined sympathies and affections which endeared us to each other emanated from the foundation of divine eternal love. It

was from the Prophet that I learned that we might cultivate these affections, and grow and increase in the same to all eternity” (*Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], pp. 297–98).

We sat in a room the other night with our five children and their eternal partners, and with their sixteen children. Twenty-eight of us joined in a circle of affection and appreciation. That circle, established with the two of us in a holy house of the Lord only a few short years ago, has expanded miraculously. Our last child was born twenty-four years ago, but the circle continues to expand and grow. God being willing, we may live to see another generation of wonderful children entering the world. We are grateful to know that our family will relate with us eternally, even as we will with those who gave us mortal life, and all of us together will find a loving place ultimately and a continuing relationship under the holy influence of Him whose spirit children we are and of Him whose holy sacrifice brought us the blessings of eternal life. Of this I testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Brother Hanks.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Bishop Victor L. Brown, Presiding Bishop of the Church.

Bishop Victor L. Brown

Aaronic Priesthood—a personal ordination

I deeply appreciate the opportunity tonight to address the young men of the Aaronic Priesthood and their leaders. I have a sincere desire to cause each one to enlarge his vision of what the Aaronic Priesthood means and what a great blessing it is to be entrusted with

its power. I think it is very important to recognize that the Lord has entrusted each individual with the responsibility associated with the Aaronic Priesthood. In other words, when I speak of the Aaronic Priesthood, I speak of it as it affects each individual, not just as a large number of boys or men. When one receives the Aaronic Priesthood, he receives it as a personal, private ordina-

tion, not just as one of many. Therefore, I hope you will feel that what I have to say tonight should be taken as a personal message—to the deacon in the upper row of the balcony here in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, to the teacher watching the satellite transmission in New Jersey, and to the young priest hearing the broadcast in France or Samoa or Brazil—to each individual young man.

Parallel between summer Olympics and Aaronic Priesthood

This summer we all witnessed one of the most wonderful and inspiring exhibitions of youthful accomplishments among athletes that can be imagined. People all over the world were lifted to new heights of faith in mankind through the performance of the men and women at the summer Olympic games in Los Angeles. Their self-confidence and commitment to excel were infectious. I, for one, have unrestrained admiration for all of them, not only those who received medals, but all of the participants; and, of course, the thousands of volunteers who made that great event possible deserve to be recognized as well.

I would like to draw some parallels between the experiences of these young people and the experiences, which are far greater and longer lasting, that most of you will have in your life's contest. I specifically speak to the deacon, teacher, and priest who have had conferred upon them the power and the authority of the Aaronic Priesthood.

Preparation and sacrifice to qualify

Each participant in the Olympics needed to train thoroughly to even qualify to participate. It took many, many hours of practicing, of developing self-discipline, of developing further commitment to achieve the goal. It required sacrifice, and it required a feeling of self-confidence. You as an Aaronic Priesthood holder have qualified to receive that priesthood. Had you

not qualified, it would not have been given to you, and you would not be authorized to participate and exercise its power and authority.

You did not have to spend the hours the athletes had to spend to condition and perfect your physical body, but you had to do something more important than that. It was necessary for you to prepare your spirit to receive the blessings of this great honor. Now that you have been accepted, if you expect to succeed, it is essential that you do those things that will bring about success. When you do succeed, which requires not just months but a lifetime of living and proving yourself, you may not receive the applause of men. You will not be performing before large audiences of enthusiastic supporters, but you will have performed many of the necessary labors in private and without expectation of recognition. And that, of course, requires greater self-discipline than just about any other human endeavor.

Inspiration and motivation

In striving to do their best, these young athletes often looked for inspiration and motivation to those who had performed in prior games, establishing Olympic records. They worked to perfect their talents in order to equal or better those records. You as an Aaronic Priesthood holder have available many examples of those who have honored their priesthood: John the Baptist, Joseph Smith, your own father, and your bishop. You need only strive to be and do your best to follow these examples.

Contest is with self

Most of the participants in the Olympic games recognized that in athletics, as well as in life, the real competition is with self, not against others. I watched a television interview one day where this was made very clear. The fourteen-year-old figure skating champion of Canada was asked how she felt

when she performed to her very best and won. She responded, "Wonderful."

"How do you feel when you perform your very best—and lose?"

"Wonderful."

"How do you feel when you don't perform your very best and win?"

"Terrible."

As an Aaronic Priesthood holder, your contest is with yourself as you honor your priesthood.

A preparatory priesthood

The priesthood you hold was restored to the earth on 15 May 1829, by a heavenly messenger, John the Baptist—the same John who with the authority of the Aaronic Priesthood baptized Jesus of Nazareth in the River Jordan and later, as a resurrected being, laid his hands on Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdrey and said:

"Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken again from the earth, until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness" (D&C 13).

John the Baptist said he came at the direction of Peter, James, and John. The ordination was performed before the Church was organized again upon the earth.

The Aaronic Priesthood is a preparatory priesthood. It is an appendage to the Melchizedek Priesthood and has to do largely with outward ordinances and temporal responsibilities. However, in the ordination, John the Baptist said that it "holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins." These are essential for admittance into the Church of Jesus Christ and to achieve the goal of exaltation in the kingdom of God.

I feel sometimes we consider the preparation and handling of the sacra-

ment and the collecting of fast offerings and so forth as almost the sum and substance of the Aaronic Priesthood responsibility. This is not true. These activities, of course, are very important, but there is so much more. As a preparatory priesthood it is preparing you ultimately, of course, for eternal life and exaltation. The Lord said, "This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). And further He has told us that eternal life—exaltation—is the greatest gift of God to man.

Service to Heavenly Father

As a holder of the priesthood you are a servant of our Heavenly Father. If you are to honor the priesthood, you must truly be a servant and serve your fellowmen. If you make this service a part of your life, you won't have to continually make decisions about what is right and what is wrong. It will become second nature to your way of living because through service you will be drawing closer to your Heavenly Father.

Serve your fellowmen

I am very much aware that you and some of your peers are living that way now. For instance, a fifteen-year-old Korean boy took his weekly allowance and bought newspapers with it. Then he and some friends sold these on the streets of Seoul, Korea, to raise money to help a fellow student who did not have sufficient funds to stay in school. This young man also gave part of his lunch to this boy each day so that he would not go hungry. Why did he do these things? Because he had been studying the story of the Good Samaritan and didn't just want to learn about the Good Samaritan but wanted to know what it felt like to be one by doing what a Good Samaritan would do. (See Luke 10:25–37.) He related these things to his father only after careful questioning by his father about his ac-

tivities. He had done them without any thought of recognition.

I doubt very much that the bishop of this young man would have to worry about how he looked when he came to participate at the sacrament table or whether his heart and hands were clean and pure. I don't think his father would have to worry about whether or not he was honest in his relationships with others, or whether or not he cheated at school.

Another father told me of an experience he had with his son who was a priest. This man needed some help around the house with cleaning and repainting and so forth. Pleasantly and cooperatively, this young man went ahead and accomplished much of the work. He is preparing himself for trust and responsibility by honoring his parents and willingly accepting chores at home. He is beginning to put on the whole armor of God, which will assure peace and happiness in this life and in the life to come. He is developing the strength and self-discipline needed to obey all of the commandments.

In another instance, some of the young men and women in one ward found themselves wavering in their testimonies and uncomfortable with Church activity. One day they decided, under the guidance of a very wise bishop, to involve themselves actively with several of the elderly members of the ward who were homebound. They divided into small groups, with each group determined to develop a family-like relationship with one of the homebound members. On a regular basis the young women and young men prepared meals that they and their elderly friends enjoyed together in the homes of the elderly members. Each Sunday the young men took the sacrament into the homes. On occasion, they arranged to hold special family home evenings to-

gether. These activities caused a remarkable change in the attitude of the young people toward themselves, toward the elderly, and toward the Church. They found a way to express the gospel of Christ through giving loving service.

The banner of the Lord

I don't think any of us will ever forget the sight of hundreds of young athletes marching proudly behind the flags and banners of their respective countries, thrilled to have been chosen to represent their nation at the Olympic games. You, my brother of the Aaronic Priesthood, seated in the balcony here, at a stake center in New Jersey, or in a chapel in France, Samoa, or Brazil, you are a chosen representative of God, having received the authority to act in His name, as has every worthy young man who holds the priesthood. The banner you carry every day may not be seen by millions of people, but it is seen by Him whose banner it is and by those who know who you are, both members of the Church and nonmembers. It is the banner of the Lord, displaying what you really are deep down inside as you show your love of God by keeping His commandments and by serving your fellowmen.

It is my firm prayer that each of you bishops and quorum advisers of these young men will aid in their understanding what it means to hold the holy priesthood and to put on the whole armor of God, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Bishop Brown.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Thomas S. Monson of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Thomas S. Monson

President Kimball's counsel

Every missionary in the Church is acquainted with the scriptural passage from the book of Amos: "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). Every member of the Church rejoices in singing the favorite hymn:

We thank thee, O God, for a
prophet
To guide us in these latter days.
(*Hymns*, no. 196.)

What secrets has the Lord God revealed to His prophet, our beloved leader President Spencer W. Kimball? What counsel would President Kimball provide us tonight, were he here, to guide us in these latter days? Would we listen? Would we obey? Would we be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving our own selves? (See James 1:22.)

Some time ago, as the General Authorities met together on an upper floor of the temple, President Kimball stood and instructed us, saying: "Brethren, of late I have been concerned and troubled by the fact that we do not have sufficient missionaries proclaiming the message of the Restoration. I hear some parents say, 'We're letting our son make up his own mind regarding a mission,' or 'We hope our son fills a mission because it would be such a growing experience for him.' " He continued: "I have heard some young men say, 'I think I might serve a mission if I really want to go.' " President Kimball raised his voice, stood on tiptoe—as he is prone to do when anxious to communicate with power a special thought—and said: "It doesn't really matter whether Mother or Father thinks it might be nice for a son to serve a mission. It doesn't really matter whether or not John, Bill, and Bob want to go—they *must* go!" President Kimball then proceeded to point out the

missionary obligation each of us has, to repay the sacrifice and service of those missionaries who left home and family and brought the gospel to our parents or grandparents in lands near and far.

Missionary heritage

I love to read my own grandfather's missionary journal. His first entries are classics. He wrote: "Today I married in the Salt Lake Temple the girl of my dreams." The very next night the journal entry read: "Tonight the bishop called at our house. I have been asked to return to Scandinavia for a two-year mission. Of course I will go, and my sweet wife will remain at home and sustain me." I am grateful for a missionary heritage.

We of the Council of the Twelve have heard President Ezra Taft Benson describe how his father was called to fill a mission. He left behind his wife, his seven children, the farm, and all that he had. Did he lose anything? President Benson tells how his mother would gather the family around the kitchen table and there, by the flickering light of an oil-fueled lamp, read the letters from her husband. Several times during the reading there would be a pause to wipe away the tears which flowed freely. The result? Each of the children later served a mission.

Many fail to cross the finish line

As we strive to respond to President Kimball's clarion call to missionary service, perhaps we should examine the Aaronic Priesthood pathway which provides the training, quickens the desire, and leads the lad who journeys along it not only to a missionary call but also to temple marriage and, at journey's end, even to exaltation in the celestial kingdom of God.

It is essential, even critical, that we study the Aaronic Priesthood path-

way, since far too many boys falter, stumble, then fall without crossing the finish line into the quorums of the Melchizedek Priesthood. In fact, today, for the first time in the history of the Church, the prospective elders outnumber the holders of the Melchizedek Priesthood, thereby eroding the active priesthood base of the Church and curtailing the activity of loving wives and precious children.

Concentrate on the Aaronic Priesthood

What can we as leaders do to reverse this trend? How can we assure that every boy becomes a finisher? The place to begin is at the headwaters of the Aaronic Priesthood stream. There is an ancient Chinese proverb which purports to correctly determine the sanity of an individual. A person is shown a stream of water flowing into a stagnant pond. He is given a bucket and asked to commence to drain the pond. If he first takes steps to effectively dam the inflow to the pond, he is adjudged sane. If, on the other hand, he ignores the inflow and tries to empty the pond bucket by bucket, he is designated insane.

The best and most effective manner whereby we can solve the challenge of the growth in numbers of prospective elders is to concentrate on the Aaronic Priesthood.

Save every boy

The bishop, by revelation, is the president of the Aaronic Priesthood and is president of the priests in his ward. (See D&C 107:87-88.) He cannot delegate these God-given responsibilities. However, he can place accountability with his counselors and name as quorum advisers men who can touch the lives of boys—indeed, men who are models to follow. Were I a bishop tonight, I would turn to my second counselor and say: "Brother Balmforth, you have the duty to look after the deacons in the ward. Yours is the task to ensure

that every boy is worthy and is ordained a teacher when he reaches his fourteenth birthday." Then I would address my first counselor with the thought: "Brother Hemingway, yours is the duty to make certain that every teacher is worthy and is ordained a priest when he reaches sixteen. As the bishop, I will assume the task to so labor with the young men who are priests that they are worthy and are ordained elders as they embark on their missions."

This, then, is our assignment: to save every boy, thereby assuring a worthy husband for each of our young women, strong Melchizedek Priesthood quorums, and a missionary force trained and capable of accomplishing what the Lord expects.

Guide each deacon to spiritual awareness

A wise first step is to guide each deacon to a spiritual awareness of the sacredness of his ordained calling. In my life this was accomplished when the bishopric asked that I take the sacrament to a shut-in who lived about a mile from the chapel. That special Sunday morning, as I knocked on the door of Brother Wright and heard his feeble reply, "Come in," I entered not only his humble cottage but also a room filled with the Spirit of the Lord. I approached his bedside and carefully placed a piece of the bread to his lips. I then held the cup of water, that he might drink. As I departed, I saw him smile as he said, "God bless you, my boy." And God did bless me with an appreciation for the sacred emblems, which continues even today.

Every teacher to home teach

Is every ordained teacher given the assignment to home teach? What an opportunity to prepare for a mission. What a privilege to learn the discipline of duty. A boy will automatically turn from concern for self when he is assigned to "watch over" others.

Priests have added duties

And what of the priests? These young men have the opportunity to bless the sacrament, to continue their home teaching duties, and to participate in the sacred ordinance of baptism.

I remember as a deacon watching the priests as they would officiate at the sacrament table. One priest had a lovely voice and would read the sacrament prayers with clear diction—as though he were competing in a speech contest. The older members of the ward would compliment him on his “golden voice.” I think he became a bit proud. Another priest in the ward had a hearing impediment which caused his speech to be unnatural in its sound. We deacons would twitter at times when Jack would bless the emblems. How we dared do so is beyond me: Jack had hands like a bear and could have crushed any of us. On one occasion Barry with the beautiful voice and Jack with the awkward delivery were assigned together at the sacrament table. The hymn was sung; the two priests broke the bread. Barry knelt to pray, and we closed our eyes. But nothing happened. Soon we deacons opened our eyes to see what was causing the delay. I shall ever remember Barry frantically searching the table for the little white card on which were printed the sacrament prayers. It was nowhere to be found. What to do? Barry’s face turned pink, then crimson, as the congregation began to look in his direction. Then Jack, with that bear-like hand, reached up and gently tugged Barry back to the bench. He, himself, then knelt on the little stool and began to pray: “Oh God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to the souls of all those who partake of it. . . .” He continued the prayer, and the bread was then passed. Jack also blessed the water, and it was passed. What respect we deacons gained that day for Jack who, though handicapped in speech, had memorized the sacred prayers. Barry, too, had a new appreciation for Jack. A lasting

bond of friendship had been established.

Influence of home and quorum presidencies

Beyond the influence of the bishopric and the Aaronic Priesthood quorum advisers is the impact of the home. Help of parents, when enlisted wisely, can frequently make the difference between success and failure. Our recent surveys reveal that the influence of the home surpasses all other factors as a determinant of missionary service and temple marriage.

Not to be overlooked are the strength and influence of devoted Aaronic Priesthood quorum presidencies. The revelations are crystal clear in their meaning: “Verily I say unto you, the duty of a president over the office of a deacon is to preside over twelve deacons, to sit in council with them, and to teach them their duty, edifying one another, as it is given according to the covenants” (D&C 107:85). A similar charge is given to the president of the teachers quorum and to the bishop as president of the quorum of priests. (See D&C 107:86–88.)

Other leaders

The stake Aaronic Priesthood committee can also provide much needed help. Stake presidents, do you ensure that your high councilors who serve on this most important committee visit the quorums of the Aaronic Priesthood on a continuing and regular basis? Do these brethren know the names of each Aaronic Priesthood boy in the stake? Generalities simply will not do. When we deal in generalities, we will never have a success; but as we deal in specifics, we will rarely have a failure.

I am reminded of the ward presided over by our own Joseph B. Wirthlin. Bishop Wirthlin had a quorum of forty-five priests. All forty-five became elders. All filled missions. The late Elder Alvin R. Dyer presided over a quorum of forty-eight priests.

Forty-six of the total served full-time missions, and forty-seven married in the house of the Lord. It can indeed be done. Each boy must be saved.

The Aaronic Priesthood pathway

When I served as a bishop, I noted one Sunday morning that one of our priests was missing from the priesthood meeting. I left the quorum in the care of the adviser and visited Richard's home. His mother said he was working at the West Temple Garage. I drove to the garage in search of Richard and looked everywhere but could not find him. Suddenly, I had the inspiration to gaze down into the old-fashioned grease pit situated at the side of the station. From the darkness I could see two shining eyes. Then I heard Richard say: "You found me, Bishop! I'll come up." He never missed another priesthood meeting.

The family moved, and Richard moved with them. About a year later Bishop Arthur Spencer of the Wells Stake called and said that Richard was responding to a mission call to Mexico and asked if I would accept the family's invitation to speak at his farewell testimonial. At the meeting, when Richard responded, he mentioned that the turning point in his determination to fill a mission came one Sunday morning—not in the chapel, but as he gazed up from the depths of a dark grease pit and found his quorum president's outstretched hand.

John Barrie, the Scottish poet, declared: "God gave us memories, that we might have June roses in the December of our lives." From my experience, some of the most fragrant and beautiful roses anywhere to be found bloom in profusion along the Aaronic Priesthood pathway. On this pathway there are feet to steady, hands to grasp, minds to encourage, hearts to inspire, and souls to save.

I invite each of you men to walk with me, shoulder to shoulder, together with all of the Aaronic Priesthood bearers of the Church, along this priesthood pathway which leads upward and onward toward perfection. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Brother Monson. The choir and congregation will now stand and sing one verse of "Praise to the Man who communed with Jehovah." Following that we will be pleased to hear from Brother R. LaVell Edwards who has come from winning a ball game in Colorado.

The choir and congregation sang "Praise to the Man."

President Hinckley

Coach LaVell Edwards, for seven years a bishop, will now speak to us.

Brother R. LaVell Edwards

My dear brethren, I am both honored and humbled by this assignment to speak with you tonight. I have often been asked, "How do you stand the pressure of coaching and remain so calm?" I can assure you, brethren, I feel real pressure standing before you this evening, especially with no more ability than I have as a speaker.

Effect of mission on athletic career

I would like to pose one or two points for your consideration, particularly to you young brethren. First, will going on a full-time mission have an adverse effect on a future athletic career? When I started coaching at BYU in 1962, there was a prevailing attitude

that missions and football did not mix. As a result, very few players went on missions and returned to play the game, the feeling being that a young man could not go into the mission field, preach love for two years and return with the desire to play a physical contact sport such as football. Many felt there would be a loss of coordination, specific techniques, and the strength and the conditioning necessary to perform at a high level of competency required for major college athletics. This attitude prevailed until our beloved prophet, President Kimball, proclaimed that every man of missionary age should prepare himself for a mission. As a result of this proclamation, many more of our athletes started going on missions. It has been our experience that if a young man decides to go on a mission, he cannot only play well when he returns, he will often play better.

If I could draw one general conclusion, it would be that if an athlete could play well before he went on a mission, he will definitely play well when he returns; and, if an athlete could not play well before his mission, he probably won't play well when he returns. However, his chances of playing well are perhaps better if he goes because he will return with a greater understanding of himself, greater leadership capabilities, better work habits, and a better knowledge of what it takes to be successful. It really depends on the young man's desire, commitment, work habits, and how important it is to him when he returns. This year alone we have fifty-two returned missionaries on our football team.

Desire, commitment, good work habits

I suspect that these traits—desire, commitment, and good work habits—are important in all facets of our lives, brethren.

Sean Covey, one of our fine young players, is now serving a mission in South Africa. He is an excellent young

quarterback prospect who I'm sure you will be hearing more about in future years. I have a neighbor, Jon Collins, who is a great friend of Sean's and is serving a mission in Scotland. Jon's mother related a story regarding Sean and Jon. Sean recently had written a letter to Jon in Scotland and shared with him the importance of his mission. He told Jon in his letter, "Just think, this weekend BYU will be opening the football season in Pittsburgh before 50,000 fans. If I were home, I would be there with the team, being a part of this very thrilling experience. Instead, I will be baptizing a lady and her daughter. I wouldn't trade this experience for anything in the world."

I am proud of my two sons, John and Jim, along with my son-in-law Ken Cannon, who is here with me this evening, for their decisions to go on missions. All three served excellent missions, and John and Jim returned to participate in college athletics—John in track and Jim in football. In their letters home, and even now that they have been back for some time, they frequently mention that the experiences in the mission field were the choicest and most gratifying of their lives. You young brethren, begin to prepare yourselves now for this marvelous experience.

On to the second point. In the field of athletics, we tend to look at successful athletes and make them almost bigger than life. It has been my experience to be a teacher and coach for over thirty years. I have seen many young men who have achieved greatness. I have also seen those who have come up a little short of their potential. I don't know what the answer is, but I do know that those who succeed have been able to do two things.

Prepare for opportunity

One, they recognize within themselves the potential to do something well and then work hard to prepare themselves for that eventual opportunity. Others wait for the opportunity to

come and then start to work, thus coming up a little short.

Every year on the football team there are players on our team who are bigger, stronger, and faster than those who are playing in their position. Why is this? I'm not sure, but after so many years of coaching, one overriding principle stands out. Potential does not always ensure success. In other words, the greatest players have not always been the most endowed. In athletics, we often hear the phrase, "He has the will to win." I think this is wrong. We can be in a game, taking a test, giving a talk, or whatever the experience may be. We can have the greatest will to do well. But unless we have prepared, it is of little use. Really, it should be the "will to prepare." Those who succeed have this will, whether it be in athletics, whether it be in school, whether it be in their chosen vocation, whether it be on a mission, or almost in any other phase of their life.

The way Steve Young thinks

Two, those who have succeeded have also had the ability to overcome adversity, disappointment, and even tragedy in their lives. Since our quarterback position has such a high visibility and everyone seems to know about them, let me share two short stories with you.

Steve Young is one of the most gifted young men that I have ever known. He is fast, strong, big, handsome, . . . and rich. It is easy for us to look at Steve and say, "With all those attributes, you ought to be great." However, it is more than his physical attributes that have made him great; it is the way he thinks! When Steve was a junior and was starting his first season as our quarterback, we had one of the greatest opportunities presented to us in our football program at BYU. We were scheduled to play Herschel Walker and the University of Georgia, the defending national champions. We worked very hard and felt we had a

chance to beat them if we played our very best and did not make mistakes.

Before 82,000 fans, and on a "rainy day in Georgia," Steve threw five interceptions in the first half of the game—more than he would normally throw in five games! In spite of the interceptions and two missed field goal attempts, we were still tied 7-7 at half-time.

Going into the dressing room, I thought to myself that I must talk to Steve and assure him that everything would be fine. The rain, the crowd, the tipped balls, etc.—I had all the excuses ready for throwing five interceptions in one half. I started explaining this to Steve and before I could finish, Steve stopped me, looked at me as if I was crazy, and said, "Hey coach, there's no problem. I can hardly wait to get back out there. We're going to win." I found myself thinking, "What do you mean there's no problem, you dummy. You have just thrown five interceptions!" It's the way he thinks. That's what has made him what he is and enabled him to accomplish what he has done. As you know, this was just the start of a career that would see him become one of the finest quarterbacks to play the game of college football.

What Robbie Bosco is made of

The second story happened this year with our present quarterback, Robbie Bosco. We were playing the University of Pittsburgh. They were preseason ranked third in the country. We were leading 3-0 in the third quarter and had a good drive going. Robbie threw a bad pass. It was intercepted and returned for a seventy-yard touchdown. Pittsburgh led 7-3. They kicked off to us, and on our second play, Robbie threw a pass that ricocheted off the shoulder of one of our receivers. It was caught by a Pittsburgh defensive back and returned to our fifteen-yard line. Four plays later, Pittsburgh scored and went ahead 14-3. I thought to myself, "This will be a good chance to see what Robbie is made of." In fact, with the

next possession of the ball we drove down the field and scored. And then, with three or four minutes remaining in the game, Robbie moved our team the length of the field and threw the winning touchdown pass to Adam Haysbert. Right then, I knew there was no question that Robbie was going to be a great quarterback.

Ability to handle adversity

Now brethren, how to we handle adversity? Adversity is going to be with us in everything that we do, almost in every facet of our lives—in our personal associations, in the mission field, in our chosen professions, in our families. When we have adversity we often-times tend to look around and think that we're the Lone Ranger. We tend to believe that we're the only one who has problems. And we always look around and see others who are more talented, taller, smarter, handsomer, or faster. I can assure you, brethren, everyone has problems—even football coaches. The ability we have to handle this adversity will determine the degree of success that we will have in life. To me, this is where the gospel can be the greatest of help to us. The power of the Holy Ghost is the greatest source of strength and comfort we can have in our lives. The Holy Ghost will not only help us in times of need, but will help us to gain a firm testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ, thereby preparing us for life.

Growth through Church callings

I have made progress over the past decades as a coach. But I feel that the progress I have made as a coach, as well as a person, is a direct result of the growth that I have made through my Church callings. I had the opportunity to serve as a bishop in a campus ward while I was still an assistant coach. When I was appointed head

football coach in 1972, I decided to approach my role as a coach much the same as I did as a bishop, delegating responsibility to my assistants, putting responsibility on the players for self-improvement in all aspects of their lives, and using personal interviews with players to try to give positive reinforcement and encouragement so that they might do their very best and reach their full potential, both on and off the field.

Every position I have held has brought invaluable experiences and growth to my life. Whatever position you are called to, brethren, whether it be bishop, priesthood quorum adviser, home teacher, or athletic director, you will have no greater thrill than when one of the young men in your stewardship makes the decision to accept a mission call. I would encourage you to double your efforts in this regard; it is well worth the time and the effort.

Now brethren, in my career I have had many wonderful things happen to me, many more than I ever dreamed would ever happen. But I would like for you young brethren especially to know that all that has happened to me in my chosen profession is a mere drop in the bucket compared to the truly important things in my life. The testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ that I have, along with my wife and my family, are my most important possessions. And this testimony I bear to you in Jesus' name, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you very much. I am inclined to say, "Hey, Coach, there's no problem." Thank you very, very much for those inspirational remarks, Brother Edwards.

President Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now speak to us.

President Ezra Taft Benson

My beloved brethren, with all my heart my love goes out to you on this very important occasion. I thank the Lord for this gathering here tonight.

Called as a Scoutmaster

I shall always be grateful that almost sixty-five years ago the good bishop of our ward came to me and asked me to be Scoutmaster of twenty-four boys in the Whitney Ward. We all received our handbooks at the same time. This was a great group of young men with a lot of musical talent.

In those days we had in the Mutual various cultural activities which were competitive. Among them were boys' choruses. Each ward was expected to have a chorus, and oftentimes the bishop would invite the Scoutmaster to take the responsibility for getting the boys out to practice. So it was in our ward.

As is often the case when a man is asked to do a job, I sought out the help of a good faithful woman who could play the piano and knew some musical technique. Under her direction we started our practices. The song to be sung in the competition was assigned by the general board and was the same throughout the Church—"The Morning Breaks; the Shadows Flee," by Parley P. Pratt (*Hymns*, no. 269).

Troop won singing competition

For weeks before and after Scout meetings we prepared. Finally the time came when we would meet in competition with the ten other wards of the Franklin Stake. We were successful in winning in the stake, and then we were to meet the winners of the six other stakes in Cache Valley in the tabernacle in Logan.

I shall never forget approaching that great tabernacle that evening. We went inside and drew for places. We drew last place, which only prolonged our anxiety.

Finally the time came that our group was to march up to the platform. As our accompanist played "The Stars and Stripes Forever," those twenty-four boys went up the aisle single file and formed in a half moon on the stage while I crouched down between a couple of benches to try to give them some leadership. Then they sang as I'd never heard them sing, and of course you can imagine that I'd not be telling this story had we not won first place in Logan.

A promise is a debt unpaid

We went home literally walking on air. We were so happy that this little community of fifty families had won over the other stakes and wards of the valley.

In the first Scout meeting following our victory, those boys (never forgetting anything that is of value to them) reminded me that in a moment of anxiety I had promised them that if we won in Logan, I would take them all on a hike over the mountain thirty-five miles to Bear Lake Valley.

Since a promise made is a debt unpaid, we began planning our hike. During the meeting one little twelve-year-old raised his hand and said very formally, "Mr. Scoutmaster, I would like to make a motion." That was a new thing in a Scout meeting—or at least it was for me—but I said, "All right, what is it?"

He said, "I'd like to make a motion that we all clip our hair off so we will not be bothered with combs and brushes on this trip."

I noticed three or four of the older boys start to squirm in their seats. They had reached that very critical age in life when they were beginning to take notice of the girls, and they knew a clipped head would be no asset to them with the women.

I put the question and it carried, with these three or four older boys dis-

sending. Then it was agreed that if they did not submit willingly, there were other ways of enforcing the rules of the troop. So they submitted.

Then, true to form—never forgetting anything if it was to their advantage—one of the older Scouts said, "How about the Scoutmasters?" It was our turn to squirm.

The following Saturday at the county seat, two Scoutmasters took their places in the barber's chair while the barber very gleefully went over each head with the clippers. As he neared the end of the job, he said, "You know, if you fellows would let me shave your heads, I would do the whole job for nothing."

Three-week trip

So after our session with the barber, we left on that great thirty-five-mile Scout trip to which I had made commitment as an inducement to get the boys out to practice their singing—twenty-four boys with heads clipped and two Scoutmasters with heads shaven.

It was a glorious three weeks together with those wonderful boys out in the hills and in the mountains and on the lake. I wish I could follow for you the life of each one of those boys from that time until the present. I am proud of them.

These twenty-four Scouts

I have made an effort to keep in touch with these boys. Many years later, after having been in Idaho and Washington, D.C., I happened to attend a Sunday School in the Whitney Ward. One of the boys was serving as bishop, another was a counselor, a third was ward clerk, and another was the visiting stake high counselor. Then we went to the adult class; there was another one as the teacher. One of them was serving as the Scoutmaster. We had a fine session together and could account for each one of the boys except

two. No one seemed to know where they were or what they were doing.

Some weeks later I was down in southern Arizona. In those days we held general priesthood meetings in connection with stake conferences, and during the meeting I noticed way at the rear of the hall what appeared to be a familiar face. At the end of the meeting, one of the two boys we had lost track of came forward. We threw our arms around each other, and I said to him, "What are you doing way down here?"

He said, "I guess you mean 'What am I doing in the Church?'"

I said, "Well, yes, that's part of it, what are you doing in the Church?"

He replied, "I'm not doing very much, but I'm a Scoutmaster." (I thought that took care of me very well!) Then he told me he had married out of the Church, but his wife had since joined the Church and was then using her influence to get him into full activity so they could go to the temple.

We started to correspond, and some months later I had the honor of officiating at the sealing of this fine couple and their children in the Salt Lake Temple.

Sometime later I was speaking at the annual meeting of the Idaho Farm Bureau at Burley, Idaho. Just before the meeting was to start, I was up on the platform with the president of the bureau and saw a man down at the door handing out literature to the farmers as they came in. I asked the president of the farm bureau who the man was. Sure enough, it was the last of the twenty-four boys to be located.

After the meeting the two of us had a good talk. He had married in the Church but out of the temple. It was not long before I also had the privilege of sealing this man and his wife and several children in the temple.

So far as we know, this was the last of the twenty-four to be married in the temple. Some of them are gone now, but we have good reason to suppose each one did a good job in life.

Maintain your standards

It is one of the choicest experiences in my life to serve in and participate in Scouting, which I have done for almost sixty-five years. Scouting is a great program for leadership training, teaching patriotism and love of country, and building strong character. It is a builder of men, men of character and spirituality. I am grateful to the bishop of this little country ward for inviting me to serve as Scoutmaster.

With all my heart, my brethren, I commend you for the good you are doing and say to you that it does not pay to go astray. It pays to live the gospel, to maintain your standards, to associate with good companions, to keep the commandments, to stand up for the truth wherever you are.

Some of you know that I was at one time in government. It was not easy, but I received a commitment from the President of the United States that I would never be asked to support a policy in which I did not believe. And he kept that promise—never asking me to support a policy in which I did not believe.

Spirit of missionary work

I am grateful to the Lord for the home in which I was born and for that mission of my father, who, as Elder Thomas S. Monson has indicated, was called on a mission and left Mother at home with seven young children. The eighth was born four months after he arrived in the field. There came into that home a spirit of missionary work that never left it, for which I am deeply grateful.

I am grateful for my ten brothers and sisters, all of whom have gone on missions. Two of my sisters, widows—

one the mother of ten and the other the mother of eight—after sending their children on missions, talked to their bishops about going on missions themselves.

I well remember the day they called me on the telephone and said, "Guess what? We've received our missionary calls."

I said, "What missionary calls?"

They replied, "Don't you know?" (They expected the President of the Quorum of the Twelve to know everything!)

I said, "No, I hadn't heard."

They responded, "Yes, we're both going to your old field of labor in England."

I wished them well, and I wish you could have heard the reports of those two sisters as they returned from their missions.

The most important thing in this life is a testimony of the truth, and there is no place on earth where you can have the opportunity to get a testimony like the mission field. I know—I have been there time and time again.

God bless this great gathering of the priesthood, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, President Benson.

The inspiring music for this priesthood session has been furnished by a combined men's choir of the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth Chorus. We are grateful for the beautiful music which you have given.

Following my closing remarks, the choir will sing "All Glory, Laud and Honor," following which Elder Jack H. Goasland, Jr., a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the benediction.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Boys, prepare to represent the Lord

Now brethren, if I may say just a word. I am going to set aside my prepared talk and speak extemporaneously. This has been a great meeting. Every boy who is here should have had cultivated in his heart tonight an increased desire to go into the world as a representative of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I wish to say to you boys, you should prepare for that great responsibility. Coach Edwards talked to you about the importance of preparation. The Lord said, "If ye are prepared, ye shall not fear" (D&C 38:30). This is the day of preparation for you boys, whether you are twelve or fourteen or sixteen or eighteen. Watch yourselves. Never use language when you are with your friends that would be incompatible with the calling that will come to you, if you are worthy of it, to go into the world to represent this church and to serve as an ambassador of the Lord. God bless you to this end.

I hope that you have listened carefully to what Coach LaVell Edwards has said. He is a winner who believes in training and in following the rules of the game. He served as a bishop for seven years. He is a wise and able man with a wealth of experience. He made a tremendous effort to get here tonight, and we very much appreciate what he has done and what he has said. Thank you, Coach Edwards, and congratulations on another victory today.

Men, be worthy of family's companionship

You men who are husbands and fathers should have had kindled in your hearts tonight, as a result of the inspiring remarks given by Brother Hanks, a resolve so to conduct yourselves in your homes as to be worthy of the love, the respect, the honor, the companionship of your wives and your children.

Holding the priesthood does not give any man the right to domineer over those for whom he should show the greatest of love and the greatest of consideration. Each of us should go home this night with a stronger resolve in our hearts to live worthy of the companionship of those who love us most and whom we should love and honor and respect without reservation.

Those who love the Lord and walk in obedience

Now, for a few minutes in closing, I wish to speak with appreciation and love for the priesthood of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

There are hundreds of thousands, now reaching toward the millions, of boys and men of the priesthood who love the Lord and who walk in obedience to his commandments. These husbands and fathers govern their homes in kindness and with a spirit of love and appreciation. They answer every call to serve in whatever capacity as such calls come from the Church. They are good citizens of the governments under which they live wherever they may be across the world. They are good neighbors in their communities. As employees, they are loyal. They work with diligence and with honesty and integrity. They are men who live chaste and honorable lives, men who love the Lord and are loved by him.

I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the goodness of your lives. I thank you for your examples before your families and before the world. You bring honor to this church. You bring happiness and peace and security into the lives of your wives and children. You indulge your generous instincts in giving to the poor, in befriending the lonely, in standing up for the very best in our society. You are the sweet fruits of this beautiful gospel of the Son of God.

No sense of guilt troubles your sleep. No violations of the commandments of God haunt your days. You are those whom I call my loyal brethren.

Thank you for your loyalty

I thank you for that tremendous loyalty. Men of your kind have carried forward this work from the beginning. They were present in the home of Peter Whitmer when the Church was organized. They were among the few who stood by the Prophet in the troubled days of the New York period of the Church. They readily left Kirtland to serve missions wherever they were asked to go, at the call of the Prophet.

They made the long march with Zion's Camp, the eight-hundred-mile journey from Ohio to western Missouri. They stood by the Prophet in Liberty Jail. Peeled and driven, they staggered with the destitute Saints across the bottomlands of the Mississippi and into Quincy, Illinois.

They drained the swamps of Commerce to create Nauvoo the Beautiful. They erected the magnificent house of the Lord on the hill above the river. They were with Joseph at Carthage. They mourned his death and rallied to the leadership of the Twelve. With mobs at their backs they abandoned their homes and temple and faced the Iowa winter. Some of them marched the long, long road with the Mormon Battalion to San Diego and then back to the valley of the Great Salt Lake.

Others followed the Elkhorn and the Platte on to Scottsbluff, South Pass, Independence Rock, and down into this valley. Here they grubbed sagebrush; fought crickets; labored and prayed; built homes, churches, and temples to their God.

Through all of this long odyssey there were those who were not loyal,

some few who were traitors, who were betrayers, but they were a small minority. Honor be to those who stood firm, and to their wives who worked beside them.

You, my brethren, are of that same kind—loyal, men of faith, men of virtue, men who love their families and love their brethren and sisters, men who build temples and then labor in them, men who respond to calls to serve and do so without stint or selfishness of any kind; men who love God and his Only Begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Appreciation, peace, and love

I cannot say enough of appreciation for you. Your sustaining vote in this conference means more than I can express. Sometimes when I think the load is heavy and the burdens are many, I think of you who not only raise your hands in affirmation, but also give of your hearts, time, and substance in loyal support.

God bless you. I pray for you, that there may be peace and love in your homes, that you may be prospered in your honest endeavors, and that when the time comes you may stand before the Lord and receive his welcome: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

I invoke the blessings of heaven upon each of you and upon your loved ones and do it with gratitude in my heart, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "All Glory, Laud and Honor."

Elder Jack H. Goaslind, Jr., offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY MORNING MEETING

FOURTH SESSION

The fourth general session of the conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, October 7, 1984. President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music for this session with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger directing and Robert Cundick at the organ.

Prior to the beginning of the session, the choir sang "With Songs of Praise" without announcement.

President Hinckley then made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Good morning, brothers and sisters. We are pleased to greet you this beautiful morning as we assemble in this fourth general session of the 154th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We are delighted to have with us this morning President Spencer W. Kimball. We are honored by his presence. We regret that President Romney is unable to be with us this morning. He is watching the proceedings on television and sends his love and blessing.

We acknowledge those tuned to this conference by radio and television, those who are seated in the overflow

congregation in the Assembly Hall where Elders Hartman Rector, Jr. and Jacob de Jager preside, and those participating through satellite transmission assembled in over nine hundred stake centers in the United States and Canada.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders, and officers and members of the Church from many lands, who have assembled to worship and to counsel together in this conference.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger with Robert Cundick at the organ, is providing the music for this session.

The choir opened these services by singing "With Songs of Praise" and will now sing "Come, We That Love the Lord," following which Elder Richard G. Scott, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "Come, We That Love the Lord."

Elder Richard G. Scott offered the invocation.

The choir sang "God Bless Our Prophet Dear" without announcement.

President Hinckley spoke without announcement.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Women's conference and priesthood gathering

A week ago last evening there emanated from this Tabernacle on Temple Square a great conference of the women of the Church. Many thou-

sands participated in that conference, which was carried across the continent from coast to coast. It was an inspirational experience to look into the faces of those assembled in the Tabernacle on that occasion—women of beauty, women of strength, women of capacity, women of virtue, women of faith.

Last night, similarly, there emanated from the Tabernacle a great gathering of the priesthood, a meeting which was carried from here to 714 other locations across the world and to 900 stake centers in which were assembled men and boys of the Church who love the Lord and walk with faith and conviction. What a marvelous thing this work is, my beloved brethren and sisters.

The prophet of the Lord

It is a great honor to stand before you and speak to Latter-day Saints across the world. I pray for direction of the Holy Spirit. I am not here as a substitute for the President of the Church. I am speaking as his Second Counselor, a responsibility I did not seek but one which I have accepted as a sacred call, in the fulfillment of which I have tried to lift some of the heavy burdens of office from the shoulders of our beloved President and move forward the work of the Lord with diligence. President Kimball is the prophet of the Lord. None other can or will take his place for so long as he lives. When he passes, there will be another ready, a man who, through long years of experience and service, has been trained, has been tested, has been schooled and refined and prepared to fill that sacred and awesome responsibility.

Work going well

I wish to report to the membership of the Church wherever you may be that the work is going well. I feel that our Father in Heaven smiles upon it with approval. I realize, of course, that each of us, regardless of our position, could do better in our responsibilities. We ought constantly to be improving. Nonetheless, there is cause for satisfaction.

The missionary work moves forward, with new fields opened since we last met in conference. The activity of Church members throughout the world improves. The vast work of genealogi-

cal research is being expanded, and an ever-increasing number of faithful Latter-day Saints carry forward the sacred work in the temples.

We are building new houses of worship on an unprecedented scale. Economies of construction have been developed to hold down the cost of these structures.

Dedications of Boise, Sydney, and Manila temples

Three new temples have been dedicated since last we met—one in Boise, Idaho; one in Sydney, Australia; and, most recently, one in Manila, the capital city of the Philippines. Tens of thousands of Latter-day Saints have participated in these inspiring dedicatory services. In the Boise Temple, twenty-four individual services were held, with a great outpouring of the Spirit of the Lord in each. Numerous were the expressions of appreciation. In Australia it was the same. People came to the temple from as far away as Tasmania in the south, and from Thursday Island in the far north; they came across the entire continent, from Perth on the west coast, many of them at great sacrifice, to enjoy the wonderful atmosphere of that significant occasion when fourteen dedicatory services were held.

We returned only a few days ago from Manila in the Philippines. There on an eminence where the ground falls away to the rear, affording a view of an entire valley, stands a beautiful and sacred temple. Here, as elsewhere, there is incised in the stone of one of the towers the words "Holiness to the Lord. The House of the Lord." By the thousands they came, the wonderful, faithful members of the Church in the Republic of the Philippines. With songs of thanksgiving, with words of counsel and testimony, with a prayer of dedication, they all joined in presenting to the Lord, as the gift of a thankful people, this beautiful house as his abode.

In all of these new temples, the buildings have been opened to the general public prior to dedication. Tens and tens of thousands have gone through them. They have been free to ask any questions concerning them. These visitors have been respectful and reverent as they have partaken of the spirit of these sacred structures. As they have felt of that spirit and learned something of the purposes for which the temples have been built, these who have been our guests have recognized why, following dedication, we regard these buildings as sanctified and holy, reserved for sacred purposes and closed to the public.

Participating in these dedicatory services, one senses the true strength of the Church. That strength is in the hearts of the people, who are united by a bond of recognition of God as our Eternal Father and Jesus Christ as our Savior. Their individual testimonies are firmly established on a foundation of faith concerning things divine.

Ancient cornerstone ceremony

In each new temple we have had a cornerstone ceremony in harmony with a tradition that goes back to ancient times. Before the general use of concrete, the foundation walls of the building were laid with large stones. A trench would be dug, and stones would be placed as footings. Starting at a point of beginning, the foundation wall would be run in one direction to a cornerstone; then the corner would be turned and the wall run to the next corner, where another stone was placed, from which the wall would be run to the next corner, and from there to the point of beginning. In many instances, including the construction of early temples in the Church, cornerstones were used at each junction point of the walls and put in place with ceremony. The final stone was spoken of as the chief cornerstone, and its placement became the reason for much celebration. With this cornerstone in position, the foundation was ready for the super-

structure. Hence the analogy that Paul used in describing the true church:

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

"In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord" (Ephesians 2:19-21).

Cornerstones of our faith

We have basic cornerstones on which this great latter-day church has been established by the Lord and built, "fitly framed together." They are absolutely fundamental to this work, the very foundation, anchors on which it stands. I should like to speak briefly of these four essential cornerstones which anchor The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I mention first the chief cornerstone, whom we recognize and honor as the Lord Jesus Christ. The second is the vision given the Prophet Joseph Smith when the Father and the Son appeared to him. The third is the Book of Mormon, which speaks as a voice from the dust with the words of ancient prophets declaring the divinity and reality of the Savior of mankind. The fourth is the priesthood with all of its powers and authority, whereby men act in the name of God in administering the affairs of his kingdom.

Chief cornerstone—Jesus Christ

May I comment on each of these. Absolutely basic to our faith is our testimony of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, who under a divine plan was born in Bethlehem of Judea. He grew in Nazareth as the carpenter's son, within him the elements of both mortality and immortality received, respectively, from his earthly mother and his Heavenly Father. In the course of his brief earthly ministry, he walked the dusty

roads of Palestine healing the sick, causing the blind to see, raising the dead, teaching doctrines both transcendent and beautiful. He was, as Isaiah had prophesied, "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3). He reached out to those whose burdens were heavy and invited them to cast their burdens upon him, declaring, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:30). He "went about doing good," and was hated for it (Acts 10:38). His enemies came against him. He was seized, tried on spurious charges, convicted to satisfy the cries of the mob, and condemned to die on Calvary's cross.

The nails pierced his hands and feet, and he hung in agony and pain, giving himself a ransom for the sins of all men. He died crying, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

He was buried in a borrowed tomb and on the third day rose from the grave. He came forth triumphant, in a victory over death, the firstfruits of all that slept. With his resurrection came the promise to all men that life is everlasting, that even as in Adam all die, in Christ all are made alive. (See I Corinthians 15:20-22.) Nothing in all of human history equals the wonder, the splendor, the magnitude, or the fruits of the matchless life of the Son of God, who died for each of us. He is our Savior. He is our Redeemer. As Isaiah foretold, "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

He is the chief cornerstone of the church which bears his name, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. There is no other name given among men whereby we can be saved. (See Acts 4:12.) He is the author of our salvation, the giver of eternal life. (See Hebrews 5:9.) There is none to equal him. There never has been. There never will be. Thanks be to God for the gift of his Beloved Son, who gave his life that we might live, and who is the chief,

immovable cornerstone of our faith and his church.

Joseph Smith's first vision

The second cornerstone—the first vision of the Prophet Joseph Smith. The year was 1820, the season spring. The boy with questions walked into the grove of his father's farm. There, finding himself alone, he pleaded in prayer for that wisdom which James promised would be given liberally to those who ask of God in faith. (See James 1:5.) There, in circumstances which he has described in much detail, he beheld the Father and the Son, the great God of the universe and the risen Lord, both of whom spoke to him.

This transcendent experience opened the marvelous work of restoration. It lifted the curtain on the long-promised dispensation of the fulness of times.

For more than a century and a half, enemies, critics, and some would-be scholars have worn out their lives trying to disprove the validity of that vision. Of course they cannot understand it. The things of God are understood by the Spirit of God. There had been nothing of comparable magnitude since the Son of God walked the earth in mortality. Without it as a foundation stone for our faith and organization, we have nothing. With it, we have everything.

Much has been written, much will be written, in an effort to explain it away. The finite mind cannot comprehend it. But the testimony of the Holy Spirit, experienced by countless numbers of people all through the years since it happened, bears witness that it is true, that it happened as Joseph Smith said it happened, that it was as real as the sunrise over Palmyra, that it is an essential foundation stone, a cornerstone, without which the Church could not be "fitly framed together."

The Book of Mormon

The third cornerstone—the Book of Mormon. I hold it in my hand. It is

real. It has weight and substance which can be physically measured. I open its pages and read, and it has language both beautiful and uplifting. The ancient record from which it was translated came out of the earth as a voice speaking from the dust. It came as the testimony of generations of men and women who lived their lives upon the earth, who struggled with adversity, who quarreled and fought, who at various times lived the divine law and prospered and at other times forsook their God and went down to destruction. It contains what has been described as the fifth Gospel, a moving testament of the new world concerning the visit of the resurrected Redeemer on the soil of this hemisphere.

The evidence for its truth, for its validity in a world that is prone to demand evidence, lies not in archaeology or anthropology, though these may be helpful to some. It lies not in word research or historical analysis, though these may be confirmatory. The evidence for its truth and validity lies within the covers of the book itself. The test of its truth lies in reading it. It is a book of God. Reasonable men may sincerely question its origin; but those who have read it prayerfully have come to know by a power beyond their natural senses that it is true, that it contains the word of God, that it outlines saving truths of the everlasting gospel, that it came forth by the gift and power of God "to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ" (Book of Mormon title page).

It is here. It must be explained. It can be explained only as the translator himself explained its origin. Hand in hand with the Bible, whose companion volume it is, it stands as another witness to a doubting generation that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. It is an unassailable cornerstone of our faith.

Restoration of the priesthood

Cornerstone number four—the restoration to earth of priesthood power

and authority. That authority was given to men anciently, the lesser authority to the sons of Aaron to administer in things temporal as well as in some sacred ecclesiastical ordinances. The higher priesthood was given by the Lord himself to his Apostles when he declared, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:19).

In its full restoration, it involved the coming of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, whose head was taken to satisfy the whims of a wicked woman, and of Peter, James, and John, they who faithfully walked with the Master before his death and proclaimed his resurrection and divinity following his death. It involved Moses, Elias, and Elijah, each bringing priesthood keys to complete the work of restoring all of the acts and ordinances of previous dispensations in this the great, final dispensation of the fulness of times.

The priesthood is here. It has been conferred upon us. We act in that authority. We speak as sons of God in the name of Jesus Christ and as holders of this divinely given endowment. We know, for we have seen, the power of this priesthood. We have seen the sick healed, the lame made to walk, and the coming of light and knowledge and understanding to those who have been in darkness.

Paul wrote concerning the priesthood: "No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron" (Hebrews 5:4). We have not acquired it through purchase or bargain. The Lord has given it to men who are considered worthy to receive it, regardless of station in life, the color of their skin, or the nation in which they live. It is the power and the authority to govern in the affairs of the kingdom of God. It is given only by ordination by the laying on of hands by those in authority to do so. The qualification for eligibility is obedience to the commandments of God.

There is no power on the earth like it. Its authority extends beyond life, through the veil of death, to the eternities ahead. It is everlasting in its consequences.

"Fitly framed together"

These great God-given gifts are the unshakable cornerstones which anchor The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, as well as the individual testimonies and convictions of its members: (1) the reality and the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God; (2) the sublime vision given the Prophet Joseph Smith of the Father and the Son, ushering in the dispensation of the fulness of times; (3) the Book of Mormon as the word of God speaking in declaration of the divinity of the Savior; and (4) the priesthood of God divinely conferred to be exercised in righteousness for the blessing of our Father's children.

Each of these cornerstones is related to the other, each connected by a foundation of Apostles and prophets, all tied to the chief cornerstone, Jesus Christ. On this has been established his Church, "fitly framed together," for the blessing of all who will partake of its offering. (See Ephesians 2:21.)

So undergirded beneath and fitly framed above, it stands as the creation of the Almighty. It is a shelter from the storms of life. It is a refuge of peace for those in distress. It is a house of succor for those in need. It is the conservator of eternal truth and the teacher of the divine will. It is the true and living Church of the Master.

Testimony

Of these things I give solemn testimony, bearing witness to all within the sound of my voice that God has spoken again to open this final glorious dispensation; that his Church is here, the Church which carries the name of his Beloved Son; that there has come from the earth the record of an ancient people bearing witness to this generation of the work of the Almighty; that the everlasting priesthood is among men for their blessing and the governance of his work; that this is the true and living Church of Jesus Christ, brought forth for the blessing of all who will receive its message; that it is immovably established on a foundation of Apostles and prophets, with cornerstones of unshakable firmness put in place by him for the accomplishment of his eternal purposes, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone.

Of such was the faith of our fathers. Of such is our faith. "Faith of our fathers, holy faith. We will be true to thee till death!" ("Faith of Our Fathers" in *Hymns*, 1985 ed.). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "Faith of Our Fathers, Living Still" without announcement.

President Hinckley

The Tabernacle Choir has sung "Faith of Our Fathers, Living Still."

Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now address us.

Elder James E. Faust

With a prayer in my heart for understanding, and with some timidity, I speak today concerning parents and children with special problems. I do so

because I am persuaded that these extraordinary challenges are, as the Savior himself said, that "the works of God should be made manifest"

(John 9:3). How these challenges are met can often be the expression of the very essence of the gospel of Christ.

The special ones

It is a common sight in our congregations to have a small group of people near the front who communicate by the graceful motion of the hands as well as by the Spirit. They are people who cannot hear. Always some kind and gifted soul sits in front of the group and lovingly converts the sounds and syllables into distinguishable motions.

Recently in a large meeting, we were touched to observe the hearing-impaired members singing the hymns in parts through the motion of their hands. When the bass and tenor parts were sung, the hands of the sisters were motionless; when the soprano and alto parts were sung, the hands of the brethren were still. To me it was a very touching sight.

Those who are without hearing are some of the special ones among us, as are the people who do not have sight and those who have other physical or mental limitations.

Superhuman nurturing care

I wish to say a word of appreciation for those among us who struggle with handicaps, and impart a message of comfort to their families, especially to the parents. Where in all of the world is the son or daughter of God who is totally without blemish? Is life not worth living if it is not perfect? Do not the people with handicaps also bring their own special gifts to life—and to others who are free of those handicaps—in a manner that cannot come in any other way? There is hardly a family without one of its members who might be considered physically or mentally diminished. I have a great appreciation for those loving parents who stoically bear and overcome their anguish and heartbreak for a child who was born with or who has developed a serious mental or physical infirmity.

This anguish often continues every day, without relief, during the lifetime of the parent or the child. Not infrequently, parents are required to give superhuman nurturing care that never ceases, day or night. Many a mother's arms and heart have ached years on end, giving comfort and relieving the suffering of her special child.

The anguish of parents upon first learning that their child is not developing normally can be indescribable. The tearful concern, the questions about what the child will and will not be able to do are heartrending: "Doctor, will our child be able to talk, walk, care for himself?" Often there are no certain answers but one: "You will have to be grateful for whatever development your child achieves."

One day at a time

The paramount concern is always how to care for the person who is handicapped. The burden of future nurturing can seem overwhelming. Looking ahead to the uncertain years or even to a lifetime of constant, backbreaking care may seem more than one can bear. There are often many tears before reality is acknowledged. Parents and family members can then begin to accept and take the burden a day at a time.

Said one great mother of a severely handicapped child: "I gradually began to take only one day at a time, and it didn't seem so hard. In fact, at the end of each day I would thank the Lord for the strength I had to get through that day and pray that tomorrow would be as good. That way I learned to love him and appreciate his place in our home."

Challenge in Jesus' time also

A missionary writing to his parents said of his severely handicapped younger brother: "Mom, kiss Billy every day for me. In one of the discussions we learned that my little brother is an automatic winner of the kingdom of God. I only pray that I too may live with my Heavenly Father and see my

little brother and talk and converse with him. He's a special gift, and we are truly blessed."

The challenge of having handicapped people is not new. Many have questioned why some have such limitations. It was so in the time of Jesus:

"And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.

"And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

"Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him" (John 9:1-3).

Loving care and attention

How are the works of God manifest in these, our handicapped brothers and sisters? Surely they are manifested greatly in the loving care and attention given by parents, other family members, friends, and associates. The handicapped are not on trial. Those of us who live free of such limitations are the ones who are on trial. While those with handicaps cannot be measured in the same way as others, many of the handicapped benefit immensely from each accomplishment, no matter how small.

Adjust and compensate

The handiwork of God is manifest with respect to the handicapped in many ways. It is demonstrated in the miraculous way in which many individuals with mental and physical impediments are able to adjust and compensate for their limitations. Occasionally, other senses become more functional and substitute for the impaired senses in a remarkable way. A young friend greatly retarded in speech and movement repaired a complicated clock although she had had no previous training or experience in watch or clock making.

Many of the special ones are superior in many ways. They, too, are in a life of progression, and new things un-

fold for them each day as with us all. They can be extraordinary in their faith and spirit. Some are able, through their prayers, to communicate with the infinite in a most remarkable way. Many have a pure faith in others and a powerful belief in God. They can give their spiritual strength to others around them.

Afflictions are temporary

For the handicapped, trying to cope with life is often like trying to reach the unreachable. But recall the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith: "All the minds and spirits that God ever sent into the world are susceptible of enlargement" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 354). Certainly, in the infinite mercy of God, those with physical and mental limitations will not remain so after the Resurrection. At this time, Alma says, "the spirit and the body shall be reunited again in its perfect form; both limb and joint shall be restored to its proper frame" (Alma 11:43). Afflictions, like mortality, are temporary.

Surely more sharing of the burden will contribute to the emotional salvation of the person who is the primary caregiver. Just an hour of help now and then would be appreciated. One mother of a child who is handicapped said, "I could never dream of going to Hawaii on a vacation; all I can hope for is to have an evening away from home."

The Savior's teaching that handicaps are not punishment for sin, either in the parents or the handicapped, can also be understood and applied in today's circumstances. How can it possibly be said that an innocent child born with a special problem is being punished? Why should parents who have kept themselves free from social disease, addicting chemicals, and other debilitating substances which might affect their offspring imagine that the birth of a disabled child is some form of divine disapproval? Usually, both

the parents and the children are blameless. The Savior of the world reminds us that God "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5:45).

Love for handicapped

May I express a word of gratitude and appreciation to those many who minister with such kindness and skill to our handicapped people. Special commendation belongs to parents and family members who have cared for their own children with special needs in the loving atmosphere of their own home. The care of those who are diminished is a special service rendered to the Master himself, for "inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these . . . , ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40).

Parents of handicapped children are occasionally embarrassed or hurt by others who awkwardly express sympathy but cannot know or appreciate the depth of the parents' love for a handicapped child. Perhaps there is some comparison in the fact that there is no less love in families for the helpless infant who must be fed, bathed, and diapered than for the older but still dependent members. We love those we serve and who need us.

Tolerance for differences

Is it not possible to look beyond the canes, the wheelchairs, the braces, and the crutches into the hearts of the people who have need of these aids? They are human beings and want only to be treated as ordinary people. They may appear different, move awkwardly, and speak haltingly, but they have the same feelings. They laugh, they cry, they know discouragement and hope. They do not want to be shunned. They want to be loved for what they are inside, without any prejudice for their impairment. Can there not be more tolerance for differences—

differences in capacity, differences in body and in mind?

Those who are close to the handicapped can frequently feel the nobility of the spirits who are confined in differently shaped bodies or who have crippled minds.

To parents of the wayward

May I also say a word of comfort for the anguished parents of children who have lost their way and have turned a deaf ear to parental pleading and teaching. While much of the time most children follow in their parents' footsteps—obedient to their teachings, reciprocating their love—a few turn their backs like the prodigal son and waste their lives. The great principle of free agency is essential in fostering development, growth, and progress. It also permits the freedom to choose self-indulgence, wastefulness, and degradation. Children have their agency and often express it when very young. They may or may not follow the teachings and wishes of their parents. Most parents do the best they know how, but also understand well the words of Lehi: "Hear the words of a trembling parent" (2 Nephi 1:14).

We are indebted to Elder Howard W. Hunter for these wise words: "A successful parent is one who has loved, one who has sacrificed, and one who has cared for, taught, and ministered to the needs of a child. If you have done all of these and your child is still wayward or troublesome or worldly, it could well be that you are, nevertheless, a successful parent. Perhaps there are children who have come into the world that would challenge any set of parents under any set of circumstances. Likewise, perhaps there are others who would bless the lives of, and be a joy to, almost any father or mother" (*Ensign*, Nov. 1983, p. 65).

As caring parents we do the best we can. I am hopeful that in parenting God will judge at least partially by the intent of the parental hearts. Children have so much to learn. Parents need to

teach their children so many things. They are commanded to teach their children specifically "the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when eight years old" (D&C 68:25). But, having lived by these truths and having taught them in their home, parents cannot always ensure their children's good behavior. Said Ezekiel, "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son" (Ezekiel 18:20).

Parents have the obligation to teach, not force, and having prayerfully and conscientiously taught, parents cannot be answerable for all their children's conduct. Obedient children do bring honor to their parents, but it is unfair to judge faithful parents by the actions of children who will not listen and follow. Parents do have the obligation to instruct, but children themselves have a responsibility to listen, to be obedient, and to perform as they have been taught. Parents are parents and usually serve their children more than the children serve their parents. To concerned parents I would paraphrase Winston Churchill: "Never give up, never give up, never, never, never."

The works of God

I do not have any foolproof formula for the nurturing of children. Beyond being a good example and teaching faith, it is essential to give children unreserved love, to give measured discipline, and to try to instill self-mastery in them. A great mother who scrubbed floors to help her children through school said, "I taught my children to pray, to have good manners, and to work." The Lord reminds us that we should continually teach repentance, faith in Christ, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. (See D&C 68:25.)

The works of God are manifest in so many ways in the challenges of parents and children, especially to those who are handicapped and to those who have lost their way. For those who have asked, "Why did this happen to me?" or, "Why did this happen to my child?" there is assurance that the difficulty will not last forever. Life on this earth is not long. Caring for the unfortunate and laboring with the wayward is a manifestation of the pure love of Christ. For those who carry such a challenge in this life, God himself provides a response. That response is patience and the strength to endure. It lies, as Paul and Job testify, "in hope of eternal life, . . . promised before the world began" (Titus 1:2), "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7).

I bear witness that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world and the Redeemer of mankind. I testify that through obedience to His commandments we may enjoy the strength to triumph over every challenge of this life. May God grant this peaceful sustaining influence to all and especially to those in greatest need. I so pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "I Am a Child of God," following which we shall hear from Elder Royden G. Derrick of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation sang "I Am a Child of God."

President Hinckley

Elder Royden G. Derrick of the First Quorum of the Seventy and President of the Seattle Temple will now address us.

Elder Royden G. Derrick

Truth and the Light of Christ

Our revered leader of years past, President David O. McKay, often said, "The mission of the Gospel of Jesus Christ [is] to make evil-minded men good and to make good men better" (*Millennial Star*, Oct. 1961, p. 469).

The Lord said to the people of ancient America, "And whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do good is of me; for good cometh of none save it be of me. I am the same that leadeth men to all good" (Ether 4:12).

To be good, one must seek after truth, for truth is the ingredient which, when inculcated into our lives, changes us for good. "Truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come" (D&C 93:24). "Truth abideth every man that cometh into the world" (D&C 88:66).

Intelligence is the ability to use knowledge properly. The Lord has said, "The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth" (D&C 93:36). The light of which this scripture speaks is the Light of Christ, for Jesus further said, "I am the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (D&C 93:2).

Remorse of conscience

One of my earliest recollections happened when I was about four years of age. Several blocks from our home was a little wooden grocery store. In the front of the store windows the proprietor had built a ledge about four inches wide, where at this time of the year he placed big juicy apples to attract those passing by. As I walked by the front of the store, I saw those beautiful red apples, and my mouth began to water. Without realizing what I was doing, I took one and continued walking up the street.

When I got a short distance away, I looked at what I had in my hand and suddenly realized I had stolen an apple.

I began to run but made the mistake of running the wrong way.

On the downhill side of our front porch, there was latticework between the porch level and the ground level. A small door enabled us to store gardening tools under the porch and also gave us access to a convenient place to hide.

I ran all the way home, crawled under the porch, and sat there all afternoon shivering with fear—and eating the apple. I knew that I had done wrong, and I knew that my Heavenly Father knew that I had done wrong.

I have often reflected upon how I suffered from a remorse of conscience at such an early age. The Light of Christ, which lights every man that comes into the world, was evident that day, which in later years caused me to ponder about how the Light of Christ can influence our lives.

The Holy Ghost

Envision yourself standing on the banks of the River Jordan on a particular day nearly two thousand years ago and observing two men standing in the water. John the Baptist, clothed with camel's hair and with a girdle of skin about his loins, is baptizing Jesus; and Jesus, dressed in the garb of the day, is coming up out of the water. The heavens open and a marvelous thing occurs. The Holy Ghost descends in the form of a dove and alights upon him. And a voice from heaven is heard saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17).

The light of life

Envision yourself some time later in the temple in Jerusalem. The weather is hot outside; but inside, the thick stone walls give relief to a group gathered in discussion. It is Jesus talking to the scribes and the Pharisees:

"I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

"The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.

"Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. . . .

"It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true.

"I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me" (John 8:12-14, 17-18).

God—fountain of wisdom

The testimony of the Father and the testimony of Jesus were not for the people of their day alone, but for men down through the ages. It was documented then—for us today—and is just as true today as it was two thousand years ago. The truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ have been restored to the earth through the Prophet Joseph Smith and are available to each of us for study.

In my limited experience in the fields of religion and education, it has been my observation that it takes as much intelligence for one to assimilate the principles of the gospel as it does for one to understand the complicated formulas of science. An understanding of the gospel is a quest and must be pursued through study, thought, and prayer.

Brigham Young taught: "All true wisdom that mankind have they have received from God, whether they know it or not. There is no ingenious mind that has ever invented anything beneficial to the human family but what he obtained it from that One Source. . . . There is only one source from whence men obtain wisdom, and that is God, the fountain of all wisdom; and though men may claim to make their discoveries by their own wisdom, by meditation and reflection, they are in-

debted to our Father in Heaven for all" (*Journal of Discourses*, 13:148).

Impossible to be saved in ignorance

To those who pursue and apply gospel principles, the Lord says, "And if your eye be single to my glory, your whole bodies shall be filled with light, and there shall be no darkness in you; and that body which is filled with light comprehendeth all things" (D&C 88:67).

President Joseph F. Smith said: "[The] knowledge of truth, combined with proper regard for it, and its faithful observance, constitutes true education. The mere stuffing of the mind with a knowledge of facts is not education. The mind must not only possess a knowledge of truth, but the soul must revere it, cherish it, love it as a priceless gem; and this human life must be guided and shaped by it in order to fulfil its destiny" (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939], p. 269).

Of what value is truth unless it is assimilated into the minds and hearts of men? "Truth is the rock foundation of every great character," wrote William George Jordan. "It is loyalty to the right as we see it; it is courageous living of our lives in harmony with our ideals" (*The Power of Truth* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1943], p. 3).

The Lord says:

"Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection.

"And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come" (D&C 130:18-19).

He further said, "It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance" (D&C 131:6).

Brigham Young asked the question, "When shall we cease to learn?" And then he answered his own question with the words, "Never, never" (*Journal of Discourses*, 3:203).

Integrity

We should not overlook the fact that some truths have little or nothing to do with our eternal salvation, while others are essential to it.

When one is loyal to the truth, we say he is a person of integrity. When one is loyal to the truth under intense opposition, we say he is a person of *great* integrity. Integrity is a quality or state of being of sound moral principle. Integrity is uprightness, honesty, and sincerity—yes, all that and even more.

Men of great integrity

Following the First Vision, the Prophet Joseph Smith was persecuted unmercifully for the rest of his life and died as a martyr at thirty-eight years of age; yet he never wavered in declaring what he knew to be the truth. He knew that if he denied what he had said, the persecution would cease; yet he stood firm. He recorded:

"I . . . [saw] a light, and in the midst of that light I saw two Personages, and they did in reality speak to me; and though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true; and while they were persecuting me, reviling me, and speaking all manner of evil against me falsely for so saying, I was led to say in my heart: Why persecute me for telling the truth? I have actually seen a vision; and who am I that I can withstand God, or why does the world think to make me deny what I have actually seen? For I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it; at least I knew that by so doing I would offend God, and come under condemnation" (Joseph Smith—History 1:25.)

To so react requires great integrity and also builds great integrity.

We revere Abraham Lincoln because of his commitment to a principle in which he strongly believed. And though the opposition was severe, the pathway filled with stumbling blocks, and the future dark and uncertain, he

tenaciously held to what he believed to be right, prevailed in the cause, and eventually won the undying gratitude of a nation that was destined to become great. We have other such patriots in other lands throughout the world who are heralded as men of great integrity.

Crown of integrity

Samuel Johnson made an interesting observation when he wrote: "Integrity without knowledge is weak and useless. . . . Knowledge without integrity is dangerous and dreadful" (*Rasselas*, ch. 41). Leaders in schools of elementary, secondary, and higher education know that the true success of their system is measured by the man it forms. Such is also true of families, politics, governments, and religion.

Many live by the motto that the end justifies the means. There are those who gain their possessions by deceit, bribery, and dishonest practices, then seek legitimacy by contributing freely to a righteous cause. Integrity cannot be compromised.

Integrity is sustained by forethought and commitment. It was written of Helaman's stripling warriors, "Yea, and they did obey and observe to perform every word of command with exactness" (Alma 57:21). They were fully committed to what they would do when they got into the heat of battle. Their efforts won them the crown of integrity.

Review our own lives

Let us review our own lives to determine how each of us measures up in our own quest for integrity.

As an employee, are you committed to give at least forty hours work for forty hours pay?

Do you work enthusiastically in your job and use your best efforts to strengthen the company for which you work?

Do you, as an administrator, study your challenges thoroughly and antici-

pate the results before you submit your recommendations?

Do you jump to conclusions without taking the time to know the facts before you make your decision?

Do you properly sustain those working under your jurisdiction?

Do you sincerely sustain those to whom you are responsible?

Do you young men and young women stand loyal, in the face of opposition, to those moral principles you have been taught in the home?

Do you, as a wife and mother, strive earnestly to create an atmosphere of love and harmony in the home?

Do you fathers and mothers seriously strive to inculcate values of integrity, morality, charity, and good manners in your children?

Are you completely honest with yourself and others?

Are you obedient to Him who gave you life?

Formula for bringing forth good fruit

The Lord said to the people in his day, and to us too: "By their fruits ye shall know them." (Matt. 7:20.)

"For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

" . . . Every tree is known by his own fruit" (Luke 6:43-44).

May I suggest a formula for bringing forth good fruit and helping one to gain eternal salvation? (1) Have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and in yourself, (2) study eternal truths, (3) ponder and pray for understanding, (4) strive to incorporate principles of truth into daily living, (5) exercise integrity in all that you do, and (6) strive to do everything you do to a standard of excellence.

Let us diligently strive to understand the wonderful things of God. The jewels of the gospel of Jesus Christ are within our reach. But we must seek—ask and strive for—and live the principles of truth. When we do so, we will become better men and better women and contribute to a better community, a better nation, and a better world, for which I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Elder Derrick.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Ronald E. Poelman of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Ronald E. Poelman

Both the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Church of Jesus Christ are true and divine, and there is an essential relationship between them that is significant and very important. Understanding the proper relationship between the gospel and the Church will prevent confusion, misplaced priorities, and failed expectations and will lead to the realization of gospel goals through happy, fulfilling participation in the Church. Such understanding will avoid possible disaffection and will result in great personal blessings.

The gospel and the Church

As I attempt to describe and comment upon the essential relationship between the gospel and the Church, it is my prayer that a perspective may be developed which will enhance the influence of both the gospel and the Church in our individual lives.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is a divine and perfect plan. It is composed of eternal, unchanging principles, laws, and ordinances which are universally applicable to every individual

regardless of time, place, or circumstance. Gospel principles never change.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the kingdom of God on earth, administered by the priesthood of God. The Church has authority to teach correctly the principles and doctrines of the gospel and to administer its essential ordinances.

Revealed eternal principles

The gospel is the divine plan for personal, individual salvation and exaltation. The Church is divinely commissioned to provide the means and resources that implement this plan in each individual's life.

Procedures, programs, and policies are developed within the Church to help us realize gospel blessings according to our individual capacity and circumstances. Under divine direction, these policies, programs, and procedures may be changed from time to time as necessary to fulfill gospel purposes.

Underlying every aspect of Church administration and activity are the revealed eternal principles contained in the scriptures. As individually and collectively we increase our knowledge, acceptance, and application of gospel principles, we can more effectively utilize the Church to make our lives increasingly gospel centered.

Conformity to God's standards

The eternal principles of the gospel implemented through the divinely inspired Church apply to a wide variety of individuals in diverse cultures. Therefore, as we live the gospel and participate in the Church, the conformity we require of ourselves and of others should be according to God's standards. The orthodoxy upon which we insist must be founded in fundamental principles, eternal law, and direction given by those authorized in the Church.

A necessary perspective is gained by studying and pondering the scriptures. Reading the scriptures, we learn the gospel as it is taught by various prophets in a variety of circumstances, times, and places. We see the consequences as the gospel is accepted or rejected by individuals and as its principles are applied or not.

In the scriptures we discover that varying institutional forms, procedures, regulations, and ceremonies were utilized—all divinely designed to implement eternal principles. The practices and procedures change; the principles do not.

Through scripture study we may learn eternal principles and how to relate them to institutional resources. As we liken the scriptures unto ourselves, we can better utilize the restored Church to learn, live, and share the gospel of Jesus Christ.

A favorite scriptural source for me is the Old Testament book of Leviticus. It is basically a handbook for Hebrew priests and contains many rules, regulations, rituals, and ceremonies which seem strange and inapplicable to us. It also contains eternal principles of the gospel which are familiar and very much applicable to everyone.

It is interesting and enlightening to read the nineteenth chapter of Leviticus, noting both the principles and the rules and practices.

In the first two verses we read, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel" (Leviticus 19:1-2). Here is the principle of revelation. God speaks to his children through prophets. He does so today.

Continuing, the Lord said to Moses, "Say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy" (Leviticus 19:2). Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). Here is an eternal gospel principle.

Eternal principles among Hebrews

There follow other eternal principles, some from the Ten Commandments. Also included are rules and programs intended to implement these principles among the ancient Hebrews in their particular circumstances.

For example, the divinely directed responsibility to care for the poor is taught. A program is presented, namely, providing food for the poor by leaving the gleanings of the crops and not reaping the corners of the fields. (See Leviticus 19:9-10.) Current programs to care for the poor are much different. The divine law is the same. Yet another principle underlies both programs, ancient and modern: those being assisted are given opportunity to participate in helping themselves to the extent of their capacity.

In verse 13 the principle of honesty is taught, accompanied by a rule requiring employers to pay employees for their work at the end of each day. Generally, today that rule is not necessary. The eternal principle of honesty is implemented by other rules and practices.

Verse 27 contains a rule about personal grooming. It is clearly not applicable to us. However, we also have standards of dress and grooming. Neither is an eternal principle; both are intended to help us implement and share gospel principles.

The principle of forgiveness is also set forth in the same chapter of Leviticus, verse 18, concluding with the second great commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," with the added divine imprimatur, "I am the Lord."

Personal witness of principles and practices

Every Church member has the opportunity, right, and privilege to receive a personal witness regarding gospel principles and Church practices. Without such a witness, one may feel confused and perhaps even burdened

by what may appear to be simply institutional requirements of the Church.

We should obey the commandments and counsel of Church leaders; but also through study, through prayer, and by the influence of the Holy Spirit, we should seek and obtain an individual, personal witness that the principle or counsel is correct and divinely inspired. Then we can give enlightened, enthusiastic obedience, utilizing the Church as a means through which to give allegiance, time, talent, and other resources without reluctance or resentment.

Daily harmony between gospel and eternal goals

Happy, fulfilling participation in the Church results when we relate Church goals, programs, and policies to gospel principles and to personal eternal goals. When we see the harmony between the the gospel and the Church in our daily lives, we are much more likely to do the right things for the right reasons. We will exercise self-discipline and righteous initiative guided by Church leaders and a sense of divine accountability.

The Church aids us in our effort to use our free agency creatively, not to invent our own values, principles, and interpretations, but to learn and live the eternal truths of the gospel. Gospel living is a process of continuous individual renewal and improvement until the person is prepared and qualified to enter comfortably and with confidence into the presence of God.

Facts, reason, and the Holy Spirit

My brothers and sisters, by inclination, training, and experience most of my life I have sought understanding by the accumulation of facts and the application of reason. I continue to do so. However, that which I know most surely and which has most significantly and positively affected my life I do not know by facts and reason alone, but

rather by the comforting, confirming witness of the Holy Spirit.

By that same Spirit I testify that God is our Father, that Jesus of Nazareth is the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh, and that he is the Savior and Redeemer of all mankind and each of us. Through his atoning sacrifice, redemption and exaltation are offered as a free gift to all who will accept by faith, repentance, and sacred covenants.

May each of us continue to learn and apply the eternal principles of the gospel, utilizing fully and appropriately the resources of the divine, restored Church.

In the words of the Nephite leader Pahoran "May [we] rejoice in the great

privilege of our church, and in the cause of our Redeemer and our God" (Alma 61:14). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "The Lord Is My Shepherd" without announcement.

President Hinckley

We have listened to Elder Ronald E. Poelman of the First Quorum of the Seventy, followed by the choir singing "The Lord Is My Shepherd."

Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our concluding speaker.

Elder Boyd K. Packer

It is the Sabbath day, and outside is such a glorious day that all nature seems to bespeak the works of God. I can't refrain from saying with the poet:

O suns and skies and clouds of
June,
And flowers of June together,
Ye cannot rival for one hour
October's bright blue weather.
(Helen Hunt Jackson, "October's
Bright Blue Weather.")

Doctrine based on convictions

I desire to share a few thoughts about a basic doctrine of the Church.

What I say is based on these convictions:

First: instruction vital to our salvation is not hidden in an obscure verse or phrase in the scriptures. To the contrary, essential truths are repeated over and over again.

Second: every verse, whether oft-quoted or obscure, must be measured against other verses. There are complementary and tempering teachings in the

scriptures which bring a balanced knowledge of truth.

Next: there is a consistency in what the Lord says and what He does, that is evident in all creation. Nature can teach valuable lessons about spiritual and doctrinal matters. The Lord drew lessons from flowers and foxes, from seeds and salt, and sparrows and sunsets.

Fourth: not all that God has said is in the Bible. Other scriptures—the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price—have equal validity, and they sustain one another.

Fifth: while much must be taken on faith alone, there is individual revelation through which we may know the truth. "There is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (Job 32:8). What may be obscure in the scriptures can be made plain through the gift of the Holy Ghost. We can have as full an understanding of spiritual things as we are willing to earn.

And I add one more conviction: there is an adversary who has his own

channels of spiritual communication. He confuses the careless and prompts those who serve him to devise deceptive, counterfeit doctrine, carefully contrived to appear genuine.

I mention this because now, as always, there are self-appointed spokesmen who scoff at what we believe and misrepresent what we teach.

Go to his friends

As a young seminary teacher, I learned a valuable lesson from our principal, Able S. Rich. He told me, "If you really want to know what a man is, and what he believes, do not go to his enemies. Go to the man himself or to his friends. He does not confide the thoughts of his heart to his enemies. His friends know him best; they know his strengths and his weaknesses. They will represent him fairly. His enemies will *mis*represent him."

The doctrine I wish to discuss concerns the nature of man and of God.

The question

There is a question in both the Old and the New Testaments: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (Psalm 8:4; see also Hebrews 2:5-7).

The answer is taught most simply in the song we sang together at the intermission of the meeting:

I am a child of God,
And He has sent me here,
Has given me an earthly home
With parents kind and dear. . . .

I am a child of God,
Rich blessings are in store;
If I but learn to do his will
I'll live with him once more.
(*Sing with Me*, B-76.)

Children of God

Those lyrics teach a basic doctrine of the Church. We *are* the children of God. That doctrine is not hidden away in an obscure verse. It is taught over

and over again in scripture. These clear examples are from the Bible:

"All of you are children of the most High" (Psalm 82:6).

And: "We are the offspring of God" (Acts 17:29).

Doctrinal truths are interrelated. There is an old saying that if you pick up one end of a stick, you pick up the other end as well.

If you concede that we are His children, you must allow that God is our Father.

God, our Father

That, too, is repeated over and over again in the scriptures. There are so many references that I could not even begin to read them to you.

But I make this point: Christ did not speak only of *the* Father, or *my* Father; He spoke of *your* Father, and *our* Father. He even put them together in one sentence, saying, "*Your* Father, and *your* God, and *my* God" (D&C 88:75; italics added). God is addressed universally in the Christian world as Father. Were we not commanded to pray "Our Father which art in heaven"? (Matthew 6:9).

You may respond, "Every Christian knows that." Perhaps every Christian does, but so-called Christians, with the help of clergymen, belittle in most unchristian ways our teaching that we are the literal sons and daughters of God.

Other ideals flow from that great truth. Once you know that, you know that all men are *brothers*. That realization changes you. Thereafter you cannot willingly injure another. You could not transgress against them in any way.

Self-respect

That simple, profound doctrine is worth knowing for another reason as well. It brings a feeling of self-worth, dignity, self-respect. Then self-pity and depression fade away. We then can yield to the discipline of a loving Father

and accept even the very hard lessons of life.

Christ taught us to be "perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48), to take on His attributes, to follow the pattern of our parentage.

A little girl taught me a profound lesson on this subject. Surely you are not above learning from little children. Much of what I know that really matters I have learned from being a father.

The chicks

Some years ago I returned home to find our little children were waiting in the driveway. They had discovered some newly hatched chicks under the manger in the barn. When they reached for them, a protective hen rebuffed them. So they came for reinforcements.

I soon gathered a handful of little chicks for them to see and touch.

As our little girl held one of them, I said in a teasing way, "That will make a nice watchdog when it grows up, won't it?" She looked at me quizzically, as if I didn't know much.

So I changed my approach: "It won't be a watchdog, will it?" She shook her head, "No, Daddy." Then I added, "It will be a nice riding horse."

She wrinkled up her nose and gave me that "Oh, Dad!" look. For even a four-year-old knows that a chick will not be a dog, nor a horse, nor even a turkey. It will be a chicken. It will follow the pattern of its parentage. She knew that without having had a course in genetics, without a lesson or a lecture.

After their own kind

No lesson is more manifest in nature than that all living things do as the Lord commanded in the Creation. They reproduce "after their own kind." (See Moses 2:12, 24.) They follow the pattern of their parentage. Everyone knows that; every four-year-old knows that! A bird will not become an animal nor a fish. A mammal will not beget

reptiles, nor "do men gather . . . figs of thistles" (Matthew 7:16).

In the countless billions of opportunities in the reproduction of living things, one kind does not beget another. If a species ever does cross, the offspring cannot reproduce. The pattern for all life is the pattern of the parentage.

This is demonstrated in so many obvious ways, even an ordinary mind should understand it. Surely no one with reverence for God could believe that His children evolved from slime or from reptiles. (Although one can easily imagine that those who accept the theory of evolution don't show much enthusiasm for genealogical research!) The theory of evolution, and it is a theory, will have an entirely different dimension when the workings of God in creation are fully revealed.

Since *every living thing* follows the pattern of its parentage, are we to suppose that God had some other strange pattern in mind for *His* offspring? Surely we, His children, are not, in the language of science, a different species than He is?

Like God

What is in error, then, when we use the term *Godhood* to describe the ultimate destiny of mankind? We may now be young in our progression—juvenile, even infantile, compared with Him. Nevertheless, in the eternities to come, if we are worthy, we may be like unto Him, enter His presence, "see as [we] are seen, and know as [we] are known," and receive a "fulness" (D&C 76:94).

This doctrine is not at variance with the scriptures. Nevertheless, it is easy to understand why some Christians reject it, because it introduces the possibility that man may achieve Godhood.

One God

Their concern centers on certain verses of scripture, for there are many

references (at least twenty in the Bible alone) which speak of *one* God. For example, Ephesians 4:6: There is "one God and Father of all."

But if you hold strictly to a too rigid interpretation of those verses, you create serious theological problems for yourself.

Plural terms

There are many other verses of scripture, at least an equal number in the Bible, that speak in plural terms of "lords" and "gods." The first chapter of Genesis states:

"And God said, Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness" (Genesis 1:26; italics added).

Such references are found from Genesis to Revelation. (See Revelation 1:6.)

The strongest one was given by Christ Himself when He quoted that very clear verse from the Eighty-second Psalm:

"Is it not written in your law, *I said, Ye are gods?* [See Psalm 82:6.]

"If he called them *gods*, unto whom the word of God came, *and the scripture cannot be broken;*

"Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the *Son of God?*" (John 10:34-36; italics added).

The acceptance of this truth does not mean accepting the multiple gods of mythology nor the polytheism of the pagans, which was so roundly condemned by Isaiah and the other prophets.

There is *one* God, the Father of all. This we accept as fundamental doctrine.

There is only *one* Redeemer, Mediator, Savior. This we know.

There is *one* Holy Ghost, a personage of spirit, who completes the Godhead.

I have emphasized the word *one*, in each sentence, but I have used it three times. Three is plural.

Paul used the plural *many* and the singular *one* in the same verse:

"For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many.)

"But to us there is but one God, the Father" (1 Corinthians 8:5-6).

Anyone who believes and teaches of God the Father, and accepts the divinity of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost, teaches a plurality of Gods.

Relying on reason

When the early Apostles were gone, those who assumed the leadership of the Church forsook revelation and relied on reason. The idea of three separate Gods offended them, for it appeared to contravene those scriptures which refer to one God.

To reconcile that problem, they took verses here and there and ignored all else that bears on the subject. They tried to stir the three *ones* together into some mysterious kind of a composite *one*. They came up with creeds which cannot be squared with the scriptures. And they were left with a philosophy which opposes all we know of creation, of the laws of nature. And that, interestingly enough, defies the very reason upon which they came to depend.

The Apostle Paul understood this doctrine and wrote to the Philippians:

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Philippians 2:5-6).

Lorenzo Snow, a modern Apostle, wrote a poem to his ancient counterpart Paul, from which I quote only one verse:

A Son of God, like God to be,
Would not be robbing Deity,
And he who has this hope within,
Will purify himself from sin.
(*Improvement Era*, June 1919,
p. 661.)

Purity

What could inspire one to purity and worthiness more than to possess a spiritual confirmation that we are the children of God? What could inspire a more lofty regard for oneself, or engender more love for mankind?

This thought does not fill me with arrogance. It fills me with overwhelming humility. Nor does it sponsor any inclination to worship oneself or any man.

The doctrine we teach has no provision for lying or stealing, for pornography, immoralities, for child abuse, for abortion, or murder. We are bound by the laws of His church, *as sons and daughters of God*, to avoid all of these and every other unholy or impure practice.

We did not invent this doctrine. Much of it was preserved in the Bible as it was revealed to prophets in ancient times. And as they foretold, further light and knowledge was revealed.

With the restoration of the fulness of the gospel came the Book of Mormon, Another Testament of Jesus Christ. Other revelations were given and continue to be given, and verses which seemed to oppose one another have harmony.

The Prophet Joseph Smith said, "It is the first principle of the Gospel to know for a certainty the Character of God" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1938], p. 345).

And that knowledge is given us.

Literal relationship with God

The Father *is* the one true God. *This* thing is certain: no one will ever ascend above Him; no one will ever replace Him. Nor will anything ever change the relationship that we, His literal offspring, have with Him. He is Elohim, the Father. He is God. Of Him there *is* only one. We revere our Father and our God; we *worship* Him.

There is only one Christ, one Redeemer. We accept the divinity of the Only Begotten Son of God in the flesh. We accept the promise that we may become joint heirs with Him. Paul wrote to the Romans:

"The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:16-17).

There are those who mock our beliefs in the most uncharitable ways. And we will bear what they do with long-suffering, for it does not change truth. And in their own way they move our work along a little faster. We will send our missionaries abroad to teach that we are the literal sons and daughters of God.

We will strive with every exertion to teach what Christ taught, to live as He lived, to endure as He endured.

We began with this question: "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" Christ, our Redeemer, our Elder Brother, asked, "What manner of men ought ye to be?" And then He answered, "Verily I say unto you, even as I am" (3 Nephi 27:27).

I bear solemn witness that Jesus is the Christ, the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh; that He is our Redeemer, our Savior; that God is our Father. This we know through the gift of the Holy Ghost. And I humbly but resolutely affirm that we will not, we cannot, stray from this doctrine. On this fundamental truth we will *never* yield! In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Elder Packer. As we conclude this service, we express appreciation to the owners and operators of the many radio and television stations and cable systems who have provided facilities as a public service to make the proceedings of this conference available to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

The Tabernacle Choir will sing in closing "Go Forth into the World in Peace," following which the benediction will be given by Bishop H. Burke Peterson, and the conference will be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The choir sang "Go Forth into the World in Peace."

Bishop H. Burke Peterson offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

FIFTH SESSION

The fifth and final general session of the 154th Semiannual General Conference commenced at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, October 7, 1984.

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, conducted this session.

Music was provided by the Tabernacle Choir directed by Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger with John Longhurst at the organ.

President Benson made the following remarks at the outset of the meeting:

President Ezra Taft Benson

The First Presidency has asked that I conduct this concluding session of the conference.

We extend our love and blessings to President Spencer W. Kimball and to President Marion G. Romney, both of whom are in attendance at this session.

We extend a sincere welcome to all assembled this afternoon in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, in the fifth and concluding session of the 154th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We also welcome those seated in the Assembly Hall where Elders Loren C. Dunn and Derek A. Cuthbert preside.

We send our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere who are

participating in these proceedings by radio, television, and satellite transmission.

The Tabernacle Choir, with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger directing and John Longhurst at the organ, is providing the music for this session.

The choir will begin this service by singing "Turn Your Hearts." The invocation will be offered by Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Tabernacle Choir sang "Turn Your Hearts."

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin offered the invocation.

President Benson

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "Come, Ye Children of the Lord." Following the singing, we shall hear from Elder David B. Haight, a member of the Council of the Twelve.

The choir sang "Come, Ye Children of the Lord."

Elder Haight spoke without further announcement.

Elder David B. Haight

Recently new temples were dedicated in Sydney, Australia, and in the Philippines.

One of the inspired dedicatory prayers offered by President Gordon B. Hinckley implored God our Father to "bless thy saints in their faith . . . [to] remain true as . . . [a] covenant people . . . , that they shall grow in wisdom" he continued, "both spiritual and temporal . . . [that] they [shall] grow in virtue and in knowledge and in love for thee . . . [and that] the evil designs of . . . [thine] enemies be frustrated" (*Church News*, 30 Sep. 1984, p. 10).

Plague of pornography

It is about the "evil designs of thine enemies" that I shall speak. I have prayed for spiritual guidance, and that I might be able to communicate to you in a thoughtful manner my frank and candid expressions of concern over the spreading of evil in our society today.

Over the past twenty years a plague of pornography has swept across most countries of the world with increasing momentum and devastating impact. What began a few years ago as a few crude picture magazines that startled sensitive people has grown to hundreds of publications, each seeking to outdo the others with increasingly shocking content.

So-called "adult" bookstores, selling materials that appeal to the prurient mind, are now open in nearly every city. Obscene materials once available only by mail and in a plain brown wrapper now are prominently displayed on the magazine racks of many local convenience stores and other business establishments where they are readily accessible to the young and the old alike.

Theaters showing X-rated films and worse have become established in most cities. It is reported that one particularly offensive movie, filmed at a

cost of forty thousand dollars, has earned revenues of over six hundred million dollars.

It should come as no surprise that grand juries have found that 90 percent of all pornography is dominated by organized crime. Large profits from one project become a source of funds for still larger and more sophisticated enterprises as a growing tidal wave of smut dashes against the weakening bulwarks of morality.

New technologies that can bless our lives in so many positive ways are also being used to spread pornographic corruption. Video recorders now can bring to homes great classics of music, history, art, and drama. But they also bring into some of these same homes lurid portrayals of debauchery that contaminate those who view them and extend their corrupting influence to our communities and society.

Cable television and satellite transmissions, with their powerful capacity for good, are not only being used, but are also being abused. State and national laws necessary to govern their proper use are not yet established, and they are almost totally unregulated. Greedy men have been ready to exploit this vacuum in legal regulation without regard for the consequence to its victims.

A controlling habit

Some may ask "What is pornography?" It was United States Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart who said that while he could not exactly define pornography, "I know it when I see it," he said (*Jacobellis v. Ohio*, 378-U.S. 184, 1964).

Pornography is not a victimless crime. Who are its victims? First, those who either intentionally, or sometimes involuntarily, are exposed to it. Pornography is addictive. (See *ENSIGN*, March 1984, pp. 32-39.) What may begin as a curious exploration can be-

come a controlling habit. Studies show that those who allow themselves to become drawn to pornography soon begin to crave even coarser content. Continued exposure desensitizes the spirit and can erode the conscience of unwary people. A victim becomes a slave to carnal thoughts and actions. As the thought is father to the deed, exposure can lead to acting out what is nurtured in the mind.

Degrades and exploits

But there are other victims. Crimes of violence have increased in the United States at up to five times the rate of population growth. A 1983 University of New Hampshire study found that states having the highest readership of pornographic magazines also have the highest number of reported rapes. Pornography degrades and exploits men, and women, and children in a most ugly and corrupt fashion.

Perhaps the greatest tragedy of all is in the lives of children who become its victims. The saddest trend of our day is the alarming, large increase in child abuse. Much of it occurs within families and involves corrupting the divine innocence that children have from birth. We sing, as we did this morning, "I am a child of God, and he has sent me here. . . . Lead me, guide me, walk beside me, help me find the way [that I might] live with him some day" are part of those words ("I Am a Child of God," *Sing with Me*, B-76). The Savior reserved His harshest condemnation for those who would offend little children. He said: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for . . . it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish" (Matthew 18:10, 14).

The Lord further commanded: "Neither commit adultery . . . nor do anything like unto it" (D&C 59:6).

"The early apostles and prophets [warned against] sins that are reprehensible . . . —adultery, . . . infidelity, . . . impurity, inordinate affection, . . . sexual relations outside of marriage,

. . . sex perversion, . . . preoccupation with sex in one's thoughts. . . . [And] one of the worst of these [sins] is incest . . . [or] sexual [relations] between persons so closely related that they are forbidden by law to marry" (Spencer W. Kimball, *President Kimball Speaks Out* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981], p. 6). Incest is an ugly sin, and this sin particularly may irreparably damage its innocent victims.

Avoid least approach toward evil

Yet, what impels these offenders to such terrible deeds? Police report that some 80 percent of those who molest young boys and girls admitted modeling their attacks on pornography they had viewed.

How has this evil gained such a foothold in our society? Have we ignored the warnings of our Church leaders? President Kimball declared: "So long as men are corrupt and revel in sewer filth, entertainers will sell them what they want. Laws may be passed, arrests may be made, lawyers may argue, courts may sentence . . . men of corrupt minds, but pornography and . . . insults to decency will never cease until men have cleansed their minds."

Continuing, President Kimball said, "When . . . [man] is sick and tired of being drowned in filth, . . . he will not pay for that filth and its source will dry up.

"Hence it is obvious," he continued, "that to remain clean and worthy, one must stay positively and conclusively away from the devil's territory, avoiding the least approach toward evil. Satan leaves his fingerprints" (*The Miracle of Forgiveness* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969], pp. 229, 232).

Not condoned nor protected

This growing presence of obscenity has been aided by the lowering of media standards for advertising, by relaxed movie ratings, by television soap operas and situation comedies that

use their powerful voices to justify, glamorize, and encourage sexual relations outside of marriage.

Perhaps we have been intimidated by those who claim that producing, distributing, and using obscene materials is a basic right to be defended. This is not true. Even under the divinely inspired constitutional principles of this land, obscenity is not condoned nor protected. The United States Supreme Court has clearly held that criminal prosecution of those who produce and distribute obscene materials does not violate their First Amendment rights. (*Miller v. California*, 413 U.S. 15, 1973.)

Failure to enforce laws

This spreading evil has been aided by a failure to enforce laws designed to prohibit or regulate it. Although some additional legislation may be helpful, those who have been fighting the discouraging battle against pornography in recent years are in agreement that nearly 90 percent of all obscene materials could be eliminated from our communities if existing obscenity laws were strictly enforced. A few courageous cities have performed outstanding service by ridding themselves of X-rated theaters and so-called "adult" bookstores, and by limiting access to hard-core pornographic books and magazines. The citizens of Mt. Lebanon, Pennsylvania, formed a citizen action group and determined that they were not going to allow such degrading material in their community. They closed an adult bookshop and a large distribution warehouse, and, as a result of their determined citizens' organization and involvement, they have had enacted a city public nuisance ordinance.

Courage and conviction

Lawmaking bodies will listen to effectively organized citizens. However, too often the trend is tragically

toward citizen apathy and a sense of futility.

And who is to blame? We could conveniently point the accusing finger at public prosecutors who are not vigorously enforcing the law. But we need men and women of courage and conviction in these offices of public trust if the awful tide is to be stemmed. But as one accusing finger is pointing toward those who make or enforce the law, another may point to ourselves, who may be equally to blame.

Community standards and concerned citizens

Fortunately, what is deemed legally obscene is partially determined by local community standards. We as citizens, by our own standards, are the ones who can help establish what offensive materials are—which ones are legally obscene—and cannot claim protection from the law.

Unfortunately, many people assume that even hard-core pornography is legal because it is so prevalent. But that is not true. Some public prosecutors may excuse themselves from seeking enforcement of obscenity laws by explaining that community standards determine what is obscene. They therefore conclude that because the community tolerates such material, its presence must reflect the accepted community standard. Concerned citizens—you and I—can change this misunderstanding.

What, then, is needed to reverse this ominous insult to ourselves, our families, and our communities? Only when men and women concerned for their families and communities let their voices and their influence be felt in thoughtful, rational ways will we alter the destructive course on which we are traveling. Silent indignation may be misinterpreted as approval. Irrational action may be ineffective because it is regarded as prudish rather than thoughtful.

Albert Camus wrote: "By your actions or your silence, you, too, enter the fray."

May I suggest a few things we could do to halt this deadly evil.

Keep free from corrupting influence

First, let each of us resolve this day to keep our minds, our bodies, and our spirits free from the corrupting influence of pornography, including everything that is obscene and indecent. Let it have no place in our homes, our minds, or our hearts. The psalmist David wrote, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart" (Psalm 24:3-4). If those who hear my voice have in their possession offensive materials that should be destroyed, let this be the day of decision and action. If someone listening has been tempted or has thought of, or even considered abusing or offending a child, may he, this day, confess and repent and forsake such evil thoughts or actions.

James the Apostle and the brother of our Lord wrote:

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation. . . . Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man" (James 1:12-13).

Parents, discuss with your children of appropriate age, and in sensitive ways, the harmful effects and addictive nature of such material. Rigorously monitor the selection of television programs, movies, videocassettes, music, and other forms of entertainment for your family. Let us never, by purchasing these damaging materials, contribute to the financial success of those who deal in this material.

We would encourage you to foster in your homes a love of knowledge through uplifting literature; wholesome books; selective movies and television; classical and exemplary popular music;

entertainment that uplifts and edifies the spirit and mind.

Work with like-minded citizens

Second, let our voices be heard in our communities—members and non-members alike. If something offends standards of decency, our voices should be heard. We would encourage members to persevere in their efforts to work with local groups and to establish a visible relationship with other like-minded citizens, and seek to preserve our quality of life by encouraging steps against such material.

Should we not actively approach the management of some stores, movie theaters, bookstores, television and radio stations, with a request to withdraw indecent materials from public display or use or patronage? Of course, such efforts should be consistent with the constitutional process, exercising gentle persuasion.

Some nationally owned and franchised convenience stores and others have responded to the courteous request of their customers to discontinue selling certain degrading materials. We commend them for what they have done and would encourage others to follow their lead.

Support enforcement of laws

And third, we can make our own elected officials and law enforcement people aware that we support the fair enforcement of laws prohibiting obscenity and regulating indecency, thank them for their past service and present efforts, and encourage them to continue the difficult and sometimes thankless task of strictly enforcing the existing laws in a consistent and fair manner.

Support enactment of laws and regulations

And fourth, where legislation is needed to meet new technological advances in cable and satellite transmis-

sion, let us support the enactment of reasonable laws and regulations that would help reduce the number of those whose lives will otherwise become marred by addiction, child abuse, and many of the other social ills that pornography helps foster. These laws should be carefully drawn within constitutional limitations, so that the freedoms we seek for ourselves now and in the future are not denied for others.

Faith and prayer

And fifth, let us exercise our faith and prayerfully seek help from God our Father in this vital task. There are some who believe that the pornography industry is out of control, already too powerful to curb. I would disagree with this dim view, but recognize the immensity of the task before us. We know that people of good will, united in such a worthy cause, where the moral fiber of our nations may be at stake, and aided by divine power, can overcome any obstacle and meet any challenge to help our Lord and Savior to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.

Personal morality

"There is a line of demarcation," said President George Albert Smith,

"well defined, between the Lord's territory and the devil's. If you will stay on the Lord's side of the line, you will be under his influence and will have no desire to do wrong; but if you cross to the devil's side of the line one inch, you are in the tempter's power, and if he is successful, you will not be able to think or even reason properly, because you will have lost the Spirit of the Lord" (*The Miracle of Forgiveness*, p. 232). As a man soweth, so shall he reap.

May we strive to purify our personal lives, strengthen our homes—and not just talk about it, but strengthen our homes—and recognize the evil forces that are working through insidious ways to thwart our eternal progress, I humbly pray, as I declare the reality of our eternal Father in Heaven and His beloved Son Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer. In His holy name, amen.

President Benson

Elder David B. Haight, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder Hugh W. Pinnock, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He will be followed by Elder Spencer H. Osborn, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Hugh W. Pinnock

The Holy Spirit sometimes works upon our minds fervently. We then know with a sure knowledge which subject to address. I shall speak of the inherent necessity of learning more thoroughly the will of our loving Heavenly Father.

Be as perfect as your Father

While serving in Pennsylvania several years ago, I was pleasantly surprised to be visited by a minister of a

huge Protestant congregation. We exchanged pleasantries and discussed the doctrinal subjects on which we could find benign agreement. Suddenly he interrupted our conversation by stating, "You teach one belief with which I could never agree. It is your idea that 'as God is, man may become.' " (See *History of the Church*, 6:302–17.) He held a well-worn white Bible in his hand. I asked him to turn to Matthew 5:48. His nimble fingers quickly turned to that reference, and he read, "Be ye

therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

He gasped and then hesitatingly agreed to man's great potential. We read other scriptures, such as: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Genesis 1:26). He understood, and found a new respect for our teachings. He left a wiser man, and I felt a renewed gratitude for the inspiring truths that we understand and teach.

God's word as our guide

A young woman had almost left the Church. While I visited the distant city where she lived, she asked if we could talk for a few minutes, and I agreed. She had heard many of the misconceptions that our detractors have used to discredit the Church for decades. We read from the scriptures for about an hour together. With relief reflected in her eyes, she finally said, "I have been misled, haven't I?"

I said, "Yes, you have."

She was disappointed with what those erring enemies of the Church were teaching, but was excited to find herself back thinking clearly again. All we had done was read from the scriptures together. Confusion and mistakes come when we forget the importance of God's word as our unwavering guide.

A friend asked me several months ago why so many problems have been plaguing a number of the members of the Church recently. I hesitatingly answered, "Well, the last days are surely approaching when even the elect shall be deceived." (See Matthew 24:24.) He looked at me momentarily and said, "Well, perhaps that might be a little of it, but I believe the real reason that so many are wandering on strange paths is because they do not follow prophetic counsel to study the scriptures and attend the classes in Church."

I have thought of that conversation many times.

Understand Jesus' teachings

Would a person languish in self-pity and guilt if he understood the teachings of Jesus: "In my Father's house are many mansions. . . . I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2).

Also, the episode when the Master asked those without sin to cast the first stone at the woman caught in adultery and then, when they left, asked her, "Woman, where are . . . thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? . . . Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John 8:10-11).

Or how could an individual defraud his customers, employer, or employees if he understood thoroughly Paul's words: "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2 Timothy 3:13). Such an individual would know that his life will progressively become more injured and that he will lose the spirit of discernment.

How could anyone claim that we are not Christian people if they had even a minimal understanding of the original Church as described in the New Testament, with baptism for the dead (see 1 Corinthians 15-29), the Melchizedek Priesthood (see Hebrews 5:6, 10), Apostles, prophets, evangelists, and teachers (see Ephesians 4:11).

Or how could an individual commit the heinous crime of child abuse if he or she remembered the protecting words of Jesus when he taught, "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matthew 18:6).

Or would it be possible for a person to be caught in the subtle humanist philosophy that appears to be spreading everywhere if he thoroughly understood these words of Nephi: "Cursed is he that putteth his trust in man, or maketh flesh his arm, or shall hearken unto the precepts of men, save their

precepts shall be given by the power of the Holy Ghost" (2 Nephi 28:31).

Or would our youth show, in some instances, almost wholesale disrespect for parents if they had carefully analyzed this verse: "Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord" (Colossians 3:20).

Likewise, would the parents be more sensitive toward their little ones if they understood the concept taught in the very next verse: "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged" (Colossians 3:21.)

Or would immorality be running rampant if people comprehended those precious words found in the first letter to the Corinthians where we learn that a person who commits fornication sins against his own body, which is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and that our bodies are not our own but have been bought through the sacrifice of Jesus. He bought our bodies and our spirits, and they belong to God. We surely are to take care of His possessions. (See 1 Corinthians 6:15-20.)

Or would divorce be used so quickly as a solution to marital differences and frustrations if the loving words of our Heavenly Father as recorded in modern-day scriptures were understood more thoroughly? "Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else.

"And he that looketh upon a woman to lust after her shall deny the faith, and shall not have the Spirit; and if he repents not he shall be cast out" (D&C 42:22-23).

Learn our Father's will

Too often we forget our teachings and doctrine and, by so doing, err to our own injury and those we love the most. Within the teachings of God are found the answers to the dilemmas and challenges of life. The examples are endless, while the solution is fixed; it does not vary.

What can we do to keep ourselves more in tune doctrinally with our Heavenly Father? There are three simple steps:

Attend Church meetings

First, attend our Church meetings. Several years ago we were given a meeting schedule that consolidated formal worship into a three-hour time frame. To each is given the identical commodity of 168 hours each week. The knave is given the same amount of time as the knight. The scriptural scholar is given the same amount of time as the doctrinal dumbo. Yes, for three hours each week we are asked to attend our formal Church meetings to become familiar with the word of God. This is less than two percent of our time. Yet too often presidencies hold meetings, members visit in the hallways, and leaders interview during this precious period. Yes, our leaders would lead better, our counselors would counsel better, and our members, by worshipping more studiously, would be able to cope more enduringly and satisfactorily.

What better lesson can a bishop, a Relief Society or Young Women president, a Melchizedek Priesthood quorum leader, or stake president teach than by being in a Gospel Doctrine class with his or her mate studying the word of God? Children certainly become more committed to doctrinal learning when they see their parents with scriptures in hand going to Church meetings and studying God's word together.

Study the scriptures

Second, study the scriptures with our family, with other members, and with friends, but also search the words of God in private contemplation. Search the scriptures as they relate to our priesthood, Relief Society, Sunday School, Young Women, and Primary lessons. Study the scriptures for additional enlightenment on how to be more

happy and less frustrated in what only too often is at least temporarily a sad and dreary world. Every four years we are guided carefully through all of the scriptures in the adult curriculum of the Church. In a lifetime, each member can become a spiritual scriptorian instead of remaining a scriptural simpleton. How blessed we are to have our four books of scripture in editions that include efficient indexes, chapter headings, and other study helps such as the Topical Guide.

Last April I was deeply impressed with the words of Elder J. Thomas Fyans when he reported to the First Quorum of the Seventy the method he and his wife, Helen, use to study the scriptures. Because his stake conference assignments kept them from sitting together in the Gospel Doctrine class, learning from the Book of Mormon this year, they studied the Sunday School manual together at home, carefully marking the scriptures as they went along. They completed their study of the Book of Mormon in just four months and were looking forward to repeating the experience.

Practice what we learn

Third, brothers and sisters, we are to practice what we learn and teach. To overcome scriptural stupor, we must put what we learn into action. The scriptures lived for those who wrote them; we can make them just as real for us today if we will live by their teachings.

Often the self-control exercised by our youth under a full moon results from remembering a scripture learned in a seminary, priesthood, Sunday School, or Young Women's meeting.

Often the discipline or total integrity needed in a business interview or sales situation comes from a principle learned through personal scriptural study or from a well-prepared teacher. And how we appreciate and love you teachers in the kingdom!

So often our single members are able to overcome discomfort, distress, and discouragement by making decisions that are based on gospel teachings.

Yes, each of us is in the business of managing his own life to be happy now and forever. We can do so only by learning and doing our Heavenly Father's will.

Perhaps we would consider a man or woman foolish if he or she did not claim a rich inheritance. Yet how foolish we are if we do not lay claim on the doctrinal endowment that we have been given.

May each of us attend our meetings regularly, study and ponder the words of God and our prophets diligently, and practice constantly what we have learned. These words I leave with you in the name of our King, Redeemer, and Master Teacher, Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Spencer H. Osborn spoke without further announcement.

Elder Spencer H. Osborn

Prior to this present calling, I served as a counselor to President Marion D. Hanks in the Salt Lake Temple. The spirit encouraged by him for all temple workers was taken from a hand-lettered sign on the wall of a little boys' clubhouse: "Nobody act big; nobody act little; everybody act

medium." I confess that I feel a great deal less than medium as I stand here at this pulpit, this spot hallowed by prophets and other great leaders who have stood here and proclaimed eternal truths.

New yoke of service

I, with others of my Brethren, have received a new calling from the Lord. My specific assignment is to serve with Elder A. Theodore Tuttle and Elder Jacob de Jager in the Presidency of the South America South Area of the Church, with the headquarters in Buenos Aires. This area comprises the great countries of Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay.

I have accepted a new yoke of service; this is something that occurs to thousands of faithful Saints every week the world over—a new yoke of service.

Carve and sand your yoke

Several months ago, Sister Osborn and I were traveling a narrow road in central Luzon in the Philippines, where I was serving as a full-time Regional Representative. We passed a farmer on his way to market. He was trotting along, carrying an enormous load of vegetables and produce hanging from both ends of a wooden yoke carried across his shoulders. I stopped the car to take his picture. After I snapped the camera, he lowered his burden in order to visit. I asked my friend if his load wasn't really too heavy to carry a great distance. He replied, "No, it isn't, because it's balanced."

"Doesn't that yoke hurt?" I asked.

"At first it did, but I carved and sanded it with a rough stone, and now it fits and is comfortable."

I noticed, also, that he had a small cloth pad that spanned his neck—I suppose to cushion the shocks of a rough road.

It wasn't until we drove away that I thought of the Savior's invitation found in Matthew 11:

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

"For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28–30).

Learn of the Lord and be teachable

Traditionally, and properly, we consider this beautiful promise of relief in connection with those without the kingdom—those who have not accepted the saving and exalting ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Very often we use this invitation for those within the Church who carry the heavy burdens of sadness, distress, sickness, problems, or sin. May I suggest another vast group of faithful Latter-day Saints who receive great comfort from this scripture. They are the workers in the vineyard, those who carry the load of service in the Church.

There are two excerpts from this scripture which seem especially appropriate to this group of men and women. The first is "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me." Not only are we to accept responsibilities in the service of the Master, but we are to continue our personal studies—the never-ending process of learning of Jesus Christ and pondering His ministry, message, and atonement. It is sad to note that all too often when we assume a demanding Church assignment our scripture studies are placed in suspension for the duration. The second segment that applies to us is "For I am meek and lowly in heart." Meekness is the key to success in the Lord's service. To be meek and lowly doesn't mean to be timid or afraid, but to be submissive to the will of the Lord, to be willing to be led by the Spirit and to be teachable.

Service in the Church

I have found through the years and in a series of Church responsibilities that as long as I balance the load, delegate and shift the burden if it becomes too cumbersome, making sure that family, business, and other interests counterbalance my load of duty, it becomes light. If the yoke chafes or irri-

tates, I whittle or sand it down by learning more about the position and educating myself in the work. Then the yoke becomes comfortable and easy, as the Lord said it would. Of course, the cushion or pad that spans the neck is the knowledge we have of the divinity of this great latter-day work, our testimony of the gospel. That is what really cushions the shocks and jolts as we carry our burdens down the rocky road of life.

My present yoke chafes a bit right now, but I'll keep sanding away until I can communicate better in that beautiful Spanish language. I rejoice in this

yoke. I delight in carrying this burden for as long as my duty requires.

I know that God lives and responds to our petition. I know that Jesus Christ is my Master, our Savior and Redeemer. I pledge to my Heavenly Father and to my Brethren my full devotion to this present yoke of service, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

We will now be pleased to hear from Elder Philip T. Sonntag, who also was sustained as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy at the April conference.

Elder Philip T. Sonntag

Testimony

This morning at an early hour, the telephone rang, and after answering the phone, I heard a little voice say, "I love you, Grandpa. Give a good talk." I must confess, brothers and sisters, that I have been restless over this assignment because perhaps my choice of words or my inability to express myself or to emphasize the proper things would not convey the feelings of my heart. I would like to bear my testimony to you that I know that God lives. I know that God lives; I know that Jesus Christ is the Savior and Redeemer of the world, the Son of God, the Prince of Peace; that Joseph Smith saw what he said he saw, heard what he said he heard; and that because of the vision of the Father and the Son, the kingdom of God has been established upon the face of the earth. This is that kingdom, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the only church upon the face of the earth that bears his authority. I know that the Book of Mormon is true and contains a fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I bear my witness to you that we have a living prophet standing at the

head of this great church. I sustain him with all my heart and soul. I sustain President Romney and President Hinckley and the Twelve and the other Brethren. I am honored to sit in council with them, to be counted among them, and to add my voice as a special witness of the divinity of this great work.

Appreciation for contributions and missionaries

We have had the privilege of being involved in the South Pacific for the past few months. It has been a glorious privilege to labor with President [Robert L.] Simpson and President [Devere] Harris in the presidency of that area, to feel of the faith and the excitement that are taking place in that area of the world.

Let me share an experience with you of the faith and the appreciation of the Saints in the islands of the sea for the contributions you have made in strengthening and building their lives; for your prayers; for your sons and your daughters, and for the great missionary couples who have been sent to their lands to teach the message of the restoration. Tears of thanks and of faith and

of love have been shed, expressions of gratitude given for your sending these missionaries to teach them of Jesus Christ and his ways.

First chapel for aborigines

As a result of your great contributions, a new chapel is being built far away from any civilization, the first one for the aborigine people. It is an exciting time for them, and for the area in the north territories of Australia. It is so exciting that even the Lord Mayor of Darwin is coming to attend the dedication, spending a whole day. Missionary couples have been busy preparing the people. One man who owns a sheep ranch in Australia equal to the size of Utah and who was firmly convinced that the average native could learn nothing, came recently to a special meeting and there he sat as the aborigines' young children sang "I Am a Child of God" (*Sing with Me*, B-76), tears streamed down his face, and he said as he walked out of the meeting, "If I hadn't seen it, I never would have believed it." Faith, strength, kindness from a people who made this possible. A great appreciation from a people who could not do what they did without you.

Outpouring of the Spirit

We see on the islands of Tonga some three hundred missionaries, most of them native young men and women, the young men wearing their white shirts and ties and their ta'ovalas, the young sister missionaries dressed in long dresses, hair in place, their name badges worn proudly, as they go from home to home in the most humble of circumstances to teach the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The glow in those brown faces as they bear witness of the divinity of this work stirs the very souls of men.

We left Ha'apai to go by boat to a small island where few General Authorities have ever visited. We were greeted at the dock by the Saints. They embraced us and tears flowed freely

down their cheeks. We walked from the docks to a chapel. As we neared the building, which is used both for a school and a church, we heard the voices of children singing in their native tongue, "We thank thee, O God, for a prophet, to guide us in these latter days" (*Hymns*, no. 196). We walked into the chapel humbled. There, filling the chapel to capacity, were members of the Church and friends alike gathered from around the island to hear the messages that were to be given.

There was a rich outpouring of the Spirit, and at the conclusion of the meeting we were invited to the rear of the building where a special ceremony of welcome was given to us. It was a beautiful service. A representative of the government was there, and he spoke and thanked the Church and General Authorities for the tremendous contributions they had made in educating, strengthening, and building the lives of the people. He was not a member of the Church, but he was touched by the Spirit of the Lord. In their greatest tribute, they gave us a huge roasted pig. They said they would like to lavish us with gifts, but this was the best they had.

They took us to a feast, a table spread with the finest that the island could produce. After the feast they picked up the pig, carried it to the ship, and insisted that we take it with us on our journey. We started walking back to the ship. I was walking with the island official and I said, "You would make a wonderful member of the Church." He said, "I am ready. I felt the Spirit, but just must get rid of a habit." I reminded him that it was just as easy to get rid of the habit today as it would be tomorrow or next week. And he said, "I'll try; I'll try."

Blessings of our contributions

I wonder sometimes if we appreciate what the few dollars we give to the Church for building the kingdom does for others. When I think of the great tithing contributions and other contri-

butions that go to bless that land, when I look at the homes that have been built because of the welfare program after their island was devastated because of a hurricane, my heart is filled with joy for a people who love the Lord, who are willing to give of their own means for the furthering of the kingdom of God.

God bless you, my dear brothers and sisters, as you go forth in this great work, that you will remember who you are and give freely and cheerfully of that which our Heavenly Father has given to you, that your testimony by your faith will bear witness to all the world that this work is true, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder John H. Groberg

How I pray for the Spirit of the Lord to continue to be with all of us, as it has been thus far.

The injunction from God to "remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8) has been in force throughout human history. There is power in keeping the Sabbath day holy. I testify that God lives, that we are his children, that he loves us, and that he gives us commandments so he can bless us as we keep them and thereby have joy. As we keep the Sabbath day holy he will bless us, and we will achieve a quiet power for good as individuals, as families, and as nations, that we cannot obtain in any other way.

Let me give two examples:

Tonga—first to greet Sabbath

The small island kingdom of Tonga lies immediately next to the international date line, so it is the first country in the world to greet the Sabbath day. It is a small country and, in the counting of the world, a poor country. But years ago a wise Tongan king decreed that the Sabbath would be kept holy in Tonga forever.

President Benson

Elder Philip T. Sonntag, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Shall the Youth of Zion Falter?," following which Elder John H. Groberg, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy will address us.

The choir and congregation sang "Shall the Youth of Zion Falter?"

Elder John H. Groberg spoke without further announcement.

Modern civilization has come in many ways to Tonga. If one goes to the capital of Nuku'alofa on a weekday, he finds the usual heavy traffic of trucks and cars and the bustle of thousands of shoppers making their regular purchases from well-stocked stores and markets. One sees people line up to view the latest movies and to rent videos. One can watch modern buses whisk tourists off to catch their jet planes, or observe the speed and clarity of a satellite call to the United States. The streets are crowded and business is good. You might wonder, "What is so different about this town from hundreds of others like it throughout the world?"

But when Sunday dawns on the kingdom of Tonga, a transformation takes place. If one goes downtown, he sees deserted streets—no taxis or buses or crowds of people. All the stores, all the markets, all the movie theaters, all the offices are closed. No planes fly, no ships come in or out, no commerce takes place. No games are played. The people go to church. Tonga is remembering to keep the Sabbath day holy.

It is significant that the first country in the world to greet the holy Sabbath keeps the Sabbath holy.

Has the Lord blessed them? Maybe the world cannot see his blessings, but in the ways that really count, he has blessed them abundantly. He has blessed them with the gospel of Jesus Christ, and a larger percentage of the population there belongs to the Church than in any other country.

Simple, well-kept chapels dot the land. Clean, smiling local missionaries are found everywhere. A beautiful, exceptionally well-attended temple stands in Tonga in fulfillment of promises made years and ages ago. And, as would be expected, their attendance at meetings and faithfulness in tithing are very near the top. Recently the Saints have been blessed with some fairly intense opposition that is having the effect of further sanctifying the true seekers of eternal life.

Does the Lord love and bless those who keep the Sabbath day holy? I testify that he does in eternally meaningful ways. I further testify that when we eventually see things through the proper perspective of eternal truth, we will be amazed at how much we were blessed in important—though often unperceived—ways through keeping the Sabbath holy; and to our sorrow we may sense how many blessings we kept from ourselves by not consistently keeping the Sabbath day holy.

There is a direct correlation between the proper observance of the Sabbath and true reverence for God, which includes obedience to his other commandments.

We can't all live in Tonga, but we can all keep the Sabbath day holy and receive the blessings that come therefrom—and they come to us wherever we live, personally as well as collectively.

Let me give another example from these very valleys:

Cache Valley—you did it!

Some time ago I was assigned to a conference in northern Utah in June. As I drove through Cache Valley on Saturday, I was struck by the beauty of

that peaceful green valley. I marveled at the temple in Logan—such a serene, peaceful beacon in so many ways. As I continued north on that clear summer day, I was impressed with the green fields so rich with a variety of crops. I particularly noticed the great number of alfalfa fields and the constant activity in nearly all of them. What a pleasing sensation it was to smell that freshly mown hay and to see the straight rows and the orderly cutting of those meticulously groomed fields.

I pulled the car over to the side of the road at the top of one of the hills and got out. I found myself absorbed right into that beautiful valley. As far as I could see was a whole panorama of the same activity in every direction—hay being mowed and stacked and hauled.

I finally drove on to the stake where we had a wonderful conference.

My parents live in southeast Idaho, and since I was already more than halfway there, I decided to drive up Sunday afternoon to visit them before returning home.

So, after conference I started north through the rest of Cache Valley. Within a few miles I was in Idaho, but the scenery and feeling were just the same. I again became absorbed in the beauty of the green fields and the smell of fresh hay all around. Again, I stopped at the top of one of the hills and got out and looked as far as I could in all directions. It was just as beautiful—if not more so—than the day before. "Yes, even more beautiful," I thought, "but why?" The sun and sky and the clouds and the fields were all the same. Why this deep feeling that this sight this Sunday afternoon was even more beautiful than the day before?

What was the difference? I noticed in the distance a small LDS chapel and a few cars starting to pull up to it. Then it struck me, rather peacefully but very effectively: "There is the difference. No one is mowing or hauling hay today." I looked as far as I could and saw hay fields everywhere, tractors stopped, mowing machines idle, and trucks resting in the fields, but no one

working—for it was the Sabbath and this was Cache Valley and these were largely good Latter-day Saint people.

As I continued north, I saw everywhere hay to be cut and stacked and hauled and equipment and weather to do it, but no man or woman in the fields. The people of this valley were observing a higher law, and the Sabbath was being kept holy in Cache Valley.

I went by dozens, even hundreds, of farms with machines waiting in the fields—left Saturday evening by God-fearing men waiting for Monday to come and the whine of activity to resume. I wondered to myself, “Will someone break this spell, will someone be out in his fields working?”

Each time I rounded a corner or came to the top of a hill, I would look and look and then breathe a sigh of relief—no one working.

I went farther and farther north, realizing I was near the end of this beautiful valley. “Would anyone break the spell? Could it be a whole valley so dedicated to God that no one would work on the Sabbath?” The suspense became almost unbearable. Each curve I rounded or each hill I came over found me looking in almost fearful anticipation, then smiling as the same peaceful scene continued.

Finally I came to the last curve and the confluence with the main road that marked the end of Cache Valley. I looked and looked, but all was peaceful and quiet. I was so excited, I pulled the car over, got out, and in almost a Toyota-like jump I raised my hands and shouted, “You did it, Cache Valley. You did it! I have traversed your length. You didn’t know I was looking, but you did it—not one field being mowed, not one tractor at work, not one truck hauling. You did it.” (I recognize that I had been through only the northern end of the valley that Sunday, but it was still Cache Valley.)

I instinctively looked heavenward and said, “Did you see that? Did you see Cache Valley this Sunday afternoon?”

Even though I didn’t hear anything, it was as though I sensed a response saying, “Yes, we know. We see everything.”

I had such a joyful feeling—almost ecstasy—as I drove north to a wonderful meeting with my parents before returning home.

For some time after that, I couldn’t get that Sunday afternoon off my mind. I kept feeling, “You have observed and witnessed something very special, something truly significant: an entire valley keeping His Sabbath holy.”

It caused me deep reflection then and many times since, but like so many things it was moved further and further to the back of my mind with the press of many current problems. Winter came, and for all intents and purposes it slipped from my conscious memory.

Power in keeping Sabbath holy

I continued to travel each weekend to various parts of the world. Many months later, I was assigned to a conference in a city noted for its particularly flagrant violations of God’s laws. The Saints there were wonderful, but oh, the decadence and debauchery that seemed to be all around them.

As I returned from the especially hectic weekend, I began reading in the scriptures. I thought about Sodom and Gomorrah. Could they have been much more wicked than this? And yet the Lord promised to spare them for fifty righteous souls—or even down to ten—but they were not found.

I let my imagination go and seemed to see a band of destroying angels loosed from heaven—thundering across the land. And even before I had time to think about the situation, I seemed to see myself standing in front of these determined destroyers, declaring, “Hold, hold, hold”; and they held. “Go back,” I said: and their horses reared, their eyes flashing in impatience. The destroyers’ anxiousness showed, but they held.

The leader looked me squarely in the eye and challenged, "By what right do you ask us to hold? Have you not seen the evil of the land?"

I replied, "Yes, I know of the sordidness of the world. I see the constant mocking of God's laws, the merchandising on his holy day, the constant breaking of his commandments. I see the evil that exists almost universally. Yes, yes, all these things are true, still . . ." Then I became concerned. What right had I to ask them to hold?

My eyes began to fall from his penetrating gaze, but something inside kept searching, searching, until finally a laserlike beam locked onto a misty memory made many months ago and faithfully filed away for such a time as this. A vista of a beautiful green valley passed before me and moved to the front of my consciousness.

I raised my eyes and met his as he again said, "What right do you have to ask us to hold?"

Then with the confidence of sure knowledge and spiritual direction, I replied, "You must hold, for you see, I have been through Cache Valley on a Sunday afternoon."

There was no hesitation, no anger, no look of surprise, no disappointment, only obedience; and he turned and rejoined his group, and they left.

Oh, my dear brothers and sisters, there is power in keeping the Sabbath day holy—power to help others as well as ourselves. If we would have God's blessings and protection as individuals, as families, as communities, and as nations, we must keep His Sabbath day holy.

May we all live that someday, someday, somewhere, somehow, as we face that which is very serious, we may be able to say, "Hold, hold, hold"; and, when challenged as to why (even by ourselves), be able—through obedience and the confidence of the Spirit—to say in our own way, "For I have been through Cache Valley on a Sunday afternoon," I do humbly pray in the name of our Savior, who lives. I know he lives, even Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

There's a vacancy up there in Cache Valley in the Chamber of Commerce; I think they have a good supporter. Elder John H. Groberg, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie

Examine yourselves

I propose some simple tests that all of us may take to determine if we are true to the faith. They consist of a few basic questions, all of which must be answered correctly in order to gain the full blessings of the gospel in this life and inherit eternal life in the realms ahead.

Our well-beloved brother Paul, an Apostle of old, counsels us in these words: "Examine yourselves, whether

ye be in the faith; prove your own selves" (2 Corinthians 13:5).

And we may well ask ourselves: Do we believe all of the doctrines of salvation? Are we keeping the commandments? Are we valiant in the cause of truth and righteousness? Will we be saved in the kingdom of God?

From among many questions that all of us must one day answer, let me test you on these:

Worship only true God?

Test one: Do I worship the only true and living God?

There is no salvation in worshipping a false god—neither a cow; nor a crocodile; nor a cedar post; nor even a spirit essence, without body, parts, or passions, that fills the immensity of space.

True believers worship that Holy Being who “made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters” (Revelation 14:7).

He is the Father of spirits with whom we dwelt before the foundations of the earth were laid. He is our Father in Heaven, who ordained and established a plan of salvation by which his spirit children might advance and progress and become like him.

He is a Holy Man, a personage of tabernacle, having a body of flesh and bones; and he created mortal man in his own image, “male and female created he them” (Genesis 1:27).

He is a glorified and exalted being in whom all fulness and perfection dwell, who knows all things and has all power, all might, and all dominion.

Believe in fall of Adam?

Test two: Do I believe in the fall of Adam?

There is no salvation in a system of religion that rejects the doctrine of the Fall or that assumes man is the end product of evolution and so was not subject to a fall.

True believers know that this earth and man and all forms of life were created in an Edenic, or paradisiacal, state in which there was no mortality, no procreation, no death.

In that primeval day Adam and Eve were “in a state of innocence, having no joy, for they knew no misery; doing no good, for they knew no sin” (2 Nephi 2:23).

But in the providences of the Lord, “Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:25).

By his fall, Adam introduced temporal and spiritual death into the world and caused this earth life to become a probationary estate.

Believe in atonement of Jesus Christ?

Test three: Do I believe in the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ?

As to this question, I give my own personal answer. It is:

I know that my Redeemer lives; with Job I testify. What though the ravages of disease destroy my body; what though I am slain by the sword of death—yet I know that he who bought me with his blood shall soon reign on earth and that “in my flesh shall I see God” (Job 19:26; see also verse 25).

I am a witness that he was lifted up upon the cross of Calvary; that he was crucified, died, and rose again the third day; that he ascended into heaven, where, sitting on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, he now reigns in everlasting glory; and that he will soon come again among the sons of men.

I know that he is the one Mediator between God and man; that he brings to pass the immortality and eternal life of man; that his is a ministry of reconciliation whereby fallen man can be reconciled with his Maker.

I know that salvation is in Christ and that only by faith in his name can we hope for the riches of eternity.

He is my Brother and Friend, but he is more. He is my Lord, my God, and my King, whom I worship in the full majesty of his Godhead and who will continue to be my Savior, my Redeemer, and my God through all the eternities that lie ahead.

Accept the plan of salvation?

Test four: Do I accept the true plan of salvation?

As there is only one God and one Savior, so there is only one salvation, one strait and narrow path leading to eternal life, one way in which the grace

of God can be poured out upon us mortals in full measure.

To gain salvation all men everywhere must have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. They must repent of their sins and be baptized by a legal administrator who has power to seal on earth and in heaven. They must receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, be sanctified by the power of the Spirit, and keep the commandments of God all their days.

Believe the restored gospel?

Test five: Do I believe the gospel as it has been restored in this final dispensation of grace?

Be it known to all men, let it be proclaimed by the very trump of God, let angelic choirs sing of its wonders and glory, let all the hosts of men stand in awe as the voice from heaven declares that God has in these last days restored the fulness of his everlasting gospel.

Let every eye see, every ear hear, every heart be penetrated—for the voice of God is heard again. Angels again are coming from the courts of glory to declare eternal truths to mortal men. The gift of the Holy Ghost is being poured out upon the faithful, and thousands again shout praises to the Holy One of Israel.

Hear it, all ye ends of the earth. God has spoken; the heavens have been opened; we have his gospel; keys and powers are again vested in men; and all men are invited to come, without money and without price, and feast upon the good word of God, for salvation is free.

Faithful member of true Church?

Test six: Am I a faithful member of the true Church?

Am I keeping the commandments of God? Do I love and serve him with all my heart, might, mind, and strength?

There is no such thing as gaining salvation from a false god, or by con-

forming to a false plan of salvation, or through membership in a false church.

Truth—pure, diamond truth—truth unmixed with error, truth and truth alone can lead a soul to salvation.

Honor Joseph Smith as prophet of the Restoration?

Test seven: Do I honor Joseph Smith as the great prophet of the Restoration?

In the days of Jesus, wicked and evil men separated themselves from the true Christians by defaming the name of Jesus and cursing him as a false prophet.

In our day the same approach is made by ill-disposed persons to the name of Joseph Smith. The way men feel about him and his prophetic successors divides true believers from those who serve another master.

Unto Joseph Smith, seer of latter days, the Lord of Heaven spoke these words: "The ends of the earth shall inquire after thy name, and fools shall have thee in derision, and hell shall rage against thee;

"While the pure in heart, and the wise, and the noble, and the virtuous, shall seek counsel, and authority, and blessings constantly from under thy hand" (D&C 122:1-2).

Why will it ever be thus? Because Joseph Smith is the restorer of the knowledge of Christ and of salvation; because he translated the Book of Mormon, which contains the fulness of the gospel; because he received revelations as numerous and glorious as those given to Moses and Isaiah; because angelic ministrants gave him keys and powers and priesthoods, which enabled him and his successors to bind on earth and have their acts sealed everlastingly in the heavens—all these are but a few of the reasons why we honor the name of Joseph Smith.

I, for one, want to seek counsel, and authority, and blessings constantly from the hands of such a man!

Enduring to the end?

Test eight: Am I enduring to the end, growing in grace, and gaining the attributes of godliness?

That is to say: Am I growing in faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity—as Peter exhorted? (See 2 Peter 1:5–7.)

Am I working out my salvation with fear and trembling before the Lord—as Paul counseled? (See Philippians 2:12.)

Am I walking in the light, as God is in the light, enjoying fellowship with the Saints, so that “the blood of Jesus Christ his Son” will cleanse me from all sin—as John promised? (See 1 John 1:7.)

Am I pressing forward “with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men, . . . feasting upon the word of Christ” and enduring to the end—as Nephi taught? (See 2 Nephi 31:20.)

Do I have a special and holy love for the Saints, thus identifying me as a true disciple—according to the word of the Lord Jesus? (See John 13:35.)

Put God’s kingdom first?

Test nine: Do I put first in my life the things of God’s kingdom? Is it with me and mine the kingdom of God or nothing?

President Brigham Young—of blessed memory who now reigns in heavenly courts—devised this rallying cry: “The Kingdom of God or nothing” (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, ed. John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1941], p. 444; see also *Journal of Discourses*, 11:249).

It was echoed by his associates and might well be revived among us.

A wise cleric of a former day leaves us this counsel: “If you have not chosen the kingdom of God first, it will in the end make no difference what you have chosen instead.”

The kingdom of God on earth is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which prepares men for an inheritance in the kingdom of God in heaven, which is the celestial kingdom.

When we put first in our lives the things of God’s kingdom, we are speaking of the earthly kingdom which prepares us for the heavenly kingdom.

With us, in this life and in the life to come, it is and should be the kingdom of God or nothing.

This kingdom of God, both in time and in eternity, is governed by the spirit of inspiration. It always sends forth the mind and will of the Lord, whether by his own voice or by the voice of his servants it is the same. (See D&C 1:38.)

On every issue it behooves us to determine what the Lord would have us do and what counsel he has given through the appointed officers of his kingdom on earth.

No true Latter-day Saint will ever take a stand that is in opposition to what the Lord has revealed to those who direct the affairs of his earthly kingdom.

No Latter-day Saint who is true and faithful in all things will ever pursue a course, or espouse a cause, or publish an article or book that weakens or destroys faith.

There is, in fact, no such thing as neutrality where the gospel is concerned.

Jesus said: “He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathered not with me scattereth abroad” (Matthew 12:30).

And it was Jacob who said: “They who are not for me are against me, saith our God” (2 Nephi 10:16).

If we do not sustain and uphold and support the kingdom of God in all things, we are thereby aiding a cause other than the Lord’s.

Only the valiant are saved. Members of the Church who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus, not valiant in the cause of Christ, not valiant in defense of his prophets and in preaching his word are not heirs of the celestial kingdom.

Living to be saved in kingdom of God?

Test ten: Am I so living that I will be saved in the kingdom of God?

This is our goal and aim and purpose in life. Everything we do should please the Lord and further our strivings for salvation.

And, the Lord be praised, there comes a time in the lives of faithful Saints when, having kept the faith and been true and faithful at all hazards, the Lord says to them: Thou shalt be exalted.

These, then, are a few of the many tests of true discipleship.

The caravan moves on

Now, I have what every true disciple has. It is called the testimony of Jesus. In our day it includes the revealed knowledge that the earthly kingdom—The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—will triumph. In this connection may I set before you this illustration:

The Church is like a great caravan—organized, prepared, following an appointed course, with its captains of tens and captains of hundreds all in place.

What does it matter if a few barking dogs snap at the heels of the weary travelers? Or that predators claim those few who fall by the way? The caravan moves on.

Is there a ravine to cross, a miry mud hole to pull through, a steep grade to climb? So be it. The oxen are strong and the teamsters wise. The caravan moves on.

Are there storms that rage along the way, floods that wash away the bridges, deserts to cross, and rivers to ford? Such is life in this fallen sphere. The caravan moves on.

Ahead is the celestial city, the eternal Zion of our God, where all who maintain their position in the caravan shall find food and drink and rest. Thank God that the caravan moves on!

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

We have just heard from Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Council of Twelve Apostles.

Before hearing President Hinckley's concluding remarks, we should like to express, on behalf of all who have listened to the singing during sessions of this general conference, deep appreciation and our sincere gratitude to the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth Chorus and to their conductors and organists.

We thank our city officials for the cooperation given this conference; the Relief Society and Church Health Unit nurses, who have been on hand to render service throughout the conference; and the ushers and interpreters.

We express appreciation to the local and national press representatives for the coverage given to the conference and to the owners and managers of the many radio and television stations and cable systems who have given public service time to carry sessions of this conference in many foreign countries.

We shall now be pleased to listen to President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, who will be the concluding speaker of the conference, after which the Tabernacle Choir will sing "Abide with Me; 'Tis Eventide."

The benediction will be offered by Elder Franklin D. Richards, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

This conference will then stand adjourned for six months.

Sunday, October 7

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Live the gospel

My brothers and sisters, this has been a glorious conference. Only one thing has been lacking, and that is to have heard from the President of the Church, the prophet of the Lord. I wish that President Kimball might have been able to speak to us. We love him. We pray for him. He would have me convey his love and blessing to each of you.

We have likewise missed the counsel of President Romney. These our Brethren have each reached an advanced age. Our hearts go out to them. We pray that the Lord will bless them and comfort and sustain them according to his all-wise program. His wisdom exceeds that of any man. He is working his grand design with reference to his purposes and his kingdom.

If our leaders could have spoken to us, I am confident they would have said, "Live the gospel." That is the greatest challenge we face. It is a simple declaration, but encompassed in those few words is a mandate applicable to each of us. It concerns our home and family life. It concerns our daily work. It concerns our activities and responsibilities as men and women, brothers and sisters, in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. As we return to our homes, let us resolve within our hearts to more fully live the gospel.

No power will retard progress

One hundred years ago at the October 1884 conference, in this same Tabernacle, George Q. Cannon, Counselor in the First Presidency, standing where I now stand, said to those here assembled:

"If I could speak so that the whole world would hear the utterance I would like to sound it in the ears of all mortal men—that there is no power that will ever be permitted to array itself, or to

combine itself against this work of our God, to retard its onward progress from this time forward until the full consummation will be achieved—that is, if the Latter-day Saints themselves are faithful to God, if they will keep the commandments of God, if they will sanctify themselves and cleanse themselves from sin, and live pure and holy lives. If they will do this, then the success and the triumph and the continued growth and advancement of this kingdom . . . are assured unto us as a people. There is no doubt of it. I say in the name of Jesus Christ, that it will be so" (*Journal of Discourses*, 25:325).

Unity and loyalty among General Authorities

I appreciate what has been said by all who have spoken in this conference. I want to assure you, as I have assured you in the past, that there is unity in the leadership of the Church. There is not the slightest divisiveness among the General Authorities. There is a great sense of loyalty among them—loyalty to you, loyalty to one another, loyalty to this cause, loyalty to God and his Eternal Son.

I love these my Brethren. Not one of them has ever hesitated to respond to any call that was made upon him. They have been willing to travel over land and sea, in sunshine or storm, to accomplish any task asked of them. They have lived up to the solemn charge given each at the time of his call—to put the interests of the kingdom of God ahead of all other interests.

Local leaders called by revelation

I can say the same of members of stake presidencies and bishoprics, Regional Representatives, mission presidents, and many others. It is a constantly unfolding miracle to me to witness the faithfulness of these men

who have been appointed as local Church leaders.

I want to assure you that they have been called by the spirit of prophecy and revelation. They have been set apart by those who are in authority to do so. They have been blessed with judgment and understanding, with discernment and inspiration.

Take problems to local leaders

I urge the people of the Church, wherever you may be, when you are faced with problems, first to try to solve those problems yourselves. Think about them, study alternatives available to you, pray about them, and look to the Lord for direction. If you are unable to settle them yourselves, then talk with your bishop or branch president. He is a man of God, called under the authority of the holy priesthood as the shepherd of the flock.

So very many letters come addressed to President Kimball asking for counsel and advice on personal problems. Most of the questions raised could be settled by the individuals themselves, and most certainly in counseling with their bishops or stake presidents, who best know the members of their wards and stakes. These brethren are close to the people. It is my observation that they are willing to give of their time unselfishly to listen to the troubles of those for whom they are responsible. They are willing to fast and to pray in seeking solutions.

It is so much better that you consult with these your local brethren rather than that you write to the General Authorities of the Church, who, in many instances, will simply refer your query back to your bishop or stake president. Such referral will not come of an unwillingness to take the time to assist those in trouble. It will be prompted by an established procedure in the Church that we should look to our local leaders for counsel, those who know us best. They are entitled to inspiration from the Lord in

counseling those for whom they have responsibility.

Even if President Kimball were in good health and vigorous, there is no way that he could deal with all of the personal problems of the people and still carry the tremendous administrative load which is attached to his office. If bishops and stake presidents do not know the answers to problems which come to them, then they may properly write to the Presidency of the Church. That is the order of things, my brethren and sisters, and there is great wisdom in it.

Cultivate a spirit of gladness

Now a final word. Enjoy your membership in the Church. Where else in all the world can you find such a society? Enjoy your activity. When I was a missionary in London fifty years ago, my companion and I would shake hands in the morning and say to one another, "Life is good." Life in the service of the Lord is good. It is beautiful. It is rewarding.

Be happy in that which you do. Cultivate a spirit of gladness in your homes. Subdue and overcome all elements of anger, impatience, and unbecoming talk one to another. Let the light of the gospel shine in your faces wherever you go and in whatever you do.

God be with you, my beloved brethren and sisters. May he smile with favor upon you as you walk in obedience to his commandments.

I add my testimony to the many that have been borne in this conference. I know that God our Eternal Father lives, the Father of the spirits of all men. Jesus is the Christ, the Anointed One, the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh, our Savior and our Redeemer, who gave his life as a vicarious sacrifice for each of us.

Joseph Smith was and is a prophet. We have a prophet among us at this time. This is the Church of Jesus Christ, restored in this dispensation for the blessing of our Father's children.

Saturday, September 29, 1984

I leave with you my love and blessing and that of each of my Brethren in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Abide with Me; 'Tis Eventide."

Elder Franklin D. Richards offered the benediction.

GENERAL WOMEN'S MEETING

With the theme "Striving Together," a general women's meeting was held Saturday evening, September 29, 1984, in the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, Utah. Latter-day Saint women and girls ten years of age and older met in the Tabernacle and Assembly Hall on Temple Square and gathered in meetinghouses to view the proceedings by television and satellite coverage. The program included music by a women's chorus from the Hol-

liday Utah Region and talks by President Gordon B. Hinckley of the First Presidency, Elder Dean L. Larsen of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and the general presidents of the Primary, Young Women, and Relief Society.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, gave the following talk at that meeting.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

What a wonderful thing it is that, although we are separated into perhaps some nine hundred different congregations, we are met together with one mind, with one heart, and with one desire. That desire, I am confident, is that each of us shall be lifted to a higher plane of thought and living.

Associates with their brethren

We were recently honored with visits to the Church Administration Building, on two consecutive days, of Ronald Reagan, President of the United States, and Walter Mondale, who is campaigning for the presidency. It was my opportunity on these occasions to introduce each of these distinguished gentlemen to Sister Young, to Sister Kapp, and to Sister Winder. In each instance I indicated that Sister Young presides over an organization of more than 650,000 children, that Sister Kapp

presides over an organization of more than a quarter of a million young women, and that Sister Winder presides over an organization of more than a million and a half mature women—the oldest continuously operating organization of women in our nation, if not in the entire world.

I also introduced these gentlemen to the members of the Council of the Twelve and to the Presiding Bishop. We all sat together, men and women, officers of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, meeting in the council room of the First Presidency.

Women in the Church are associates with their brethren in carrying forward this mighty work of the Lord. It is no small thing that there are enrolled in these organizations, presided over by women, some two and a half million members.

Associate role to priesthood

Columnists and reporters for the media have occasionally tried to paint a picture in which women of the Church are demeaned and placed in a status of inferiority. Nothing could be further from the truth. The very presence of these three capable women in those meetings with General Authorities and candidates for the presidency of the United States was an indication that under the plan of the Lord women carry tremendous responsibilities and they are accountable for the fulfillment of those responsibilities. They head their own organizations, and those organizations are strong and viable and are significant forces for good in the world. They stand in an associate role to the priesthood, all striving together to build the kingdom of God in the earth. We honor and respect you for your capacity. We expect leadership, and strength, and impressive results from your management of the organizations for which you are responsible. We uphold and sustain you as daughters of God, working in a great partnership to assist him in bringing to pass the immortality and the eternal life of all of the sons and daughters of God.

You, my beloved associates, are where you are in the balance of the sexes because God your Eternal Father, who loves you, put you there. He loves you and honors you. We are honored to be associated with you.

Conversation becometh the gospel

I have been interested in the theme which has been selected for this meeting. It comes from the first chapter of the Epistle of Paul to the Philippians, and reads, "Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."

Those are the last words of the twenty-seventh verse. The opening words of that same verse are equally challenging: "Let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ."

"Let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ." That is a tremendously compelling injunction given to each of us. I recommend those words as a personal motto. May I suggest that you type or write them and put them on the mirror before you so that each day you might be reminded of them. They could become a powerful motivator in restraining from anger, in thinking better thoughts, in speaking more elevating language.

What does God expect of me?

As I have wondered and prayed about what I might say on this occasion, I have been led again to read the twenty-fifth section of the Doctrine and Covenants. This, as you know, is a revelation given through Joseph the Prophet to his wife Emma. It was given at Harmony, Pennsylvania, in July of 1830, only a short time after the Church was organized. Insofar as I know, this is the only revelation given specifically to a woman, and in concluding it the Lord said, "This is my voice unto all" (D&C 25:16). Therefore, the counsel given by the Lord on this occasion is applicable to each of you. It includes you girls of ten and eleven years of age. I am grateful that you are with us tonight. I thank you for the effort you have made to come here. Many of you are here with your mothers, and that is a wonderful thing, for there is nothing more beautiful, no picture more lovely, than that of a mother with her daughters.

A woman wrote to me a short time ago with a great sense of frustration. She indicated that she had been defeated or had failed in most of what she had tried to do. She then asked, "What does God expect of me?"

"If thou art faithful"

Some of the things which God expects of her and of every other woman—in fact, of each of us—are set forth in this beautiful revelation.

Saturday, September 29, 1984

Said he to Emma, and to each of us:

"A revelation I give unto you concerning my will; and if thou art faithful and walk in the paths of virtue before me, I will preserve thy life, and thou shalt receive an inheritance in Zion" (D&C 25:2).

"If thou art faithful and walk in the paths of virtue before me"—those words might become the theme of a very long sermon. I shall comment only briefly.

In very large measure each of us holds the key to the blessings of the Almighty upon us. If we wish the blessing, we must pay the price. A part of that price lies in being faithful. Faithful to what? Faithful to ourselves, to the very best that is within us. No woman can afford to demean herself, to belittle herself, to downgrade her abilities or her capacities. Let each be faithful to the great, divine attributes that are within her. Be faithful to the gospel. Be faithful to the Church. We have all about us those who are seeking to undermine it, to look for weaknesses in its early leaders, to find fault with its programs, to speak critically of it. I give you my testimony that it is the work of God, and those who speak against it are speaking against him.

Be faithful to him. He is the one true source of your strength. He is your Father in Heaven. He lives. He hears and answers prayers. Be faithful to God.

"Walk in the paths of virtue"

The Lord continued, saying to Emma, "If thou . . . walk in the paths of virtue" (D&C 25:2).

I think every woman in these gatherings tonight understands the meaning of that. I feel those words were given to Emma Smith, and consequently to all of us, as a condition to be observed if we are to receive an inheritance in the kingdom of God. Lack of virtue is totally inconsistent with obedience to the commandments of God. There is nothing more beautiful than virtue. There is

no strength that is greater than the strength of virtue. There is no other nobility equal to the nobility of virtue. There is no quality so becoming, no attire so attractive.

It is interesting that in this revelation, when the Lord gave that great conditional promise to Emma, he went on to say, "Thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou art an elect lady" (D&C 25:3). I am so grateful for the gift of forgiveness extended by a merciful Father. Said the Lord through the prophet Isaiah concerning those who repent and are forgiven, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18).

To any within the sound of my voice who may be grieving over serious mistakes in their lives, I hold out the assurance, given anciently and in modern revelation, that where there is repentance there may be forgiveness. Do not dwell upon the tragic mistakes of the past. Rather, "look to God and live" (Alma 37:47).

"Murmur not"

Emma was called "an elect lady." That is, to use another line of scripture, she was a "chosen vessel of the Lord." (See Moroni 7:31.) Each of you is an elect lady. You have come out of the world as partakers of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. You have made your election, and if you are living worthy of it, the Lord will honor you in it and magnify you.

He then went on to say to Emma, "Murmur not because of the things which thou hast not seen" (D&C 25:4). He was speaking of the plates which her husband was translating, she serving at the time as his scribe. Evidently she complained because Joseph would not show them to her. The Lord is saying to her, "Murmur not. Complain not. Accept what must be in my eternal wisdom, and do not find fault." There are a few women in the Church who complain because they do not hold the priesthood. I think the Lord would say

to you, "Murmur not because of the things which are not given thee."

This is his work. Joseph did not set the rule about not showing the plates to others. He was instructed concerning it. Nor have we set the rule concerning those who should receive the priesthood. That was established by him whose work this is, and he alone could change it.

Speak with consoling words

Emma was called, in the words of this revelation, to be "a comfort unto my servant, Joseph Smith, Jun., thy husband, in his afflictions, with consoling words, in the spirit of meekness" (D&C 25:5).

That is interesting language. She was his wife, his companion, his strength in his afflictions. She was to comfort with consoling words, given in a spirit of meekness.

I see in that the challenge to every woman who is a wife to set the tone of that which is spoken in the home. It was said of old that "a soft answer turneth away wrath" (Proverbs 15:1). It is interesting to me that in this revelation the Lord spoke of consoling words in the spirit of meekness.

There is so much of argument in the homes of the people. It is so destructive. It is so corrosive. It leads only to bitterness, heartbreak, and tears. How well advised we would be, each of us, when there is tension, when there is friction, when there is affliction, to speak with consoling words in the spirit of meekness.

"To learning much"

Emma was to be ordained under the hand of Joseph "to expound scriptures, and to exhort the church, according as it shall be given thee by my Spirit" (D&C 25:7).

She was to be a teacher. She was to be a teacher of righteousness and truth. For the Lord said concerning this calling to her, "Thou shalt receive the Holy Ghost, and thy time shall be given

to writing, and to learning much" (D&C 25:8).

She was to study the gospel. She also was to study the things of the world in which she lived. That was made clear in subsequent revelations applicable to all of us. She was to devote her time "to learning much." She was to write, giving expression to her thoughts.

Writing—great discipline

To you women of today, who are old or young, may I suggest that you write, that you keep journals, that you express your thoughts on paper. Writing is a great discipline. It is a tremendous educational effort. It will assist you in various ways, and you will bless the lives of many—your families and others—now and in the years to come, as you put on paper some of your experiences and some of your musings.

In the language of the revelation, she was to "expound scriptures, and to exhort the Church, according as it shall be given thee by my Spirit."

Exhortation to good works

What a remarkable charge to her and to all of the women of this Church. There must be learning, there must be preparation, there must be organization of thought, there must be an expounding of the scripture, there must be an exhortation to good works as directed by the Holy Spirit.

The Lord continued, "I say unto thee that thou shalt lay aside the things of this world, and seek for the things of a better" (D&C 25:10).

I feel he was not telling Emma that she should not feel concerned about a place to live, food on her table, and clothing. He was saying to her that she should not be obsessed with these things, as so many of us are wont to be. He was telling her to get her thoughts on the higher things of life, the things of righteousness and goodness, matters of charity and love for others, the things of eternity.

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Song of the righteous

Emma was instructed to make a collection of hymns for the Church, and it is interesting that this counsel came only three months after the Church was organized. In connection with that call the Lord made a remarkable declaration which is often quoted among us: "For my soul delighteth in the song of the heart; yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads" (D&C 25:12).

As this gifted chorus has sung to us tonight, those words have gone through my mind. The song of the righteous is a prayer unto God, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads.

Lift hearts and rejoice

Continuing, the Lord said: "Wherefore, lift up thy heart and rejoice, and cleave unto the covenants which thou hast made" (D&C 25:13).

I believe he is saying to each of us, be happy. The gospel is a thing of joy. It provides us with a reason for gladness. Of course there are times of sorrow. Of course there are hours of concern and anxiety. We all worry. But the Lord has told us to lift our hearts and rejoice. I see so many people, including many women, who seem never to see the sunshine, but who constantly walk with storms under cloudy skies. Cultivate an attitude of happiness. Cultivate a spirit of optimism. Walk with faith, rejoicing in the beauties of nature, in the goodness of those you love, in the testimony which you carry in your heart concerning things divine.

"Continue in the spirit of meekness, and beware of pride" (D&C

25:14). Those words are from this same revelation. They are meaningful for each of us.

Promise of a queenly crown

"Keep my commandments continually, and a crown of righteousness thou shalt receive" (D&C 25:15). That was the promise of the Lord to Emma Hale Smith. It is the promise of the Lord to each of you. Happiness lies in keeping the commandments. For a Latter-day Saint woman there can be only misery in the violation of those commandments. And for each who observes them, there is the promise of a crown, a queenly crown for each daughter of God, a crown of righteousness and eternal truth.

I commend to each of you the words of this great revelation given 154 years ago. It is as timely today as it was when it was spoken. May I urge that each of you read it. Reflect on it. It is in harmony with and so beautifully amplifies the theme of this meeting.

God bless you my beloved sisters—you little girls whom we so much appreciate; you beautiful young women who dream wonderful dreams of the future; you who are not married and sometimes feel lonely, but who, I assure you, the Lord has not forgotten; those of you who carry the burdens of rearing families; those of you who are widowed or divorced; and you beautiful older women whom we so love and honor and respect. God bless you with every righteous desire, with peace in your hearts and joy in your days, as daughters of God blessed with the light of his everlasting gospel. I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

SALT LAKE TABERNACLE CHOIR AND ORGAN BROADCAST

The following broadcast, announced by J. Spencer Kinard and originating with KSL Radio and Television, Salt Lake City, Utah, was presented from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, October 7, 1984, through the courtesy of the Columbia Broadcasting System's network throughout the United States, parts of Canada, and through other facilities to several points overseas:

Announcer: Once more we welcome you within these walls with Music and the Spoken Word from the crossroads of the West.

CBS and its affiliated stations bring you at this hour the Mormon Tabernacle Choir from Temple Square in Salt Lake City, with Jerold Ottley conducting the choir, Robert Cundick, Tabernacle organist, and the Spoken Word given by Spencer Kinard.

(Choir without announcement: "Fight the Good Fight"—Williams)

Announcer: The Tabernacle Choir has opened today's broadcast of Music and the Spoken Word singing the music of David H. Williams, with a text adapted from the writings of Paul: "Fight the Good Fight."

We next hear the words of the 121st Psalm and the music of Leo Sowerby as the choir sings "I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes."

(Choir: "I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes"—Sowerby)

Announcer: "Still, Still with Thee when purple morning breaketh." The choir now sings these words by Harriet Beecher Stowe; the music is by Harry Rowe Shelley.

(Choir: "Still, Still with Thee"—Shelley)

Announcer: From "Four Sketches" for keyboard by Robert Schumann, Robert Cundick plays "Sketch no. 4 in D Flat."

(Organ: "Sketch no. 4 in D Flat"—Robert Schumann)

Announcer: The burden of modern civilization is not, as many have supposed, that wealth is ill distributed, or that social welfare has been neglected. It is rather the very real possibility that civilization has become an obstacle to the simple faith of honest souls.

Skepticism and cynicism are the products of an age which relies too much on itself.

Like the transatlantic balloonist who throws his instruments of navigation overboard to stay aloft, we too are discarding, one by one, the means of human progress: our ideals, our simplicity, our childlike faith in faith itself.

The laws, institutions, and technology of civilization have no life of their own; they are only symbols, representatives of our faith in goodness and justice. If faith dissolves, the symbols will crumble. Belief is so necessary to our social existence that, without it, we must fall into the bondage of despotism or the chaos of anarchy.

And what is this faith which is the foundation of all civilization?

—The simple belief that the Sermon on the Mount is as scientific a formula as the equation for splitting the atom.

—The conviction that it is sweet and dignified to love one's family, or to shed tears over the loss of a friend, and that he who rules his own spirit is greater than he who rules a city.

—It is to have a spirit untainted by false sophistication, to still believe that honesty is the best policy, that virtue is its own reward, that charity never faileth.

—All of this and more, vanishing elements of man's faith, placed on the endangered species list by an age which

knows the price of everything and the value of nothing.

This faith of simple hearts cannot be marketed in the mass media, produced in the laboratory, or fabricated in the factory. It can be neither produced nor purchased. It is a product of spontaneous combustion—rising instantaneously in hearts where good is accomplished, where beauty is served, where truth is spoken.

When the decades turn to eons
And the sun has turned to ash
When the idols of modern
civilization
Become dim recollections of man's
primeval past
And time has measured out the
better part
The crowning achievement of
humanity will be
—The childlike faith of an honest
heart.

(Choir without announcement:
"The Lost Chord"—Sullivan)

Announcer: The choir has sung "The Lost Chord" by Sir Arthur Sullivan.

We next hear a hymn tune by Konrad Kocher, "For the Beauty of the Earth."

(Choir: "For the Beauty of the Earth"—Kocher)

Announcer: The Tabernacle Choir closes today's broadcast singing an old Gaelic rune in a musical setting by John Rutter, entitled "A Gaelic Blessing."

(Choir: "A Gaelic Blessing"—Rutter)

Announcer: Again we leave you from within the shadows of the everlasting hills. May peace be with you this day . . . and always.

Announcer (on radio): This concludes the two-thousand, eight-hundred, seventy-seventh performance continuing the fifty-sixth year of this traditional broadcast from the Mormon Tabernacle on Temple Square, brought to you by CBS and its affiliated stations, originating with Station KSL in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Jerold Ottley conducted the choir, Robert Cundick was at the organ, the Spoken Word was given by Spencer Kinard.

In another seven days at this same hour, Music and the Spoken Word will be heard again from the crossroads of the West.

This is the CBS Radio Network.

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE MUSIC

The Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir furnished the choral numbers for the Saturday morning, Sunday morning, and Sunday afternoon sessions of the conference with Jerold Ottley and Donald H. Ripplinger conducting.

The music for the Saturday afternoon session was provided by the Mormon Youth Chorus with Robert Bowden conducting.

At the general priesthood meeting, a combined men's choir from the Tabernacle Choir and the Mormon Youth Chorus directed by Jerold Ottley and Robert Bowden furnished the music.

Prelude, postlude, and interlude music and accompaniments on the Tabernacle organ throughout the conference sessions were played by Robert Cundick, John Longhurst, and Clay Christiansen, Tabernacle organists.

Francis M. Gibbons
Clerk of the Conference

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THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY
SAINTS

Official Report of the
One Hundred Fifty-fifth
Annual General

CONFERENCE

of The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints

held in the Tabernacle
Salt Lake City, Utah

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THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-FIFTH ANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The 155th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 6, 1985, at 10:00 A.M.

The general sessions of the conference were held at 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday, April 6 and 7, 1985. The general priesthood meeting was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, April 6, 1985 at 6:00 P.M.

President Spencer W. Kimball attended and presided at the four general sessions of the conference and watched the general priesthood session on television in his apartment in the Hotel Utah. President Marion G. Romney, First Counselor in the First Presidency, attended one session and watched the other sessions on television in his home because of ill health. President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday morning, general priesthood, and Sunday morning sessions. President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, conducted the Saturday afternoon and Sunday afternoon sessions.

Television and radio stations carried portions or all of some of the conference sessions to large audiences throughout the world. In addition, the general sessions and the priesthood session were carried via satellite transmission to more than 750 stake centers. The general priesthood session was also carried by closed-circuit transmission to approximately 892 locations in many countries.

General Authorities present

The following General Authorities of the Church attended one or more of the general sessions:

The First Presidency: Spencer W. Kimball, Marion G. Romney, and Gordon B. Hinckley.

The Council of the Twelve: Ezra Taft Benson, Howard W. Hunter, Thomas S. Monson, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, Bruce R. McConkie, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, and Dallin H. Oaks.

The First Quorum of the Seventy:
Presidents: J. Thomas Fyans, Carlos E. Asay, M. Russell Ballard, Dean L. Larsen, Richard G. Scott, Marion D. Hanks, and Wm. Grant Bangerter. *Additional Members of the Seventy:* A. Theodore Tuttle, Franklin D. Richards, Theodore M. Burton,¹ Hartman Rector, Jr., Loren C. Dunn, Robert L. Simpson, Rex D. Pinegar, Adney Y. Komatsu, Joseph B. Wirthlin, Gene R. Cook, Charles Didier, William R. Bradford, George P. Lee, John H. Groberg, Jacob de Jager, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Royden G. Derrick, Robert E. Wells, James M. Paramore, Hugh W. Pinnock, F. Enzio Busche, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Ronald E. Poelman, Derek A. Cuthbert, Robert L. Backman, Rex C. Reeve, Sr., F. Burton Howard, Ted E. Brewerton, Jack H. Goaslind, Jr., Angel Abrea, John K. Carmack, Russell C. Taylor, Robert B. Harbertson, Devere Harris, Spencer H. Osborn, Philip T. Sonntag, John Sonnenberg, F. Arthur Kay, Keith W. Wilcox, Victor L. Brown, H. Burke Peterson, J. Richard Clarke, Hans B. Ringger, Waldo P. Call, and Helio da Rocha Camargo.

The Presiding Bishopric: Robert D. Hales, Henry B. Eyring, and Glenn L. Pace.

Emeritus General Authorities: Eldred G. Smith, Sterling W. Sill,

¹Paul H. Dunn was hospitalized and was not in attendance at any of the conference meetings.

Henry D. Taylor, Bernard P. Brockbank, James A. Cullimore, Joseph Anderson, John H. Vandenberg, and O. Leslie Stone.

Other authorities present

Other authorities of the Church in attendance included Regional Repre-

sentatives, presidents of missions, presidents of stakes and their counselors, presidents of temples, bishops of wards, and presidencies and members of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood quorums.

Many general, stake, and ward auxiliary officers also attended.

FIRST DAY MORNING MEETING

FIRST SESSION

The first general session of the 155th Annual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 6, 1985, at 10:00 A.M. President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The music for the opening session was provided by the Tabernacle Choir with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducting and Robert Cundick at the organ.

Prior to the meeting the Tabernacle Choir sang "Jehovah, Lord of Heaven and Earth" without announcement.

President Hinckley made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My beloved brethren and sisters, we greet you in general conference, on this beautiful morning in the valley of the mountains, at this glorious Easter season. We are convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City in this, the first general session of the 155th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-

day Saints. President Spencer W. Kimball, President of the Church, is seated on the stand, and we are delighted to have him with us this beautiful morning.

We welcome all who are participating in the conference, whether seated here in the Tabernacle or in the overflow session in the nearby Assembly Hall where Elders J. Thomas Fyans and Rex D. Pinegar preside, or who are participating by satellite transmission, radio, cable, or television. These proceedings are being carried to over seven hundred and fifty stake centers throughout the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico, to which the conference is being carried by satellite transmission.

We acknowledge the General Authorities of the Church, the Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary general presidencies, and the Activities Committee, who are seated on the stand. We extend a special welcome to government, education, and civic leaders who are present.

The Tabernacle Choir under the direction of Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger with Robert Cundick at the organ is providing the music for this session.

The choir opened this session by singing "Jehovah, Lord of Heaven and Earth," and they will now sing "How Gentle God's Commands." Following the singing, the invocation will be offered by Elder A. Theodore Tuttle, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "How Gentle God's Commands."

Elder A. Theodore Tuttle offered the invocation.

President Gordon B. Hinckley spoke without announcement.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My brethren and sisters, my heart reaches out to you, wherever you are, with a great overflowing spirit of gratitude. This vast congregation spans the continents of the world as we are assembled in this great general conference.

President Kimball—a long season

We are so delighted to have President Spencer W. Kimball with us this morning. He recently celebrated his ninetieth birthday. While he is unable to speak to us, his very presence stirs within each of us a great sense of appreciation to the Lord, who has spared his life during these four score and ten years. That is a long season for the life of a man in this generation. He is here because of the manifest power of the Lord. I assure you that we speak with him frequently and that no action for which there is not a well-established pattern is taken without his approval. He customarily meets with us in the weekly temple meetings of the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve. His presence is a blessing and an inspiration to all of us. Unitedly we invoke the favor of the Lord upon him that he may be preserved in comfort and ease.

We regret the absence of President [Marion G.] Romney, who suffers from the problems of illness and age. We anticipate that he will be with us during at least one of the sessions of this conference.

We remember with sincere appreciation our able and beloved associate and friend, Elder G. Homer Durham of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, who passed away last January.

Release of Presiding Bishopric

The Church moves forward with remarkable unity and strength. The burdens of responsibility are many and serious, but they are lightened by the absolute certainty that this is God's work, that he is watching over it and directing it. It is our prayer that constantly he will give his direction, that we shall be sensitive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit at all times and in all circumstances, that his will may be done in earth as it is in heaven.

The burdens of responsibility are also lightened by the demonstrated unity among the brethren and sisters, among all of the General Authorities who are united in a remarkable and wonderful way, among officers and boards of the auxiliary organizations, among local officers worldwide, and with relatively few exceptions, among the membership. I appreciate more than I can express in language your prayers, your letters of assurance, the sustaining power of your lives and faith, and your willing response to every request made upon you.

The Presiding Bishopric, particularly, have carried an extremely heavy burden since Bishop Victor L. Brown came into the Bishopric twenty-four

years ago. He was named Presiding Bishop and Bishop Peterson became his Counselor thirteen years ago. Bishop Clarke is in his ninth year of service. Never before in the history of the Church have so many new buildings been constructed: meetinghouses, temples, and other significant structures, such as the new Church museum and the new Genealogy Building. With the work moving forward in more than ninety nations, these Brethren, who have had responsibility for all of these and many other activities, have been under taxing administrative obligations and the most rigorous schedules of travel in overseeing these vast and widely scattered programs. I cannot say enough of good for what they have accomplished. They have earned a change from the burdens they have carried so well for so long.

With great appreciation for all that they have done and with our sincere love and our blessing, we extend honorable releases to Bishop Victor L. Brown as the Presiding Bishop of the Church, to his First Counselor, Bishop H. Burke Peterson, and to Bishop J. Richard Clarke, his Second Counselor. All who wish to join in an expression of appreciation to these devoted and able Brethren may do so by the uplifted hand.

Sustaining of General Authorities and general officers

I shall now present to you the General Authorities and general officers of the Church for your sustaining vote.

It is proposed that we sustain President Spencer W. Kimball as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. All in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed, by the same sign.

Marion G. Romney as First Counselor in the First Presidency, and Gordon B. Hinckley as Second Counselor in the First Presidency. All in favor, please signify it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

It is proposed that we sustain as President of the Council of the Twelve, Elder Ezra Taft Benson. All in favor, please manifest it. Those opposed, by the same sign.

As the Council of the Twelve Apostles: Ezra Taft Benson, Howard W. Hunter, Thomas S. Monson, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, Bruce R. McConkie, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, and Dallin H. Oaks.

It is proposed that we sustain the Counselors in the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

As the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy: J. Thomas Fyans, Carlos E. Asay, M. Russell Ballard, Dean L. Larsen, Richard G. Scott, Marion D. Hanks, and Wm. Grant Bangerter. As new members of the First Quorum of the Seventy to serve on a lifetime basis: Victor L. Brown, H. Burke Peterson, and J. Richard Clarke; and, additionally, Hans B. Ringger, Waldo Pratt Call, Sr., and Helio da Rocha Camargo to serve as new members of this quorum on the rotation basis we announced a year ago. All other members of the First Quorum of the Seventy and the emeritus Brethren as at present constituted. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

It is proposed that we sustain Robert D. Hales as Presiding Bishop, with Henry Bennion Eyring as First Counselor and Glenn Leroy Pace as Second Counselor. Simultaneously, we release Elder Hales as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy with our appreciation. All in favor. Any opposed.

It is proposed that we sustain Dean L. Larsen as Church Historian and Recorder. All in favor of this proposition. Any opposed.

For your information, Elder Ringger is a native of Switzerland. He has served long and faithfully in the

Church in many capacities, including those of stake president and Regional Representative. Elder Call is a native of Mexico and has served as president of the Juarez Mexico Stake. He presently serves as president of the Uruguay Montevideo Mission. Elder Camargo is from Brazil, where at various times he has served as stake president, mission president, and Regional Representative.

Also for your information, in harmony with the principle we have followed of calling some members of the First Quorum of the Seventy to serve as temple presidents and as mission presidents, Elder Victor L. Brown has been called to serve as president of the Salt Lake Temple—his appointment will become effective June 1; Elder Peterson to serve as president of the Jordan River Temple—his appointment to be effective at the same time; and Elder Clarke to serve as president of the South Africa Capetown Mission, a place and a work he has loved ever since serving as a missionary in that land.

By way of announcement we desire to inform you of decisions of area administration. In three international areas, for over eight months, we have tested the concept of having Area Presidencies living on site. This has been done in Europe, in the southern part of South America, and in the Pacific Islands, and has proved highly desirable. We now announce that effective

July 1 three more Area Presidencies will be put in place—one to reside in Brazil, to serve Brazil and the northern portions of South America; another in Mexico, to serve Mexico and Central America; and another will reside perhaps in Japan to serve the Far East—so that beginning in July we will have six Area Presidencies presiding in the international areas. Additionally, we wish to confirm that seven Presidencies will have responsibility over Areas in the United States and Canada. We thank these Brethren and their families for their willingness to go wherever they are asked to go.

With the exceptions noted, there have been no changes within the General Authorities or the general officers of the Church since the last conference. It is proposed, therefore, that we sustain all of the General Authorities and general officers of the Church as at present constituted. All in favor, manifest it. Any who may feel otherwise, may so manifest it.

It appears that the voting has been unanimous in favor in each instance. We thank you for your sustaining vote and for your undeviating support.

President Hinckley

We shall now be pleased to hear from President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

President Ezra Taft Benson

Our mission—to preach the gospel

My beloved brethren and sisters, we have called a conference of mission presidents from all over the world. We have met with these wonderful men and their wives earlier this week, and they have received instruction and counsel. I therefore feel that I should like to say

a few words about our missionary responsibility as members of the Church.

Our mission as a church is to preach the gospel to all the world. That means, in due time, every country, nationality, and people. In a letter to Mr. John Wentworth in March 1842, Joseph Smith prophesied: "No unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; . . . the truth of God will

go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated *every* continent, visited *every* clime, swept *every* country, and sounded in *every* ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done" (*History of the Church*, 4:540; italics added).

Much is required

To appreciate the accelerated progress that the Church has made in the last few decades, consider that it took 117 years for the Church to reach its first million members (1947); 16 years to reach its second million (1963); and 9 years its third million (1972). But during President Kimball's administration as President of the Church, over two million people were added.

Yet there is much to do before the work of God can be pronounced completed. Hearts of leaders of nations must be softened, doors of nations opened, false ideologies overcome, and the gospel presented to all our Heavenly Father's children.

As members of the Lord's Church, we must take missionary work more seriously. The Lord's commission to "preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15) will never change in our dispensation. We have been greatly blessed with the material means, the technology, and an inspired message to bring the gospel to all men. More is expected of us than any previous generation. Where "much is given much is required" (D&C 82:3).

Permit me to suggest some of the ways you can participate in this glorious endeavor to bring the gospel to all mankind.

Live the principles of the gospel

First, *you can live the principles of the gospel.*

The Lord expects this of us. The Apostle Paul commended, "Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in

conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12).

We are grateful that members of the Church for the most part are striving to live the gospel and dealing justly with our fellowman. But are we not all saddened and disappointed when Church members are found guilty of taking advantage of others through business transactions or are judged guilty of breaking the laws of God and man? As Church members, blessed with the truths of the gospel, the Lord expects us to be honest, morally clean, chaste, free from profanity and vulgarity, trustworthy, and exemplary in all our conduct.

The Lord said to Church members of this dispensation:

"But inasmuch as they keep not my commandments, and hearken not to observe all my words, the kingdoms of the world shall prevail against them.

"For they were set to be a light unto the world, and to be the saviors of men;

"And inasmuch as they are not the saviors of men, they are as salt that has lost its savor, and is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men" (D&C 103:8-10).

One of our best missionary tools is the sterling examples of members who live the gospel. This is what the Lord meant when He said to the Church, "Zion must increase in beauty, and in holiness; . . . Zion must . . . put on her beautiful garments" (D&C 82:14).

Prepare sons for missions

Second, *we can prepare our sons to serve missions.*

President Kimball was once asked, "How many missionaries do you expect? How many do you need?" His answer: "All of them" (Regional Representatives' seminar, 3 Apr. 1975).

"I am asking," said he, "for missionaries who have been carefully indoctrinated and trained through the family and the organizations of the

Church, and who come to the mission with a great desire.

"I am asking," he further stated, "that we start earlier and train our missionaries better" (Regional Representatives' seminar, 4 Apr. 1974).

When do we begin such preparation? Our prophet said we should "start at the birth of a male child and begin to put away money and help him save for his mission so that at 19 years when he is of age, he is prepared and ready for his mission. Every boy should have saved much toward his mission" (Regional Representatives' seminar, 3 Oct. 1974).

How do you build in boys a great desire to serve? You do not wait until they are nineteen years old to help them decide to serve a mission. You help them decide to go when they are nine, ten, or eleven! The home is the seedbed for the preparation of young men. And every young man should be prepared in his home to serve.

Early preparation consists of teaching a young boy how to pray, reading him stories from the Book of Mormon and other scriptures, having home evenings and giving him a portion of the lesson, teaching him principles of moral cleanliness, starting a savings account for his future mission, teaching him how to work, and providing opportunities to serve others.

I know of families who always prayed in family prayer that their sons would be worthy to serve missions. This, they say, had a great effect on their sons.

For our teenage young men and women, one of the best preparations for a mission is provided by the Church through seminary and institute of religion classes. We hope you will urge your children to take part in this inspired program.

Financially support missionary program

Third, *we can financially support the missionary program.*

Let me explain to you the challenge we face in the Church. Many of our worthy young men who desire to serve missions are in other countries of the world. Most of these elders and sisters do not have the resources to support themselves for two years on a mission and therefore must receive supplementary assistance. We have a General Missionary Fund in the Church to which we ask all members to contribute. Those who have received bounteously from the Lord can afford to give generously to support this program. Most adult members could contribute some each month and, by doing so, help prosper the missionary efforts throughout the world.

Introduce friends and neighbors to missionaries

Fourth, *we can introduce our friends and neighbors to the missionaries.*

On January 2, 1831, the Lord said: "And again, I say unto you, I give unto you a commandment, that every man, both elder, priest, teacher, and also member, go to with his might, with the labor of his hands, to prepare and accomplish the things which I have commanded.

"And let your preaching be the warning voice, every man to his neighbor, in mildness and meekness" (D&C 38:40-41).

Also, on December 27, 1832, the Lord commanded:

"Behold, I sent you out to testify and warn the people, and it becometh every man who hath been warned to warn his neighbor.

"Therefore, they are left without excuse, and their sins are upon their own heads" (D&C 88:81-82).

Our living prophet today has told us how this work is best accomplished:

"We must . . . involve the members of the Church more effectively in missionary work. Member-missionary work is the key to the future growth of the Church, and it is one of the great keys to the individual growth of our

members" (Regional Representatives' seminar, 3 Oct. 1980).

We all share this great responsibility. We cannot avoid it. Let no man or woman think that because of where we live, or because of our place in society, or because of our occupation or status, we are exempt from this responsibility.

Membership in the Lord's Church is a gift and a blessing which the Lord has given us in mortality, and He expects us to share that blessing with those who do not have it.

We also have a great obligation to love our neighbors. It is the second of the two great commandments. Many of our neighbors are not yet members of the Church. We must be good neighbors. We must love all our Father's children and associate with them.

How I pray that we will be filled with the love of God for our fellowman!

Participate in missionary service

Fifth, we can participate in missionary service by preparing for and serving a mission.

One way couples can do this is to save and prepare to serve a mission together. Again I state, "We have need for select missionary couples" (*Ensign*, May 1984, p. 45).

I repeat, we urge you to seriously consider serving a full-time mission. Some of you younger couples have your sons already on missions. Perhaps now is the time for you to prepare financially and otherwise for missionary service. Many couples have provided distinguished service and stability to various missions in the Church.

You can study the scriptures together, particularly the Book of Mormon. The Lord has said that we are condemned if we do not remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon. (See D&C 84:56-57.)

Missionary service requires great faith. I know how difficult it is for older couples to decide to serve missions. I have two widowed sisters who went on a mission to England together. A brother has just left for his third mission

with his wife. Many couples can attest that their missionary service was among their happiest times together because they were completely dedicated to one purpose—missionary work.

Spirit of missionary work

Yes, brothers and sisters, the field is "white already to harvest; and lo, he that thrusteth in his sickle with his might, the same layeth up in store that he perisheth not, but bringeth salvation to his soul" (D&C 4:4).

I am grateful for the great missionary program of the Church. My father's family consisted of eleven children. All eleven of us have filled missions. My wife also filled a mission and had the pleasure of her widowed mother serving with her for the last six months. When my own father went on a mission, I remember, as the eldest son, the letters that he wrote from the mission field in the Midwest. There came into that home a spirit of missionary work that has never left it, for which I am humbly grateful.

May God bless this great missionary program. May He bless each of us with the spirit of missionary work prompted out of love for our fellowman.

I testify that this work is true and that the results of all our efforts today will one day fill the world with wards, stakes, and many millions of our Father's children whose souls are saved in His kingdom.

God bless us all as members of His Church to share the gospel with others, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just addressed us.

We shall ask the newly called Brethren to come and take seats here on the stand—if they will proceed to do so immediately so that all of you may watch them.

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "Blessing, Glory, Wisdom, and Strength," following which we will be pleased to hear Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The choir sang "Blessing, Glory, Wisdom, and Strength."

Elder Bruce R. McConkie spoke without further announcement.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie

Most transcendent event

I feel, and the Spirit seems to accord, that the most important doctrine I can declare, and the most powerful testimony I can bear, is of the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

His atonement is the most transcendent event that ever has or ever will occur from Creation's dawn through all the ages of a never-ending eternity.

It is the supreme act of goodness and grace that only a god could perform. Through it, all of the terms and conditions of the Father's eternal plan of salvation became operative.

Blessings of the true and faithful

Through it are brought to pass the immortality and eternal life of man. Through it, all men are saved from death, hell, the devil, and endless torment.

And through it, all who believe and obey the glorious gospel of God, all who are true and faithful and overcome the world, all who suffer for Christ and his word, all who are chastened and scourged in the Cause of him whose we are—all shall become as their Maker and sit with him on his throne and reign with him forever in everlasting glory.

Witness by Holy Spirit of God

In speaking of these wondrous things I shall use my own words, though you may think they are the words of scripture, words spoken by other Apostles and prophets.

True it is they were first proclaimed by others, but they are now mine, for the Holy Spirit of God has borne witness to me that they are true, and it is now as though the Lord had revealed them to me in the first instance. I have thereby heard his voice and know his word.

Christ suffered for us in Gethsemane

Two thousand years ago, outside Jerusalem's walls, there was a pleasant garden spot, Gethsemane by name, where Jesus and his intimate friends were wont to retire for pondering and prayer.

There Jesus taught his disciples the doctrines of the kingdom, and all of them communed with Him who is the Father of us all, in whose ministry they were engaged, and on whose errand they served.

This sacred spot, like Eden where Adam dwelt, like Sinai from whence Jehovah gave his laws, like Calvary where the Son of God gave his life a ransom for many, this holy ground is where the Sinless Son of the Everlasting Father took upon himself the sins of all men on condition of repentance.

He made mercy available

We do not know, we cannot tell, no mortal mind can conceive the full import of what Christ did in Gethsemane.

We know he sweat great goutts of blood from every pore as he drained the

dregs of that bitter cup his Father had given him.

We know he suffered, both body and spirit, more than it is possible for man to suffer, except it be unto death.

We know that in some way, incomprehensible to us, his suffering satisfied the demands of justice, ransomed penitent souls from the pains and penalties of sin, and made mercy available to those who believe in his holy name.

We know that he lay prostrate upon the ground as the pains and agonies of an infinite burden caused him to tremble and would that he might not drink the bitter cup.

We know that an angel came from the courts of glory to strengthen him in his ordeal, and we suppose it was mighty Michael, who foremost fell that mortal man might be.

As near as we can judge, these infinite agonies—this suffering beyond compare—continued for some three or four hours.

He was judged as a common criminal

After this—his body then wrenched and drained of strength—he confronted Judas and the other incarnate devils, some from the very Sanhedrin itself; and he was led away with a rope around his neck, as a common criminal, to be judged by the arch-criminals, who as Jews sat in Aaron's seat and who as Romans wielded Caesar's power.

They took him to Annas, to Caiaphas, to Pilate, to Herod, and back to Pilate. He was accused, cursed, and smitten. Their foul saliva ran down his face as vicious blows further weakened his pain-engulfed body.

With reeds of wrath they rained blows upon his back. Blood ran down his face as a crown of thorns pierced his trembling brow.

But above it all he was scourged, scourged with forty stripes save one, scourged with a multithonged whip into whose leather strands sharp bones and cutting metals were woven.

He suffered an ignominious death at Calvary

Many died from scourging alone, but he rose from the sufferings of the scourge that he might die an ignominious death upon the cruel cross of Calvary.

Then he carried his own cross until he collapsed from the weight and pain and mounting agony of it all.

Finally, on a hill called Calvary—again, it was outside Jerusalem's walls—while helpless disciples looked on and felt the agonies of near death in their own bodies, the Roman soldiers laid him upon the cross.

With great mallets they drove spikes of iron through his feet and hands and wrists. Truly he was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities.

Then the cross was raised that all might see and gape and curse and deride. This they did, with evil venom, for three hours from 9:00 A.M. to noon.

He entered paradise of God

Then the heavens grew black. Darkness covered the land for the space of three hours, as it did among the Nephites. There was a mighty storm, as though the very God of Nature was in agony.

And truly he was, for while he was hanging on the cross for another three hours, from noon to 3:00 P.M., all the infinite agonies and merciless pains of Gethsemane recurred.

And, finally, when the atoning agonies had taken their toll—when the victory had been won, when the Son of God had fulfilled the will of his Father in all things—then he said, "It is finished" (John 19:30), and he voluntarily gave up the ghost.

As the peace and comfort of a merciful death freed him from the pains and sorrows of mortality, he entered the paradise of God.

When he had made his soul an offering for sin, he was prepared to see

his seed, according to the messianic word.

These, consisting of all the holy prophets and faithful Saints from ages past; these, comprising all who had taken upon them his name, and who, being spiritually begotten by him, had become his sons and his daughters, even as it is with us; all these were assembled in the spirit world, there to see his face and hear his voice.

After some thirty-eight or forty hours—three days as the Jews measured time—our Blessed Lord came to the Arimathæan's tomb, where his partially embalmed body had been placed by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathæa.

He will reign forever in eternal glory

Then, in a way incomprehensible to us, he took up that body which had not yet seen corruption and arose in that glorious immortality which made him like his resurrected Father.

He then received all power in heaven and on earth, obtained eternal exaltation, appeared unto Mary Magdalene and many others, and ascended into heaven, there to sit down on the right hand of God the Father Almighty and to reign forever in eternal glory.

He is father of immortality

His rising from death on the third day crowned the Atonement. Again, in some way incomprehensible to us, the effects of his resurrection pass upon all men so that all shall rise from the grave.

As Adam brought death, so Christ brought life; as Adam is the father of mortality, so Christ is the father of immortality.

And without both, mortality and immortality, man cannot work out his salvation and ascend to those heights beyond the skies where gods and angels dwell forever in eternal glory.

Atonement—least understood doctrine

Now, the atonement of Christ is the most basic and fundamental doctrine of the gospel, and it is the least understood of all our revealed truths.

Many of us have a superficial knowledge and rely upon the Lord and his goodness to see us through the trials and perils of life.

But if we are to have faith like Enoch and Elijah we must believe what they believed, know what they knew, and live as they lived.

Sound and sure knowledge of the Atonement

May I invite you to join with me in gaining a sound and sure knowledge of the Atonement.

We must cast aside the philosophies of men and the wisdom of the wise and hearken to that Spirit which is given to us to guide us into all truth.

We must search the scriptures, accepting them as the mind and will and voice of the Lord and the very power of God unto salvation.

As we read, ponder, and pray, there will come into our minds a view of the three gardens of God—the Garden of Eden, the Garden of Gethsemane, and the Garden of the Empty Tomb where Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene.

Garden of Eden

In Eden we will see all things created in a paradisiacal state—without death, without procreation, without probationary experiences.

We will come to know that such a creation, now unknown to man, was the only way to provide for the Fall.

We will then see Adam and Eve, the first man and the first woman, step down from their state of immortal and paradisiacal glory to become the first mortal flesh on earth.

Mortality, including as it does procreation and death, will enter the

world. And because of transgression a probationary estate of trial and testing will begin.

Gardens of Gethsemane and the empty tomb

Then in Gethsemane we will see the Son of God ransom man from the temporal and spiritual death that came to us because of the Fall.

And finally, before an empty tomb, we will come to know that Christ our Lord has burst the bands of death and stands forever triumphant over the grave.

Thus, Creation is father to the Fall; and by the Fall came mortality and death; and by Christ came immortality and eternal life.

If there had been no fall of Adam, by which cometh death, there could have been no atonement of Christ, by which cometh life.

Salvation through his atoning blood

And now, as pertaining to this perfect atonement, wrought by the shedding of the blood of God—I testify that it took place in Gethsemane and at Golgotha, and as pertaining to Jesus Christ, I testify that he is the Son of the Living God and was crucified for the sins of the world. He is our Lord, our God, and our King. This I know of myself independent of any other person.

I am one of his witnesses, and in a coming day I shall feel the nail marks in his hands and in his feet and shall wet his feet with my tears.

But I shall not know any better then than I know now that he is God's Almighty Son, that he is our Savior and Redeemer, and that salvation comes in and through his atoning blood and in no other way.

God grant that all of us may walk in the light as God our Father is in the light so that, according to the promises, the blood of Jesus Christ his Son will cleanse us from all sin.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us. Thank you, Brother McConkie, for your elequent and moving testimony given under difficult circumstances.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Redeemer of Israel, our only delight," following which we shall hear from Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The choir and congregation sang "Redeemer of Israel."

Elder Russell M. Nelson spoke without further announcement.

Elder Russell M. Nelson

Unitedly we thank the Almighty for the wondrous prolongation of the life of Elder Bruce R. McConkie, enabling him to preach that powerful sermon. Our gratitude is profound!

Reverence for life

I pray for the Spirit of the Lord to help me communicate his mind and will

on a very vital and sensitive subject. I apologize for the use of words repugnant to me and ill-suited to this hallowed pulpit. I do so only for clarity of communication regarding reverence for human life.

As sons and daughters of God, we cherish life as a gift from him.

A heavy toll on life is included among the evils of war. Data from all

nations are appalling. For the United States of America, one hundred thousand were killed in World War I; over four hundred thousand died in World War II. In the first two hundred years as a nation, the lives of over one million Americans were lost due to war.

Abortion—war on unborn

Regrettable as is the loss of loved ones from war, these figures are dwarfed by the toll of a new war that *annually* claims more casualties than the total number of fatalities from all the wars of this nation.

It is a war on the defenseless—and the voiceless. It is a war on the unborn.

This war, labeled "abortion," is of epidemic proportion and is waged globally. Over 55 million abortions were reported worldwide in the year 1974 alone.¹ Sixty-four percent of the world's population now live in countries that legally sanction this practice.² In the United States of America, over 1.5 million abortions are performed annually.³ About 25 to 30 percent of all pregnancies now end in abortion.⁴ In some metropolitan areas, there are more abortions performed than live births.⁵ Comparable data also come from other nations.

War on life

Yet society professes reverence for human life. We weep for those who die, pray and work for those whose lives are in jeopardy. For years I have labored with other doctors here and abroad, struggling to prolong life. It is impossible to describe the grief a physician feels when the life of a patient is lost. Can anyone imagine how we feel when life is destroyed at its roots, as though it were a thing of naught?

What sense of inconsistency can allow people to grieve for their dead, yet be calloused to this baleful war being waged on life at the time of its silent development? What logic would encourage efforts to preserve the life of a critically ill twelve-week-old infant,

but countenance the termination of another life twelve weeks after inception? More attention is seemingly focused on the fate of a life at some penitentiary's death row than on the millions totally deprived of life's opportunity through such odious carnage before birth.

Twisted reasoning

The Lord has repeatedly declared this divine imperative: "Thou shalt not kill."⁶ Recently he added, "Nor do anything like unto it" (D&C 59:6). Even before the fulness of the gospel was restored, the enlightened understood the sanctity of life. John Calvin, the sixteenth-century reformer, wrote: "If it seems more horrible to kill a man in his own house than in a field, because a man's house is his place of most secure refuge, it ought surely to be deemed more atrocious to destroy a *fetus* in the womb before it has come to light."⁷

But what impropriety could now legalize that which has been forbidden by the laws of God from the dawn of time? What twisted reasoning has transformed mythical concepts into contorted slogans assenting to a practice which is consummately wrong?

Proper concern or convenience?

These slogans begin with proper concern for the health of the mother. Infrequently, instances may occur in which the continuation of pregnancy could be life-threatening to the mother. When deemed by competent medical authorities that the life of one must be terminated in order to save the life of the other, many agree that it is better to spare the mother. But these circumstances are rare, particularly where modern medical care is available.

Another sympathetic concern applies to pregnancies resulting from rape or incest. The tragedy of this despoilment is compounded because, in such relationships, freedom of choice is denied the woman who is innocently involved.

But less than 3 percent of all abortions are performed for these two reasons.⁸ The other 97 percent are performed for what may be termed "reasons of convenience."

Some argue for abortion because a malformed child may result. The harmful effects of certain infectious or toxic agents in the first trimester of pregnancy are real.

Trusting in the Lord

The experience of a couple whom I shall identify as Brother and Sister Brown (fictitious names) is instructive. Sister Brown was only twenty-one years old at the time, a beautiful woman and a devoted wife. In her first trimester, she contracted the dreaded German measles.

Abortion was advised because the developing baby would almost surely be damaged. Some members of her family, out of loving concern, applied additional pressure for an abortion. "Don't burden yourself financially with a handicapped child," they argued. "You are too young and too poor."

Devotedly Brother and Sister Brown consulted their bishop. He referred them to their stake president, who listened to their serious concern and counseled them not to terminate the life of this baby, even though the child might have a problem. He quoted this scripture:

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

They chose to follow that counsel and permit their child to be born—a beautiful little girl, normal in every respect, except for a hearing loss, that became evident later. After an evaluation at a school for the deaf, Brother and Sister Brown were advised that this child had the intellect of a genius. Now, some twenty years later, she attends a major university on a scholarship.

When recently asked how they felt about their once-weighty decision, the mother quickly responded, "She is one

of the great joys of my life! She is such a choice spirit! Though she lost the sense of hearing, she has compensated with augmented ability otherwise. Her eyes are alive with constant attention. She excels in dancing, even though she perceives the sounds of music from vibrations. She has served as an officer in school. But most significant is her guileless spirit, her unconditional love. She has taught us to serve and to share. Her spiritual insights have helped us to know God and his purposes. My husband and I are so grateful that she is one of our children."

Consider another individual weighing the consequences of her pregnancy. She was beyond the normal age for bearing children. She announced to her doctor that her husband was an alcoholic with a syphilitic infection. One of her children had been born dead. Another child was blind. Another had tuberculosis. Her family had a history of deafness. Finally she confessed that she was living in abject poverty. If this true historical situation were posed today, many would recommend abortion. The child born from that pregnancy became the renowned composer Ludwig van Beethoven.

But the principle involved extends beyond those who may become great. If one is to be deprived of life because of potential for developing physical problems, consistency would dictate that those who already have such deficiencies should likewise be terminated. Continuing, then, those who are either infirm, incompetent, or inconvenient should be eliminated by those in power. Such irreverence for life is unthinkable!

Free but not from consequences

Another contention raised is that a woman is free to choose what she does with her own body. To a certain extent this is true for all of us. We are free to think. We are free to plan. And then we are free to do. But once an action has been taken, we are never free from its consequences. Those considering abortion have already exercised certain choices.

To clarify this concept, we can learn from the astronaut. Any time during the selection process, planning, and preparation, he is free to withdraw. But once the powerful rocket fuel is ignited, he is no longer free to choose. Now he is bound by the consequences of his choice. Even if difficulties develop and he might wish otherwise, the choice made was sealed by action.

So it is with those who would tamper with the God-given power of procreation. They are free to think and plan otherwise, but their choice is sealed by action.

Two separate lives involved

The woman's choice for her own body does not validate choice for the body of another. The expression "terminate the pregnancy" applies literally only to the woman. The consequence of terminating the fetus therein involves the body and very life of another. These two individuals have separate brains, separate hearts, and separate circulatory systems. To pretend that there is no child and no life there is to deny reality.

It is not a question of when "meaningful life" begins or when the spirit "quickens" the body. In the biological sciences, it is known that life begins when two germ cells unite to become one cell, bringing together twenty-three chromosomes from both the father and from the mother. These chromosomes contain thousands of genes. In a marvelous process involving a combination of genetic coding by which all the basic human characteristics of the unborn person are established, a new DNA complex is formed. A continuum of growth results in a new human being. The onset of life is not a debatable issue, but a fact of science.

Approximately twenty-two days after the two cells have united, a little heart begins to beat. At twenty-six days the circulation of blood begins.⁹

Scripture declares that the "life of the flesh is in the blood"

(Leviticus 17:11). Abortion sheds that innocent blood.

Faith and obedience

Another excuse some use to justify abortion relates to population control. Many in developing nations unknowingly ascribe their lack of prosperity to overpopulation. While they grovel in ignorance of God and his commandments, they may worship objects of their own creation (or nothing at all), while unsuccessfully attempting to limit their population by the rampant practice of abortion. They live in squalor, oblivious to the divine teaching—stated in the scriptures not once, but thirty-four times—that people will prosper in the land only if they obey the commandments of God.¹⁰

How can God fulfill his promise to prosper his children in obedience if they worship idols or destroy life created by him—destined to be in his very image?

They will prosper only when their education includes faith in and obedience to the God of this world, who said,

"I, the Lord, . . . built the earth, my very handiwork; and all things therein are mine. And it is my purpose to provide. . . . *But it must needs be done in mine own way.* . . . For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare" (D&C 104:14–17; italics added).

Warnings

Now, as a servant of the Lord, I dutifully warn those who advocate and practice abortion that they incur the wrath of Almighty God, who declared, "If men . . . hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, . . . he shall be surely punished" (Exodus 21:22).

Of those who shed innocent blood, a prophet declared: "The judgments which [God] shall exercise . . . in his wrath [shall] be just; and the blood of the innocent shall stand as a witness against them, yea, and cry

mightily against them at the last day" (Alma 14:11).

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has consistently opposed the practice of abortion. One hundred years ago the First Presidency wrote: "And we again take this opportunity of warning the Latter-day Saints against those . . . practices of foeticide and infanticide."¹

Early in his presidency, our beloved President Spencer W. Kimball said, "We decry abortions and ask our people to refrain from this serious transgression."²

Why destroy a life that could bring such joy to others?

Hope for those who have so sinned?

Now, is there hope for those who have so sinned without full understanding, who now suffer heartbreak? Yes. So far as is known, the Lord does not regard this transgression as murder. And "as far as has been revealed, a person may repent and be forgiven for the sin of abortion."³ Gratefully, we know the Lord will help all who are truly repentant.

Life—gift from God

Yes, life is precious! No one can cuddle a cherished newborn baby, look into those beautiful eyes, feel the little fingers, and caress that miraculous creation without deepening reverence for life and for our Creator.

Life comes from life. It is a gift from our Heavenly Father. It is eternal, as he is eternal. Innocent life is not sent by him to be destroyed! This doctrine is not of me, but is that of the living God and of his divine Son, which I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

References

- ¹ Christopher Tietze, *Induced Abortion: A World Review*, 4th ed. (New York: Population Council, 1981), p. 19.

² Tietze, *Induced Abortion*, pp. 7, 19–37.

³ See Stanley K. Henshaw, Jacqueline Darroch Forrest, Ellen Sullivan, and Christopher Tietze, "Abortion Services in the United States, 1979 and 1980," *Family Planning Perspective*, Jan./Feb. 1982, pp. 1, 7.

⁴ Henshaw, et al, "Abortion Services," *Family Planning Perspective*, p. 6.

⁵ See Center for Disease Control, *Annual Summary: Abortion Surveillance, 1979–80*, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, p. 130.

⁶ See Exodus 20:13, Deuteronomy 5:17, Matthew 5:21, Mark 10:19, Luke 18:20, Romans 13:9, James 2:11, Mosiah 13:21, 3 Nephi 12:21, D&C 42:18–19, D&C 132:36.

⁷ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses Arranged in the Form of a Harmony*, 24 vols., trans. Charles William Bingham (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1950), 3:42 (Exodus 21:22).

⁸ See U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *The Human Life Bill: Hearings on S. 158*, 97th Congress, First Session, 1981.

⁹ See J. Willis Hurst, R. Bruce Logue, Robert C. Schlant, and Nanette Kass Wenger, *The Heart*, 4th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978), p. 7.

¹⁰ See Leviticus 26:3–15; Joshua 1:7–8; 1 Kings 2:3; 2 Kings 18:7; 2 Chronicles 24:20, 26:5, 31:21; Ezra 6:14; Job 36:11; 1 Nephi 2:20, 4:14; 2 Nephi 1:9, 20, 31; 4:4; 5:10–11; Jarom 1:9; Omni 1:6; Mosiah 1:7; 2:22, 31; Alma 9:13; 36:1, 30; 37:13; 38:1; 45:6–8; 48:15, 25; 50:20; Helaman 3:20; 3 Nephi 5:22; D&C 9:13.

¹¹ In James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965–75), 3:11.

¹² *Ensign*, Nov. 1975, p. 6.

¹³ *General Handbook of Instructions*, 1983, p. 78.

President Hinckley

We have just listened to Elder Russell M. Nelson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, who professionally has been widely recog-

nized in his capacity as a medical doctor and surgeon.

Elder Victor L. Brown, who was just released as Presiding Bishop of the Church and sustained as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will be our next speaker.

Elder Victor L. Brown

Twenty-four years ago this next October, I received a long-distance telephone call at our home in Chicago. The caller in Salt Lake City asked if I planned to attend general conference, which convened the next morning. To this I answered, "No," whereupon he asked if I could. I responded, "I suppose I can if you want me to." The caller said, "The President of the Church would like to see you tomorrow morning at 8:00 in his office. Now have a good night's sleep because it will be your last." After some twenty-four years, it looks as though I may get that good night's sleep—perhaps.

Gratitude

These years have been the most challenging and rewarding years of my life. I have had the indescribable blessing of being tutored every week, with few exceptions, by four Presidents of the Church and eight different Counselors in the First Presidency, and, of course, for eleven years of that time, by a wonderful Presiding Bishop, John H. Vandenberg. It was a great blessing to serve with Elder Robert L. Simpson as Counselors to Bishop Vandenberg. Words cannot adequately express my love and my appreciation for my own faithful Counselors, Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone, Bishop H. Burke Peterson, and Bishop J. Richard Clarke, for their loyalty to me personally, and for their outstanding contribution to the Church during these thirteen years. We've been abundantly blessed by men and women of great faith and

commitment—both here at home and from all over the world—who joined with us in response to the assignment from the First Presidency to accomplish the temporal work of the kingdom in these latter days. I express my heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to all, wherever they may be, and thank them for the blessing of being associated with them.

Free agency

These associations have reinforced for me the basic principles learned in my youth. I should like to discuss two or three of them today. There are some things that are common to all mankind. Two of the most obvious are that we are born and we die. We take with us in death no more than we brought with us in birth, as far as material things are concerned. The closer I get to the time of departure from this life, the more concern I feel about what I will take with me.

A common principle, perhaps one of the most important, is the gift of free agency. This great gift of God to all of his children was part of the plan of salvation explained in the councils in heaven. From the scriptures we read:

"And the Messiah cometh in the fulness of time, that he may redeem the children of men from the fall. And because they are redeemed from the fall they have become free forever, knowing good from evil, to act for themselves. . . .

"Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given

them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself" (2 Nephi 2:26-27).

Individual salvation

As President Brigham Young said:

"If Brother Brigham shall take a wrong track, and be shut out of the Kingdom of heaven, no person will be to blame but Brother Brigham. I am the only being in heaven, earth, or hell, that can be blamed.

"This will equally apply to every Latter-day Saint. Salvation is an individual operation. I am the only person that can possibly save myself. When salvation is sent to me, I can reject or receive it. In receiving it, I yield implicit obedience and submission to its great Author throughout my life, and to those whom he shall appoint to instruct me; in rejecting it, I follow the dictates of my own will in preference to the will of my Creator" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1941], p. 390).

Obedience

Thus we see that free agency goes hand in hand with responsibility, and that consequences, good or bad, are the result of our personal decisions resulting from the exercise of free agency. And this is another principle, obedience.

The Lord, understanding our frailty as human beings and recognizing the influence that Satan would exert, gave us standards by which we can live our lives and know good from evil. These standards are found in the holy scriptures. I should like to refer to some of these scriptures which for me have increased meaning as I grow older. The

first one, perhaps, would be the foundation upon which the others can rise.

Light of life

In the eighth chapter of John, the Savior says, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). If we accept this statement of the Lord, others will naturally fold into proper place. What does it mean to have the "light of life" and "not walk in darkness"? A rich young ruler may have had this question in mind when he asked Jesus what he should do to inherit eternal life, which is the greatest gift of God to man. The Savior responded:

"Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother.

"And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up.

"Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.

"And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.

"And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

"For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (Luke 18:20-25).

Naaman and a prophet in Israel

May I restate part of President Young's quotation: "When salvation is sent to me, I can reject or receive it. In receiving it, I yield implicit obedience and submission to its great Author throughout my life."

One of the great lessons on obedience is taught in the story of Naaman. Naaman was "captain of the host of the

king of Syria, . . . and a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper" (2 Kings 5:1).

One of his wife's maidens, an Israelite who had great faith and concern for Naaman's condition, "said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy" (2 Kings 5:3).

When the king learned of this, he sent Naaman to the king of Israel with a letter and with gifts, requesting that the king of Israel cure Naaman of his leprosy. He had misunderstood the maiden's comment and thought that the king of Israel was the one who could cure his ailment. The Israelite king was very upset with this request because he had no power to do such a thing. Yet, he knew if he did not do it, it could mean war with the Syrians. Elisha, the prophet, heard of the king's distress and suggested, "Let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel."

"So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha.

"And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean" (2 Kings 5:8-10).

Naaman being a man of high position was insulted that Elisha would send a messenger and not show him the respect of coming himself. In addition, the simple nature of the message offended him.

"Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.

"Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.

"And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great

thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he said to thee, Wash, and be clean?

"Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean" (2 Kings 5:11-14).

Naaman needed to have the faith of a child to be obedient as a child before his flesh became clean as a little child's.

Act promptly and decisively

The final principle that I have observed in the lives of effective men and women is to act promptly and decisively once they have determined what the Lord wishes done. In the parable of the ten virgins, we are taught the folly of procrastinating and delaying our preparation for the day when the Savior will come again—but it is our choice. We "are free to choose liberty and eternal life . . . or to choose captivity and death" (2 Nephi 2:27).

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom"—who is the Savior—at his second coming.

"And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

"They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:

"But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. . . .

"And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

"Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

"And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

"But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

"And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were

ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

"Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

"But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

"Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" (Matthew 25:1-4, 6-13).

The foolish virgins expected that they could borrow oil from others. To their sorrow, they learned that they were individually responsible for their circumstances and had not prepared themselves. As I conclude this part of my service in the Church, it is my prayer that each of us will be wise enough to live lives that will cause us to be found among those referred to in this scripture:

"And at that day, when I shall come in my glory, shall the parable be fulfilled which I spake concerning the ten virgins.

"For they that are wise and have received the truth, and have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide, and have not been deceived—verily I say unto you, they shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire, but shall abide the day.

"And the earth shall be given unto them for an inheritance; and they shall multiply and wax strong, and their children shall grow up without sin unto salvation.

"For the Lord shall be in their midst, and his glory shall be upon them, and he will be their king and their lawgiver" (D&C 45:56-59). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Howard W. Hunter, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us. He will be our concluding speaker.

Elder Howard W. Hunter

Passover and Easter

I believe it is safe to say that Passover is without equal in the Jewish calendar of celebrations. It is the oldest of the Jewish festivals, celebrating an event in advance of receiving the traditional Mosaic Law. It reminds every generation of the return of the children of Israel to the promised land and of the great travail in Egypt which preceded it. It commemorates the passage of a people from subjection and bondage to freedom and deliverance. It is the Old Testament festival of springtime when the world of nature awakens to life, growth, and fruition.

Passover is linked with the Christian observance of Easter which we celebrate this weekend in this great conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Passover in the Old Testament and Easter in

the New Testament testify of the great gift God has given and of the sacrifice that was involved in its bestowal. Both of these great religious commemorations declare that death would "pass over" us and could have no permanent power upon us, and that the grave would have no victory.

Plagues in Egypt

In delivering the children of Israel out of Egypt, Jehovah himself spoke to Moses out of the burning bush at Sinai saying:

"I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows. . . .

"Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children

of Israel out of Egypt" (Exodus 3:7, 10).

Because Pharaoh was unyielding, many plagues were brought upon Egypt, but still "the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, neither would he let the children of Israel go" (Exodus 9:35).

In response to that refusal by Pharaoh, the Lord said, "And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts" (Exodus 11:5).

As a protection against this last and most terrible punishment inflicted upon the Egyptians, the Lord instructed Moses to have the children of Israel take to them every man a lamb without blemish.

"And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.

"And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. . . .

"And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's passover. . . .

"And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service?

"That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt" (Exodus 12:7-8, 11, 26-27).

Boy Jesus in the temple

After the Israelites had escaped from Pharaoh's grasp and death came to the firstborn of the Egyptians, the Israelites eventually crossed over Jordan. It is recorded that "the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho" (Joshua 5:10). And so it was with Jewish families year after year thereafter,

including the family of Joseph and Mary and the young boy, Jesus.

When Jesus was but twelve years old, he went to Jerusalem with his parents to take part in the Passover celebration. Luke's account tells us that Jesus remained behind in the temple after his parents had departed for home. They returned with fear and anxiety to find him among the doctors of the law "both hearing them, and asking them questions" (Luke 2:46). Luke records that all who "heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers" (Luke 2:47).

Could it have been possible that Jesus was teaching these older and formally trained men about the meaning of the Passover just celebrated? Would it have surprised them that one so young and seemingly inexperienced would have known so much about the meaning of that fateful night in Egypt so long ago and so far away? Would they have been amazed at his knowledge of the lamb and the blood and the firstborn and the sacrifice? The scriptures are silent on such questions.

Passovers during Christ's ministry

As the Gospel of John makes clear, the feast of the Passover marked significant milestones during the mortal ministry of Christ. At the first Passover in his ministry, Jesus made his mission known by purifying the temple when he drove from its portals the money changers and those who sold animals. In the second Passover Jesus manifested his power by the miracle of the loaves and fishes. Christ here introduced the symbols that would later have even greater meaning in the Upper Room. "I am the bread of life," he said. "He that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John 6:35).

Jesus' last Passover

Of course, it would be the feast of his last Passover that would give full expression to this ancient celebration.

By that final week of his mortal ministry, Jesus knew clearly what this particular Passover would mean to him. Trouble was already in the air. Matthew records:

"When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples,

"Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified" (Matthew 26:1-2).

Knowing full well what awaited him, Jesus asked Peter and John to make arrangements for the paschal meal. He told them to ask of the master of a local house, "Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?" (Luke 22:11).

The loneliness of his birth was to be, in a sense, duplicated in the loneliness of his death. Foxes had holes and birds had nests, but the Son of Man had nowhere to lay his head either in his nativity or in his last hours of mortality.

Finally, preparations for the Passover meal were complete, in keeping with nearly fifteen hundred years of tradition. Jesus sat down with his disciples and, after the eating of the sacrificial lamb and of the bread and wine of this ancient feast, he taught them a newer and holier meaning of that ancient blessing from God.

He took one of the flat, round loaves of unleavened bread, said the blessing over it, and broke it into pieces that he distributed to the Apostles, saying: "This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19).

As the cup was being poured, he took it and, giving thanks, invited them to drink of it, saying, "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:20). Paul said of it: "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (1 Corinthians 11:26).

Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

The bread and wine, rather than the animals and herbs, would become

emblems of the great Lamb's body and blood, emblems to be eaten and drunk reverently and in remembrance of him forever.

In this simple but impressive manner the Savior instituted the ordinance now known as the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. With the suffering of Gethsemane, the sacrifice of Calvary, and the resurrection from a garden tomb, Jesus fulfilled the ancient law and ushered in a new dispensation based on a higher, holier understanding of the law of sacrifice. No more would men be required to offer the firstborn lamb from their flock, because the Firstborn of God had come to offer himself as an "infinite and eternal sacrifice."

Gift of eternal life

This is the majesty of the Atonement and Resurrection, not just a pass-over from death, but a gift of eternal life by an infinite sacrifice as so beautifully stated by Amulek:

"For it is expedient that there should be a great and last sacrifice; yea, not a sacrifice of man, neither of beast, neither of any manner of fowl; for it shall not be a human sacrifice; but it must be an infinite and eternal sacrifice" (Alma 34:10).

At this Easter season, I bear testimony of the Firstborn of God, who made that sacrifice, who has "borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows," who "was wounded for our transgressions" and "was bruised for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:4-5). Of the divine nature of this Redeemer and Savior of all mankind I testify, in his name, Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Howard W. Hunter, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has been our concluding speaker.

We are grateful to the managers and operators of the many television and radio stations and cable systems for

offering their facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this conference to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "Thy Spirit, Lord, Has Stirred Our Souls." The benediction will then be given by Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi, a member of the First Quorum of the Sev-

enty, after which this conference will be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The choir sang "Thy Spirit, Lord, Has Stirred Our Souls."

Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi offered the benediction.

FIRST DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

SECOND SESSION

The second general session of the 155th Annual General Conference began at 2:00 P.M. on Saturday, April 6, 1985. President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, conducted this session.

Music for this session was provided by a Primary children's choir from the Jordan Utah Region with Susan Kenney as director and Clay Christiansen at the organ.

The Primary children's choir sang "Jesus Once Was a Little Child" and "Keep the Commandments," followed by organ music just prior to the opening of the meeting.

At the beginning of the meeting, President Ezra Taft Benson made the following remarks:

President Ezra Taft Benson

What a joy to hear their sweet voices. My beloved brethren and sisters, the First Presidency has asked that I conduct this session of the conference.

We are grateful for the presence of our beloved President Spencer W. Kimball. We deeply regret the absence of President Marion G. Romney to whom we extend our love and blessings.

We are pleased to welcome those who are gathered here in the Tabernacle for this, the second general session of the 155th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We also welcome those who are participating by means of television, cable, or radio; also the many who are watching in over seven hundred and fifty stake centers throughout the United States and Canada to which the conference is being carried by satellite transmission.

We note that Elders Richard G. Scott and William R. Bradford are presiding in the overflow session in the Assembly Hall.

We are pleased to acknowledge especially our guests who are present this afternoon, along with general and local Church leaders and members from many parts of the world.

We express our appreciation to the owners and operators of many radio and television stations and to the owners and operators of cable systems for their cooperation in making these proceedings available to members and friends of the Church in many countries.

The music for this session will be provided by a Primary children's choir from the Jordan Utah Region, under the direction of Susan Kenney with Clay Christiansen at the organ.

The choir will begin this service by singing "Seek the Lord Early" and "If with All Your Hearts." The invocation will be offered by Elder Theodore M. Burton, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Seek the Lord Early" and "If with All Your Hearts." Elder Theodore M. Burton offered the invocation.

President Benson

The choir with Clark Utterback as soloist will now sing "Oh, How Lovely Was the Morning," following which Brother Wilford G. Edling will read the auditor's report and Brother Francis M. Gibbons will present the statistical report of the Church for the year 1984.

The choir sang "Oh, How Lovely Was the Morning."

Auditor's Report 1984

Wilford G. Edling

We have reviewed the annual financial report of the Church as of 31 December 1984 and operations for the year then ended. The financial statements and operations reviewed by the committee include the general funds of the Church and of other controlled organizations, the accounts of which are maintained by the Finance and Records Department of the Church. We have also examined the budgeting, accounting, and auditing procedures employed and the manner in which funds are received and expenditures are controlled. We determined that expenditures of general Church funds were authorized by the First Presidency and by budgetary procedures. The budget is authorized by the Council on Disposition of Tithes, composed of the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, and the Presiding Bishopric. The Budget and Appropriations Committee, in weekly meetings, administers the expenditure of funds under the budget.

Modern accounting technology and equipment are employed by the Finance and Records Department and other departments in keeping abreast of rapid Church expansion and changing methods of electronic data processing.

The Auditing Department, which is independent of all other departments, functions in the threefold capacity of performing financial audits, operational audits, and audits of computer systems employed by the Church. These services are conducted on a continuous basis for all Church departments and other Church-controlled organizations, the accounts of which are maintained under the direction of the Finance and Records Department. These comprise worldwide operations including missions, schools, administrative offices, and departmental activities conducted in foreign countries. The extent and scope of the Auditing Department services in safeguarding the resources of the Church are expanding to encompass the growth and widening activities of the Church. The audits of local funds of wards and stakes are performed by stake auditors, the reports of which are reviewed by the Church Auditing Department. Incorporated businesses owned or controlled by the Church, for which accounts are not maintained in the Finance and Records Department, are audited by the Auditing Department, professional auditing firms, or governmental regulatory agencies.

Based on our review of the annual financial report and other accounting data, and our study of the accounting

and auditing methods by which financial operations are controlled, together with continuing discussions with personnel of the Finance and Records Department and Auditing departments, and Church legal representatives, we are of the opinion that the general funds of the Church received and expended during the year 1984 have been prop-

erly accounted for in accordance with established procedures outlined herein.

Respectfully submitted,

Church Audit Committee
Wilford G. Edling
David M. Kennedy
Warren E. Pugh
Merrill J. Bateman
Ted E. Davis

Statistical Report 1984

Francis M. Gibbons

For the information of the members of the Church, the First Presidency has issued the following statistical report concerning the growth and status of the Church as of 31 December 1984.

Church Units

Number of stakes	1,507
Number of districts.....	353
Number of missions.....	180
Number of wards	9,723
Number of branches in stakes	2,697
Number of branches in missions	2,043
Number of sovereign countries with organized wards or branches.....	96
Number of territories, colonies, and possessions with organized wards or branches.....	18

Church Membership

Total membership at the close of 1984	5,650,000
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Church Growth during 1984

Increase in children of record	98,000
Children of record baptized	69,000
Converts baptized	192,983

Priesthood

Deacons.....	240,000
Teachers	178,000
Priests.....	356,000
Elders.....	465,000
Seventies	33,000
High priests	198,000

Missionaries

Full-time missionaries	27,655
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Genealogical Data

Names cleared in 1984 for temple endowments	6,328,870
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Temples

Number of endowments performed during 1984:	
For the living	53,998
For the dead	4,395,424
Temples in operation	31
Temples planned or under construction	15
Temples closed during the year for renovation	1
(Six temples were dedicated in 1984, and seven are planned to be dedicated in 1985.)	

Church Educational System

Total enrollment during 1983-84 school year:	
Seminaries and Institutes, including special programs	322,802
Church schools, colleges, and continuing education	440,502

Welfare Services

Persons assisted by LDS

Social Services	84,069
Persons placed in gainful employment	26,116
Man-days of labor donated to Welfare Services	277,754
Bishop's orders from storehouses	345,498

Prominent Members Who Have Passed Away Since Last April

Elder G. Homer Durham, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, who was Church Historian and Recorder; Ethel D. Stapley, widow of Elder Delbert L.

Stapley, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles; Neil D. Schaerrer, former general president of the Young Men organization; and Emily Higgs Bennett, former counselor in the YW-MIA presidency.

President Benson

Thank you, Brothers Edling and Gibbons.

Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our first speaker. He will be followed by Elder John Sonnenberg, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder L. Tom Perry

To Bishop Brown, Bishop Peterson, Bishop Clarke, I just want to express my deep love and appreciation for your great devoted years of service. To Bishop Hales, Bishop Eyring, Bishop Pace, I want you to know that I'm ready to assist in any way that you may desire.

Pavilion foundations

"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

"And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it" (Matthew 7:24-27).

Years ago I had the privilege of serving on the New York World's Fair

Committee. I remember that after months of planning we were ready to start construction. It was a clear and beautiful day as we gathered at the fair site for our groundbreaking event. All around us was a flurry of activity as the fair buildings were taking shape. The fair was being constructed on a lush meadowland. Instead of the traditional groundbreaking ceremonies of turning over soil with shovels, we were using a pile driver because of the lack of a solid foundation. Big wooden piles about the size of those used for telephone poles were being driven into the ground to form the foundation of our pavilion.

After a prayer and two or three responses, it was time to drive the first pile. Everything was in place. The driver was ready for action. There was a big puff of steam and a loud thud. The pile driver started its work. Then the second puff and the second thud—the pile was on its way into the earth. Then the third puff and the third thud—suddenly the earth swallowed up the pile, and it sank completely out of sight. We learned a great deal that day about foundations.

The days and weeks passed, and many piles were driven into the meadowland soil until a foundation was established that was strong enough to support our beautiful pavilion.

Foundation in the gospel

How often do we consider or think about our own personal faith and our foundation in the gospel? On what are they built? How strong is our house? our household? our family? Helaman taught his two sons:

"I desire that ye should remember to keep the commandments of God. . . . Behold, I have given unto you the names of our first parents who came out of the land of Jerusalem; and this I have done that when you remember your names ye may remember them; and when ye remember them ye may remember their works . . . that they were good.

"Therefore, my sons, I would that ye should do that which is good" (Helaman 5:6-7).

Then Helaman continued to teach his sons "to lay up for yourselves a treasure in heaven, yea, which is eternal . . . that precious gift of eternal life" (Helaman 5:8).

Then he said to them, "My sons, remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation . . . which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall" (Helaman 5:12).

Rock of eternal truth

We have been taught by the prophets concerning foundations. President Joseph F. Smith has said: "But the men and the women who are honest before God, who humbly plod along, doing their duty, paying their tithing, and exercising that pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, which is to visit the fatherless and the widows in their afflictions and to keep oneself unspotted from the world, and who help look after the poor; and who

honor the holy Priesthood, who do not run into excesses, who are prayerful in their families, and who acknowledge the Lord in their hearts, they will build up a foundation that the gates of hell cannot prevail against; and if the floods come and the storms beat upon their house, it shall not fall, for it will be built upon the rock of eternal truth" (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939], pp. 7-8).

Eternal nature of family unit

One of those great eternal truths which the gospel anchors to a sure foundation is the doctrine of the eternal nature of the family unit. It was to the prophet Malachi the Lord declared:

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord:

"And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers" (Malachi 4:5-6).

Can we think of anything more important than residing in an eternal family unit with parents loving children, and children loving parents? It begins, of course, with a husband and wife married in the holy temple of God for all eternity by those holding priesthood authority. For we know that "in the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees; And in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage]" (D&C 131:1-2).

There is no other way to start an eternal family unit than to be married in the proper place, at the proper time, by the proper authority, receiving the proper instructions that will lay the proper foundation. President David O. McKay said in his infinite wisdom:

"The exalted view of marriage as held by this Church is given expressly in five words found in the 49th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, 'Marriage is ordained of God.' . . .

"It is said that the best and noblest lives are those which are set toward high ideals. Truly no higher ideal regarding marriage can be cherished by young people than to look upon it as a divine institution. In the minds of the young such a standard is a protection to them in courtship, an ever-present influence inducing them to refrain from doing anything which may prevent their going to the temple to have their love [sealed] in an enduring and eternal union. It will lead them to seek divine guidance in the selecting of their companions, upon the wise choice of whom their life's happiness here and hereafter is largely dependent. 'Our home joys . . . are the most delightful earth affords, and the joy of parents in their children is the most holy joy of humanity. It makes their hearts pure and good; it lifts them up to their Father in heaven.' Such joys are within the reach of most men and women if high ideals of marriage and home be properly fostered and cherished" (*Gospel Ideals* [Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1953], p. 462).

Goodly parents

As a marriage is blessed with children, we realize even more the necessity of teaching and training in the family. We recall the words of Nephi at the beginning of the Book of Mormon as he said, "I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents" (1 Nephi 1:1).

What a blessing it would be to have it said of all fathers and mothers that they were goodly parents, righteous parents, active parents, faithful parents, exemplary parents, celestial parents. Then Nephi goes on further to say, "I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father" (1 Nephi 1:1).

Nephi was taught in the ways of the gospel by his father, Lehi. It was this good father, Lehi, who in a dream saw the tree of life whose fruit was most desirable to make one happy. When he partook of the fruit of the tree, he knew

it was desirable above all other fruit. After partaking, his first thought was of his family. And he said, "I began to be desirous that my family should partake of it also" (1 Nephi 8:12).

Lehi wanted more than anything else for his family to partake of the blessings of life—eternal life.

We have another good example in Enos, the son of Jacob, for he also came from a good home:

"I, Enos, knowing my father that he was a just man—for he taught me in his language, and also in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. . . .

"And the words which I had often heard my father speak concerning eternal life, and the joy of the saints, sunk deep into my heart.

"And my soul hungered" (Enos 1:1, 3-4).

Praise be to the father and mother who bestow the blessings of a good name, a noble heritage, and a testimony of the gospel, and who teach their children obedience to the Lord.

Family foundations

We have just enjoyed two special events in our family this year. The first was the privilege of participating in a priesthood ordinance as our first grandson received the Aaronic Priesthood. How proud I was of Terry as he presented himself fully prepared for this occasion.

The second was just a few weeks ago when a new little granddaughter was blessed. As the circle formed, I looked down on bright, beautiful, little Cami and thought how precious and sweet she is.

On both occasions I listened to beautiful blessings pronounced by my two sons-in-law. They were blessings of love, gratitude, faith, understanding, and hope, using the power of the priesthood, which each is worthy to hold.

In the circles which were formed to participate in these events were relatives who had made a great effort by traveling many, many miles over snow-

covered roads to be with us for these occasions.

To build a foundation strong enough to support a family in our troubled world today requires the best effort of each of us—father, mother, brother, sister, grandmother and grandfather, aunts and uncles, cousins, and so on. Each must contribute energy and effort in driving piles right down to the bedrock of the gospel until the foundation is strong enough to endure through the eternities. The Lord has promised us in the Doctrine and Covenants that “he that buildeth upon this rock shall never fall” (D&C 50:44).

To strengthen family

Build traditions in your families that will bring you together, for they can demonstrate your devotion, love, and support for one another. For each of the members of your family, these events would include blessings of children, baptisms, other priesthood ordinances, graduations, missionary farewells, homecomings, and, of course, marriages. If distance, missions, or ill health prevent personal reunions, write one of those special letters that will be treasured in family histories. Sharing these occasions as a family will help us build a foundation established upon a rock.

Does this not lend great strength in any family? It is so essential that we build homes that are strengthened by the support of an extended family. “Honour thy father and thy mother” (Exodus 20:12). If we show love for our parents, we will, in turn, be teaching our children love and respect in the family unit.

Continue building lasting, loving relationships for all family members. Listen to one another, be united, work together, play together, pray together, study together. Live celestial principles together, serve the Lord together. Find those precious teaching moments with one another. Don’t let them slip through your fingers, but feed and nur-

ture these special occasions. Never let golden opportunities go by in your relationships with your family members that will help build eternal principles.

Work and search and train

The Lord has declared in the Doctrine and Covenants, “I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth” (D&C 93:40).

Jesus, as He appeared to the Nephites, instructed them to “pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name, that your wives and your children may be blessed” (3 Nephi 18:21).

“And if ye shall always do these things blessed are ye, for ye are built upon my rock.” (3 Nephi 18:12.)

These are wise words from the book of Proverbs: “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6). If we want an eternal family, we must work for it. It does not come by chance.

Let us each day search from the scriptures and from the prophets that which it takes to make an eternal family. The scriptures that are never read will never help us. If read, the words of God will nourish our souls and carry us to great heights in our endeavors to build and excel in our family life. Oh, how I desire that every Latter-day Saint child could say as Nephi of old, “Having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught.”

Yes, I was taught in the ways of my father the gospel of Jesus Christ, taught to obey the commandments of God, taught to walk in the ways of an eternal family, taught to walk in light and truth, taught to build my life on a sure foundation as a child of God.

Brothers and sisters, God lives! Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the sure foundation upon which all else is built, for He is the cornerstone. Of this I bear solemn witness to you in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder John Sonnenberg who was sustained

for the first time last conference as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He will be followed by Elder F. Arthur Kay who also was sustained for the first time last conference as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder John Sonnenberg

Testimony and calling

I would like to preface my remarks by bearing my testimony and telling you that I know this church is true, that Jesus is the Christ, and that we are led by prophets of God.

October 3, 1984, began as an ordinary day. The sun rose, the colors of autumn sprinkled the Midwest, and it appeared as the garden spot of the nation. The day was somewhat uneventful until the telephone rang. "Elder Sonnenberg?" the voice inquired, and then intoned, "The office of the First Presidency is calling. President Hinckley would like to speak with you."

After a brief exchange of kindnesses, he invited me to become a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy and a General Authority. It has been, and yet remains, overwhelming. The day took on new meaning and an entirely different dimension in my life as I pondered the challenge and invitation. I will do my best and serve with all my heart. My lovely wife and children and their wonderful families surely sustain me, as they have always done.

Invitation of the Master

Men's lives have been clearly and completely changed by such invitations from men of God. This acceptance was acknowledged by asking when and where the Lord would have me go.

Men and women the world over are invited each day to come and join

with us. The Savior invited men to "come, follow me" (Luke 18:22). It was not an ordinary invitation—to follow Jesus. The commitment had everlasting and eternal consequences. Peter was invited to "launch out into the deep" (Luke 5:4). He was a strong, suntanned, ordinary fisherman until he was invited "to let down [the] nets" (Luke 5:4). Thereafter he would never be the same because the Savior was steering his soul more than the ship. Yes, he was an ordinary fisherman until he heard the voice of Jesus and accepted His invitation.

Another time Peter was invited to walk on the water, and when he couldn't continue he learned that when our faith falters we fail. (See Matthew 14:28-31.) Accepting the invitation requires unconditional faith.

To be as He is

In the presence of arrogant and angry men who were eager to accuse, the Master inscribed in sand and dust that which is now cast in concrete. The crowded courtyard of anxious accusers was cleared, and a sinner was saved from stoning because the Savior was interested in the person more than the problem. (See John 8:3-11.) He invited us to not judge, and then He demonstrated that forgiveness fosters love and that casting stones simply wouldn't solve the problem or bring about a solution.

If we are to be as He is, we must be as He was. We must even invite with interest those who show disin-

terest and hope that somehow they will recognize the divine discourse described as a testimony.

He invited us to seek after the singular sheep that was lost. He made us to understand that a lost sheep is really a lost soul that we need to seek and search for, that a lost coin is one who needs to be counted and then converted, and that a prodigal son is one that can be saved by serving and then giving service himself.

He invited little children to come unto Him and each of us to become as one of them. He invited men to love one another as He has loved us, and then He would call them His disciples. He extended His love to his Apostles on condition that they understood what unconditional love for their fellowman was.

He invites men to receive the priesthood of God and to magnify it by service. He invites us to pay our tithing and fast offering, to teach the gospel, and to be baptized, and receive the Holy Ghost. And He invites us to preach the gospel in all the world because we are a worldwide church.

Last month my faithful and youthful companion, Timmy Manners, and I did our home teaching. Sixteen-year-old Timmy was born in the British Isles, I was born in the DDR [German Democratic Republic], and we teach a family from France. We visit them in Germany, and speak English—and we all understand each other.

Each of our families was converted to this, the Lord's true church,

by dedicated missionaries in different lands. We were taught by the sweet Spirit of the Lord. As we meet monthly in the lovely home of Jean Collin and his wonderful family, we have the opportunity to enlighten one another in our home teaching visit by that same sweet Spirit.

We invite the Spirit of the Lord on bended knee in the attitude of prayer. On this wise shall ye pray. What an invitation to communicate in the name of Christ! We are invited to cry repentance and bear our testimony, and then as a crown of commitment He allows us to go to His Holy House and be sealed for eternity.

Before 1830, April 6 was also just an ordinary day. Since the coming of the Book of Mormon and the organization of His church, the Spirit of the Lord has touched men and women around the world. Apostles and prophets and fellow Saints have borne witness of the divinity of the restoration of the gospel. Light, knowledge, and truth have been restored, and the Spirit of the Lord has been felt by members of His Church.

My beloved brothers and sisters, I testify that the Book of Mormon is true, that Jesus is the Christ and that Spencer W. Kimball is a prophet of God, and I invite you to follow them and enjoy the Spirit of the Lord, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder F. Arthur Kay spoke without further announcement.

Elder F. Arthur Kay

My beloved brothers and sisters, words are so inadequate to express the deep and tender feelings of my heart as I stand at this pulpit, which has been hallowed by the prophets of God and their associates, the General Authorities of the Church. Yes, "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the

Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21), for "they spake the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31).

I love and revere these valiant servants of our Heavenly Father and feel honored and very humbled to be numbered among them.

Testimony of the prophets

I come to this calling knowing that God lives—that he is our Father, that Jesus Christ is the very Son of God, our Savior and the Redeemer of the world. I say, as did Job:

“For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

“And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

“Whom I shall see for myself” (Job 19:25–27).

I know that Joseph Smith was a prophet, called of God, an instrument in His hands to restore the gospel in its fullness.

The accounts of the marvelous manifestations and experiences of his youth, and throughout his life, have always been very real to me. I have identified with him as if they had almost been experiences of my own.

I sustain our beloved prophet, Spencer W. Kimball, with all the strength that I possess. I never cease to marvel at the lengthened stride and progress of the Church under his inspired leadership and that of his noble associates.

I express special appreciation to President Gordon B. Hinckley this day for his great and dedicated service at this time in the history of the Church.

To strengthen others

Now, the great desire of my heart is to always be found in step and in unity with the Brethren and to be in harmony with the revealed word and will of God, for I know that obedience is the first law of heaven and the first law of his kingdom here on earth.

Therefore, I desire to do well that which is assigned to me, wherever and under whatever circumstances. “I’ll go where you want me to go, dear Lord.” I’ll do what you want me to do. (See *Hymns*, no. 75.)

With all my heart I desire to share my testimony with others of our Fa-

ther’s children—those who may have need of strengthening within the flock, those who may have estranged themselves from God and his Church, or those who may never have heard the glorious gospel message.

My earnest desire is to kindle in their hearts that which burns so deeply and strongly within my own, that they, too, may have the peace, the happiness, the security, and the spiritual strength that gospel living brings.

As President Kimball has said of truth and of testimony, it “is the electric light illuminating the cavern; the wind and sun dissipating the fog. . . . It is much more than all else, for . . . ‘this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.’ (John 17:3.)” (*Faith Precedes the Miracle* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1972], p. 14).

Testimony, like the widow’s cruse of oil, will not fail (see 1 Kings 17:14), neither be diminished as it is shared; rather, it will be enlarged at its base and renewed at its source.

Joy of service in the temples

With this calling comes the privilege and the blessing and obligation of sharing my testimony as an *especial* witness of Him whose name we bear and in whose image and likeness we were created. (See D&C 107:25.)

I want to kindle in the hearts of our Father’s children a desire to receive the sacred ordinances of His holy house and help them to understand the importance of associated covenants and the necessity of honoring those covenants if they are to have eternal life.

I want to help them understand and appreciate the joy of service in the temples and to understand that service is essential to their salvation. The Savior taught this mighty principle when he said, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:40).

It is in these holy edifices we become Saviors on Mount Zion. (See Obadiah 1:21.) Whenever one serves selflessly, with an eye single to the glory of God (see D&C 59:1), one receives joy unspeakable.

In closing, I wish to express my eternal gratitude to the sweetheart of my youth, my eternal companion, for her long and loyal and faithful service and devotion to that cause which we both espouse. I express my love and devotion to our five daughters, their husbands, our grandchildren, and to my sisters and their families, all of

whom extend to me their confidence and their love. I bear this sacred witness in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

We have just listened to Elders John Sonnenberg and F. Arthur Kay, members of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Keith W. Wilcox, also sustained for the first time as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy at October conference, will now address us.

Elder Keith W. Wilcox

Look for the beautiful

Not long ago, President Gordon B. Hinckley, in a commencement address at BYU—Hawaii, admonished graduates to “stop seeking out the storms and enjoy more fully the sunlight” (*Church News*, 3 July 1983, p. 10). He pointed out that we can be negative and look for the ugly in life and the faults and failings of those around us, or we can develop positive attitudes and see the beautiful in life and the good, the strong, the decent, and the virtuous in people, which brings joy and happiness. It is a matter of attitude.

Shortly after beginning three years of service as a mission president, I was reminded of my personal attitude concerning the world and the people in it. One evening I looked up to see my thirteen-year-old daughter walking up to my desk. She stopped and looked intently at me, with her hands on her hips. She finally said, “Dad, I think I have you figured out.” Now she had my complete attention. Then she said, “You have devoted your life to the beautiful, haven’t you?”

I thought for a few moments, and then replied, “Yes, Carole, you do have me figured out. Thank you.”

Beauty in buildings and people

My lovely wife and our six beautiful daughters had long been aware of my interest in the beauty of buildings, as expressed in my practice as a professional architect, and also of my interest in the beauty of this world, as expressed in my landscape paintings. Carole had now correctly concluded that I had an even greater interest in the creation of beautiful people—the type of radiant beauty that comes from righteous living and acceptance of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as taught by our missionaries.

In recent months in traveling to many parts of the world, I have observed this same beauty and spiritual glow in so many of those with whom I have associated.

During these travels I have also observed many types of buildings. More and more I see how buildings and people resemble each other. The most beautiful buildings I have seen are our sacred temples.

The Lord has told us that we can be beautiful, even like a temple. In 1 Corinthians he said, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16.)

In 2 Corinthians we read, "For ye are the temple of the living God" (2 Corinthians 6:16).

When the Lord Jesus Christ finalized his immortal Sermon on the Mount, he used a comparison of buildings and people to emphasize the importance of foundations common to both:

"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

"And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it" (Matthew 7:24-27).

Foundation on which to build our lives

A solid foundation is the most important part of a building or of a person. President Benson has emphasized that in the Sermon on the Mount "we are told to be a light to others, to control our anger, to reconcile bad feelings with others . . . , [and] to love our enemy. . . . We are further instructed how to pray, how to fast, and how to regulate our priorities." (*Come unto Christ* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1983], p. 37).

As we live the principles of the Sermon on the Mount, we build a rock-solid foundation upon which our lives can safely be constructed.

The Lord, the great Master Architect, has given us perfect plans and specifications to guide us in the building of our lives. These are the sacred scriptures. They contain the words of

the Lord and should be frequently read and pondered.

By seeking the Lord through prayer and through his holy scriptures, we learn to look for the beautiful and to develop positive attitudes. We achieve guidance in the building of our foundations and our lives.

A temple of God

As we live righteous and unselfish lives, the Spirit of the Lord enters our souls and then radiates from us. We become beautiful, even as a holy temple is beautiful. And as missionaries we can help others to become beautiful. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings" (Isaiah 52:7, Mosiah 12:21, 3 Nephi 20:40).

I leave you my testimony that I know this is the restored Church of Jesus Christ, with a message for all mankind. Jesus is the Christ. We are led by a prophet of the Lord, President Spencer W. Kimball. Our church provides the way for each of us to construct that which is truly beautiful—a Christ-like life, which brings joy and happiness now and into the eternities. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Keith W. Wilcox, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Let Us All Press On," following which Bishop Robert D. Hales, who was sustained this morning as Presiding Bishop of the Church, will address us.

The Choir and congregation sang "Let Us All Press On."

Bishop Robert D. Hales spoke without further announcement.

Bishop Robert D. Hales

My dear brothers and sisters, this is the fourth time that I will be ordained or set apart as a bishop.

In turning to the forty-first section of the Doctrine and Covenants, we find where the first Presiding Bishop was called—Edward Partridge. There it was said that he was a guileless man. Concerning that particular attribute, I would like to say of Bishop Brown, Bishop Peterson, and Bishop Clarke how guileless they are and how well they have served. In searching for a Presiding Bishopric, the Lord and the Brethren go through the kingdom to find three men who would be willing to enter a javelin-catching contest.

To bishops and branch presidents

Bishop Vandenberg, Bishop Simpson, and Bishop Featherstone have been great examples to me over the years. When I was a bishop in a ward, they were serving in the Presiding Bishopric.

If I could give a tribute today at this Easter time to the more than ten thousand bishops and branch presidents throughout the world, I would say how much the office of the bishop embodies the Savior's characteristics. There are great bishops throughout the world. There is something that happens to a man when he becomes a bishop because he learns more than anything else to honor the call. Once a bishop is ordained, he is never released—the reason being that he holds within him the confidences, which will go to the grave with him, for those whom he serves.

Mantle of the bishop

The mantle of the bishop includes being president of the Aaronic Priesthood and president of the priests quorum, being a common judge in Israel, being presiding high priest, assisting in temporal matters, providing for the welfare of the Saints through auxilia-

ries and priesthood councils, and being responsible for tithes and offerings.

Have you ever wondered about this mantle which comes upon a bishop? He can sit in a sacrament meeting and look out at his flock and know who is in trouble, look at his Aaronic Priesthood—the deacons, the teachers, and the priests—and know which ones need his counsel. There is a hopeless feeling when you are released as a bishop to become a General Authority, and then return to your home ward where you have been serving and realize you have lost the power of discernment with the ward members. You can't do what you did as a bishop.

We think of the disciples waiting outside the Garden of Gethsemane and not having the discerning nature to know what the Savior was going through. And yet, the Savior himself embodied that characteristic which a bishop and all of us should have. He said, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" (Matthew 26:40). They did not understand.

Sometimes, experience is the best teacher of discernment. We are reminded of President Harold B. Lee having to lose his sweet companion so that he might understand the agony and anguish of a single person who has lost his or her companion, turning his attention as a prophet to the singles of the Church. It is in moments like this that we learn.

Learn from others

I remember, too, my mother as she went through eight years of being paralyzed. The last year and a half she needed care around the clock, and my dear father cared for her. One night, a few weeks before she passed away, I knelt at her bed after a word of prayer and she said, "I would like to go to heaven to see Papa."

I said, "Mother, why have you gone through this pain?"

She said, "To learn patience."

"Mother, have you learned enough patience?"

Then, with a mother's kind way of teaching, she looked at me and said, "I have, but have you?"

At such moments you begin to understand that the difficulties and problems of others, if we will feel them, will make us grow, if we will but lend a hand.

Lives of the Saints

There are many priesthood leaders here from all over the world. These stake presidents, Regional Representatives, and General Authorities know the truth of the counsel once given us by one of the Presiding Bishops of this dispensation, Elder LeGrand Richards. After a weighty discussion in the temple with all the General Authorities, he said, "Now, Brethren, I understand all that we discussed, but until the bishops move, nothing will happen. Everything above the bishop is all talk." He taught a great lesson.

Each priesthood leader who is here this day must go home and make sure the bishops understand the messages which we have heard, for it is in their interviews with the youth, it is in their interviews in calling the people to positions, it is in their compassion for the needy and the widows that the important spiritual things happen in the lives of the Saints. The bishop who utilizes the resources at his hands—the auxiliaries, the priesthood—to fulfill the needs of his people, is a true bishop, not one who follows slavishly a handbook to the detriment of his people.

Turn to your bishop

Having said this, I would like to ask the youth and adults who are here, and all within the sound of my voice, that every night and morning you pray for your bishop. He needs your help. He cannot carry the responsibilities on his shoulders without your help and prayers.

The story is told of the young child who misbehaved in sacrament meeting. Father and Mother were embarrassed by his actions. Finally, Father was a little disturbed and took the child out. As he went down the aisle, he gave the child a little squeeze. The child knew he was in trouble. As the father turned to go out of the chapel, the child, now up over his father's shoulder, said, "Bishop, help me!"

All members of the Church can turn to their bishops when they are in need of help and can feel secure in his love for them and can have confidence in following his counsel. Bishops learn not to judge people against a standard of perfection. A bishop learns that he will rejoice with those over whom he presides in any progress they make.

In the forty-first section of the Doctrine and Covenants, on that day when Edward Partridge was called, the superscription says, "The members were striving to do the will of God so far as they knew it." And that's true today. We strive to do the Lord's will so far as we know it. The section goes on to say that the Lord asks us to assemble ourselves together to agree upon his word. (See D&C 41:2.) If we do that, there will be unity. That unity has been here today. May the Lord's blessings continue, that "by the prayer of your faith," as the Lord promises, "ye shall receive my law, that ye may know how to govern my church and have all things right before me" (D&C 41:3).

We stand at the Jordan

In conclusion, let's turn to the story of Elijah and Elisha. Elijah had gone from his duties to go up to a cave. The Lord came to him, and he was called to go back to his duties. He had not had a convert for some period of years, but when he went back he found Elisha, who immediately followed him. (See 1 Kings 19.)

They dwelt and worked together for a few years until the time came when all the priesthood leaders knew

that it was time for Elijah to be translated. Elijah and Elisha stood at the banks of the River Jordan. Fifty other priesthood holders stood in view far off as the two stood by the Jordan. "And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground." And Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for thee." Can you imagine? Then Elijah was translated and departed in a flaming chariot, and the only thing that was left was his mantle. Elisha picked up the mantle, then turned toward the fifty priesthood leaders who were standing afar off. He had to return over the river, so he picked up the cloak, smote the River Jordan, and it parted. (See 2 Kings 2:1-15.)

I now stand at the Jordan with two sweet counselors, Bishop Eyring and Bishop Pace, as we attempt to cross the River Jordan to serve together. I ask for the blessings of Bishop Brown, Bishop Clarke, and Bishop Peterson, and all those who are here, that my counselors and I might also have that river part so we may return and go about our mission.

Bishop Pace said to me when he received his call, "You don't know me that well." My response was, "No, but the Lord does." Bishop Eyring and I have known each other since boyhood. He is a man of God. Sitting in this audience today is Wilber Cox. Both Bishop Eyring and I have served as

counselors to him in a stake presidency. He molded us in a way in which we have been blessed.

I appreciate being taught by the example of my mother and father. Mother, for fifteen years, was a Relief Society president. After I received my driver's license, she had me drive her to deliver the welfare supplies and care for the needy. Father would always have me polish the sacrament trays when I was a deacon, and we would bring them home and wash the sacrament cloths and honor the priesthood. When he was in the bishopric, he took care of the outside of the building; and we, as Aaronic Priesthood boys, assisted him.

May the Lord's blessings be with each and every one of us. It is my testimony that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ. Of this I have no doubt. I give you my testimony with those who have prophesied this day. As I look into their eyes and feel the love I have for them, I ask that we might be able to work together in harmony. I say this in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Bishop Robert D. Hales, the new Presiding Bishop of the Church, has just addressed us.

Elder James E. Faust, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Boyd K. Packer, also a member of the Council of the Twelve.

Elder James E. Faust

Christian and disciple

In World War II, I was in a military hospital in Africa for a few days with a respiratory infection. The hospital was staffed with native orderlies who were to keep the hospital clean, change the beds, and generally be of help to the patients. Because of the prevalence of malaria and its carrier,

the mosquito, we slept under large mosquito nets which hung from the ceiling and covered the whole bed. One night as I went to bed I slipped my wallet under my pillow and drifted off to sleep.

Some time later in the night I was awakened and startled to feel some hands slipping under my bedclothes. I suspected that a thief was after my wal-

let. I instinctively grabbed one of the hands and switched on the light. My wallet slipped out from under the pillow. To my surprise, I held the arm of the native boy who was the orderly assigned to clean my room. All he said in defense of his action was, "Don't worry. I am a disciple." He could tell from the look on my face that I did not understand. In further explanation, he said simply, "I am a disciple. I am a Christian. I do not want your purse. I was only tucking the mosquito netting around your bed to protect you from the mosquitoes while you slept." I came to know that this young man was not only a Christian, he was a disciple.

True disciples believe, act, speak, know

True disciples are those who go beyond simply believing. They act out their belief. Said the Savior, "If any man will *do his will, he shall know of the doctrine*, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John 7:17; italics added). Disciples follow the Divine Master. Their actions speak in symphonic harmony with their beliefs. They know who they are. They know what God expects of them. They mirror inner peace and certainty concerning the mission and resurrection of Christ. They hunger and thirst after righteousness. They know they are here on this earth for a purpose. They understand life after death. They believe that the transcendent event in the ministry of the Christ was the Atonement, culminating in the Resurrection.

The prophet Ether says that a disciple may with "surety hope for a better world, . . . which hope cometh of faith, maketh an anchor to the souls of men, which would make them sure and steadfast, always abounding in good works" (Ether 12:4).

Divine gift

I should like on this afternoon before Easter to testify concerning the surety of hope all disciples may have

through the resurrection of the Christ. The resurrection of Jesus is one of the greatest messages of all Christianity. It is a divine gift of the Atonement for all mankind. The idea that one who has died can live again was so unprecedented, so foreign to all human experience, that even the Apostles, who had been told it would happen, could hardly believe it.

When Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary (the mother of James), and the other women told the Apostles that they had seen the resurrected Lord, "their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not" (Luke 24:11; see also Matthew 28:9-10).

Nevertheless, Peter and John must have experienced a confirmation of the Spirit that the women's testimony was not to be ignored. John testified that Peter and John literally ran to the sepulchre to see for themselves. They found that the tomb was empty, just as the women had said, except for the linen burial clothes. (See John 20:3-10.) Peter departed "wondering in himself at that which was come to pass" (Luke 24:12).

Witnesses of the miracle

As Mary stood without the sepulchre weeping, she was addressed by an apparent stranger with two ever-so-tender, compassionate questions: "Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?" In her grief and blinded by tear-filled eyes, she pleaded with the stranger, whom she supposed to be the gardener, "Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away."

"Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself" (John 20:15-16).

One, only one, person could speak her name that way. With that single word all doubt, confusion, and uncertainty was swept away. Mary, in that instant, came to the grand, sublime realization that He for whom she mourned, even Jesus that was crucified, had risen from the dead, just as the

angels early that very morning had testified, "He is risen." (See Luke 24:6.)

Mary was not to be the only witness of the miracle of the Resurrection. Although the Savior was the "first-fruits" of them that slept (1 Corinthians 15:23), the scriptures testify that "many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many" (Matthew 27:52-53).

Jesus appeared to two followers in Emmaus whose "eyes were holden that they should not know him" (Luke 24:16), and they entreated him: "Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them" (Luke 24:29). As Jesus ate with them, their eyes were opened, and they knew him.

Upon his first appearance to the ten Apostles following the Resurrection, they were terrified and thought they had seen a spirit, and he comforted them by saying, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."

"And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet" (Luke 24:39-40).

Thomas was absent, and when the others told him of Jesus' resurrection, his response was disbelief: "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." At his next appearance a week later, Christ said to Thomas: "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing."

"And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God" (John 20:25, 27-28).

And so for forty days the Savior ministered to his Apostles and other disciples and taught them.

During these forty glorious days, Christ was also "seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this

present. . . . After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles." Paul adds, "And last of all he was seen of me" (1 Corinthians 15:6-8).

Latter-day witnesses

Latter-day Saints have additional witnesses of the reality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and of the certainty of life after death. One of these witnesses is the Book of Mormon, a record containing the ministry of the resurrected Christ upon the American continent after his death and resurrection in Jerusalem. The appearance was preceded by a voice as if it came out of heaven: "And it was not a harsh voice, neither was it a loud voice; nevertheless, and notwithstanding it being a small voice it did pierce them that did hear to the center . . . ; yea, it did pierce them to the very soul, and did cause their hearts to burn" (3 Nephi 11:3).

The voice announced, "Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name. . . ."

"And behold, they saw a Man descending out of heaven; and he was clothed in a white robe; and he came down and stood in the midst of them; and the eyes of the whole multitude were turned upon him" (3 Nephi 11:7-8).

He stretched forth his hand and said, "Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world" (3 Nephi 11:10). And he invited the multitude: "Arise and come forth unto me, that ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet, that ye may know that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world" (3 Nephi 11:14).

The testimony of modern witnesses is also recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants. The Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon testified:

"And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

"For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—

"That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God" (D&C 76:22–24).

The glorified appearance of Jesus Christ in the temple in Kirtland, Ohio, was described by the Prophet Joseph Smith as follows:

"His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying:

"I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father" (D&C 110:3–4).

Joseph Smith also testified of the appearance of the Father and the Son to him as a young boy: "When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*" (Joseph Smith—History 1:17).

What is the resurrection?

What, then, is the resurrection? A very good description comes from the Book of Mormon; the prophet Alma explains that Christ loosed the bands of temporal death for all of us.

"All shall be raised from this temporal death.

"The spirit and the body shall be reunited again in its perfect form; both limb and joint shall be restored to its proper frame . . . ; and we shall be brought to stand before God, knowing

even as we know now, and have a bright recollection of all our guilt.

"Now, this restoration shall come to all, both old and young, both bond and free, both male and female, both the wicked and the righteous; and even there shall not so much as a hair of their heads be lost; but every thing shall be restored to its perfect frame, as it is now. . . .

"And also concerning the resurrection of the mortal body. I say unto you that this mortal body is raised to an immortal body, that is from death, even from the first death unto life, that they can die no more; their spirits uniting with their bodies, never to be divided; thus the whole becoming spiritual and immortal" (Alma 11:42–45).

The members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believe in universal salvation as well as individual salvation. We believe that through the Resurrection and Atonement there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust: "For as in Adam all [men] die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22).

Jesus of Nazareth—the resurrected Savior

How do we accept Jesus of Nazareth?

We joyfully accept him without reservation as the greatest personage who ever lived on the face of the earth.

We believe him to be the Messiah, the Redeemer.

We glory in his mission and his doctrine.

We delight in him as the firstfruits of them that slept.

We worship him as the second member of the Godhead of three.

We humbly come to the Father through him, believing his words. "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

A hallmark of a disciple is described in the words of the Master: "By this shall all men know that ye are my

disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35).

We can ask, with Job, the age-old question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" (Job 14:14). And the answering testimony is that Jesus Christ made the resurrection possible:

"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

"And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God" (Job 19:25-26).

We testify with Isaiah that "his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). Of the Resurrection we can declare with Paul: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Corinthians 15:55.)

With the abundance of testimony, both ancient and modern, sealed by the witness of the Holy Spirit of God, we

stand firm and unequivocating in our knowledge that Jesus of Nazareth is the resurrected Savior. His arms are stretched forth to all men, including my native friend in Africa, who, by accepting Him in His appointed way, may become not just believers but true disciples and with Paul hope to "obtain a better resurrection" (Hebrews 11:35).

To all we say, "May Christ lift thee up, and may . . . the hope of his glory and of eternal life, rest in your mind forever" (Moroni 9:25). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

We have just heard from Elder James E. Faust, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our concluding speaker.

Elder Boyd K. Packer

Brethren and sisters, I had in mind speaking on another subject today.

However, during the last few days, I have had pressing upon me, by inspiration as I believe, the feeling that I should present some counsel on another subject.

Ordained by one having authority

I have here in my hand a most interesting document. Let me quote from it: "To whom it may concern:

"This certifies that *Parley P. Pratt*, has been received into the church of the Latter Day Saints, . . . and has been ordained an elder according to the rules and regulations of said church, and is duly authorized to preach the gospel, agreeably to the authority of that office. . . .

"Given by the direction of a conference of the elders of said church, assembled in Kirtland, Geauga

County, Ohio, this 26th day of *April*, in the year of our Lord one thousand, eight hundred, and thirty-five. [Signed] *Joseph Smith Jr. . . . Oliver Cowdery, Clerk*" (Parley P. Pratt Collection, Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City).

So that you may sense the significance of this document, I quote from the forty-second section of the Doctrine and Covenants:

"I say unto you, that it shall not be given to any one to go forth to preach my gospel, or to build up my church, except *he be ordained by some one who has authority, and it is known to the church that he has authority and has been regularly ordained by the heads of the church*" (D&C 42:11; italics added).

I read that elder's certificate to show that from the very beginning of the Church very careful procedures of authorization have been followed.

It is important that every member of the Church understand that.

The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy of perilous times and apostasy to come in the last days.

He listed the many evils that would be abroad in those perilous times, such things as false accusers, despisers of those that are good, and traitors, and he warned, "From such turn away" (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

Immunization against evils

"Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and has been assured of, *knowing of whom thou hast learned them*" (2 Timothy 3:13-14; italics added).

That phrase, *knowing of whom thou hast learned them*, has great significance.

Paul taught that a knowledge of the scriptures was our immunization against these evils.

Repeating what the Lord said: "Again I say unto you, that it shall not be given to any one to go forth to preach my gospel, or to build up my church, except [one:] *he be ordained by some one who has authority*, and [two:] *it is known to the church that he has authority and has been regularly ordained by the heads of the church*" (D&C 42:11; italics added).

The Church will always be led by those who have been called by the regularly ordained heads of the Church.

Titles in the Church

Now, this does not prevent any member from sharing the gospel in a missionary attitude; that is our duty. There are duties, such as home teaching, and ordinances, such as blessing the sick, which go with the priesthood, and no special setting apart is required. But, for any and every office, there is care to see that anyone given authority receives it from one who has authority

and it is *known to the church* that he has authority.

We sometimes puzzle others with the many titles in the Church. They wonder why we have so many presidents. We have presidents in stakes and missions and quorums and women's auxiliaries.

Each is sustained by the congregations before they are ordained or set apart, and a record is kept of that action.

Bishops receive a certificate of ordination. So do stake and mission presidents and elders and seventies and high priests. It is known to the Church that they have authority.

Identify keys of authority

Once, in company with Elder Gene R. Cook and the mission president, we traveled in a very remote region on the Altiplano, or high plain in Bolivia. We had traveled much of the day in a four-wheel-drive vehicle. We had crossed an arm of Lake Titicaca on an ancient ferry. We followed mountain roads first built by the ancient Incan Indians.

Once, we had to build a stone ramp to emerge from a river bed which formed something of a road in the dry season. Lifting stones at an altitude of more than thirteen thousand feet is no small task.

We came eventually to our destination, Huacuyo. It is really not a village so much as houses scattered about the mountains, as high, I suppose, as men live anywhere on earth.

There we found what we were seeking—a little adobe and stone chapel. The few Saints in the region had built it themselves with no help from the Church.

The distance and forbidding terrain made this, I'm sure, as remote from Church headquarters as any place on earth.

The chapel had a dirt floor and rude hand-hewn benches. The interior walls had been whitewashed. Hanging on the front wall were three pictures:

the President of the Church and his two counselors—the First Presidency.

I repeat the words of Paul:

“Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, . . . *knowing of whom thou hast learned them*” (2 Timothy 3:14; italics added).

Even in that remote little branch the members could identify those who hold the keys of authority.

Identify general and local authorities

It is not unusual to see pictures of General Authorities in church buildings across the world. These pictures appear in Church publications. Whenever there is a change, new pictures appear. Now, with the sustaining of a new Presiding Bishopric and the calling of other Brethren, their pictures will appear in the news and eventually in chapels across the world.

Those who know me well know that I very much dislike to see pictures of myself displayed. But I endure that, as do the other Brethren, for very good reason.

There is purpose in members of the Church everywhere in the world being able to identify the general and local authorities. In that way they can know of whom they learn.

A few years ago Sister Packer and I were returning from New Zealand. We left Auckland at midnight and landed in Papeete in Tahiti. We waited there for a connecting flight. Just before dawn, a plane landed. It was not the one we were to board. We did not know its route; it was just an airliner landing on that small island in the South Pacific in the wee hours of a Monday morning.

I told my wife, “I will know someone on that plane.” I stood near the gate and as the passengers disembarked, four people, none of whom I had met before, approached me. “Are you Brother Packer?” And near the end of the line was one man I knew.

The point is this. It is manifestly impossible, in Huacuyo, Bolivia, or

Tierra del Fuego, Argentina, in Kemi, Finland, or Vava’U in Tonga or anywhere else on earth, for an imposter to present himself as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and not be detected by the members as one who has not been regularly ordained by the leaders of the Church.

Official call and authorized ordination

There are those who claim authority from some secret ordinations of the past. Even now some claim special revealed authority to lead or to teach the people. Occasionally they use the names of members of the First Presidency or of the Twelve or of the Seventy and imply some special approval of what they teach.

There have been too many names presented, too many sustaining votes taken, too many ordinations and settings apart performed before too many witnesses; there have been too many records kept, too many certificates prepared, and too many pictures published in too many places for any one to be deceived as to who holds proper authority. Claims of special revelation or secret authority from the Lord or from the Brethren are false on the face of them and really utter nonsense!

The Lord never operated that way; these things were not done in a corner (see Acts 26:26); there is light on every official call and every authorized ordination, and it has always been that way.

Now, the priesthood is structured so that ordinary men and women and youth are called to work in the Church.

Surely we must appear at times to be very amateurish when compared to the highly schooled clergy of other churches.

The very nature of the priesthood allows for a great variety in the gospel knowledge of members struggling to learn as they serve.

A member, at any given time, may not understand one point of doctrine or another, may have a misconception, or even believe something is true that in fact is false.

There is not much danger in that. That is an inevitable part of learning the gospel. No member of the Church should be embarrassed at the need to repent of a false notion he might have believed. Such ideas are corrected as one grows in light and knowledge.

"From such turn away"

It is not the *belief* in a false notion that is the problem, it is the *teaching* of it to others. In the Church we have the agency to believe whatever we want to believe about whatever we want to believe. But we are not authorized to teach it to others as truth.

If someone approaches you individually or invites you to very private meetings, claiming to have some special calling, whatever you do, follow Paul's counsel—"from such turn away."

They may claim special revelations and callings. They may claim visions and visitations. But where, pray tell me, can they claim the sustaining vote of the membership? In the revelation on organization and Church government given in 1830, the Lord said:

"No person is to be ordained to any office in this church, where there is a regularly organized branch of the same, without the vote of that church" (D&C 20:65).

There is another area where caution means safety. There are some who, motivated by one influence or another, seek through writing and publishing criticisms and interpretations of doctrine to make the gospel more acceptable to the so-called thinking people of the world.

They would do well to read very thoughtfully the parable of the tree of life in the eighth chapter of 1 Nephi, and to ponder very soberly verse twenty-eight:

"And *after*" [meaning after they were members of the Church] *after* "they had tasted of the fruit they were ashamed, because of those that were scoffing at them; and they fell away

into forbidden paths and were lost" (*italics added*).

If their spirits are pure and their motives worthy, they will do no harm either to themselves or to others. If they are not, we would all do well to follow Paul's admonition and "from such turn away."

Preparation for stakehood

I saw something else on the wall of that little chapel in Huacuyo. It was a rudely printed poster. I could not hold back the tears as I read the heading "preparacion para ser estaca"—preparation for stakehood.

There followed a list of qualifications for a stake of Zion. A stake of Zion there in the remotest village atop the Andes Mountains? Oh, yes! That will be one day. And when it comes, one of us will be there to give authority to the leaders. When a stake of Zion is organized anywhere on earth, a man sitting on this stand must be there to confer the keys of presidency. Only from those who *have the authority* and *it is known to the church that they have authority* can they receive them. There is yet a further witness. Any seeking soul—any member—has the right to know by the gift of the Spirit about the call of our leaders.

Witness of the Spirit

On one occasion I was organizing a new stake on Upolu Island in Samoa. As is customary, we were conducting interviews with local priesthood leaders, asking each to suggest a few names of brethren of stature to be considered for a call.

One dignified branch president had walked from the other side of the island. He stood before us in a white shirt and tie, with a lavalava, or skirt, tied about his waist. He wore no shoes; he had never owned shoes.

I asked for names. He gave but one: "Bishop Iono will be our stake president." He was right, for that had

already been revealed to me. But I did not feel he should make the announcement.

So I asked for other names, for we had counselors and others to call as well. He replied, holding up his finger, "Just one name." "But," I said, "suppose he could not serve, would you not like to name others?" This humble priesthood president then asked me a question, "Brother Packer, are you asking me to go against the witness of the Spirit?"

How marvelous! This wonderful man had reminded me that each member of the Church, in prayer, can receive confirmation that the fifth article of faith has been honored.

"We believe that a man [and this applies to sisters as well] must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof."

The Lord and his servants

On one occasion, Karl G. Maeser was leading a party of young missionaries across the Alps. As they reached the summit, he looked back and saw a row of sticks thrust in the snow to mark the one safe path across the otherwise treacherous glacier.

Halting the company of missionaries, he gestured toward the sticks and said, "Brethren, there stands the priesthood [of God]. They are just common sticks like the rest of us, . . . but the position they hold makes them what they are to us. If we step aside from the path they mark, we are lost" (in Alma P. Burton, *Karl G. Maeser, Mormon Educator* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1953], p. 22).

Although no one of us is perfect, the Church moves forward, led by ordinary people.

The Lord promised:

"If my people will hearken unto my voice, and unto the voice of my servants whom I have appointed to lead

my people, behold, verily I say unto you, they shall not be moved out of their place.

"But if they will not hearken to my voice, nor unto the voice of these men whom I have appointed, they shall not be blest" (D&C 124:45-46).

I bear witness, brethren and sisters, that the leaders of the Church were called of God by proper authority, and it is known to the Church that they have that authority and have been properly ordained by the regularly ordained heads of the Church. If we follow them we will be saved. If we stray from them we will surely be lost. That is true of the file leaders down through the ranks of the Church, the heads of quorums and wards, of stakes and missions, and of the prophet, who stands at the head of the Church.

I sustain President Spencer W. Kimball as the prophet of God. I know that he is the prophet of God. I know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and by His order, and in His order, is the Church moved forward in our generation. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has been our concluding speaker.

We remind the brethren of the general priesthood meeting which will convene here in the Tabernacle this evening at 6:00 P.M.

The nationwide CBS Radio Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those desiring to attend this broadcast must be in their seats no later than 9:15 A.M.

The singing for this session has been furnished by a Primary children's choir from the Jordan Utah Region. We are grateful, indeed, for the presence of these beautiful children and for the sweet spirit their music has added to this meeting.

The choir will now sing in closing "Jesus Has Risen" and "He Sent His Son." Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder Derek A. Cuthbert, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Jesus Has Risen" and "He Sent His Son."

The benediction was offered by Elder Derek A. Cuthbert.

GENERAL PRIESTHOOD MEETING

THIRD SESSION

The general priesthood meeting convened in the Tabernacle at 6.00 P.M. on Saturday, April 6, 1985.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for this session was provided by a priesthood choir from Brigham Young University directed by Ronald Staheli and Mack Wilberg with John Longhurst at the organ.

President Hinckley opened this session with the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Brethren, President Spencer W. Kimball is watching the proceedings on television in his apartment. President Romney, likewise, is at home. Both send their greetings and love to you. President Kimball has been with us in both of the general sessions today.

For the information of the brethren in outlying areas, we announce that at the first general session this morning Bishops Victor L. Brown, H. Burke Peterson, and J. Richard Clarke were honorably released as the Presiding Bishopric of the Church and were sustained as members of the First Quorum of the Seventy. Elders Hans B. Ringger, Waldo P. Call, and Helio da Rocha Camargo were also sustained as members of that quorum. Elder Wm. Grant Bangerter was sustained as a new member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy. Elder Robert D. Hales was sustained as Presiding Bishop with Henry B. Eyring and

Glenn L. Pace as first and second counselors, respectively.

These services are being relayed by closed-circuit transmission to members of the priesthood gathered in the Assembly Hall and in at least 686 locations in many countries around the world. They are likewise being carried to the Marriott Center on the BYU campus and to over 950 stake centers by satellite transmission.

We extend our greetings and blessings to all the priesthood brethren wherever they may be.

We note that Elders Franklin D. Richards and James M. Paramore are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall, and Elders Charles Didier and John K. Carmack preside at the BYU Marriott Center.

The singing during this session will be furnished by a priesthood choir from Brigham Young University under the direction of Ronald Staheli and Mack Wilberg, with John Longhurst at the organ.

We shall begin this service with the choir singing "Come, O Thou King of Kings." Following the singing, Elder Robert L. Simpson of the First Quorum of the Seventy will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "Come, O Thou King of Kings."

Elder Robert L. Simpson offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

I would like to recognize this evening a group of young men who are with us, seated in the Tabernacle. They are members of the Dixie College basketball team. Dixie College—for those of you who are across the world—is in Southern Utah, in St. George. And these young men have just won the National Junior College Athletic Association men's basketball championship. The best in the entire nation! Of the squad of twelve, seven are returned missionaries, and two more are preparing to leave for missions. All of the team are here tonight except one, who had to be excused. Their Coach [Neil] Roberts was having difficulty getting here and their Coach [Thomas] Dobrusky could not get here, but I would like to have you young men stand so that at least all of those in the Tabernacle can see you and those across the world can hear about you.

We congratulate you most warmly. You go to a state school but you are a credit to this church. Thank you so very much, and our best wishes to you for continued success! Between this group of basketball and the BYU football players, this is going to be a challenging year in 1985.

The choir will now favor us with "The Priesthood Gift." Following the choir number, President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve, will speak to us.

I should say that the president of Dixie College is Alton Wade, who at one time served as president of the Church College of New Zealand, so he has a good background also.

The choir sang "The Priesthood Gift."

President Ezra Taft Benson spoke without further announcement.

President Ezra Taft Benson

My beloved brethren, this is a glorious sight. It's a wonderful occasion to be with you. I'm grateful to see so many fathers here in the Tabernacle with their sons, and I feel assured that this is the case with our unseen audience in many locations throughout the world.

Aaronic Priesthood prepares you to serve

Fathers, your greatest influence with your sons will be your example. If you want your boys to see what the gospel will do for them, let them see what it has done for you.

I want to say a few words to you young men who are here tonight because you hold the priesthood. The Aaronic Priesthood is to prepare you to serve—to serve our Heavenly Father all the days of your life. Most of you

within the sound of my voice are preparing for a mission. Let me suggest four ways that you young men can prepare now for your missions.

Prepare yourselves physically

First, prepare yourselves physically. A two-year mission today requires good physical health. It requires that you keep your body clean. In your early teenage years, when temptations come to you to take things into your body which are unsuitable, have the courage to resist. Live the Word of Wisdom—no smoking, no drinking of any alcoholic beverages, and no drugs. Keep your body pure—a pure vessel for the Lord.

Stay morally clean. This means that you keep a clean mind. Your thoughts will determine your actions, and so they must be controlled. It's

difficult to control those thoughts if you submit yourself to temptation. So you will have to carefully select your reading material, the movies you see, and the other forms of entertainment in order to have good thoughts rather than unwholesome desires.

Prepare yourselves mentally

Second, prepare yourselves mentally. A mission requires a great deal of mental preparation. You must memorize missionary discussions, memorize scriptures, and oftentimes learn a new language. The discipline to do this is learned in your early years.

Establish now the daily practice of reading the scriptures ten to fifteen minutes each day. If you do so, by the time you reach the mission field, you will have read all four of the standard works. I urge you to read particularly the Book of Mormon so that you can testify of its truthfulness as the Lord has directed.

Prepare yourselves socially

Third, prepare yourselves socially. A mission requires that you get along with others. You must get along with your companion, who is with you twenty-four hours a day. You must learn to meet people and be gracious and practice good manners. One of the greatest assets that a person has in life is the ability to make friends. When you make a friend of a person, you can teach him the gospel.

Prepare yourselves spiritually

Fourth, prepare yourselves spiritually. A spiritual person obeys all the Lord's commandments. He prays to our Heavenly Father, and he gives service to others.

Let me talk about obedience. You're learning now to keep all the commandments of the Lord. As you do so, you will have His Spirit to be with you. You'll feel good about yourselves. You can't *do* wrong and *feel*

right. It's impossible! One of the great lessons I learned on my first mission was the principle of total obedience.

A lesson on obedience

In 1923 I was serving a mission in Great Britain. At that time there was great opposition to the Church. It began with the ministers and then spread through the press. Many anti-Mormon articles appeared in the daily press. A number of anti-Mormon movies were shown, and derogatory plays were produced on the stage. The general theme was the same—that Mormon missionaries were in England to lure away British girls and make slaves of them on Utah farms. Today that seems fantastic, but in those days it was very real. In some places we even had to stop tracting because of such misunderstandings.

One time we received a letter from mission headquarters instructing us that we should discontinue all street meetings. At that time I was serving as the conference president, and my companion was the conference clerk. When this instruction arrived, we already had a meeting scheduled for the following Sunday night. So we reasoned that we would hold that meeting and then discontinue street meetings thereafter. That's where we made our mistake!

The next Sunday evening we held our street meeting down near the railway station as scheduled. The crowd was large and unruly. In our efforts to preach to them, my companion and I stood back to back. He spoke in one direction, and I faced the other half of the crowd.

When the saloons closed, the rougher, coarser element came out on the streets, many under the influence of liquor. The crowd became noisy, and those on the outside were not able to hear too well.

Some yelled, "What's the excitement?"

Others yelled back, "It's those dreadful Mormons."

To this, others responded, "Let's get them and throw them in the river."

Soon an attempt was made to trample us under their feet. But since we were taller than the average man there, we put our hands on their shoulders and prevented them from getting us under their feet.

During the excitement, my companion and I became separated. They took him down the far side of the railway station and me down the near side. Things began to look pretty bad.

Then a big husky fellow came up to me as some of the others formed a circle around me about ten feet in diameter. The man looked me straight in the eye and said, "Young man, I believe every word you said tonight!"

By this time a British policeman had worked his way through the crowd. He took me by the arm and said, "Young man, you come with me. You're lucky to be alive in this crowd." He led me several blocks and then ordered, "Now you get to your lodge and don't come out anymore tonight."

When I arrived at the lodge, I found that my companion was not yet there. I worried and then prayed and waited. I became so concerned about him that I decided to disguise my appearance by putting on an old American cap and taking off my topcoat. Then I went out to try to find him.

As I neared the place of the meeting, a man recognized me and asked, "Have you seen your companion?"

I said, "No. Where is he?"

He responded, "He's down on the other side of the railway station with one side of his head mashed in."

This frightened me greatly, and I sprinted to the site as fast as I could. Before I reached the railway station, however, I met the same policeman again. He said, "I thought I told you to

stay in and not come out on the street again tonight."

I replied, "You did, officer. But I'm concerned about my companion. Do you know where he is?"

He replied, "Yes, he got a nasty blow on the side of his head, but he's gone to the lodge now. I walked part-way with him as I did earlier with you. Now you get back there and don't come out anymore tonight."

So I went back to the lodge and found my companion disguising himself in order to go out and look for me. We threw our arms around each other and knelt together in prayer. From that experience I learned always to follow counsel, and that lesson has followed me all the days of my life.

Yes, young men, prepare now. Prepare yourselves physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually. Always be obedient to authority. Start a savings account for your mission if you haven't done so already. Pay your tithing, and seek a testimony of the gospel through study and prayer.

I pray, my young brethren, that our Heavenly Father will bless you with an understanding of how desperately you're needed in His service today.

God bless you to prepare yourselves for future service in His Church, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We have another champion with us tonight, Brother Peter Vidmar, winner of two gold medals and one silver medal at the 1984 Summer Olympics. Peter will now address us. He will be followed by Elder M. Russell Ballard, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Brother Peter Vidmar

I've been asked to address my remarks to the young men this evening. It is my humble prayer that I may further instill in them the desire to pursue excellence and to dedicate themselves to serving our Heavenly Father.

Beyond athletics

I am very honored and proud to have represented my country in the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles. Participating in that great competition is an event that I will always cherish and remember. My involvement in gymnastics, however, has taught me qualities that go beyond athletics. The qualities, characteristics, and keys to success in sports are factors that carry over to all other aspects of our lives.

For those of us who, in any way, had the opportunity to view the Olympic Games, we saw the greatest athletes in the world performing at the very best of their abilities. Many of those athletes scored the most points, the fastest times, or the greatest distances in the history of the Olympic Games.

Ingredient for success

But how did they do it? What makes a great athlete? I remember a great Olympic champion who once addressed this question. He named some important factors such as great coaching, good equipment, good athletes to train with, or just pure natural talent. All of these ingredients can go into the recipe for a great athlete, and each will help in its own way. But there is one quality that rises above all, and without it, the athlete is not complete. That ingredient is desire.

The athlete with the greatest desire to succeed will stand a greater chance of reaching his or her goal. The same holds true for the student or the musician or whatever it is that you young men aspire to be. A five-year study of many of the United States' top athletes,

musicians, and scholars has recently concluded that "drive and determination, not great natural talent, led to their extraordinary success" (*Los Angeles Times*, 17 Feb. 1985).

"Do it"

In determined athletes, we can see the difference between knowing and doing. Those who really desire to reach their goals will do whatever they must do in order to achieve them.

Our great prophet, Spencer W. Kimball, has in his office a little motto that simply reads: "Do it." In Matthew 21:28-31 we read:

"But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard.

"He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.

"And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not.

"Whether of them twain did the will of his father?"

Let's not just talk about what we want to be. Let's not just dream about what we want to be. Let's just do it, whatever it takes. To reach your goals, you may have to work harder than you have ever worked before in your entire life.

Work harder than anyone else

My coach taught me a great lesson in my early development as a gymnast. I was leaving for my first national team training camp. Before I traveled to the camp, my coach told me only one thing. He didn't tell me to learn any new maneuvers at the camp. He didn't tell me to try to perform my routines better than the rest of the team. He told me that when I returned from that training camp that he wanted to hear me tell him, with all honesty, that I had worked

harder than anyone else on the national team.

So I remember making it a point to be the last one out of the gym every day; and that didn't mean just waiting at the door for everyone else to leave! Also, I remember that at night, when some team members would occasionally relax with their pizza and beer, I would go back to my room and do more exercises.

When I returned home two weeks later, I was proud to tell my coach, "Yes, I worked harder than everyone else." I didn't work twice as hard, just a little bit harder. But it was enough to help me to improve greatly. Sometimes, just a little bit is all that matters.

Margin of victory

Let's realize what the margin of victory was in a few of the events in last summer's Olympics. In women's cycling, after the 79.2-kilometer race, the difference between the gold medalist and the silver medalist at the finish line was just the length of a tire. In a pressure-packed swimming relay, the difference between the first-place team and second-place team was only .04 of a second. In many of the gymnastics competitions, the difference between first place and second place was as minute as .025 of a point.

The champions didn't win by running twice as fast, by jumping twice as far, or by scoring twice as many points as their opponents. In many cases they won by just a fraction of a second, a fraction of an inch, or a fraction of a point. Likewise, and more important, the champions didn't win by training twice as hard as their opponents. If another gymnast trains six hours a day, I can't train twelve hours a day. Twelve hours a day in a gym just isn't healthy! But I can train six hours and fifteen minutes a day. This is where giving it that little extra and going the extra mile makes the difference.

In whatever you want to improve upon, whether it be schoolwork, athletics, music, or studying the scriptures,

just give a little extra—every day. Fifteen minutes a day for one year add up to over ninety-one hours. I only use fifteen minutes as an example of how time well-spent can add up. I know that I would be a better individual if I applied this more in other important areas of my life. I sincerely hope and pray that I do this.

"Don't quit"

There is another little sign in President Kimball's office. This one reads: "Don't quit." We are all going to have hardships and setbacks. But Heavenly Father will not give us a hardship that we cannot overcome. Behind many Olympic champions are stories of incredible hardships that had to be overcome. Just this past summer, many of us had the opportunity to see an American win his country's first gold medal in Greco-Roman wrestling. We saw this big guy crying tears of joy as he stood on that victory stand. Just two years before, he had undergone a serious operation for a rare form of cancer. He never gave up. Now he is an Olympic champion.

As children of our Father in Heaven, we can have setbacks of sin. But we must never quit or give up hope. Heavenly Father has provided a way to overcome spiritual setbacks through the great gift of repentance. He truly loves us and wants to forgive us. All we have to do is to go through the process of repentance, and we will triumph over our mistakes.

Do your best

I have talked today about pursuing excellence in all areas of our lives. I don't stand here as a shining example of that. I have achieved a wonderful thing in the world of sports. I only pray I can do better in other, more important areas of my life.

I do know of the importance of setting your goals very high, for if you do this, your intermediate goals should be easier to reach. By setting my sights

on the Olympics, I found it easier to become a state or college champion because I always knew I had to improve.

Let's not settle for mediocrity. Let's always try our best. Let us decide now what type of person we want to be, and when a difficult situation comes along we will be prepared to pass the test.

Make proper decisions early

I feel very blessed that at a young age I was taught the importance of keeping the Word of Wisdom. I committed myself to keeping that commandment. I remember a very prestigious competition in Germany, when I won the vaulting event. As I stood on the victory stand, I received a gold medal, flowers, and gifts. I couldn't have been more pleased.

Before walking off of the stand, I noticed another individual coming forward with a silver cup, and I thought, "How great! Another prize!" But as the presenter moved closer with this cup, I noticed it was full of wine.

Turning to my German friend and competitor, I asked what it was for, and he explained that tradition calls for the champion to drink out of the cup and to pass it to the next athlete.

I told him, "Well, I don't drink."

He responded with: "Then just take a little sip and hand it to the next person."

Then I explained, "No, it's against my religion, and I can't even take a sip."

My friend proceeded to explain to the officials in German that I wouldn't drink it, but for some reason they insisted I take the cup.

So I took the cup and held it high in the air for the crowd to see. And then, without taking a sip, I handed it down to the next person. I admit that amidst the laughter of the crowd I felt a bit embarrassed, but I felt proud that it was easy to say no. I believe

that if we make proper decisions before we are faced with a temptation, we will find it much easier to resist that temptation.

Proper perspective on goals

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize keeping a proper perspective on our goals. Let us never lose sight of the gospel in pursuing our temporal ambitions. We didn't come to this world to become Olympic champions, or great doctors, lawyers, or businessmen, or to become rich and famous. We came here to prove ourselves worthy of returning back to the presence of our Heavenly Father. We came here to set and reach the highest goal possible.

I know how hard I worked to compete in the Olympics. At times I trained as much as six hours a day, six days a week. It sometimes seemed it took all of my energy and resources. I think I'm beginning to realize how serious my commitment to the Lord's work must be if I am to receive God's greatest gift. Indeed, it will take all of my talent, energy, and resources—my heart, might, mind, and strength—to earn and receive eternal life.

Just imagine what it's like to be an Olympic champion! Imagine the feeling of having that medal placed around your neck as you stand on the victory platform. It's a feeling I can't describe. But let's realize one more thing. We can all have an experience infinitely greater than that. If we prove worthy, we will return to our Heavenly Father's presence.

I have a testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I know that Christ lives. I know that Spencer W. Kimball is a living prophet of God. I have so much to be thankful for. My temple marriage to my beautiful wife is worth more than all the gold in the world.

I know I have a long way to go, but I pray that I may always improve and someday be found worthy of all the

blessings that Heavenly Father has in store for those that truly serve him, in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder M. Russell Ballard spoke without further announcement.

Elder M. Russell Ballard

Blessings of the holy priesthood

Just fifteen days ago, by assignment, I left Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, which is approximately ten thousand miles from here. The world is very small in some ways. Had I been able to fly directly from Addis Ababa to Salt Lake City, it would have taken approximately nineteen hours. In many other ways, however, the world is very large. Billions of our Heavenly Father's children live upon the earth in all kinds of circumstances; the plight of those who are living in the drought-stricken areas of Africa is disastrous. Human suffering there is almost beyond description. I do not know all the reasons for the suffering. However, this most recent experience in my life has had a profound effect on me. I will never be the same.

I can testify to you, my brethren, that I know as I have never known before that to enjoy the privilege of holding the holy priesthood is a most treasured blessing. If every one of you young men of the Aaronic Priesthood could have been on the mission to Ethiopia with Bishop Glenn Pace and me, your hearts surely would have been filled with the *desire* to honor your priesthood. I do not believe even one of us in this vast priesthood gathering should take for granted the great blessings that we enjoy as bearers of the holy priesthood.

When we arrived in Ethiopia, we found one member of the Church, Brother Harry Hadlock from Seattle, Washington. He was overjoyed to meet two brethren of the priesthood. On Sunday morning, the three of us held a testimony meeting and then, with our

priesthood, blessed and passed the sacrament. The Spirit of the Lord was present. Because we had a deep yearning to help our Father's children who were suffering, we offered a special prayer that rain might come to that drought-stricken area. We felt a deep sense of the importance of our mission. I knew that if we called upon the Lord to bless the land the elements would be tempered. We prayed, brethren, for rain. During the balance of the time we were in Ethiopia it rained every day wherever we traveled. We were grateful to our Heavenly Father because the rain was a special witness to us that he was aware that his sons, bearing his holy priesthood, were about his business in that part of the world.

Training to serve missions

But there was more we could do for them, much more. We have a spiritual gift, the *living waters*, to share. (See John 4:10.) Could we but give them this, they would not thirst thereafter. My brethren, tonight I feel a deep urgency to touch the heart of every boy in the Church that each one might have a *desire* to live worthy to hold the Melchizedek Priesthood and serve a mission. You young men must live worthy to become elders so you can carry the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people as the Lord has commanded us to do. (See Mosiah 15:28.)

The light of the gospel of Jesus Christ is needed desperately in the far reaches of the earth. You young men who are here tonight need to prepare now for your future service. I would ask, which one of you knows what the

Lord has in mind for you to do in the future? May I ask also, which of you may someday sit here in the Tabernacle in these red chairs on the rostrum? As unlikely as it may seem to you young men tonight, all of the General Authorities were boys once, much like you. Even I was your age once. No young man should aspire to a calling, but as surely as you are sitting in this priesthood meeting tonight, many of you will preside over wards, stakes, missions, quorums, and, of course, your own families. Priesthood training, my brethren, starts when a young man is ordained a deacon in the Aaronic Priesthood. You Aaronic Priesthood bearers need to understand that you are in training.

Nephi had a good training plan. I recommend it to all of the boys here tonight: "And it came to pass that I, Nephi, being exceedingly young [he was in his teens], nevertheless being large in stature, *and also having great desires to know of the mysteries of God*, wherefore, I did cry unto the Lord; and behold he did visit me, and did soften my heart that I did believe all the words which had been spoken by my father; wherefore, I did not rebel against him like unto my brothers" (1 Nephi 2:16; italics added). The key, my brethren, was Nephi's *desire* to "know of the mysteries of God." You young men, fill your hearts with this *desire*.

Training for later calls

Of all the training I have received in my Church assignments, none has been more important to me than the training I received as a nineteen-year-old elder serving a full-time mission in the British Isles. As I look back now, I can see that no training in my life was more important for what I am now doing in the Church than the training I received as a full-time missionary.

I am convinced, boys, that the Lord has no better place to get acquainted with you than when you serve him in the mission field. When you are serving your mission, he will send you

on errands to act in his name. He will give you experience with the power of the Holy Ghost. He will authorize you to teach, to convert, and then to perform the sacred ordinances of salvation in his name. He will come to know you. He will come to know that he can trust you and can rely on you. He will help you learn the lessons that will qualify you for the great work that you must perform as you do your part in carrying the message of the Restoration to everyone in the world.

Prompting of Spirit, and goodness of people

On the recent errand to Ethiopia, the Spirit prompted Bishop Pace and me. We knew what to do. We knew what to say. We knew where to go. In many ways, boys, I relived some of my missionary experiences of thirty-four years ago. For example, we needed a permit from the government to travel to Makale to visit the food stations and the distribution centers where tens of thousands of homeless refugees were gathered. When the permit was delayed, desiring to fill our mission, we knelt in prayer and asked the Lord for help. The next morning the permits were issued. Then we needed to get from Addis Ababa to Makale. We again prayed for help and then found passage with a British Royal Air Force mercy flight in a C-130 Hercules transport plane. From Makale, we had no way to travel to Asmara. The Lord knew of our need. Late in the afternoon we hitched a ride with a Swedish Air Force mercy flight. Hitchhiking is not a good idea, and especially not by air, but being on the Lord's errand, it was all right.

I have deep affection for the goodness of people, many of whom I met in far-off Ethiopia, who are not members of the Church but who are giving unselfish Christian service. Brethren, I was so grateful that the Church made a significant contribution to help meet a desperate need. I believe if we had more missionaries in the world, rendering meaningful Christian service and

helping people come to the knowledge of the glorious message of the Restoration, we would find favor with the Lord.

Call every worthy boy to serve mission

I say to you young men tonight, get ready; every one of you, get ready. This world needs your service. Repent if you need to. Study from the standard works every day. Say your prayers morning and night. Develop in your heart a *desire* to know the mysteries of God. To lead the Church tomorrow, you must prepare today. Train hard, boys, and I promise you that you will live to be grateful that you made the effort to prepare.

Now, you young men, may I speak a few words to your bishops and stake presidents? You can listen if you'd like to. The past four days we have enjoyed historic meetings with the mission presidents and their wives from every mission in the Church, along with all of the Regional Representatives, and the stake presidents. We have received instruction from the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, and others. We were instructed to *call* every worthy boy to serve a mission. I encourage each of you bishops in the Church to review carefully the roster of boys who are old enough to serve missions so you can extend a call to every one. Don't miss one!

I would like to share with you a personal experience. When I served as bishop many years ago, a fine young man in our ward had fallen in love before being called to serve his mission. He made it known that he was going to get married and would not be available for missionary service. I worried how I was going to approach this young man because I felt an urgency as his bishop to see that he served our Father in Heaven as a missionary. When I invited Doug into my office, I approached him in a different way than I had ever approached a prospective missionary. I was prompted to say, "Doug, the Lord

wants you to serve a mission." Doug said he was not going to serve a mission because he was going to be married. I asked him to get together with his sweetheart and his parents and to fast and to pray. I asked him to come back within a week and tell me what he was going to do about the fact that he had been called to serve the Lord.

One week later, with a great deal of emotion, Doug said to me, "Bishop, we did what you asked us to do. I cannot ignore a call from the Lord. I *desire* to serve. How do I proceed?" Doug served his mission. In fact, he served as a counselor to his mission president. Upon returning, he married his sweetheart. She waited for him—that is not always the case, and it may not always be best that they do—but in Doug's case it worked out. He has since served as a bishop and presently serves as the first counselor in his stake presidency. His mission was one of the most important training periods of his life.

Prepare to serve

May we ask all priesthood leaders, especially you fathers, to help prepare your sons. Prepare them both spiritually and temporally, to look and to act as servants of the Lord.

Now you fine young men of the Aaronic Priesthood, remember: the Aaronic Priesthood is a preparatory priesthood. You are in training. Train hard. Get ready. The Lord needs you. The world needs you. The Church needs you.

A wonderful chorus of missionaries sang to us yesterday these words:

"Called to serve him, heav'nly
King of glory,
Chosen e'er to witness for his
name; . . .

Onward, ever onward, as we glory
in his name."

("Called to Serve," *Sing with Me*, B-85.)

May God bless all of you young men to desire to serve him is my

humble prayer. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have just heard Elder M. Russell Ballard, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Praise to the Man."

The choir and congregation sang "Praise to the Man."

President Hinckley

I note that most of you in the balcony have taken off your coats. It is warm. If any of the others of you feel to shed your coats, you may feel at liberty to do so. We would like you to be as comfortable as possible.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Marvin J. Ashton, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, following which we shall enjoy seeing and hearing a visual and audio clip featuring President Spencer W. Kimball. This consists of clips taken from previous talks given at this pulpit at past general priesthood meetings.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

President Kimball: true disciple of Christ

Each time I listen to the voice and words of President Spencer W. Kimball, my testimony that he is indeed a living prophet is reaffirmed with great impact. I bear you my special witness at the outset to that great reality and truth. Through him we have been blessed with continuous guidance and direction in the ways of the Lord. By his example we have learned how to live the Christlike life. From him we have learned the meaning of endurance.

Day after day, trial after trial, President Kimball has set his goals and moved forward and upward, becoming a true disciple of Christ.

We as members of the Church of Jesus Christ have a prophet who has shown us by his daily living the formula for success. By sharing with you tonight some personal experiences I have had with President Kimball, I hope I can encourage all of us to look to his life for inspiration as we set our goals.

President Kimball: minister and servant

When I was ordained an Apostle, Spencer W. Kimball was President of the Council of the Twelve. I remember his saying to me, "Marvin, I am Acting President of the Twelve. Harold B. Lee is President of the Twelve. As long as he is serving as a counselor in the First Presidency and is my senior, I am merely Acting President." He wanted me to understand that. He has always been careful never to assume any role that was not rightfully his. He was indicating also his respect for President Lee and at the same time teaching me. He has always applied Matthew 23:12—"He that shall humble himself shall be exalted."

After one of our lengthy temple meetings, when I had been a member of the Twelve for only a short time, President Kimball took hold of my arm and said, "Will you wait just a few minutes? I want to talk to you." Of course I waited. When we were alone he said, "I don't want the First Presidency or the other members of the Twelve to know,

but I don't feel very good today. Will you please give me a blessing?"

This thought came to my mind immediately: "Here am I, the least and last to be ordained, and he is asking me to give him a blessing."

I was very nervous; I do not remember all that I said, but I shall never forget how pleased I was that he thought enough of me to ask for my assistance. He was asking the newest member to give him a blessing when he could have asked any of the First Presidency or other Apostles.

Why do I love this great man? In his hour of need he was exhibiting love and confidence in me. He has learned the art of making people feel good about themselves. By his actions we know he loves us. "But whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" (Matthew 20:26-27).

Puts himself above no man

Let me tell you another incident that indicates President Kimball looks upon himself as our minister and servant.

A few years ago I was in my office about 6:30 A.M. I am mentioning that so you will know I was there early—it takes some of us a little longer. My phone rang, and as I answered it, I recognized that special voice that said, "Marvin."

I replied, "Yes, President Kimball."

He said, "Could I come up and see you?"

His office is on the first floor, and mine is on the third. (That is the only time I am ever higher than he is.)

My reply was, "President Kimball, if you want to see me, I will be right down."

He then responded with, "Would you do that?"

He did not exhibit any authority. There was no feeling of "Do you know who this is?" or "You'd better come." He courteously asked, "Could I come

up and see you?" When I told him I would be right down, his voice reflected gratitude as he said, "Will you do that?"

I went to his office in a hurry. After we shook hands, he handed me a letter and said, "How would you answer this?"

I read it quickly and said, "President Kimball, you might want to consider this approach," and told him what I thought.

"I agree," he said. "That is my thinking also." He shook my hand, and I was on my way, reflecting about a prophet who asks for counsel and puts himself above no man.

Lesson in counseling, interviewing, and kindness

Another lesson was learned from President Kimball as we visited a prison together.

One day a few years ago President Kimball said, "Marvin, I'd like you to take me to visit the Utah State Prison." He remembered that when I was in charge of the Social Services programs for the Church I had had the responsibility for prisoners.

I said, "President Kimball, I don't want you to go to the prison. I am afraid for your safety. There are some men confined there who would do anything to attract attention by embarrassing, injuring, or insulting you. I just don't want you to go."

That was once when I felt I couldn't grant his request. He took my advice, and we didn't go.

However, about two months later, D. Arthur Haycock, President Kimball's personal secretary, phoned me and said, "Elder Ashton, President Kimball wants you to go to the Utah State Prison with him." The next day we went. My delaying tactic had only lasted a few weeks.

I called Warden Morris and said, "May we come and visit you? We do not want anyone to know of our visit. Could we just meet in your office and not go through the minimum, medium,

or maximum security places? Perhaps you could invite two inmates with whom President Kimball could visit in your office. Later we could look around the grounds and talk with others." He agreeably made the arrangements.

We traveled to the institution, where about a thousand people are incarcerated. Soon into the warden's office came two prisoners. I was impressed with how hard the convicts looked—how mean, how sullen. After they were introduced and sat down, I broke the silence by saying to President Kimball, "Would you like to say a few words to these two men?"

He said, "Yes."

They both looked steadily down at the floor. President Kimball waited, and finally when one raised his head up a little, President Kimball looked directly into his eyes.

Let me just pause for a minute and set the stage. One prisoner had been convicted for murder and the other for manslaughter. Here is a prophet. Here were two hardened criminals. What do you say? What do you do? Do you say, "Aren't you ashamed of yourselves? What a waste for you to be in such a place as this"? Those are things that might cross your mind and mine.

As I mentioned, as President Kimball caught the eye of one of them, he looked at him with a penetrating stare and said, "Tell me about your mother."

This inmate looked up and told him about his mother. Tears came to his eyes as he talked in detail about his mother.

When that was over, President Kimball looked at the other one, who was now paying strict attention. He said, "Young man, tell me what your father does for a living."

The prisoner said, "I do not know where my father is. I never hear from him." And he went on and on talking openly about his family.

I won't tell you the details, but what a lesson in counseling, interviewing, and kindness was being taught by this great prophet. I learned more about

interviewing in those fifteen minutes than in any similar period in my life. No condemnation. No judging. Only displaying a real interest in the person and his circumstances.

He loves everyone

Before our interview was over, somehow the press found out that President Kimball was there. They were at the door and wanted to get into the warden's office for an interview and a picture. I remember one of the inmates said, "Mr. Kimball, could I have my picture taken with you?"

President Kimball responded with "Why don't I stand between the two of you, and we will take all three of us at once."

I did not feel very comfortable with President Kimball standing between those two men in this setting. I had the responsibility for his safety. I had tried to talk him out of it. But he is a disciple of Christ and holds on to the words of God; "I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: . . . Naked, and ye clothed me: . . . I was in prison, and ye came unto me" (Matthew 25:35-36).

After the pictures were taken, President Kimball looked at one prisoner and then at the other and said, "Thank you for letting me have my picture taken with you." Is there any doubt we love him? He loves everyone. He teaches us the real meaning of Matthew 22:37-40:

"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

"This is the first and great commandment.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

"On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Pray to understand enemies

Each week after the Twelve and First Presidency have met in the temple

to take care of current business, we take turns reporting where we have been and what has been accomplished in the way of stake divisions or reorganizations, or missions visited, regional conferences attended, and so on. One week I remember among the Twelve we had been almost everywhere around the globe. President Kimball listened to all of us and then gave his report: "I spent Saturday and Sunday visiting the sick and the homebound." The rest of us who thought we had had a busy and productive weekend realized that a man of God had again taught us a lesson.

Has our prophet taught us anything through his prayers? Very often the Twelve and the First Presidency pray together. When President Kimball takes his turn to be voice, he generally includes this phrase in his prayers: "Bless our enemies. Help us to understand them, and them to understand us." He doesn't ask for vengeance or retaliation, just for understanding so differences can be resolved. Perhaps family differences and neighborhood problems could be resolved if we would follow our prophet's example and pray for patience and forgiveness.

President Kimball once said, just after he became President of the Church, "I thought I knew how to pray before, but now I am really learning how to pray." A man of God knows he cannot reach goals alone. He knows that guidance and help are available through prayer.

Unconditional love

I share these personal experiences to illustrate lessons I have learned from a disciple of Christ. I only do so to encourage myself and you, particularly the Aaronic Priesthood members, to select the traits I have illustrated and incorporate them into your lives. We should list our goals and then work on them consistently, until little by little they become part of us.

This beloved prophet of ours doesn't speak to us much anymore. He has already given us more direction

than most of us are following. So often we are reminded of the sign on his desk that says, "Do it." Yet are we doing all we can to live productive, spiritual lives, with love of God and neighbor at the center of our plans and actions? Have we learned the power and the need of unconditional love? He even shows love to his enemies and many become friends. He has no time for envy, hate, ridicule, or evil speaking. Do we?

Enduring and persistence

Two or three weeks ago this great teacher gave me motivation to try even harder to follow his example. Each Thursday morning after the Twelve have met for two hours, we are joined by the First Presidency to take care of our joint business. When President Kimball comes into the room on the fourth floor of the temple, one by one we go by and shake his hand.

President Kimball, now worn from long years of service, has a difficult time seeing, hearing, and speaking, so when it was my turn, I said, "President Kimball, I am Marvin Ashton." He took my hand, paused, and then finally said softly, "Marv Ashton, I love you." That is all he said to me. What else do I need? I can now go into the world and accomplish all of my assignments more effectively when I realize President Kimball trusts me and loves me.

When I am asked, "What does President Kimball say when he is with you and the others in the temple?" I say, "That is not too important. The thing that is important is that he is there." Despite pain, discomfort, and a tired, worn body, he is there. From him we learn what enduring and persistence are all about.

The fiftieth section of the Doctrine and Covenants gives, I believe, an accurate description of President Spencer W. Kimball: "He that is ordained of God and sent forth, the same is appointed to be the greatest, notwith-

standing he is the least and the servant of all" (D&C 50:26).

Men of God

Now a great counselor is sitting at the side of this wonderful prophet. To him President Kimball has delegated much responsibility. With wisdom and judgment President Gordon B. Hinckley bears a tremendous load as he carries on the myriad tasks the prophet needs to have completed. Week after week President Hinckley sits at the side of the President in the temple, deferring to him, respecting his wishes, carrying on the daily responsibilities of the First Presidency, never assuming authority or becoming obtrusive. There is a

mighty bond between President Kimball, President Romney, and President Hinckley. As they serve together each one teaches us what it means to be united and to be men of God.

I leave you my witness that President Spencer W. Kimball is a prophet, preserved in this day for purposes and occasions such as this. We can reflect, ponder, and be grateful the Lord has given us an extended period in which to enjoy his influence. His life motivates us to set our goals and make our plans to become disciples of Christ such as he. May God help us as priesthood bearers to follow his example, heed his priceless counsel, and share his wisdom and love in our homes, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

A videotape presentation followed featuring these extracts from talks given by President Kimball in past general conference priesthood sessions

Extension of family life

"I am happy to be with you here tonight in this priesthood meeting. It is a particular delight to us to see the fathers and their sons coming early to the Saturday night priesthood meeting—many of them an hour or two early to be sure of a good seat, and thousands of others, fathers and sons, hurrying to the Tabernacle and to the numerous stake and ward buildings all over the country. This is a delightful extension of our family life which we celebrate and love and which the world is beginning to recognize as a basic family pattern—to have fathers and sons together.

"We are grateful to have you present, and our appreciation for you is great and our affection sincere" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1974, p. 124; or *Ensign*, May 1974, p. 86).

Stretch souls in service

"We are concerned, brethren, with our need to provide continually significant opportunities for our young men to stretch their souls in service. Young men do not usually become inactive in the Church because they are given too many significant things to do. No young man who has really witnessed for himself that the gospel works in the lives of the people will walk away from his duties in the kingdom and leave them undone" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1976, p. 68; or *Ensign*, May 1976, p. 45).

Make certain decisions only once

"It is most appropriate for Aaronic Priesthood youth, as well as Melchizedek Priesthood men, to quietly, and with determination, set some serious personal goals in which they will seek to improve by selecting certain things that they will accomplish within a specified period of time. Even if the priesthood holders of our Heavenly Father are headed in the right direction, if

they are men without momentum they will have too little influence. You are the leaven on which the world depends; you must use your powers to stop a drifting and aimless world.

"We hope we can help our young men and young women to realize, even sooner than they do now, that they need to make certain decisions only once. I have mentioned at this pulpit before some determinations made early in my life, which decisions were such a help to me because I did not have to remake those decisions perpetually. We can push some things away from us once and have done with them! We can make a single decision about certain things that we will incorporate in our lives and then make them ours—without having to brood and redecide a hundred times what it is we will do and what we will not do" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1976, p. 69; or *Ensign*, May 1976, p. 46).

Promises to self and Heavenly Father

"Let me tell you of one of the goals that I made when I was still but a lad. When I heard a Church leader from Salt Lake City tell us at conference that we should read the scriptures, and I recognized that I had never read the Bible, that very night at the conclusion of that very sermon I walked to my home a block away and climbed up in my little attic room in the top of the house and lighted a little coal-oil lamp that was on the little table, and I read the first chapters of Genesis. A year later I closed the Bible, having read every chapter in that big and glorious book.

"I found that this Bible that I was reading had in it 66 books, and then I was nearly dissuaded when I found that it had in it 1,189 chapters, and then I also found that it had 1,519 pages. It was formidable, but I knew if others did it that I could do it.

"I found that there were certain parts that were hard for a 14-year-old boy to understand. There were some pages that were not especially interest-

ing to me, but when I had read the 66 books and 1,189 chapters and 1,519 pages, I had a glowing satisfaction that I had made a goal and that I had achieved it.

"Now I am not telling you this story to boast; I am merely using this as an example to say that if I could do it by coal-oil light, you can do it by electric light. I have always been glad I read the Bible from cover to cover. . . .

"And I remember that without being pressured by anyone, I made up my mind while still a little boy that I would never break the Word of Wisdom. I knew where it was written and I knew in a general way what the Lord had said, and I knew that when the Lord said it, it was pleasing unto him for men to abstain from all these destructive elements and that the thing I wanted to do was to please my Heavenly Father. And so I made up my mind firmly and solidly that I would never touch those harmful things. Having made up my mind fully and unequivocally, I found it not too difficult to keep the promise to myself and to my Heavenly Father" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1974, p. 126; or *Ensign*, May 1974, p. 88).

Plan your life

"To be sure your life will be full and abundant, you must plan your life. What you plan now when you are deacons can assure you an abundant life. Have you already been saving money dedicated to your missions?

"You may not yet have chosen your business or profession or life's work, but there are many generalities which you can already set up in your lives, even though you may not yet know whether you will be a lawyer or a doctor or a teacher or an engineer. There are decisions you should already have made or now be making. What are you going to do in the years between now and your marriage? And what will you do about your marriage?

"You can determine now that you will be the most faithful deacon and teacher and priest. You can decide that

now with an irrevocable covenant. You can be a good student; you can use your time properly and efficiently. All the balance of your life you can be happy if you use your time well.

"You can make up your mind this early that you will fill an honorable mission when you reach mission age, and to that end that you will now earn money and save it and invest it for your mission, that you will study and serve and use every opportunity to properly prepare your mind and heart and soul for that glorious period of your life" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1974; p. 125; or *Ensign*, May 1974, p. 86).

Responsibility and opportunity

"And since you will now establish your goal to fill a mission, remember it costs money to go to the various parts of the world and preach the gospel. Remember, then, it is your privilege now to begin to save your money.

"Every time money comes into your hands, through gifts or earnings, set at least a part of it away in a savings account to be used for your mission. Every boy would like to be independent and furnish his own funds for his mission, rather than to ask his parents to do that for him. Every boy in every country in all the world who has been baptized and received the Holy Ghost will have the responsibility of bearing the message of the gospel to the people of the world. And this is also your opportunity, and it will contribute greatly toward your greatness" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1974, p. 117; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1974, p. 83).

Free agency and mission program

"The question has been often asked, Is the mission program one of compulsion? And the answer, of course, is no. Everyone is given his free agency. . . . He *should* pay his tithing, like he *should* attend his meetings, like he *should* keep his life clean and free from the ugliness of the world and plan a celestial marriage in the temple of the

Lord" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1974, p. 125; or *Ensign*, May 1974, p. 87).

You, your attitudes, your responses

"I remind you young men that regardless of your present age, you are building your life; it will be cheap and shoddy or it will be valuable and beautiful; it will be full of constructive activities or it can be destructive; it can be full of joy and happiness, or it can be full of misery. It all depends upon you and your attitudes, for your altitude, or the height you climb, is dependent upon your attitude or your response to situations" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1974, p. 112; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1974, p. 80).

Know by the Spirit

"And you, my fine young men, must not be just average. Your lives must be clean and free from all kinds of evil thoughts or acts—no lying, no theft, no anger, no faithlessness, no failure to do that which is right, no sexual sins of any kind, at any time.

"You know what is right and what is wrong. You have all received the Holy Ghost following your baptism. You need no one to brand the act or thought as wrong or right. You know by the Spirit. You are painting your own picture, carving your own statue. It is up to you to make it acceptable.

"May God bless you, our beloved young men. I know your Heavenly Father is your true friend. Everything he asks you to do is right and will bring blessings to you and make you manly and strong" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1974, p. 118; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1974, p. 83).

Need not wait for blessings

"The youth of the Church should realize that they do not need to be old men, long experienced, to receive the blessings of the Church. Joseph Smith

was only 14 when he had the Vision, 25 when the Church was organized, 18 when he met Moroni, 24 when he got the plates, and 39 when he was martyred.

"Thomas B. Marsh was 31, David W. Patten 30, about the time they became apostles. These were all young men, so to speak.

"Brigham Young was 28, Heber C. Kimball 28, Orson Hyde only 25, William E. McLellan 24, Parley P. Pratt 23, Luke Johnson, 22, William Smith 19, Orson Pratt 18, John F. Boynton 18, and Lyman E. Johnson 18, when the Church was organized on April 6, 1830. And these men, many of them, were of the apostleship in 1835 when the Council of the Twelve was organized. All were still young men when they were deprived of Joseph.

"They were able to inspire boys. They became great missionaries. You young boys need not wait to be great. You can be superior missionaries, strong young men, great companions, and happy, trusted Church leaders. You need not wait until tomorrow.

"The Lord bless you as you grow year by year to receive the inspiration

of the Lord to be able to pass on the glorious blessings of the gospel.

"And this, my dear beloved brethren, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1976, p. 71; or *Ensign*, May 1976, p. 47).

President Hinckley

Wasn't that wonderful? Before giving my closing remarks, we note that the nationwide Tabernacle Choir radio broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 tomorrow morning. Those desiring to attend must be in their seats before 9:15 A.M.

As you leave this meeting tonight, we remind you to obey traffic rules, to use caution, and to be courteous in driving.

The music has been furnished by a priesthood choir from Brigham Young University.

We are grateful to these brethren for this lovely and stirring music. Following my remarks, the choir will sing "Rise Up, O Men of God!" Following the music, Elder Ronald E. Poelman of the First Quorum of the Seventy will offer the benediction.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My brethren, I pray for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It is almost anticlimactic to speak after what we have heard. This has been a wonderful meeting, beginning with the opening music of the choir singing Parley P. Pratt's great plea, "Come, Oh Thou King of Kings," followed by the beautiful prayer of Bishop Simpson.

President Benson's remarks touched each of us. I think we will all be prone to be a little more obedient as a result of what he said.

Example to all young men

I am confident you boys were greatly interested in the remarks of Peter Vidmar. What a remarkable thing it is to be the very best in all the world in something. It is a tremendous achievement to have won two gold medals and one silver in the Olympics. Peter missed winning his third gold only by .025 of a point. That says that he is very good, and it also says that the margin between number one and number two can be ever so narrow, as he indicated.

Peter weighs only 130 pounds. He is twenty-three years of age. He started

with gymnastics at the age of eleven. He set his eye on the Olympics and prepared for eleven years for that great international contest. He was born in the Church and married in the temple. He is a member of the UCLA ward of the Los Angeles California Stake. He served a stake mission. In his manner of living, in his speech, in his activity, he is an example to all young men. Thank you, Peter, for being with us this evening and for what you have said.

I wish we might have had more time to listen to Brother Ballard. He manages the Missionary Department of the Church. I hope he has stirred within every young man an increased desire to fill a mission. He is a tremendous example of a great and willing servant. When we asked him to go to Ethiopia to investigate the situation there first-hand, along with Brother Pace, he said promptly, "When do you want me to leave?" I said, "How about tomorrow?" He said, "I'll go up today and get my yellow fever shots and be ready to go." There were no questions asked; there was no delay. I shall make further reference tomorrow to what he said tonight concerning what he and Brother Pace found there.

We have been lifted by Elder Ashton's wonderful tribute to President Kimball. I hope that all of us have stored in our memories that which he said and that each will take direction therefrom.

To please his Heavenly Father

And now, what an inspiring and delightful experience to hear again as he spoke in the days of his great vitality, our beloved leader, President Kimball. His words have stirred within us anew a resolution to lengthen our stride and quicken our pace in the awesome responsibility to carry the gospel to the world while strengthening the membership wherever there may be weakness. It is easy to see why President Kimball is universally loved. He has been a leader rather than a commander, and I think there is a difference

between the two. He himself has done that which he has asked others to do and has done it with greater devotion and energy.

I would like to use as a theme for a few minutes some of the words that all of you heard tonight from him. You will recall that in talking of his life as a boy he said that he made up his mind that he wanted to please his Heavenly Father. Now that's a very simple statement. Anybody can make a statement like that, but what a tremendous effect that resolution had upon his life. And what a tremendous effect a similar resolution would have upon the lives of each of us—so to live as to please our Heavenly Father.

If this were the measure by which we gauged all of our activity, what a difference it would make. Think of what that would mean in your own life. Each time we planned a program, each time we became involved in an activity, each time we mapped a course in our lives, if we applied the gauge, "Will this please my Heavenly Father?" we would be spared so much of pain and regret and enjoy so much of success and achievement that it would be wonderful.

A man of integrity, ambition, virtue

Think of what that resolution, made while a boy, did for Spencer Kimball. It made of him a man of integrity in the business life of his community. It made of him a young man of ambition in preparing himself for his future. It made of him a young man of virtue, a husband and father possessed of love and compassion, the servant in whom the Lord found no guile, a prophet to the people.

"I wanted to do those things which would please my Heavenly Father," he said. There is nothing grand or heroic about that statement. It is simply an expression of attitudes: "As [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7).

I wish I might have the capacity to burn into the consciousness of every man and boy within the sound of my voice those words of resolution made by President Kimball when he was a boy.

To please your Heavenly Father?

What would your Father in Heaven have you do that would please Him? First, you boys. He would have you live honestly. That means no cheating in your schoolwork. No boy anxious to please his Heavenly Father would fail to take advantage of educational opportunities. Through words of modern revelation the Lord has laid upon us responsibilities to seek learning "by study and also by faith" (D&C 88:118). The Lord expects each of us to live productive and useful lives. Youth is the season of preparation, and we will please him if we apply ourselves to train our minds and hands that we may make a more substantial contribution to the society of which we are a part.

No boy anxious to please his Heavenly Father could belittle or degrade a daughter of our Father in Heaven through immorality. He would realize that to degrade or dishonor a girl would be to insult her Father in Heaven who loves her and who expects great and good things of her.

In the mission field

Every young man seeking to please his Heavenly Father would be willing and anxious to give approximately a tithe of his life at the age of nineteen or twenty to go into the world to preach the gospel. He would save his money for this; he would plan his life's program around it; he would keep himself physically, mentally, and morally alert, as well as spiritually strong, to be prepared for this great and sacred responsibility.

While in the mission field he would be "anxiously engaged" in the work of the Lord (see D&C 58:27),

willing to give freely of his time, his talents, his strengths, and his substance to bless the lives of others. He would guard against wasting his time or diminishing his effectiveness through engaging in activities that might in any way be out of harmony with his great and sacred call.

As a husband

Having served an honorable mission, he would return home, desiring to complete his education and looking forward to finding his companion to love and cherish for eternity. Trying to please his Heavenly Father, he would see that his courtship is kept unsullied. Again trying to please his Heavenly Father, he would be married worthily in the way which God has prepared for those who love him and those who desire his richest blessings—that is, in His holy house under the authority of His everlasting priesthood.

As a husband, he would live with respect for his wife, standing side by side with her, never belittling her nor demeaning her, but rather encouraging her in the continued development of her talents and in the church activities which are available to her. He would regard her as the greatest treasure of his life, one with whom he can share his concerns, his innermost thoughts, his ambitions and hopes. There would never be in that home any "unrighteous dominion" of husband over wife (see D&C 121:37, 39), no assertion of superiority, no assertion of authority, but rather an expression in living which says that these two are equally yoked.

No man can please his Heavenly Father who fails to respect the daughters of God. No man can please his Heavenly Father who fails to magnify his wife and companion, and nurture and build and strengthen and share with her.

Relationship of Sister Kimball to President Kimball

It has been a wonderful thing to see Sister Kimball in her relationship to

President Kimball. She is a woman of learning, a woman who reads much, a woman who is constantly refining her talents, a woman who loves the Lord and serves in His kingdom—a woman who supports and sustains, loves and encourages her husband and their children. And he, throughout his married life, has encouraged and sustained her, has relied upon her, has shared with her in times of sorrow and rejoicing, in seasons of stress and ease, in sickness and in health. They have worked together, they have prayed together, they have sorrowed together, they have stood side by side in a relationship that becomes an example to the entire Church. He has never lost sight of that boyhood resolution to do that which would please his Heavenly Father.

Wife and child abuse

Wife abuse is totally inconsistent with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Child abuse is an affront to our Father in Heaven. As President Harold B. Lee was wont to remind us, the greatest work that any of us will ever do will be within the walls of our own homes. A father who wishes to please his Heavenly Father will govern his family in a spirit of example and love.

There appears to be a plague of child abuse spreading across the world. Perhaps it has always been with us but has not received the attention it presently receives. I am glad there is a hue and cry going up against this terrible evil, too much of which is found among our own. Fathers, you cannot abuse your little ones without offending God. Any man involved in an incestuous relationship is unworthy to hold the priesthood. He is unworthy to hold membership in the Church and should be dealt with accordingly. Any man who beats or in other ways abuses his children will be held accountable before the great judge of us all. If there be any within the sound of my voice who are guilty of such practices, let them repent forthwith, make amends where possible, develop within themselves

that discipline which can curb such evil practices, plead with the Lord for forgiveness, and resolve within their hearts henceforth to walk with clean hands.

Lift and strengthen others

How beautiful is that home where lives a man of godly manner, who loves those for whose nurture he is responsible, who stands before them as an example of integrity and goodness, who teaches industry and loyalty, not spoiling his children by indulging their every wish, but rather setting before them a pattern of work and service which will underpin their lives forever. How fortunate is the man whose wife radiates a spirit of love, of compassion, of order, of quiet beneficence, whose children show appreciation one for another, who honor and respect their parents, who counsel with them and take counsel from them. Such home life is within the reach of all who have cultivated in their hearts a resolution to do that which will please their Father in Heaven.

It is so even with community effort. Those who love Him will seek to do that which will encourage and uphold community standards which will create and maintain an environment of culture, of growth, and of peaceful relationships. Let us never forget that we are all sons and daughters of God and that if we are to please our Eternal Father, we must work to lift and strengthen his children and the communities in which we all live together.

One who seeks to please his Heavenly Father will serve the needs of our Father's kingdom. This Church is a part of His divine plan. It is the kingdom of God in the earth. Its work is important. Its work is necessary to the accomplishment of the eternal purposes of our Father. If each of us is to please our Father in Heaven, we must be responsive to the needs of His kingdom. We must be willing to work wherever we are called to work and to develop our talents so that our work will be more effective in

reaching out to those who are not members of the Church or those who are inactive in the Church. We must be diligent in carrying forward the great work of salvation for the dead and in every other way giving of our strength and talent and substance to move forward and strengthen the Church. This may involve some sacrifice, yes, but with every sacrifice comes a blessing.

Simple words with power

Mine has been the privilege these past two or three months of interviewing and extending calls to fifty-eight men to serve as mission presidents. What a gratifying and inspiring experience this has been. Each of these men is one who is carrying substantial responsibility in business or professional service, who has many concerns and interests demanding attention. But without exception, in every case, the response has been, "If I can help the work of the Lord, that is what I want to do. If the Lord is extending a call, I am ready to leave." Sometimes after such interviews, tears have welled in my eyes as I have reflected on the great faith of so many who, at the call of the Church, are willing to set aside every other interest out of a desire to please our Heavenly Father.

The remarkable and wonderful thing is that although they give up much

to go, as everyone can testify when he returns home, they gain so very much that is unique and wonderful. They all come back saying there is no experience like it, and they would not trade it for any other on earth. It is so with any service we do as an expression of love for our Father in Heaven. I repeat, these are very simple words which we heard President Kimball express tonight. They were spoken by him when he was a boy. But what remarkable power there lies within them to stir us to greater, more Godlike endeavor.

I want to suggest them to every boy and man within the sound of my voice—"I will try to do that which will please my Heavenly Father." I do not hesitate to promise that if we will do so our lives will be the richer, the more purposeful, the more satisfying. Our homes will be happier, and one day in the life to come we shall hear from Him whom we have served, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matthew 25:21). For this I humbly pray in behalf of each of us, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

The choir sang "Rise Up, O Men of God."

The benediction was offered by Elder Ronald E. Poelman.

SECOND DAY MORNING MEETING

FOURTH SESSION

The fourth session of the general conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 7, 1985. President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger directing and John Longhurst at the organ.

Prior to the opening of the session, the choir sang "Rejoice, the Lord Is King" without announcement.

President Hinckley made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

On this beautiful Easter morning we extend a special welcome to all gathered in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on Temple Square in this, the fourth gen-

eral session of the 155th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We are particularly grateful for the presence of President Spencer W. Kimball at this session of the conference. We are also delighted to have with us President Marion G. Romney. We excuse Elder Paul H. Dunn of the First Quorum of the Seventy who because of illness is unable to meet with us this morning; otherwise, I think all General Authorities are present.

The significance of this day reminds us of the duties resting on those who have accepted the Savior and who have been baptized into his Church, to honor and to love him, to keep his commandments, and to reflect in our lives the noble qualities of character which he exhibited during his mortal ministry and which he has enjoined upon us by commandment.

We acknowledge those tuned to this conference by radio, television, or cable, those who are seated in the overflow congregation in the Assembly Hall where Elders Marion D. Hanks and F. Burton Howard preside, and those participating through satellite transmission assembled in over seven hundred and fifty stake centers in the

United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders, and officers and members of the Church from many lands who have assembled to worship and to counsel together in this conference.

The Tabernacle Choir under the direction of Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger with John Longhurst at the organ is providing the music for this session.

The choir opened these services by singing "Rejoice, the Lord Is King" and will now sing "I Believe in Christ"; words written by Elder Bruce R. McConkie.

Following the music of the choir, Elder Robert E. Wells, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "I Believe in Christ."

Elder Robert E. Wells offered the invocation.

President Gordon B. Hinckley spoke without announcement.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Mortal death and immortal life

A few days before last Christmas a terrible tragedy occurred at one of the large coal mines in central Utah. Twenty-seven miners lost their lives when fire engulfed the long underground slopes and shafts. Many of these were young men with young wives and young children. The hearts of thousands over the world were touched by the suffering of loved ones left behind.

I met many of these. I spoke with them. I joined with them in a memorial service. There were tears, with much

of weeping. There was an overwhelming feeling of loneliness as widows, with children to feed and clothe and educate, looked into the bleakness of the future. Our tears flowed with theirs. But shining through all of this was a faith transcendent that, as surely as there had been mortal death, there will be immortal life; and as certainly as there had been separation, there will be reunion. This is the faith which comes of Christ, who brought to all the promise of immortality.

Christ opened gates of salvation

My beloved brethren and sisters, what a glorious day is Easter! This is the day when we, with Christian people everywhere, celebrate the most significant event in human history—the resurrection from the grave, the return to life from death, of the Son of God. Among all the facts of mortality, nothing is so certain as its end. How tragic, how poignant is the sorrow of those left behind. The grieving widow, the motherless child, the father bereft and alone—all of these can speak of the wounds of parting.

But thanks be to God for the wonder and the majesty of His eternal plan. Thank and glorify His Beloved Son, who, with indescribable suffering, gave His life on Calvary's cross to pay the debt of mortal sin. He it was who, through His atoning sacrifice, broke the bonds of death and with godly power rose triumphant from the tomb. He is our Redeemer, the Redeemer of all mankind. He is the Savior of the world. He is the Son of God, the Author of our salvation.

"If a man die, shall he live again?" (Job 14:14). This is the great universal question framed by Job. He spoke what every other living man or woman has pondered. The Christ alone, of all the millions who up to that time had walked the earth, was the first to emerge from the grave triumphant, a living soul complete in spirit and body. He became "the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Corinthians 15:20). Were greater words ever spoken than those of the angel that first resurrection morn—"Why seek ye the living among the dead?" (Luke 24:5). "He is not here: for he is risen, as he said" (Matthew 28:6).

His death sealed the testimony of His love for all mankind. His resurrection opened the gates of salvation to the sons and daughters of God of all generations.

In all of history there has been no majesty like His majesty, He, the mighty Jehovah, condescended to be born to mortal life in a stable of Bethle-

hem. He grew as a boy in Nazareth and "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52).

His crucifixion

He was baptized by John in the waters of Jordan, "and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

"And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:16-17).

During the three years of His earthly ministry, He did what none other had ever done before, He taught as none other had previously taught.

Then came His time to be offered. There was the supper in the Upper Room, His last with the Twelve in mortality. As He washed their feet, He taught a lesson in humility and service they would never forget. There followed the suffering of Gethsemane, "which suffering," He said, "caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit" (D&C 19:18).

He was taken by rough and crude hands, and in the night, contrary to the law, was brought before Annas, and then Caiaphas, the wily and evil officer of the Sanhedrin. There followed early the next morning the second appearance before this scheming, vicious man. Then He was taken to Pilate, the Roman governor, to whom his wife said in warning, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man" (Matthew 27:19). The Roman, thinking to evade responsibility, sent Him to Herod, the corrupt, debauched, and evil tetrarch of Galilee. Christ was abused and beaten. His head was crowned with sharp and platted thorns, a mocking robe of purple was thrown upon His bleeding back. Again he was taken before Pilate, to whom the mob cried, "Crucify him, Crucify him" (Luke 23:21).

With stumbling steps He walked the way to Golgotha, where His

wounded body was nailed to the cross in the most inhumane and pain-ridden method of execution that sadistic minds could conjure.

Yet He cried out, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

The hours passed as His life ebbed in pain. The earth shook, the veil of the temple was rent. From His parched lips came the words, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost" (Luke 23:46).

It was over. His mortal life was finished. He had offered it as a ransom for all.

Victory over death

Gone were the hopes of those who loved Him. Forgotten were the promises He had made. His body was hurriedly but tenderly placed in a borrowed tomb on the eve of the Jewish Sabbath. That Sabbath came and went. Then, early in the morning of Sunday, Mary Magdalene and other women came to the tomb. They wondered as they hurried how the stone might be rolled from the door of the sepulchre. Arriving, they saw an angel who spoke to them: "I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said" (Matthew 28:5-6).

It had never before happened. The empty tomb was the answer to the question of the ages. Well did Paul say: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Corinthians 15:55).

The miracle of that resurrection morning, that first Easter Sunday, is a miracle for all mankind. It is the miracle of the power of God, whose Beloved Son gave His life to atone for the sins of all, a sacrifice of love for every son and daughter of God. In so doing He broke the seals of death.

All of us will die. But that will not be the end. Just as He in the spirit world taught those who once had been disobedient in the days of Noah and were capable of being taught, even so shall

each of us continue as individual personalities capable of learning and teaching and other activities.

And just as He took up His body and came forth from the tomb, even so shall all of us enjoy a reunion of body and spirit to become living souls in the day of our own resurrection.

We rejoice, therefore, as do many, and as should all mankind, when we remember the most glorious, the most comforting, the most reassuring of all events of human history—the victory over death.

Witness to reality of Resurrection

To all the world we bear solemn witness. We have read the testimony of those who participated in the experiences of those three days of pain, of sorrow, and of rejoicing. We have read of the sufferings endured by those who testified of these things and of their willingness to give their own lives rather than deny the truth of that which they had seen. We have read the testimony of those in Palestine and of those in the New World who were visited by the risen Lord. The Spirit has borne witness within our hearts concerning the truth of these testimonies.

We also have the testimony of one who, in the opening of this dispensation, spoke with the living Christ and with His Eternal Father, and who gave his own life to seal that testimony with his blood. Declared he in words of soberness:

"And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

"For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—

"That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God" (D&C 76:22-24).

In solemnity, and with understanding of the gravity of that which we

say, we add our witness to all the world of the reality of the Resurrection, that this same Jesus who rose from the grave ascended into heaven. We declare that in this dispensation of time He returned to restore to earth the pristine gospel which He had taught while walking among men, that with that restoration has come further certain witness of His reality, and has come also the holy priesthood, given to men, which is exercised in His name. This is our testimony, which we bear in the name of Jesus Christ, and we invite all men to hear and accept it.

Special fast for starving in Africa

And now, I should like to turn to another matter, dealing with an expression of the gospel of our Lord of whom we have spoken.

When the lawyer tempted Him, asking, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?"

"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

"This is the first and great commandment.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

"On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:36-40).

When hearts across the world were touched by reports of starving populations in Africa, we invited members of the Church in the United States and Canada to observe a special fast day, abstaining from two meals and giving the equivalent value, or more, to aid these famine-stricken people. We at the time asked only those in North America because of a desire to move quickly, and we felt there was not sufficient time to put in place the program elsewhere. Many of you outside North America have asked that you be given a similar opportunity, and some have responded.

The response of those who participated has been wonderful. It has been most gratifying. It was far more generous than at the regular monthly fast. We, as the trustees of your contributions, should like to give you an accounting of what we have done to date. Your contributions have reached the sum of \$6,025,656. We indicated that any money so received would be handled through organizations of demonstrated integrity. We do not have members of the Church in the areas where the need is most acute. If we were to help quickly and effectively, we had to join hands with others, and this has been a most gratifying experience. We have come to know that there are many organizations that are doing great good in stemming the tide of hunger that threatens millions in that part of the world. We have associated ourselves in this endeavor with four of these, who have been most cooperative and helpful.

Thus far we have distributed funds as follows:

American Red Cross	\$1,300,000
(for use by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International League of Red Cross)	(plus \$100,000 given earlier, making a total of \$1,400,000)
Catholic Relief Services.....	\$1,400,000
Africare	\$1,100,000
Care, Inc.....	\$ 500,000
Total committed from the special fast.....	\$4,300,000

Geographic Breakdown of Expenditures

Ethiopia	\$2,850,000
Sudan	\$ 825,000
Other African nations....	\$ 625,000
	<u>\$4,300,000</u>

As I indicated, we had previously given \$100,000, making a total of \$4,400,000.

The balance will be committed to areas where our research indicates the

greatest need, to be administered also by qualified agencies.

Aid means difference between life and death

Some few have criticized us for extending aid to those who are the victims of the policies or mismanagement of their governments. My response has been that where there is stark hunger, regardless of the cause, I will not let political considerations dull my sense of mercy or thwart my responsibility to the sons and daughters of God, wherever they may be or whatever their circumstances.

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy and Bishop Glenn L. Pace, who joined the Presiding Bishopric yesterday, have just returned from Africa, where they went out into the rural areas of Ethiopia. They saw firsthand how the funds you consecrated are literally saving the lives of many who otherwise would die of starvation, disease, and exposure. Your contributions not only have supplied food and medicine where they are so desperately needed, but your contributions also have furnished tents sufficient to put thirty thousand people under shelter from the blistering sun and the cold night winds, with blankets to comfort them. The food and other commodities are getting through to those who need them. There has been no interference with this, but only the best of cooperation.

Elder Ballard and Bishop Pace have been with these suffering people. They say they are men and women of courage and character, but they are defeated and frightened by the terrifying circumstances in which they find themselves. Their lands are dry and naked. There is neither irrigation water nor food. They wander in desperation until they and their children die unless they are fed. A little cracked wheat literally spells the difference between life and death.

Only if rains come and wells are drilled can there be long-term recovery

and sustenance. Some of our funds will be used in a joint venture relationship to drill in areas of underground water to bring land under cultivation and make it fruitful, with the hope that there may be long-term as well as short-term help for these destitute people.

Acknowledgments

I, for one, am deeply grateful for the opportunity to assist in blessing those of our Father's children in that part of the earth who are in such desperate need. I am confident that there springs up in the heart of each of you a feeling of appreciation for what has come to pass and will yet further come to pass as the result of many of our people with one heart doing so small a thing as refraining from two meals and contributing the value thereof to a common effort. Think what might happen if there were such a fast day observed across the world. No one would be hurt, and many would be helped. How grateful we are for the inspiration of the Almighty in establishing so simple, yet so effective a program for relieving want and suffering.

In the administration of African relief we have not used a single dollar for overhead, but every dollar you have contributed has gone or will go to help directly those in such urgent need, not one of whom is a member of the Church.

May I read a few lines from two letters. The first is from the chairman of Catholic Relief Services:

"I want to acknowledge the very generous contribution of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints . . . for relief efforts in Ethiopia and the Sudan. You can be sure that these funds will be put to rapid use to help alleviate the suffering that millions face in those countries.

"We are pleased to participate in an interfaith action of this kind. Such ecumenical efforts underline the compassion and concern which we hold in common when faced by such human

tragedies as well as our common commitment to positive action.

"This cooperation between us has a special character since the resources involved come directly from your individual members through a day of fasting. It is thus in a very heartening sense an example of people responding to people at a fundamental level of moral and practical concern. . . . Sincerely yours in Christ, [signed] Daniel P. Reilly, Bishop of Norwich, chairman of the board of directors"

And now from the president of the American Red Cross:

"I cannot thank you and your members in the U.S. and Canada enough for the outstanding support you have given the Red Cross relief effort in Africa. Your most recent contribution of \$800,000 brings the total donations to \$1,400,000. This support . . . has permitted us to provide 350,000 victims food for a month based upon the Red Cross estimate that \$4 a month is needed to feed a child. . . .

"In Ethiopia . . . on a daily average the Red Cross workers are feeding more than 500,000 people. . . . Red Cross assistance is being provided to the most vulnerable groups: children under 5 years of age, pregnant women, nursing mothers and the elderly. In northern Ethiopia where few other organizations are able to work, assistance is being given to the most needy.

"In neighboring Sudan the situation is deteriorating rapidly. 200,000 to 300,000 new refugees from Chad, Uganda and Ethiopia are expected by the end of May. In addition, Sudan itself is being affected by the drought with 280,000 forced to leave their homes in search of food. 15,000 children were recently found to suffer night blindness, the last step to total blindness due to poor nutrition. These children are now being fed by the Red Cross. . . .

"You may be assured the Red Cross is honored by the trust you have

placed in our relief work. *All* contributions given through the American Red Cross are used in African Famine Relief. No overhead or fund raising costs are being deducted. I know your members have sacrificed to make this relief possible. The trust of your fellowship will be honored. God bless you all. [Signed] Richard Schubert, President"

Walk in obedience and deal with mercy

As you see, we have provided immediate aid to the extent of \$4,400,000.

Thank you for what you have done. Many contributed far more than the value of two meals. You have cast bread upon the waters, and it will return to you as you experience the peace of generous hearts.

You responded in a magnificent way in sharing of your plenty with those who are destitute. We can similarly respond to a score of other challenges we face as Latter-day Saints to move forward the work of God. On this Easter morning, when we remember Him who gave His life for each of us, let us resolve, individually, to walk in obedience to the teachings and commandments of our Savior and to deal with mercy, I humbly pray as I leave with you my testimony of the divinity of this work, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

The choir will now sing "O Savior, Thou Who Wearest a Crown," following which Elder David B. Haight will address us.

The choir sang "O Savior, Thou Who Wearest a Crown."

Elder David B. Haight spoke without further announcement.

Elder David B. Haight

On this glorious Easter morning, I rejoice with you and untold millions of people throughout the world whose hearts are turned to Jesus of Nazareth. To the Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well who said, "I know that Messias cometh . . . : when he is come, he will tell us all things" came Christ's declaration, "I that speak unto thee am he" (John 4:25-26).

Many of the heavenly directed events leading up to and following the crucifixion of our Lord have been narrated by the early Apostles and other witnesses.

Jesus' burial, and guarding the tomb

According to these accounts, Joseph, a rich man from the village of Arimathea and one of the Sanhedrin, did not openly declare his belief in Jesus, as he feared the Jewish authorities. But now sorrow, as well as indignation, aroused his courage. He asked Pilate if he could take away Jesus' body. Pilate gave permission.

Nicodemus—a noble disciple who had visited Jesus at night lest someone might see them together—assisted Joseph. They wrapped Jesus' body in fine linen, together with spices, according to the Jewish custom of preparing a body for burial. They laid the body reverently in the rocky niche of a tomb in a garden that belonged to Joseph. The tomb had never been used. It was the day before the Jewish Sabbath. (See John 19:38-42.)

The next day Pilate gave permission for the tomb to be carefully guarded until the third day, so the disciples could not steal the body and then tell the people that Jesus had risen from the dead, as had been prophesied. The chief priests and Pharisees made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and leaving a guard on watch. (See Matthew 27:62-66.)

"He is not here"

Before daylight the next morning, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, having prepared fresh spices and ointments, went to the tomb of Jesus and found that the stone had been rolled away. Looking in and not finding the body, they hurried to find Peter and the Apostles and told them what they had found. Peter and John hastened at once to the tomb. John outran his older companion. Stooping down, he gazed in silent wonder into the empty tomb. Entering, Peter saw the burial clothes lying where the body of Jesus once lay. And then John followed him. And in spite of fear, there dawned upon them the hope, which later would become an absolute knowledge, that Christ had indeed risen, but as yet no one had seen him. The two wondering Apostles returned to their brethren.

Mary stayed at the tomb and was grieving at the entrance when someone approached. Thinking it was the keeper of the garden, she asked where he had laid her Lord. Jesus said to her, "Mary."

Jesus himself was standing before her, but he did not appear as she had known him; he was now risen and glorified. She then recognized our Lord and must have attempted to embrace him, for he said, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."

Filled with amazement, she hastened to obey and repeated that glorious message which would give hope through all future ages and to which she added her personal declaration that she had seen the Lord. (See John 20:1-18.)

Later, women carrying spices for the final preparation of the body for burial looked in the tomb and witnessed angels, who said, "Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified. Why seek ye the living among the dead? He

is not here, but is risen" (Mark 16:6; Luke 24:6)

The angels told the women to go and notify the disciples, but the men believed them not. (See Mark 16:7; Luke 24:9-11.)

On the road to Emmaus

The Gospel according to Luke relates that on that same day two of Jesus' followers were on their way to a village called Emmaus, about eight miles from Jerusalem, and they were discussing with sad and anxious hearts the things that had happened in the past two days.

As they walked and conversed, a stranger joined them and walked along with them. Even though this stranger was indeed the resurrected Christ, they did not recognize him.

Gospel writers indicate their conversation went something like this:

Jesus asked them, "What are you talking about, as you walk along?"

They were surprised and said, "Are you the only visitor in Jerusalem that does not know what has been happening here these last few days?"

"What things?" Jesus asked.

"The things that happened to Jesus of Nazareth. This man was a prophet and was considered by God and by all the people to be powerful in everything he said and did. Our chief priests and rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and he was crucified. We had hoped that he would be the one who was going to set Israel free.

"And besides, today is the third day since it happened. Some of our women went to the tomb," they continued, "but could not find his body. They came to us saying they had seen a vision of angels, who told them that he is risen. So some of us went to the tomb and found it even as the women said, but we did not see him."

Then the stranger said to them, "How foolish you are, to be so slow to believe all that the prophets have said. Was it not necessary for Christ to suffer these things and to enter into his glory?" And Jesus explained, as they

walked, what was said about himself in the scriptures, beginning with Moses and the writings of all of the prophets.

As they came near the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going further, but they persuaded him to stay, saying, "Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent."

So he stayed with them. As he ate the simple meal with them, he took the bread and blessed it; then he broke the bread and gave it to them. As he did this, their eyes were opened, and they recognized the Lord; and then he vanished from their sight.

They said in amazement to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us when he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?"

They hurried back to Jerusalem, where they found ten of the Apostles and other disciples gathered together, with the doors closed for fear of the Jews. (See John 20:19.) They declared, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon."

The two men then explained what had happened on the road and how they had recognized the Lord when he broke the bread.

Appeared to Apostles

While the two men were telling them this, suddenly the Lord himself stood in the midst of them and said, "Peace be unto you."

They were terrified and supposed that they were seeing a spirit, but he said to them, "Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?"

"Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."

He showed them his hands and his feet. They still could not believe as they were so full of joy and wonderment, so he asked them, "Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and . . . honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them."

Then he said to them, "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me."

Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures and said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." And then he reminded them, "Ye are witnesses of these things." (See Luke 24:13-48.)

One of the Twelve, named Thomas, was not with them when Jesus came, so the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." Thomas said to them, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe."

A week later the disciples were again gathered together indoors, and Thomas was with them. The doors were locked, but Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be unto you." Then he said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach thither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing."

I have often pictured in my own mind the skeptical Thomas' depth of remorse that must have been burning within his soul as his doubting heart, now purified, attempted a reply to his Lord.

Thomas' only answer unto him was, "My Lord and my God."

And Jesus said unto him, "Thomas, because thou has seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." (See John 20:25-29.)

Perhaps no clearer declaration of fact has ever been made than those which tell of the literal resurrection of Christ. The record of appearances to the Apostles during the forty days following his resurrection—as a group or

separately, to teach them "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3)—leaves no cause for doubt. John informs us that "there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written, . . . even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (John 21:25).

Appeared on Western Hemisphere

Shortly after Jesus' appearance to the disciples on the Eastern Hemisphere, he appeared to the Nephites on the Western Hemisphere. God himself introduced his Son to the multitude: "Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name—hear ye him" (3 Nephi 11:7).

"The people beheld a Man, clothed in a white robe, who descended and stood among them. He spake, saying: 'Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world; and behold, I am the light and the life of the world; and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world, in the which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning.' [3 Nephi 11:10-11.] The multitude [knelt] in adoration for they remembered that their prophets had foretold that the Lord would appear among them after His resurrection and ascension.

"As He directed, the people arose, and one by one came to Him, and did see and feel the prints of the nails in His hands and feet and the spear-wound in His side. . . . With one accord they cried: 'Hosanna! blessed be the name of the Most High God!' [3 Nephi 11:17.] Then, falling at the feet of Jesus, they worshiped Him" (James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1916], p. 725).

Appearances in modern day

When Joseph Smith was visited by the Father and the resurrected Christ in 1820, the latter was introduced by the Father, "This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!" (Joseph Smith—History 1:17), thus ushering in the marvelous events of the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Our resurrected Lord was seen in a vision by Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon in 1832. Joseph recorded: "The Lord touched the eyes of our understandings, . . .

"And we beheld the glory of the Son, on the right hand of the Father, and received of his fulness;

"And saw the holy angels, and them who are sanctified before his throne, worshipping God, and the Lamb, who worship him forever and ever.

"And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony . . . which we give of him: That he lives!

"For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—

"That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God" (D&C 76:19–24).

"I am the resurrection, and the life"

Now, these fragmentary events which I have briefly portrayed bear record and witness that resurrection and eternal life come to us because of what Christ our Lord did for each of us. He declared, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:25–26). To this declaration of truth I bear my solemn witness, in the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder David B. Haight of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "I Know That My Redeemer Lives," following which we shall hear from Elder Wm. Grant Bangerter, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation sang "I Know That My Redeemer Lives."

Elder Wm. Grant Bangerter spoke without further announcement.

Elder William Grant Bangerter

The glory of Easter morning fills the souls of those who yearn for eternal life. A similar glory touched the majestic morning when the Father and the Son announced the dawning of the day of salvation in the last days.

To contemplate what happened on those mornings of grandeur stirs the innermost feelings of the members of the Church.

Spirit of gathering

A mystic, spiritual force, similar to the magnetism of the lodestone, has drawn the Saints to seek the place where their longings can be satisfied. This is the spirit of the gathering, foretold in the scriptures. It is the reason why each one of us is here today, as we have been drawn both literally and spiritually to Zion—an actual, tangible place where the soul's yearning can be

fulfilled in anticipation of salvation and eternal life in the kingdom of God.

As I respond to the new appointment which has been given to me, I have deep feelings about the man whose passing away left the vacancy into which I have been called, Elder G. Homer Durham. Elder Durham married Eudora, the daughter of Elder John A. Widtsoe. Aside from their Church service, these two men, Dr. Durham and Dr. Widtsoe, have been outstanding in positions of leadership and responsibility, particularly in the field of education. Dr. Durham was the first commissioner of Higher Education in the state of Utah, and earlier presided over Arizona State University. He is greatly missed. Dr. John A. Widtsoe was the president of two universities before he was called to serve as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

In the gospel net

Many years ago Elder Widtsoe told the story of his mother, Anna Karine Gaarden Widtsoe, who, one hundred years ago was caught up in the "gospel net." Elder Widtsoe's prologue is as follows:

"This is the story of a woman, a seeker after truth, who, tossed by the waves of mysterious fate, was caught by the Gospel net, and carried into a far country, where, through the possession of eternal truth, though amidst much adversity, she and her family found unbounded happiness" (*In the Gospel Net* [Independence, Mo: Zion's Printing and Publishing Co., 1941], Prologue).

The beautiful story concerning his mother, who came from an obscure island off Norway, has been repeated thousands of times in the lives of the Latter-day Saints. These experiences are the foundation of the faith of every member of the Church. As I make reference to some of the influences that have drawn us into the gospel net, I hope that every Latter-day Saint will reflect on the spiritual power which has brought us to the gospel.

Words of a humble shoemaker

Elder Widtsoe's mother responded to the words of a humble shoemaker who had placed some tracts in her child's shoes. Speaking to her with some hesitation as she was leaving his shop, he said, "You may be surprised to hear me say that I can give you something of more value than soles for your child's shoes."

She responded, "What can you, a shoemaker, give me better than soles for my son's shoes?"

He answered, "If you will but listen, I can teach you the Lord's true plan of salvation for His children. I can teach you how to find happiness in this life and to prepare for eternal joy in the life to come. I can tell you whence you came, why you are upon the earth, and where you will go after death. I can teach you as you have never known it before, the love of God for his children on earth" (*In the Gospel Net*, pp. 54-55).

Confusion of ages ended

The deep and powerful influence which has reached out across time and space, often into far and hidden corners of the earth, has the effect to snatch people from their normal life patterns and bring them to Zion.

Since the Church was organized in 1830, the gospel net has encircled and drawn together many millions of people who, either through their own personal experience, or through receiving the teachings of their parents and grandparents, have found the way to eternal life.

This means that for those who receive the message, the confusion of ages about how to come to Christ has ended. The answers are at hand to the great questions, such as:

What is the meaning of human life on earth?

Is there revelation from heaven?

Where are the Apostles and prophets?

What about those who never heard of Christ?

Which of the many churches is authorized by God?

Who has authority to administer the gospel?

How can I know what God wants me to do?

There is only one way these questions could ever be answered. God would have to tell us. To do so he has called a latter-day prophet. He has sent heavenly messengers to confer the true priesthood and authority. He has revealed the Book of Mormon to support the witness of the Bible that Jesus is Christ. He has reestablished the ordinances and restored the everlasting covenant. The sure way to eternal life is again in place.

My own membership in the Church is in response to this powerful influence. My own grandparents in Switzerland were also led by the Spirit in the midst of ridicule and persecution to find the path by which they could rear their children with the sure knowledge of divine truth.

My mother's grandparents were among the first in England to respond to the teachings of Heber C. Kimball and Willard Richards in 1837.

They vibrated to the thrilling news that the kingdom of God had been brought back to the earth.

The human soul, to be spiritually alive, requires a vision, a yearning, a longing, a desire. The spirit of America reaches out to that longing; the great vision of liberty, the spirit of freedom, the land of opportunity and hope.

"Land consecrated unto him"

Sister Bangerter and I recently stood at the feet of the Statue of Liberty in New York harbor with President and Sister McGregor of Caldwell, New Jersey. They pointed out Ellis Island as the entry point into this land for hundreds of thousands of immigrants, including my grandparents and also Elder Widtsoe and his mother. We read again the inspiring words of Emma Lazarus

announcing the beacon to wandering souls. Referring to the ancient statue on the Greek island of Rhodes, she speaks of "The New Colossus":

"Not like the brazen giant of
Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride
from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset
gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch,
whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and
her name
Mother of Exiles. From her
beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome; her
mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin
cities frame.
'Keep, ancient lands, your stored
pomp!' cries she
With silent lips. Give me your
tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to
breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your
teeming shore,
Send these, the homeless,
tempest-tost, to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden
door."

(In *Masterpieces of Religious Verse*, ed. by James Dalton Morrison [New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1948], p. 517; inscribed in bronze on the Statue of Liberty, Bedloe Island, New York Harbor.)

Then President McGregor coupled this feeling to the words of Lehi:

"Wherefore, this land is consecrated unto him whom he shall bring. And if it so be that they shall serve him according to the commandments which he hath given, it shall be a land of liberty unto them; wherefore, they shall never be brought down into captivity; . . . but unto the righteous it shall be blessed forever" (2 Nephi 1:7).

The yearning of ancient Israel was to Jerusalem. During their captivity, the soul of the people was expressed in the 137th Psalm:

"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. . . .

"For they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.

"How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.

"If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy" (Psalm 137:1, 3-6).

Found pearl of great price

All of us should reflect on what we have joined and what power has captured our faith. Hundreds of thousands living today have in their own lifetime personally found the pearl of great price. They are the grandparents of the future whose names will be blessed by their posterity.

For forty-five years I have had close association with the land of Brazil. Many tens of thousands have joined the Church in that country. I had great joy yesterday in hearing of the call of Elder Helio da Rocha Camargo, our companion and fellow member of the Church. Brother Camargo and his wife were stalwart, faithful people before they joined the Church. They had been brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Brother Camargo was a graduate of the military academy of Brazil. Later, still a young man, he became a Methodist minister. He told me something of his experience with the "gospel net." One evening two young men called at his home. He said that the first thing he noticed was the huge feet of one of the young men. He looked upward from the feet until he found the face of the tallest North American he had ever met. He was not at first impressed with the beauty of

either the feet or the face. However, he invited the young men in, and in the process of their presentation they left him a copy of the Book of Mormon.

On a subsequent visit they inquired if he had read the book. He explained that he had read considerable, making notes of the things with which he did not agree. The elder then suggested that it was not in keeping with a book of scripture to read it to see what was wrong with it, but that it should be read as Moroni says, "with a sincere heart" and "real intent," having "faith in Christ" and desiring to know the truth of the book. (See Moroni 10:4.)

Brother Camargo said he found it necessary to read the book again. In the process the Spirit witnessed to him that it was the true word of God, and he joined the Church with his family. He sometimes refers to the scripture in Isaiah 52:7 which says, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet [those huge missionary feet] of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; . . . that sayeth unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" The truth he has found has brought similar beauty to the feet of three of his sons as they have served as missionaries. All of his children were married in the temple covenant, and he and his wife have great joy and rejoicing in their posterity. One of his sons is present at this conference today as a stake president.

Call to Zion

President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., captured the spirit of this drawing power in his memorable address in 1947 "to them of the last wagon"—our pioneers who endured the hardships of their great journey:

"They had," he said, "their testimony burning always like an eternal fire on a holy altar, that the restored gospel was true. . . .

"When in the evening the last wagon creaked slowly into its place in the circle corral, and the Brethren came to inquire how the day had gone with the mother, then joy leaped in their

hearts, for had not the Brethren remembered them? New hope was born, weariness fled, fresh will to do was enkindled; gratitude to God was poured out for their knowledge of the truth, for their testimony that God lived, that Jesus was the Christ, that Joseph was a prophet, . . . and that for the righteous a crown of glory awaited that should be theirs during the eternities of the life to come."

He states that at the conclusion of their journey, "[they] all sank to their knees in the joy of their souls, thanking God that at last they were in Zion. 'Zion, Zion, lovely Zion, beautiful Zion, Zion, City of our God' " (in Conference Report, Oct. 1947, pp. 157-58).

What a thrill of joy must have moved Andrew as he said to Peter, "We have found the Messiah" (John 1:41). Along with countless thousands, it has "come to pass that the righteous

shall be gathered out from among all nations, and shall come to Zion, singing with songs of everlasting joy" (D&C 45:71).

May we lift our souls this beautiful Easter morning with the assurance that through the mystic call of the restored gospel we have come to the threshold of Zion and the gateway to eternal life. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Wm. Grant Bangerter, recently sustained as a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder H. Burke Peterson, who was yesterday sustained a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, having previously served as First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric.

Elder H. Burke Peterson

Gratitude

This morning my spirit is subdued as I express my thanks to the Lord for the opportunity to serve and to learn. I am grateful for his trust and confidence. I would also like you to know that I have treasured choice memories involving many faithful employees of the Church, both here and in the far-off reaches of the world. They are Saints of the first order. My feelings are tender as I express my love to Bishop Brown, Bishop Clarke, and Bishop Featherstone, with whom I've served these past years. I will miss the brotherhood of the Presiding Bishopric.

My wife and I are thrilled and honored with the call to devote our efforts and energies in the holy temple. We know somewhat of the magnificent experience this will be. I express my deep appreciation to the Brethren for extend-

ing to us this unusual opportunity for service.

A few years ago I had been assigned with other General Authorities to attend a series of area conferences in New Zealand and Australia. Initially, the leader of our group was to have been President Spencer W. Kimball. However, because of the need for some emergency surgery, he could not travel with us, so President N. Eldon Tanner led the group in his place.

Each day during the trip President Tanner telephoned President Kimball in his hospital room to get a report on his condition and to give a brief report of the conferences in which we were participating. After the daily call to Salt Lake City, President Tanner would always give us a report on the President's condition. We were anxious and appreciated these brief messages.

Once, after we had been out for five or six days, President Tanner made

his usual call to the hospital in Salt Lake City. However, this day he had no report for us. When we asked if he had talked to the President, he told us he had tried, but President Kimball wasn't in his room. "Where was he?" we asked. "They weren't sure; they couldn't find him," President Tanner said. "They thought he might have gone down to the next floor of the hospital to visit the sick."

To paraphrase a statement made by Wendell Phillips, it may be accurately said, "How prudently most men sink into nameless graves, while now and then a few *forget themselves* into immortality" (as quoted by William Jennings Bryan, *The Prince of Peace* [Independence: Zion's Printing and Publishing Co., 1925]).

Christlike patterns for living

In the day-to-day process of living, with all of its trials, challenges, and discouragements, we often underestimate our own God-given attributes and abilities which make it possible for each of us to pattern his or her life after that of the Savior and, in fact, do some of the things he did as he lived here among men. We may never personally experience the miracle of raising the dead, or be one to turn water into wine. We may not be one of thousands who may be fed from a few aves and fishes, or be a part of the miraculous experience of walking on a stormy sea. But for each one of us, there are a number of Christlike patterns of living we can be a part of in our mortal sojourn.

For instance, with us here today there are more than a few who display unquestioning obedience to whatever is asked of them—as did he. There are those who are complete in their forgiveness of the offenses of others—as was he. Some among us are scrupulously honest, even when it isn't convenient—as was he. The list of Christlike attributes and patterns of living goes on and on, as does the list of those who will continue to strive to be obedient,

however difficult it may be. Thank heaven for those who keep trying! They cannot fail.

The selfless person

This morning I would like to teach of another divine attribute—a quality which, when it becomes part of our lives, produces as an outgrowth individuals who are happy in their relationships with others and at peace with themselves and those around them: siblings who enjoy each other more; married couples who cherish their relationships; those who are alone, for whatever reason, who find a fuller and more abundant life. You see, there are those among us today who are completely *selfless*—as was he.

A selfless person is one who is more concerned about the happiness and well-being of another than about his or her own convenience or comfort, one who is willing to serve another when it is neither sought for nor appreciated, or one who is willing to serve even those whom he or she dislikes. A selfless person displays a willingness to sacrifice, a willingness to purge from his or her mind and heart personal wants, and needs, and feelings. Instead of reaching for and requiring praise and recognition for himself, or gratification of his or her own wants, the selfless person will meet these very human needs for others. Remember the words of the Savior as he taught his disciples on an occasion when personal recognition was being sought: "But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, . . . whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:42-45).

The selfish person

There is another word that sounds almost like the one we have been using. However, it is an ugly word. It de-

scribes a characteristic of satanic proportions. We will not say much of this word, for it is not pleasant to think about, and we don't like to use it. The word is *selfish*. The dictionary describes a selfish person as one who is "concerned excessively or exclusively with oneself: seeking pleasure or well-being without regard for others" (*Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*). May we add, a selfish person is often one who refers to "I," "me," and "mine" rather than to "we," "ours," "yours," or "theirs." This person is anxious to be in the limelight, to be on center stage in life's little dramas. He or she may be a poor listener, or a conversation monopolizer. Selfishness is the great unknown sin. No selfish person ever thought himself to be selfish.

Self-evaluation

Now let's be positive again. What can we do to cultivate and nurture this divine quality of selflessness? May I suggest, as a first step, that there be a very careful, introspective evaluation. Consider the behavioral patterns we have just referred to. Do any of them fit your style or conduct? For instance:

—Could you be obedient if you were asked to give up your home for two or three years, leave your children and grandchildren, and go across the world to live in a place much less comfortable than your own home, in a culture strange to you? Many here today have done it without a backward glance.

—To those who live alone: will you feel as lonely if you make a nursing home visit after work before you go home for dinner?

—As a parent, can you take precious time to listen to a son or daughter tell you about what the young people are wearing, or what the teacher said? If you do, *without interrupting*, you may find they'll talk to you when they are *really* troubled because they've learned you listen.

—At a dinner or in a group, notice yourself. Do you take up a large share of the conversation time?

Attitude of service

As part of this self-evaluation process, it is important to remember there can be no successful change in any of us unless we recognize a need to change. That must come first.

With the recognition of the need to improve, may we now suggest that as a part of the process of cultivating and nurturing the attribute of selflessness we begin to develop an attitude of service—the ongoing desire for the well-being of others. A beginning would be feeling empathy for those who need uplifting, then acting with caring thoughtfulness. It could be:

—A telephone visit with someone who lives alone—just to chat about the day's experiences.

—Or perhaps a note to a youth speaker who did his best last Sunday.

—Even a thank-you to an unruly neighbor boy when he *doesn't* jump your fence or smash your flower garden. Remember, those who are not the most attractive in their behavior or looks are the ones who need our caring concern the most.

—Or could it be stopping to talk to someone who is handicapped with whom you've never before taken the time to get acquainted? Are we cultivating an awareness that they have the same longings for love and friendship all of us have and yet usually get so much less?

It is important to break the chains of "self" that bind us. Sincere and sensitive acts in behalf of *others* are the mark of the selfless.

A family experience

Now to those who may be incapacitated in any one of a variety of ways, be it physical, mental, or financial—to those who *cannot* do what you would sincerely *like* to do for

another—let me tell of a personal family experience.

Some months ago my wife drove down to Provo for her customary weekly visit with her mother, who had been ill for some time. On this particular day her mother had been having an unusually difficult time, and didn't have the strength to hold up her head, or even open her eyes. Though she was physically restricted, she was very alert mentally, and as my wife was caring for her many needs of the day she visited with her about family and friends. My wife held her mother's head up with one hand while she fed her with the other, and during the meal their conversation turned to one of our daughters and her husband who have five children under the age of seven. My wife commented to her mother that three of our daughter's children had chicken pox at the same time. The fact that this little mother was unusually busy was obvious. My mother-in-law stopped eating, thought for a moment, and then in a weak, almost inaudible voice said, "I feel so sorry for Robin. I wish I could go to her home and help her." A few moments later, as my wife pondered this wish, she observed, "You know, Mother, I think in your case wanting to is enough. Surely you will receive a blessing for service and selflessness as though you went to her home and helped."

When I was told of the experience, I recalled the words of King Benjamin when, in his final address to his people, he said, "And again, I say unto the poor, ye who have not and yet have sufficient, that ye remain from day to day; I mean all you who deny the beggar, because ye have not; I would that ye say in your hearts that: I give not because I have not, but if I had I would give" (Mosiah 4:24).

It is my feeling that, after all is said and done, it will be the intent of the heart by which we shall be judged. However, let us be careful that we do not fill our hearts with *unjustified* ex-

cuses. Being selfless does not come naturally to most of us. Often it is easier to say, "I can't," or "I'm made differently," or "I don't have time," than it is to become involved in making life happier and more pleasant for others. Let us remember the words from the scriptures:

"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. . . .

"Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

"When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

"Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:34, 37-40).

Selflessness is a beautifully expressive word. It is a divine word expressing a divine pattern of living.

I testify of the selflessness of the Savior. I testify that through his life, his atoning sacrifice, and his resurrection, he has made possible resurrection for all mankind, and eternal life for the obedient. I know that he lives!

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "Love Divine" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Elder H. Burke Peterson spoke to us, followed by the choir singing "Love Divine."

Elder Thomas S. Monson of the Council of the Twelve will be our concluding speaker.

Elder Thomas S. Monson

Learning another language

Recently I visited the Missionary Training Center at Provo, Utah, where missionaries who have been called to serve throughout the world are devotedly learning the fundamentals of the languages spoken by the people to whom they shall teach and testify.

Vaguely familiar to me were the conversations in Spanish, French, German, and Swedish. Totally foreign to me and perhaps to most of the missionaries were the sounds of Japanese, Chinese, and Finnish. One marvels at the devotion and total concentration of these young men and women as they grapple with the unfamiliar and learn the difficult.

I am told that on occasion when a missionary in training feels that the Spanish he is called upon to master appears overwhelming or just too hard to learn, he is placed during the luncheon break next to missionaries studying the complex languages of the Orient. He listens. Suddenly Spanish becomes not too overpowering, and he eagerly returns to his study.

Language of the Spirit

There is one language, however, that is understood by each missionary: the language of the Spirit. It is not learned from textbooks written by men of letters, nor is it acquired through reading and memorization. The language of the Spirit comes to him who seeks with all his heart to know God and to keep His divine commandments. Proficiency in this language permits one to breach barriers, overcome obstacles, and touch the human heart.

The Apostle Paul, in his second epistle to the Corinthians, urges that we turn from the narrow confinement of the letter of the law and seek the open vista of opportunity which the Spirit provides. I love and cherish Paul's

statement: "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (2 Corinthians 3:6).

In a day of danger or a time of trial, such knowledge, such hope, such understanding bring comfort to the troubled mind and grieving heart. The entire message of the New Testament breathes a spirit of awakening to the human soul. Shadows of despair are dispelled by rays of hope, sorrow yields to joy, and the feeling of being lost in the crowd of life vanishes with the certain knowledge that our Heavenly Father is mindful of each of us.

The Savior provided assurance of this truth when He taught that even a sparrow shall not fall to the ground unnoticed by our Father. He then concluded the beautiful thought by saying, "Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Matthew 10:29-31).

Spiritual answers to questions

We live in a complex world with daily challenges. There is a tendency to feel detached—even isolated—from the Giver of every good gift. We worry that we walk alone.

From the bed of pain, from the pillow wet with the tears of loneliness, we are lifted heavenward by that divine assurance and precious promise, "I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Joshua 1:5).

Such comfort is priceless as we journey along the pathway of mortality, with its many forks and turnings. Rarely is the assurance communicated by a flashing sign or a loud voice. Rather, the language of the Spirit is gentle, quiet, uplifting to the heart and soothing to the soul.

At times, the answers to our questions and the responses to our daily prayers come to us through silent promptings of the Spirit. As William Cowper wrote:

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea
And rides upon the storm. . . .

"Judge not the Lord by feeble
sense,
But trust him for his grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face."
(*Hymns*, no. 48.)

Examples of "heart petals"

We watch. We wait. We listen for that still, small voice. When it speaks, wise men and women obey. We do not postpone following promptings of the Spirit.

To address such a sacred subject, may I refer not to the writings of others, but to the actual experiences of my life. I testify to their truth, for I lived them. I share with you today three cherished examples of what President David O. McKay identified as "heart petals"—the language of the Spirit, the promptings from a heavenly source.

First, the inspiration which attends a call to serve.

Second, the gratitude of God for a life well lived.

Third, the knowledge that we do not walk alone.

Inspiration in calls

Every bishop can testify to the promptings which attend calls to serve in the Church. Frequently the call seems to be not so much for the benefit of those to be taught or led as for the person who is to teach or lead.

As a bishop, I worried about any members who were inactive, not attending, not serving. Such was my thought as I drove down the street where Ben and Emily lived. They were older—even in the twilight period of life. Aches and pains of advancing years caused them to withdraw from activity to the shelter of their home—isolated, detached, shut out from

the mainstream of daily life and association.

I felt the unmistakable prompting to park my car and visit Ben and Emily, even though I was on the way to a meeting. It was a sunny weekday afternoon. I approached the door to their home and knocked. Emily answered. When she recognized me, her bishop, she exclaimed, "All day long I have waited for my phone to ring. It has been silent. I hoped that the postman would deliver a letter. He brought only bills. Bishop, how did you know today was my birthday?"

I answered, "God knows, Emily, for He loves you."

In the quiet of the living room, I said to Ben and Emily, "I don't know why I was directed here today, but our Heavenly Father knows. Let's kneel in prayer and ask Him why." This we did, and the answer came. Emily was asked to sing in the choir—even to provide a solo for the forthcoming ward conference. Ben was asked to speak to the Aaronic Priesthood young men and recount a special experience in his life when his safety was assured by responding to the promptings of the Spirit. She sang. He spoke. Hearts were gladdened by the return to activity of Ben and Emily. They rarely missed a sacrament meeting from that day to the time each was called home. The language of the Spirit had been spoken. It had been heard. It had been understood. Hearts were touched and lives saved.

A life well lived

For my second example I turn to the release of a stake president in Star Valley, Wyoming—even the late E. Francis Winters. He had served faithfully for the lengthy term of twenty-three years. Though modest by nature and circumstance, he had been a perpetual pillar of strength to everyone in the valley. On the day of the stake conference, the building was filled to overflowing. Each heart seemed to be saying a silent thank-you to this noble

leader who had given so unselfishly of his life for the benefit of others.

As I stood to speak following the reorganization of the stake presidency, I was prompted to do something I had not done before, nor have I done so since. I stated how long Francis Winters had presided in the stake; then I asked all whom he had blessed or confirmed as children to stand and remain standing. Then I asked all those persons whom President Winters had ordained, set apart, personally counseled, or blessed to please stand. The outcome was electrifying. Every person in the audience stood to his feet. Tears flowed freely—tears which communicated better than could words the gratitude of tender hearts. I turned to President and Sister Winters and said, “We are witnesses today of the prompting of the Spirit. This vast throng reflects not only individual feelings but also the gratitude of God for a life well lived.” No person who was in the congregation that day will forget how he felt when he witnessed the language of the Spirit of the Lord.

We do not walk alone

Finally, I testify that we do not walk alone.

Stan, a dear friend of mine, was taken seriously ill and rendered partially paralyzed. He had been robust in health, athletic in build, and active in many pursuits. Now he was unable to walk or to stand. His wheelchair was his home. The finest of physicians had cared for him, and the prayers of family and friends had been offered in a spirit of hope and trust. Yet Stan continued to lie in the confinement of his bed at the university hospital. He despaired.

Late one afternoon I was swimming at the Deseret Gym, gazing at the ceiling while backstroking width after width. Silently, but ever so clearly, there came to my mind the thought: “Here you swim almost effortlessly, while your friend Stan languishes in his hospital bed, unable to move.” I felt the

prompting: “Get to the hospital and give him a blessing.”

I ceased my swimming, dressed, and hurried to Stan’s room at the hospital. His bed was empty. A nurse said he was in his wheelchair at the swimming pool, preparing for therapy. I hurried to the area, and there was Stan, all alone, at the edge of the deeper portion of the pool. We greeted one another and returned to his room, where a priesthood blessing was provided.

Slowly but surely, strength and movement returned to Stan’s legs. First he could stand on faltering feet. Then he learned once again to walk—step by step. Today one would not know that Stan had lain so close to death and with no hope of recovery.

Frequently Stan speaks in Church meetings and tells of the goodness of the Lord to him. To some he reveals the dark thoughts of depression which engulfed him that afternoon as he sat in his wheelchair at the edge of the pool, sentenced, it seemed, to a life of despair. He tells how he pondered the alternative. It would be so easy to propel the hated wheelchair into the silent water of the deep pool. Life would then be over. But at that precise moment he saw me, his friend. That day Stan learned literally that we do not walk alone. I, too, learned a lesson that day: Never, never, never postpone following a prompting.

As we pursue the journey of life, let us learn the language of the Spirit. May we remember and respond to the Master’s gentle invitation: “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him” (Revelation 3:20). This is the language of the Spirit. He spoke it. He taught it. He lived it. May each of us do likewise, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Thomas S. Monson of the Council of the Twelve has been our concluding speaker.

We extend our appreciation to the operators of various broadcasting facilities for all they have done to make it possible for many people in various parts of the world to participate with us. Thank you for your presence this beautiful morning.

The choir will now sing in closing "Sweet Is the Peace the Gospel Brings." The benediction will be of-

fered by Elder Rex C. Reeve of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The choir sang "Sweet Is the Peace the Gospel Brings."

Elder Rex C. Reeve offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

FIFTH SESSION

The fifth and final general session of the 155th Annual General Conference commenced at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, April 7, 1985.

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve, conducted.

Music was provided by the Tabernacle Choir directed by Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger with Robert Cundick at the organ.

President Benson made the following remarks at the outset of the meeting:

President Ezra Taft Benson

The First Presidency has asked that I conduct this concluding session of the conference

We extend our love and blessings to President Spencer W. Kimball who we are so pleased to have in attendance this afternoon and to President Marion G. Romney who is watching at home.

We extend a sincere welcome to all assembled this afternoon in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah. This is the fifth and concluding session of the 155th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We also welcome those seated in the Assembly Hall where Elders Ted E. Brewerton and Angel Abrea preside.

We send our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere who are participating in these proceedings by radio, television, cable, and satellite transmission.

The Tabernacle Choir, with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger directing and Robert Cundick at the organ, is providing the music for this session.

The choir will begin this service by singing "Arise, O God, and Shine." The invocation will be offered by Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Arise, O God, and Shine."

Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone offered the invocation.

President Benson

The Tabernacle Choir, assisted by the congregation, will now sing "Consolation: I Am a Child of God." Following the singing, we shall hear from Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The choir sang "Consolation: I Am a Child of God."

Elder Neal A. Maxwell spoke without further announcement.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

I do not apologize for trying to speak about one of what Paul called "the deep things of God" (1 Corinthians 2:10), only for my inability to go deeply enough.

Submitting fully to the Lord

While we see this quality in the quiet but spiritually luxuriant lives of the genuine, spiritual heroes and heroines about us, the lack of it keeps so many of us straggling in the foothills and off the peaks in the adventure of full discipleship. I refer to our hesitancy and our holding back in submitting fully to the Lord and His purposes for us.

This holding back is like leaving Egypt without journeying all the way to the Holy Land, or waiting in Nauvoo for the railroad to come through, or staying permanently at Winter Quarters.

Though possessed of other fine attributes, we may still lack this one quality. Such was the case with the righteous young man who knelt sincerely at Jesus' feet. Lacking one thing, he went away sorrowing and unsubmitive when a particularized challenge was given. (See Mark 10:21-22, Luke 18:22-23.) Whether it is walking away without looking back from "great possessions" (Mark 10:22), or from a statusful place in the secular synagogue (see John 12:42-43), or from proud but erroneous attitudes accrued over the years, or merely "straightway" from fishing nets (Mark 1:18), the test is always the same.

"Become as little children"

With honest, individualized introspection, each of us could name what we yet lack—and in my case more than one thing.

Spiritual submissiveness is so much more than bended knee or bowed head. Alas, insofar as we "mind the

things of the flesh" (Romans 8:5), we simply cannot have the "mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16).

Jesus laid down this sobering requirement: "Except ye . . . become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3).

One of Jesus' prophets delineated—with submissiveness thrice stipulated—how a disciple can become "as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father" (Mosiah 3:19).

Three other clusters of scriptures stress these towering qualities. (See Alma 7:23, 13:28; D&C 121:41-42.) Stunningly parallel, they form an almost seamless litany of attributes to be developed, with submissiveness at their catalytic center. This repeated clustering is too striking to be random.

Be led aright

Moreover, the descriptive simplicity of this quality is matched by its developmental difficulty. It is so easy to be halfhearted, but this only produces half the growth, half the blessings, and just half a life, really, with more bud than blossom.

A superficial view of this life, therefore, will not do, lest we mistakenly speak of this mortal experience only as coming here to get a body, as if we were merely picking up a suit at the cleaners. Or, lest we casually recite how we have come here to be proved, as if a few brisk push-ups and deep knee bends would do.

Just how much submissiveness to circumstance there should be is not treated in these brief remarks. Suffice it to say, God "allotteth unto men" certain things with which we are to be content. (See Alma 29:4, Philippians 4:11, 1 Timothy 6:8.) A missing parent or limb is to be lived without. Yet temper and lust are to be tamed. One's race is

fixed, but one's genetic endowment offers opportunity to be a careful steward. The submissive soul will be led aright, enduring some things well while being anxiously engaged in setting other things right—all the time discerning the difference.

Meekness of mind

Required, in particular, is meekness of mind which recognizes God's perfect love of us and His omniscience. By acknowledging these reassuring realities and accepting that God desires our full development and true happiness, we are readied even as the learning experiences come. Such meekness requires genuine intellectual honesty, owning up to the learning experiences of the past and listening to the Holy Ghost as he preaches to us from the pulpit of memory.

As the Lord communicates with the meek and submissive, fewer decibels are required, and more nuances are received. Even the most meek, like Moses (see Numbers 12:3), learn overwhelming things they "never had supposed" (Moses 1:10). But it is only the meek mind which can be so shown and so stretched—not those, as Isaiah wrote, who "are wise in their own eyes" (Isaiah 5:21; see also 2 Nephi 9:29 and 15:21).

God's counsel aligns us and conjoins us with the great realities of the universe; whereas sin empties, isolates, and separates us, confining us to the solitary cell of selfishness. Hence the lonely crowd in hell.

Spiritual submissiveness means, instead, community and communion as the mind and the heart become settled. We then spend much less time deciding, and much more time serving; otherwise, the more hesitation, the less inspiration.

Yielding one's heart

Yielding one's heart to God signals the last stage in our spiritual development. Only then are we beginning to

be fully useful to God! How can we sincerely pray to be an instrument in His hands if the instrument seeks to do the instructing?

As we really begin to keep the first commandment—loving God with "all thy heart, with all thy might, mind, and strength" (D&C 59:5; see also Matthew 22:37)—giving time, talent, and treasure is then accompanied by fully giving of ourselves.

Sometimes, our holding back occurs because we lack faith or we are too entangled with the cares of the world. Other times, there is in us an understandable tremulousness which slows our yielding, because we sense what further yielding might bring.

Yet we need to break free of our old selves—the provincial, constraining, and complaining selves—and become susceptible to the shaping of the Lord. But the old self goes neither gladly nor quickly. Even so, this subjection to God is really emancipation.

How can we truly acknowledge the Fatherhood of God and refuse His tutorials? Especially in view of the fact, the Lord even chastens those whom He loves. (See Hebrews 12:6, D&C 136:31, Mosiah 23:21, Revelation 3:19.)

Saul, when chosen, was "a choice young man, . . . and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he" (1 Samuel 9:2). Later, he became encrusted with ego and puffed by power. Samuel then recalled a time when Saul "wast little in [his] own sight" (1 Samuel 15:17). In contrast, true submissiveness greatly enlarges the soul, but *without* hypocrisy and guile. (See D&C 121:42.)

Total surrender

Submissiveness also checks our tendency to demand advance explanations of the Lord as a perplexed yet trusting Nephi understood: "I know that [God] loveth his children; nevertheless, I do not know the meaning of all things" (1 Nephi 11:17).

So did a wondering but submissive Mary: "And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38).

Just as the capacity to defer gratification is a sign of real maturity, likewise the willingness to wait for deferred explanation is a sign of real faith and of trust spread over time.

If faithful, we end up acknowledging that we are in the Lord's hands and should surrender to the Lord on His terms—not ours. It is total surrender, no negotiating; it is yielding with no preconditions.

Suppose Enoch had demurred when called by the Lord? He would have gone on being a good person, serving the Lord part-time, living in a city which was a slum compared to the glorious City of Enoch; nor would Enoch be a part of that scene of glorious greeting yet to come. (See Moses 7:63.)

Suppose Peter had not left his nets "straightway"? (See Mark 1:18.) He might have become the respected president of the local Galilean fishermen's association. But he would not have been on the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus, Moses, and Elias and heard the voice of God. (See Matthew 17:4.)

Three special words

We have been given three special words—but *if not*—by three submissive young men who entered their fiery furnace, knowing "our God . . . is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, . . . *But if not*, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods" (Daniel 3:17–18; italics added).

Moreover, our prayers should allow for three more special words: "And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, *which is right*, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you" (3 Nephi 18:20; italics added).

By yielding to God

It is only by yielding to God that we can begin to realize His will for us. And if we truly trust God, why not yield to His loving omniscience? After all, He knows us and our possibilities much better than do we.

"Nevertheless they did fast and pray oft, and did wax stronger and stronger in their humility, and firmer and firmer in the faith of Christ . . . even to the . . . yielding their hearts unto God" (Helaman 3:5).

Otherwise, one can be too busy promoting his own agenda: "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Romans 10:3).

Distinguished therefrom is Jesus' clear call: "Wherefore, seek not the things of this world but seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness" (JST, Matthew 6:38).

While events often induce submissiveness, one's development need not be dramatic or tied to a single moment; it can occur steadily in seemingly ordinary, daily settings. If we are meek, a rich and needed insight can be contained in reproof. A new calling can beckon us away from comfortable routine and from competencies already acquired. One may be stripped of accustomed luxury in order that the malignant mole of materialism be removed. One may feel humiliated in order that pride be chipped away.

The shaping goes on, and it is anything but merely cosmetic.

The tilt of our souls in first moments is so vital. Will what follows be viewed with disdain or as having some design? Which will we do most, murmur or ponder?

While most of our suffering is self-inflicted, some is caused by or permitted by God. This sobering reality calls for deep submissiveness, especially when God does not remove the cup from us. In such circumstances,

when reminded about the premortal shouting for joy as this life's plan was unfolded (see Job 38:7), we can perhaps be pardoned if, in some moments, we wonder what all the shouting was about.

For the faithful, what finally emerges is an understanding of "things as they really are" (Jacob 4:13), such as the reassuring realization that we are in the Lord's hands! But, brothers and sisters, we were never really anywhere else! Demonstrating this great attitude is our beloved and submissive brother, Bruce R. McConkie.

"Know ye not that ye are in the hands of God?" (Mormon 5:23.) Likewise, "all flesh" (D&C 101:16, Moses 6:32) and "the heavens and the earth" (D&C 67:2)! Perhaps the realization of being in God's hands comes fully only as we ponder the significance of the prints in the hands of our submissive Savior. (See 3 Nephi 11:14-15.) Some will have to ask what those wounds are, having been estranged. (See D&C 45:51-52.) These are they who "regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands" (2 Nephi 15:12).

Pondering the awesome atonement

The more we study, pray, and ponder the awesome Atonement, the more we are willing to acknowledge that we are in His and the Father's hands. Let us ponder, therefore, these final things.

When the unimaginable burden began to weigh upon Christ, it confirmed His long-held and intellectually clear understanding as to what He must now do. His working through began, and Jesus declared: "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour." Then, whether in spiritual soliloquy or by way of instruction to those about Him, He observed, "But for this cause came I unto this hour" (John 12:27).

Later, in Gethsemane, the suffering Jesus began to be "sore amazed"

(Mark 14:33), or, in the Greek, "awe-struck" and "astonished."

Imagine, Jehovah, the Creator of this and other worlds, "astonished"! Jesus knew cognitively what He must do, but not experientially. He had never personally known the exquisite and exacting process of an atonement before. Thus, when the agony came in its fullness, it was so much, much worse than even He with his unique intellect had ever imagined! No wonder an angel appeared to strengthen him! (See Luke 22:43.)

The cumulative weight of all mortal sins—past, present, and future—pressed upon that perfect, sinless, and sensitive Soul! All our infirmities and sicknesses were somehow, too, a part of the awful arithmetic of the Atonement. (See Alma 7:11-12, Isaiah 53:3-5, Matthew 8:17.) The anguished Jesus not only pled with the Father that the hour and cup might pass from Him, but with this relevant citation. "And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me" (Mark 14:35-36).

Had not Jesus, as Jehovah, said to Abraham, "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" (Genesis 18:14). Had not His angel told a perplexed Mary, "For with God nothing shall be impossible"? (Luke 1:37; see also Matthew 19:28, Mark 10:27, Luke 18:27).

Jesus' request was not theater!

In this extremity, did He, perchance, hope for a rescuing ram in the thicket? I do not know. His suffering—as it were, *enormity* multiplied by *infinity*—evoked His later soul-cry on the cross, and it was a cry of forsakenness. (See Matthew 27:46.)

Even so, Jesus maintained this sublime submissiveness, as He had in Gethsemane: "Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39).

While bearing our sins, our infirmities, our sicknesses, and bringing to pass the Atonement (see Alma 7:11-12), Jesus became the perfect Shepherd, making these lines of Paul's especially relevant and reassuring:

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" (Romans 8:35).

Indeed, we are in His hands, and what hallowed hands!

The wondrous and glorious Atonement was the central act in all of human history. It was the hinge on which all else that finally matters turned. But it turned upon Jesus' spiritual submissiveness!

May we now, in our time and turn, be "willing to submit" (Mosiah 3:19),

I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen!

President Benson

Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder J. Richard Clarke, who was released yesterday as Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric and sustained as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder J. Richard Clarke

Brothers and sisters, this has been a wonderful week. We have been so spiritually fed, and I pray now that I might be able to share something that will be appropriate.

Before doing so, I would like to express my love and appreciation to Bishop Brown and to Bishop Peterson for eight and a half wonderful years of association in the Presiding Bishopric. And to the Seventy and the Twelve and the First Presidency who have been so supportive and encouraging, I express my love and continued support for them. I also would like to acknowledge those wonderful brothers and sisters who work behind the scenes here at headquarters and throughout the world to provide so many services and resources to help move the work along.

It's marvelous to be in the service of the Lord and now to be called as a witness for our Lord and Savior and to return to a land that I love more than I can express. It's just about as much emotion as I can handle at one time. So I pray that I might be able to fulfill the expectations of that wonderful call.

Covenant children of Abraham

In the Pearl of Great Price we read that the Lord delivered Abraham from

idolatrous sacrifice. He introduced Himself as Jehovah and declared, "[Abraham], I will lead thee by my hand, and I will . . . put upon thee my name, even the Priesthood of thy father, and my power shall be over thee. . . .

[And] through thy ministry my name shall be known in the earth forever, for I am thy God" (Abraham 1:18-19).

This blessing was extended to Abraham's posterity, who would "bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations." (See Abraham 2:9.) The covenant children of Abraham were to be distinguished by their sacred obligation to declare to the world the true and living God. Not only were they to be believers and worshipers, but His witnesses, boldly testifying of Him among the unbelievers.

God has once again spoken from the heavens and restored the fulness of the gospel through His chosen prophet. We have become the covenant children of Abraham, a new generation of witnesses to bear testimony that God lives and Jesus is the Christ. We are to be a pure people, a holy people, fully committed and zealous in our proclamation of the gospel in word and deed. This is an awesome responsibility.

“Stand as witnesses of God”

In the Book of Mormon we are told that “to be called His people” we must be willing “to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places, . . . even until death” (Mosiah 18:8–9). As individual members of the Church it is in the everyday context of our lives that this witness we exemplify comes under constant scrutiny.

May I share with you a personal experience to illustrate how humbling this can be? I was employed by a major corporation for almost twenty-five years. During those years I developed a personal friendship with a fine business associate from Texas. Our careers paralleled each other very closely. A few years ago, he presented me with a most unusual gift, which I shall always cherish. It was a large, molded bronze, personalized coat of arms. He said, “I have been observing you for many years and have created an original coat of arms using symbols which I believe represent the four most important values to which you have committed your life, namely, your church, your family, your profession, and your quest for personal development.”

Naturally, I was surprised, deeply impressed, and flattered. As the significance of this gift settled upon my mind, the thought of someone quietly taking mental notes of my actions, attitudes, and values fired my imagination. I realized the weighty responsibility each of us has to demonstrate accurately the principles and priorities to which we are committed. It was like a mini-foretaste of Judgment Day!

I thought of the scripture in Revelation in which John saw the books opened, “and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works” (Revelation 20:12). It was a most sobering experience.

“Hold up your light”

All of us give our lives daily for what we believe is important. Those with whom we associate are silently assessing us, our values and character traits. Is there anything about our daily conduct we would change if we knew someone was doing a written appraisal for publication?

Suppose you received, as the head of a family, a telephone call from your stake president, who said, “The local newspaper is doing a series of articles on the Church. They have asked permission for a reporter to move into one of our homes for a week to observe firsthand what a Mormon family is really like. We have selected you to represent the Church in our stake.”

You say, “Yes, President, we will be happy to do it.” You have seven children ranging from age two months to a nineteen-year-old son awaiting his mission call. Little time is allowed for “sprucing” things up—just a typical week with life as you live it.

This actually happened to Max and Nettie Ann Nelson of Boise, Idaho, in 1983. How proud I was of this fine family as I read the reporter’s account. What a positive impression was made upon him. The question going through your mind is possibly the same one that I had: “If our family were selected, would we be ready?”

To the Nephites Jesus said, “Hold up your light that it may shine unto the world. Behold I am the light which ye shall hold up” (3 Nephi 18:24).

In a related admonition, Peter counseled “that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. . . .

“Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

“Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that . . . they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation” (1 Peter 2:9, 11–12).

To the Israelites and again to the Nephites the Lord commanded: “Thou

shalt not bear false witness." (See Exodus 20:16, Mosiah 13:23.) Are we not false witnesses if we are untrue to gospel principles we profess but do not practice?

Character under pressure

Most damage to the collective reputation of the Church is done by those members who want to straddle the line, with one foot in the kingdom and the other foot in spiritual Babylon. Those who so compromise their principles want to play for both teams at once—the Lord's and Satan's—as if to say, "I want to wait and see which side is winning before I declare myself."

There are some members who are not concerned about their outward appearances and actions, rationalizing that they know what they really are on the inside. These individuals inevitably are judged "guilty by association." To be judged fairly, we must avoid the very appearance of evil. We would do well to remember the words quoted by President McKay: "Whate'er thou art, act well thy part." (See *Cherished Experiences*, comp. Claire Middlemiss [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1955], pp. 174–75.)

Character is revealed under pressure. Let me illustrate. A few years ago, Elder Gordon B. Hinckley related this inspiring story:

"I talked with a young man recently returned from the war. He too had walked the jungle patrols, his heart pounding with fear. But reluctantly he admitted that the greatest fear he had was the fear of ridicule.

"The men of his company laughed at him, taunted him, plastered him with a nickname that troubled him. They told him the things they reveled in. Then on one occasion when the going was rough, he faced them and quietly said, 'Look, I know you think I'm a square. I don't consider myself any better than any of the rest of you. . . . But I grew up in a different way. I grew up in a religious home and a religious town. I went to church on Sundays. We

prayed together as a family. I was taught to stay away from these things. It's just that I believe differently. With me it's a matter of religion, and it's kind of a way of respecting my mother and my dad. All of you together might force me toward a compromising situation, but that wouldn't change me, and you wouldn't feel right after you'd done it.'

"One by one they turned silently away. But during the next few days each came to ask his pardon, and from his example others gained the strength and the will to change their own lives. He taught the gospel to two of them and brought them into the church" (*Church News*, 29 Apr. 1972, p. 14).

True witnesses among youth

As Church members, we all benefit when one of us is honorable and righteous. Some years ago I made a speech at a business convention. When I concluded, a distinguished gentleman came up to me and asked, "Are you a Mormon?" I responded, "Yes." He said, "I am associated with John Russon, a member of your church. He is the finest practicing Christian I have had the pleasure to know." To him, and I'm sure to countless others, Brother Russon, now the president of the St. George Temple, is a reliable witness.

One of our greatest needs is for true witnesses among our youth. Young people need models from their own generation. Thankfully we have a tremendous army of latter-day sons and daughters of Helaman, stripping "Saturday's warriors," who are not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Rather, they have turned this commitment to the Lord into an advantage. Let me tell you of one.

Steve Hawes is the student body president at New Canaan High School in Connecticut. Of its twenty-three hundred students, only twenty-four are Latter-day Saints. Steve ran unopposed in a landslide election. This is impressive. But even more impressive is Steve's moral courage—his

commitment to living the principles of the gospel.

The Hawes family lived for a time in Tampa, Florida. Steve played junior high football and basketball. When his family was preparing to move to Connecticut, the coach told Steve's father how much he appreciated and admired Steve, not just because he is a fine athlete, but because of his deep religious convictions.

"He doesn't preach sermons; he just quietly lives his religion each day. I remember," said the coach, "a group of us were in the squad room, and one of the boys pulled out a copy of *Playboy* magazine. They opened to the centerfold and began to make some vulgar comments.

"I noticed Steve walk away, so I followed him and asked if anything was wrong. He said, 'I'm okay, Coach, but that just isn't my kind of thing.'"

The coach said, "Steve made us all better people. When he joined us, most of the guys were swearing. Then they stopped swearing around Steve, and af-

ter a while, they pretty well stopped swearing altogether."

When I heard this tribute, I thought of Paul's counsel to Timothy: "Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12).

"Ye are my witnesses," said the Lord through Isaiah (Isaiah 43:10).

Let us stand tall, brothers and sisters, and be not ashamed to take upon us the name of Christ. May God bless us as a church and as individuals that the testimony we bear as His witnesses will be true and clear and fully reliable, I humbly pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder J. Richard Clarke, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Bishop Henry B. Eyring, who was sustained yesterday as the First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric.

Bishop Henry B. Eyring

On Friday morning, President Hinckley called me to serve as a counselor to Bishop Hales in the Presiding Bishopric. I am grateful for the call and for the knowledge that it is the Savior who makes such calls through his servants in his Church. And I am grateful for your sustaining vote, which surely must stem from your conviction that God issued that call.

Love and confidence, and solicitude

During the meetings yesterday, I was overwhelmed in two ways by the reaction of the General Authorities. First, they expressed love and confidence, which I deeply appreciate. But second, I felt, in addition to that same

love from Bishops Brown, Peterson, and Clarke, an added expression of almost solicitude. I realized they knew what was ahead of me, and I sensed they might know the growing feeling in my heart that I was overwhelmed by the task ahead. As that feeling increased, I began to think more and more of me. But then I remembered that, in the past few weeks, a deacon has come home with the rolls to announce he was the new quorum secretary; a teacher has been called to preside in his quorum; a mother has been called to be a counselor in a Relief Society presidency; and a nineteen-year-old boy has been called to go to a new city with a new missionary companion. To each of them, and to each of you, fear of failure

might try to poke its head in, as it has with me.

A youthful testimony

Something happened to me yesterday afternoon that I found of great help to me, and it may be of help to you. Since that moment, the fear has gone. It was when Bishop Hales was speaking in conference. He mentioned that we had known each other since boyhood, and as he did a memory was replayed in my mind. It was of a hotel ballroom in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Bishop Hales was likely not there, since he lived in what seemed to us the well-established stake in New York. We were in the New Jersey District, a single district that covered the whole state. The Princeton Branch met in my parents' dining room. Dad was the branch president. Mother was both the pianist and chorister (which is hard to do if you think about it). There was not another family in the branch with children, so my brother Ted was the Aaronic Priesthood, and my brother, Harden, and I were all there were of Primary and junior Sunday School. The congregations were young students who happened to be there, like Jim Fletcher and Neil Zundle, and a few older converts—none with spouses that were members.

There was no building, no gym, no stake center, and so we traveled to a hotel ballroom for what must have been a district conference. I was sitting on a folding chair somewhere near the back, next to my mother. I must have been very young because I can remember putting my legs through the back of the chair and sitting aft instead of forward. But then I remember hearing something—a man's voice from the pulpit. I turned around and looked. I still remember that the speaker was at a rostrum set on wooden risers. There was a tall window behind him. He was the priesthood visitor. I don't know who he was, but he was tall and bald, and he seemed very old to me.

He must have been talking about the Savior or the Prophet Joseph, or both, because that was all that I remember much of hearing in those days. But as he spoke, I knew that what he said came from God and that it was true, and it burned in my heart. That was before scholars told me how hard it was to know. I just knew of certainty—I knew it was true. And when I listened to Bishop Hales yesterday, I knew that what he was saying was from God and that it was true, and then the fear left.

Listen for the Master's voice

You can have that same confidence, not of yourself, but from God. He lives, and he communicates with his children. This is the Church of Jesus Christ, and he leads it. No assignment in it need ever overwhelm you if you know that and listen for the Master's voice.

Now I can hear the young deacons saying, "Well, now, that may be fine for you, but surely you don't think that's going to help me in my assignment down here in this deacons quorum." Oh yes, I do. Between being a high counselor and a member of the general board of the Sunday School, I was a deacons quorum adviser. A boy, the president, presided in the meetings, and I taught the lessons out of the scriptures and out of the manual. I stayed very close to the lessons as they were outlined.

I remember one boy in the quorum had to miss a few meetings, and so he sent his brother to the class with a tape recorder. His brother recorded our meeting and took it home. It happened more than once. When the deacon came back, I asked him why. I don't remember his words, but I remember that it was clear he knew what I knew. God was trying to speak to that deacons quorum. The boy wasn't anxious to have a tape recording to hear me; he was trying to hear God. He knew where to listen and how to hear.

He'd read the scriptures for us in class, and I knew he knew them and

loved them. And so, even when I wasn't teaching very well, by the power of the Holy Ghost and from knowing the Master's voice in the scriptures, he could hear what he needed to hear. The memory of that black recorder with its tape turning will always remind me of the scripture which says, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matthew 11:15).

I spoke at his funeral just a few years later. He lived about as many years as the Prophet Joseph had lived when he saw God the Father and Jesus Christ in the grove. My deacon hadn't seen a vision, but he had heard the voice of God through his servants in a deacons quorum. He wanted to hear, he knew how, and he had the faith he could. Like the boy prophet Joseph, he knew the heavens were open.

Study, pray, and tune hearts and ears

You and I can take confidence in that assurance. If you and I will study the scriptures and pray and tune our hearts and ears, we will hear the voice of God in the voice of the people that he has sent to teach and guide us and direct us. I heard it yesterday as I listened to Bishop Hales, and I heard it last evening in the priesthood session as I listened to the recorded voice of President Kimball, a prophet of God. You and I can take confidence in that assurance for the Church itself. However large the kingdom will grow (and it will fill the earth), you will not ever feel lost or forgotten, and you need never feel overwhelmed. God will call people to care about you and to teach you. And if you will listen and hear the voice of God, the kingdom will roll forth to its appointed place, ready for the coming of the Master.

None of us can see now all the wonders of technology and organization and buildings that God may give us; but you, just you, hearing the voice of God through your teacher and leader, will always be at its heart.

Gratitude for heritage

I'm grateful for the gift given to me of ears to hear. One of my great-grandfathers, John Bennion, walked or rode his horse from over Jordan to this place to hear his name called out to go on a mission to Dixie. His journal doesn't say much, except just that the next day he prepared to go, and he went. His assignment was to be a shepherd. In his journal there is a record of an evening in which he met with Erastus Snow. He said another man was in the room; his name was Henry Eyring. And somewhere in St. George that night was Bishop Miles Romney. They talked about sheep. And you might have thought they were talking about something temporal. But not to those men, because they knew they were God's sheep, and they knew they were for God's people. And they knew how to listen, and they knew how to do what they heard.

John Bennion went on another mission to Wales and back again to this valley. Henry Eyring went on to Colonia Juarez, as Miles Romney did. And they left for me a tradition which I deeply appreciate. They were the yeomen of the Church, the soldiers of the Church, and my great-grandfathers. You can't find in their journals records of the positions they held, just of the instructions they heard, and knew were from God, and followed. I'm grateful to my parents who handed me that heritage undiminished. I'm grateful to my wife, who more than once has heard when I did not and gently said, "Would you pray about it?" If my sons and daughters will listen to her, and hear through her what God has in mind for them, we will pass the heritage on again.

God lives, Jesus is the Christ, Joseph Smith in fact saw God and His Son and received all the keys of the priesthood. And President Kimball holds them today. I testify that God loves his children and can tell us what is true. I pray that we all may have ears to hear, that he may guide us. I pray that

I may serve you and him, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Bishop Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, has just addressed us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet," following which Bishop Glenn L. Pace, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, will speak to us.

The choir and congregation sang "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

President Benson

Bishop Glenn L. Pace, who was sustained yesterday as Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Council of the Twelve.

Bishop Glenn L. Pace

President Kimball, we love you. Prior to getting into my text, let me offer my apologies to you in the audience and across the world who must listen to these proceedings through a translator. During the past year, I have been privileged to travel extensively in your lands, and I have a feeling of love and respect for you. I apologize that I cannot speak to you in your language. May the Lord bless us, as I speak, that you will be able to hear things just as personally as if I were speaking in your language. Perhaps the day will come when we Saints on the Wasatch Front will have to put on earphones so we can understand what's going on.

Humility and confidence

I hope I can convey to you the humility with which I approach this calling. I've just recently been released as a second counselor. What does one say, when one day you are the second counselor of the Bountiful Thirteenth Ward bishopric, and the next day you're the Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric. In the Regional Representatives' seminar Friday morning, Elder Russell M. Nelson reminisced that last year he was sitting in the Regional Representatives' seminar—sitting very inconspicuously in the

back, and very comfortably. Later that day he received an interview which turned his life upside down.

Last Friday I was in the Regional Representatives' seminar, but my ticket wasn't stamped "Regional Representative"; it was stamped "Invited Guest." By four o'clock that afternoon, I had received a letter signed by President Hinckley telling me I was to speak for thirteen minutes in the Sunday afternoon session of conference.

My first question to President Hinckley wasn't "What should I say?" It was "How do I get in?"

As late as last Wednesday night, I was rehearsing for a ward play. (By the way, Sister Lalli, wherever you are, I'm sorry I wasn't to play practice yesterday morning.) I was released from the bishopric in January after serving for four years. How I loved that calling, and the brethren with whom I served—Bishop Lee J. Lalli, and his able and dedicated first counselor, D. Ray Alexander—Lee J. and Ray, as I affectionately called them.

Since my release I've been traveling extensively, and therefore have been without a calling for two months. At that play practice Wednesday, I sent a signal to the new bishop, Russ Herscher, that I was ready to reenter the "job market." I hope you won't feel that

I'm an aspiring person, but I told the Primary president, Susan Mabey, I wanted to teach Primary—ideally my seven-year-old daughter's class. I know sanctification comes not with any particular calling, but with genuine acts of service, often for which there is no specific calling.

Now, despite the humility with which I approach this call, I have full confidence in my ability to perform. This, however, is not self-confidence, but confidence in the fact that the Lord makes every man and woman equal to the assignment that he or she is given. Therefore, I state clearly but humbly, "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them" (1 Nephi 3:7).

Brothers and sisters, I have never been a bishop. Since Friday afternoon I have felt puzzled, almost bewildered and overwhelmed, at how a man could be called to be a member of the Presiding Bishopric without having had the experience of being a bishop. I agonized for twenty-four hours until yesterday afternoon, when President Hinckley laid his hands upon my head and ordained me a bishop. I heard the voice of the Lord say in my heart, "No, Glenn, you have never been a bishop, but now you are a bishop, and always will be."

Loss of anonymity

Several years ago, I made a covenant with the Lord. I promised to give him anything he should require of me, and prayed this gesture might warrant forgiveness of my transgressions. Yesterday I gave the only thing I had left. It was something I cherished. I held onto it until the very last moment. I never thought of it as a selfish possession. That of which I speak flew out the window of my home when I turned on the television to watch the news and saw my picture on the television

screen. I speak of my prized remaining possession—anonymity.

How I love not to be noticed! I don't want to sit with the General Authorities in the "fishbowl" at the BYU football games in my dark blue suit! I want to sit in the stands with my father, wearing an obnoxious T-shirt which reads: "BYU #1. Enough said!" I have license and credentials to be obnoxious! I was born and raised in Provo, Utah. I attended school at Provo High School. I received my bachelor's and master's degrees from BYU. I'm a member of the Church, and I even work for the Church. My credentials are impeccable. I want to go berserk in the upper tier of the San Diego Stadium as I have the last four years at the Holiday Bowl—with the exception of Ohio State [which soundly beat BYU's team in the bowl game], when I went into deep depression. I still have one faint hope—perhaps the Brethren will let me sit with Elder Perry at the ball games. Nevertheless, I give up my prized anonymity, just as I will give up my life if it is required of me.

Transformation, love and loyalty

I love the Lord Jesus Christ. I love the transformation his atonement has wrought in me. Earlier speakers have spoken of him with such eloquence. How I wish I had command of the language which would enable me to express my feelings on this Easter afternoon. May I add my simple testimony to those who have spoken articulately. I once was in darkness, and now see light. I once lost all of my confidence, and now know all things are possible in the Lord. I once felt shame and now am "filled with his love, even unto the consuming of my flesh" (2 Nephi 4:21). "I am encircled about eternally in the arms of his love" (2 Nephi 1:15).

I express my deepest loyalty to Bishop Hales and his First Counselor, Bishop Eyring. I will not betray their trust. I express my love and loyalty to the First Presidency, the Council of the

Twelve Apostles, the First Quorum of the Seventy, and those I love most—the rank-and-file members of the Church. I express my love to my wife; without her love and understanding, I literally would not be standing at this pulpit today. I love my children, who must also give up their anonymity, as well as some time with their father. How I wish I could embrace my oldest son, who is serving a mission in the Cook Islands!

I thank God I was born of goodly parents. I begged my mother not to stand and take my picture as I came to the stand for the first time yesterday morning! But what would I have done if, during my formative years, she had not demonstrated that same pride and enthusiasm for everything I accomplished, however small. My father, Bishop Kenneth L. Pace, was the bishop of the Bonneville Ward in the East Provo Stake during my teens. He remains uppermost in my mind as exemplifying the pure love of Christ throughout his life.

Prayer of my heart

Finally, I share the prayer of my heart with you at this time. May I display in my service the courage of my convictions in a manner like unto that displayed by Bishop Victor L. Brown. May I acquire the inspired, objective judgment of Bishop H. Burke Peterson. And may I acquire the open, warm, Christlike personality of Bishop J. Richard Clarke. May I exhibit the love and loyalty to Bishop Hales taught to us so beautifully by Joseph's beloved brother, Hyrum. And lastly, may we as a Bishopric acquire the same love, respect, and unity I felt in the bishopric of the Bountiful Thirteenth Ward with Bishop Lee J. Lalli and D. Ray Alexander, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks spoke without further announcement.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks

To partake of the sacrament

On this Easter Sunday we rejoice in the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. This is a holy day for all of Christianity. Countless Christians attend worship services on this day to partake of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which many call communion. (See 1 Corinthians 10:16.)

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are commanded to partake of the sacrament each week. (See D&C 59:9, 12.) In doing so, they witness unto God the Eternal Father, as stated in the prayer on the bread, that they are "willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given them" (D&C 20:77, Moroni 4:3). We

should ponder these sacred covenants during the sacrament service.

On this Easter Sunday it is appropriate to reflect on what it means to partake of the sacrament. I will focus on the first of these solemn "witnesses" to God the Eternal Father: that we are willing to take upon us the name of his Son. What does this mean?

Taking upon us the name of Jesus Christ

Our witness that we are willing to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ has several different meanings. Some of these meanings are obvious, and well within the understanding of our children. Others are only evident to those who have searched the scriptures and pondered the wonders of eternal life.

One of the obvious meanings renews a promise we made when we were baptized. Following the scriptural pattern, persons who are baptized "witness before the Church that they have truly repented of all their sins, and are willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end" (D&C 20:37; see also 2 Nephi 31:13, Moroni 6:3). When we partake of the sacrament, we renew this covenant and all the other covenants we made in the waters of baptism. (See Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954-56], 2:341, 346.)

As a second obvious meaning, we take upon us our Savior's name when we become members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. By his commandment, this church bears his name. (See D&C 115:4, 3 Nephi 27:7-8.) Every member, young and old, is a member of the "household of God" (Ephesians 2:19). As true believers in Christ, as Christians, we have gladly taken his name upon us. (See Alma 46:15.) As King Benjamin taught his people, "Because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you" (Mosiah 5:7; see also Alma 5:14, 36:23-26).

We also take upon us the name of Jesus Christ whenever we publicly proclaim our belief in him. Each of us has many opportunities to proclaim our belief to friends and neighbors, fellow workers, and casual acquaintances. As the Apostle Peter taught the Saints of his day, we should "sanctify the Lord God in [our] hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh [us] a reason of the hope that is in [us]" (1 Peter 3:15). In this, we keep the modern commandment: "Take upon you the name of Christ, and speak the truth in soberness" (D&C 18:21).

A third meaning appeals to the understanding of those mature enough to know that a follower of Christ is obligated to serve him. Many scriptural ref-

erences to the name of the Lord seem to be references to the work of his kingdom. Thus, when Peter and the other Apostles were beaten, they rejoiced "that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name" (Acts 5:41). Paul wrote certain members who had ministered to the Saints that the Lord would not forget the labor of love they had "shewed toward his name" (Hebrews 6:10). According to this meaning, by witnessing our willingness to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ, we signify our willingness to do the work of his kingdom.

In these three relatively obvious meanings, we see that we take upon us the name of Christ when we are baptized in his name, when we belong to his Church and profess our belief in him, and when we do the work of his kingdom.

There are other meanings as well, deeper meanings that the more mature members of the Church should understand and ponder as he or she partakes of the sacrament.

Authority of God and exaltation

It is significant that when we partake of the sacrament we do not witness that we *take upon us* the name of Jesus Christ. We witness that we are *willing* to do so. (See D&C 20:77.) The fact that we only witness to our willingness suggests that something else must happen before we actually take that sacred name upon us in the most important sense.

What future event or events could this covenant contemplate? The scriptures suggest two sacred possibilities, one concerning the authority of God, especially as exercised in the temples, and the other—closely related—concerning exaltation in the celestial kingdom.

The name of God is sacred. The Lord's prayer begins with the words, "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name" (Matthew 6:9). From Sinai came the commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the

Lord thy God in vain" (Exodus 20:7, Deuteronomy 5:11). Latter-day revelation equates this with using the name of God without authority. "Let all men beware how they take my name in their lips," the Lord declares in a modern revelation, for "many there be who . . . use the name of the Lord, and use it in vain, having not authority" (D&C 63:61-62).

Consistent with these references, many scriptures that refer to "the name of Jesus Christ" are obviously references to the authority of the Savior. This was surely the meaning conveyed when the seventy reported to Jesus that "even the devils are subject unto us through thy name" (Luke 10:17). The Doctrine and Covenants employs this same meaning when it describes the Twelve Apostles of this dispensation as "they who shall desire to take upon them my name with full purpose of heart" (D&C 18:27). The Twelve are later designated as "special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world," and as those who "officiate in the name of the Lord, under the direction of the Presidency of the Church" (D&C 107:23, 33).

The significance of temples

By way of further illustration, the Old Testament contains scores of references to the name of the Lord in a context where it clearly means the authority of the Lord. Most of these references have to do with the temple.

When the children of Israel were still on the other side of the Jordan, the Lord told them that when they entered the promised land there should be a place where the Lord their God would "cause his name to dwell" (Deuteronomy 12:11; see also Deuteronomy 14:23-24, 16:6). Time after time in succeeding revelations, the Lord and his servants referred to the future temple as a house for "the name" of the Lord God of Israel. (See 1 Kings 3:2; 5:5; 8:16-20, 29, 44, 48; 1 Chronicles 22:8-10, 19; 29:16; 2 Chronicles 2:4; 6:5-10, 20, 34, 38.) After the temple

was dedicated, the Lord appeared to Solomon and told him that He had hallowed the temple "to put my name there for ever" (1 Kings 9:3, 2 Chronicles 7:16).

Similarly, in modern revelations the Lord refers to temples as houses built "unto my holy name" (D&C 124:39, 105:33, 109:2-5). In the inspired dedicatory prayer of the Kirtland Temple, the Prophet Joseph Smith asked the Lord for a blessing upon "thy people upon whom thy name shall be put in this house" (D&C 109:26).

All of these references to ancient and modern temples as houses for "the name" of the Lord obviously involve something far more significant than a mere inscription of his sacred name on the structure. The scriptures speak of the Lord's putting his name in a temple because he gives authority for his name to be used in the sacred ordinances of that house. That is the meaning of the Prophet's reference to the Lord's putting his name upon his people in that holy house. (See D&C 109:26.)

Willingness to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ can therefore be understood as willingness to take upon us the authority of Jesus Christ. According to this meaning, by partaking of the sacrament we witness our willingness to participate in the sacred ordinances of the temple and to receive the highest blessings available through the name and by the authority of the Savior when he chooses to confer them upon us.

Called by his name

Another future event we may anticipate when we witness our willingness to take that sacred name upon us concerns our relationship to our Savior and the incomprehensible blessings available to those who will be called by his name at the last day.

King Benjamin told his people, "There shall be no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of

Christ, the Lord Omnipotent" (Mosiah 3:17; see also 2 Nephi 31:21). Peter proclaimed "the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth" to the leaders of the Jews, declaring that "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:10, 12; see also D&C 18:21).

The scriptures proclaim that the Savior's atoning sacrifice was for those who "believe on his name." Alma taught that Jesus Christ, the Son, the Only Begotten of the Father, would come "to take away the sins of the world, yea, the sins of every man who steadfastly believeth on his name" (Alma 5:48, 9:27, 11:40; Helaman 14:2). In the words of King Benjamin, "Whosoever doeth this shall be found at the right hand of God, for he shall know the name by which he is called; for he shall be called by the name of Christ" (Mosiah 5:9).

Thus, those who exercise faith in the sacred name of Jesus Christ and repent of their sins and enter into his covenant and keep his commandments (see Mosiah 5:8) can lay claim on the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Those who do so will be called by his name at the last day.

When the Savior taught the Nephites following his resurrection, he referred to the scriptural statement that "ye must take upon you the name of Christ." He explained, "For by this name shall ye be called at the last day; And whoso taketh upon him my name, and endureth to the end, the same shall be saved at the last day" (3 Nephi 27:5-6). That same teaching is repeated in a modern revelation, which adds the caution that "if they know not the name by which they are called, they cannot have place in the kingdom of my Father" (D&C 18:25; see also Alma 5:38).

The Book of Mormon explains the significance of being called by the name of Jesus Christ. When the Savior showed his spirit body to the brother of Jared, he introduced himself as the Father and the Son, declaring that through his redeeming sacrifice all mankind

who believed on his name should have life eternal through him, "and they shall become my sons and my daughters" (Ether 3:14). Abinadi said of those who believed in the Lord and looked to him for a remission of their sins "that these are his seed, or they are heirs of the kingdom of God" (Mosiah 15:11). He continued this explanation as follows:

"For these are they whose sins he has borne; these are they for whom he has died, to redeem them from their transgressions. And now, are they not his seed?" (Mosiah 15:12).

Speaking through the prophet Alma, the Lord explained the significance of this relationship: "For behold, in my name are they called; and if they know me they shall come forth, and shall have a place eternally at my right hand" (Mosiah 26:24).

Faith, repentance, compliance with laws and ordinances

In these great scriptures from the Book of Mormon, we learn that those who are qualified by faith and repentance and compliance with the laws and ordinances of the gospel will have their sins borne by the Lord Jesus Christ. In spiritual and figurative terms they will become the sons and daughters of Christ, heirs to his kingdom. These are they who will be called by his name in the last day.

According to this meaning, when we witness our *willingness* to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ, we are signifying our commitment to do all that we can to achieve eternal life in the kingdom of our Father. We are expressing our candidacy—our determination to strive for—exaltation in the celestial kingdom.

Those who are found worthy to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ at the last day are described in the great revelations recorded in the ninety-third and seventy-sixth sections of the Doctrine and Covenants. Here the Savior revealed to Joseph Smith that in due time, if we keep the commandments of God, we can receive the

"fulness" of the Father (D&C 93:19-20). Here the Savior bears record that "all those who are begotten through me are partakers of the glory of the [Father], and are the church of the Firstborn" (D&C 93:22). "They are they into whose hands the Father has given all things. . . . Wherefore, as it is written, they are gods" who "shall dwell in the presence of God and his Christ forever and ever" (D&C 76:55, 58, 62). "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3; see also D&C 88:4-5). This is the ultimate significance of taking upon us the name of Jesus Christ.

When the priest offers the scriptural prayer on the bread at the sacramental table, he prays that all who partake may "witness" unto God, the Eternal Father, "that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son" (D&C 20:77, Moroni 4:3). This witness has several different meanings.

Candidacy for exaltation

It causes us to renew the covenant we made in the waters of baptism to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ and serve him to the end. We also take upon us his name as we publicly profess our belief in him, as we fulfill our obligations as members of his Church, and as we do the work of his kingdom.

But there is something beyond these familiar meanings, because what we witness is not that we *take* upon us his name but that we are *willing* to do so. In this sense, our witness relates to some future event or status whose attainment is not self-assumed, but depends on the authority or initiative of the Savior himself.

Scriptural references to the name of Jesus Christ often signify the authority of Jesus Christ. In that sense, our willingness to take upon us his name signifies our willingness to take upon us the authority of Jesus Christ in the sacred ordinances of the temple, and to receive the highest blessings available

through his authority when he chooses to confer them upon us.

Finally, our willingness to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ affirms our commitment to do all that we can to be counted among those whom he will choose to stand at his right hand and be called by his name at the last day. In this sacred sense, our witness that we are willing to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ constitutes our declaration of candidacy for exaltation in the celestial kingdom. Exaltation is eternal life, "the greatest of all the gifts of God" (D&C 14:7).

That is what we should ponder as we partake of the sacred emblems of the sacrament. As we do so, we glory in the mission of the risen Lord, who lived and taught and suffered and died and rose again that all mankind might have immortality *and eternal life*. Of this I testify in the sacred name of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose witness I am, amen.

President Benson

We have just heard from Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Before hearing President Hinckley's concluding remarks, we should like to express appreciation and our sincere gratitude to the Tabernacle Choir, the Primary children's choir, and the Brigham Young University priesthood choir, and to their conductors and organists.

We thank our city officials for the cooperation given this conference, the Relief Society and Church Health Unit nurses who have been on hand to render service throughout the conference, and the ushers and interpreters.

We express appreciation to the local and national press representatives for the coverage given to the conference and to the owners and managers of the many radio and television stations and cable systems who have given public service time to carry sessions of this conference to many countries.

We shall now be pleased to listen to President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, who will be the concluding speaker of the conference, after which the Tabernacle Choir will sing "Testimony."

The benediction will be offered by Elder Robert L. Backman, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

This conference will then stand adjourned for six months.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

You've heard very much from me in this conference. I think I would like to take the liberty of asking Brother [Hans B.] Ringger, Brother [Waldo P.] Call, and Brother [Helio R.] Camargo to come quickly to the stand and each

take about two and a half minutes so that you won't have to wait six months to see them and hear them. Three good men and true, who we have sustained as members of the First Quorum of the Seventy at this conference.

Elder Hans B. Ringger

Need for friends

Elder Packer taught us two days ago that in the early years of the Church the Saints would sometimes get a letter from "Box B." A letter from Box B meant you were getting a calling without being interviewed first. Presidents of the Church called members on missions with no warning beforehand. I feel the same way today.

It's a long way from Switzerland to this stand in Salt Lake City. I had to cross many borders. I had to ask for a visa, for permission to enter this country. But I found out that wherever I had to cross a border or had to talk with people, the people were friendly. That's exactly what I need in my assignment—friends. I have some sitting behind me. I have some sitting before me.

Answers will come

I'm really happy to be here and to serve. I don't know at the moment all the questions I will be asked or how I will find solutions for them. But I know that I will get an answer when I work on it and pray about it. If I do that, I know I will be blessed in all I do.

I am very thankful for my priesthood leaders, my parents, my sisters, my brethren, my teachers in Sunday School—all who have given me the strength to fulfill the assignments I get in my life. Hopefully, I can serve so that our Lord will be pleased. I am very thankful to the First Presidency for this privilege—for calling me to be a General Authority. I leave you my testimony that I know that our Lord lives, that Jesus is the Christ, and that Joseph Smith is a true prophet. This I say in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Waldo P. Call

Love and gratitude

My dear brothers and sisters, this is, as our missionaries would say, an

awesome situation. At this time, I want to thank my parents for the good example they set for me. There was one time in my life—and my mother, who

I imagine might be listening, doesn't know this—when the love I knew she had for me saved me. I knelt down one night to pray, as she had taught me. I was about to throw away everything that I had. As I started praying, I started thinking of her and of the love that she had for me. As I cried and prayed—and it took most of the night—I was so grateful that I knew that she loved me.

I am grateful for my wife. Throughout the many years we have been together, I have known that she has loved me. It is because of this love I have felt for my family, and they have felt for me, that I am here today.

I am grateful for President Kimball. I was watching some young

people sitting in front of me as we were singing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet" (*Hymns*, no. 196), and I imagine they would have liked to have come up and sit beside President Kimball where I sat just now.

Testimony

I know that this is the work of the Lord. I know that he lives. I know this. I know that these men, the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve, are prophets and Apostles, seers and revelators, and if we will follow them, we will have eternal life. I say this in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Helio da Rocha Camargo

The Lord is in charge

My dear brothers and sisters, you cannot even imagine how I feel now in front of this huge and wonderful congregation of Saints, called to speak in this historical tabernacle. I don't know how my legs support my body now; this is an experience I never wanted to have.

When President Hinckley called me and asked me to accept this calling, there came to my mind the remembrance of a time in the history of the people of God, Israel, when they had to face their enemies. They assembled a huge army of strong soldiers and they presented themselves in front of the Lord to go to battle, and the Lord didn't accept this army. He reduced it, and he reduced it again and again until only three hundred people were left. And with this ridiculous army he defeated the enemy and destroyed the enemies of his people.

This is the way I feel about my calling in this position. The Lord chose

to put me in this position, using my weakness and my inability so that he could prove that he is God, he is the Lord, he is in charge. Even using my poor and broken English, he can do his work. It is because I believe this—I know this, I know that he lives, he is in charge, as I told President Hinckley—that I accept this calling in humility, but in certainty that the Lord is with me. He leads, he governs, and this is his kingdom.

Plan for happiness

I know that the Lord lives. I know that President Kimball is a prophet—oh, I know that! I could tell you some stories, but the time is not enough now. I know that I am a child of God, and that this gospel is the plan for the happiness of all the children of God in this world, and this I say in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

I am sure that was time well-spent. I wish we might have heard from these Brethren [Elders Ringger, Call, and Camargo] at greater length. They are three wonderful men, and their very presence here this day is to me a testimony of the great power and the divinity of this work.

Angel Moroni's visit to Joseph Smith

I love to read of the visit of Moroni to the boy Joseph Smith—that night when he was only a youth, when a messenger clothed in white appeared before him in his bedroom. He was a farm boy, with very little in the way of formal education. But he had received a vision three years earlier, the like of which no man in his generation—or in any generation since—has received, when God the Eternal Father and the resurrected Lord had appeared to him.

Now the angel Moroni came, and according to the Prophet's testimony, "said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me, and that his name was Moroni; that God had a work for me to do; and that my name should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues, or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people" (Joseph Smith—History 1:33).

Three Brethren, three lands

Brother Ringger comes from Switzerland. His grandmother was touched by the missionaries a long, long time ago. His father was a man of great faith, a patriarch in the midst of his people, in a very literal way. Brother Hans Ringger has been a stake president among his people and a Regional Representative. He is a man of faith. His English may not be as polished as perhaps yours is. But there burns in his heart a deep, flaming conviction of the truth of this work. By

profession, he is a distinguished architect in his native land. He has just retired as a full colonel from the Swiss Army. When I talked with him the other day about his leaving his business and consecrating himself to the work of the Lord and what it would entail, I looked into his strong face, and the tears began to well just a little. Then he said, "Of course, of course. If that's what the Lord wishes, that's what I want to do."

It was so with Brother Call, who was born in Mexico and reared in Mexico—in that land where the teaching of the gospel has been so fruitful, where there are now some three hundred thousand members of the Church who speak that beautiful language known as Spanish.

It was so with Brother Camargo, who came within a few hours after I had talked with him on the phone—just picked up his things and came, without ever a question, who speaks the tongue of Brazil—Portuguese—in that tremendous nation of South America.

Three lands! "God had a work for me to do; . . . my name should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues, . . . it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people." These are but representatives of this marvelous, miraculous thing, which we are witnessing in our time, of the spread of the restored gospel across the earth for the blessing of our Father's children wherever they may be found.

The Holy Spirit and faith

Brothers and sisters, the time has come to conclude the conference. We now leave for our homes. May we take with us something of the light of inspiration which we have gained here. Every one of us should be the better for having been here. May we put renewed energy into that which lies ahead of us.

When I was a boy, we frequently sang in Sunday School:

"Put your shoulder to the wheel;
push along;
Do your duty with a heart full of
song.
We all have work; let no one
shirk;
Put your shoulder to the wheel."
(*Hymns*, no. 206.)

God bless you, my beloved associates, that his Holy Spirit may abide in your hearts, that his Holy Spirit may dwell in your homes, that faith will

grow at your hearthsides among those you love most, and that your influence for good may be felt among all with whom you associate, I humbly pray as I leave with you my witness and testimony of the divinity of the work, and in the authority of the holy priesthood in me vested, invoke the blessings of heaven upon you. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Testimony."

Elder Robert L. Backman offered the benediction.

SALT LAKE TABERNACLE CHOIR AND ORGAN BROADCAST

The following broadcast, announced by J. Spencer Kinard and originating with KSL Radio and Television, Salt Lake City, Utah, was presented from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 7, 1985, through the courtesy of the Columbia Broadcasting System's network throughout the United States, parts of Canada, and through other facilities to several points overseas:

Announcer: Once more we welcome you within these walls with Music and the Spoken Word from the crossroads of the West.

CBS and its affiliated stations bring you at this hour the Mormon Tabernacle Choir from Temple Square in Salt Lake City, with Jerold Ottley conducting the choir, John Longhurst, Tabernacle organist, and the Spoken Word given by Spencer Kinard.

(Organ: Musical introduction to *Rabboni*—Manookin)

Announcer: With soloists JoAnn Ottley, Clayne Robison, Douglas Keeler, and Wilford Whittaker, the Tabernacle Choir presents the broadcast premiere of music from a new

Easter cantata by Robert Manookin, entitled *Rabboni*, the name used in the Gospel of John to address Christ.

After Jesus had been crucified, Joseph of Arimathea besought Pilate that he might take the body away, and Pilate gave him leave. In the night, Joseph and Nicodemus wound the body in linen clothes and myrrh and aloes, as was the manner of the day.

Now in the place where He was crucified, there was a garden with a new sepulchre in which they laid Jesus.

And the women followed after and beheld the sepulchre and how His body was laid.

And they prepared spices and ointments, and rested the Sabbath day. And in the end of the Sabbath, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre bringing the spices which they had prepared.

(Women: "Bring Aloes and Myrrh"—Manookin)

Announcer: Very early in the morning of the first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene unto the sepulchre, and seeth that the stone was rolled away.

(Choir: "Awake and Sing!"—Manookin)

Announcer: But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping; and as she wept she looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, and they say unto her . . .

(Soloists: "Woman, Why Weepst Thou?"—Manookin)

(Soloist without announcement: "Jesus of Nazareth"—Manookin)

(Men without announcement: "Why Seek Ye the Living among the Dead"—Manookin)

Announcer: And she turned herself back and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus, but supposed Him to be the gardener.

(Soloist: "Rabboni"—Manookin)

(Soloist without announcement: "Remember How I Spake unto You"—Manookin)

(Choir and soloists without announcement: "Awake and Sing!"—Manookin)

Announcer: For behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore He suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him. And he hath risen again from the dead, that he might bring all

men unto him. . . . And how great is his joy . . .

(Choir: "Let Your Hearts Rejoice"—Manookin)

Announcer: The Tabernacle Choir has presented the broadcast premiere of the Easter cantata *Rabboni* by Robert Manookin. This work was commissioned by the Milton A. Barlow Endowment for Music Composition. The text, based on scripture, was prepared by Jean L. Kaberry and Ted Gibbons.

Announcer: Again we leave you from within the shadows of the everlasting hills. May peace be with you this day . . . and always.

Announcer on radio: This concludes the two-thousand, nine-hundred, third performance continuing the fifty-sixth year of this traditional broadcast from the Mormon Tabernacle on Temple Square, brought to you by CBS and its affiliated stations, originating with Station KSL in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Jerold Otley conducted the choir, John Longhurst was at the organ, the Spoken Word was given by Spencer Kinard.

In another seven days at this same hour, Music and the Spoken Word will be heard again from the crossroads of the West.

This is the CBS Radio Network.

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE MUSIC

The Tabernacle Choir furnished the choral numbers for the Saturday morning, Sunday morning, and Sunday afternoon sessions of the conference with Jerold Otley and Donald Ripplinger conducting.

The music for the Saturday afternoon session was provided by a Primary children's choir from the Jordan Utah Region directed by Sister Susan Kenney.

At the general priesthood meeting a priesthood choir from Brigham

Young University under the direction of Ronald Staheli and Mack Wilberg furnished the music.

Prelude, postlude, and interlude music and accompaniments on the Tabernacle organ throughout the conference sessions were played by Robert Cundick, John Longhurst, and Clay Christiansen, Tabernacle organists.

Francis M. Gibbons
Clerk of the Conference

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THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY
SAINTS

Official Report of the
One Hundred Fifty-fifth
Semiannual General

CONFERENCE

of The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints

held in the Tabernacle
Salt Lake City, Utah

October 5 and 6, 1985

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THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-FIFTH SEMIANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The 155th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, October 5, 1985, at 10:00 A.M.

The general sessions of the conference were held at 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday, October 5 and 6, 1985. The general priesthood meeting was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, October 5, 1985, at 6:00 P.M.

President Spencer W. Kimball attended and presided at the four general sessions of the conference and watched the general priesthood meeting on television in his apartment in the Hotel Utah. Because of ill health, President Marion G. Romney, First Counselor in the First Presidency, did not attend any of the conference sessions, but watched all of them on television in his home. President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday morning, general priesthood, and Sunday morning sessions. President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, conducted the Saturday afternoon and Sunday afternoon sessions.

Television and radio stations carried portions or all of some of the conference sessions to audiences in many parts of the world. The general sessions and the general priesthood session were also carried via satellite transmission to over one thousand stake centers. The general priesthood session was carried by closed-circuit transmission to over seven hundred locations in many different countries.

On Saturday, September 28, 1985, a general women's meeting was held in the Tabernacle on Temple Square. A summary of this meeting and President Hinckley's address are included in this report.

General Authorities present

The following General Authorities of the Church attended one or more of the general sessions:

The First Presidency: Spencer W. Kimball¹ and Gordon B. Hinckley.

The Council of the Twelve: Ezra Taft Benson, Howard W. Hunter, Thomas S. Monson, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry,¹ James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, and M. Russell Ballard.

The First Quorum of the Seventy:
Presidents: Carlos E. Asay, Dean L. Larsen, Richard G. Scott, Marion D. Hanks, Wm. Grant Bangerter, Jack H. Goasland Jr., and Robert L. Backman.
Additional Members of the Seventy: A. Theodore Tuttle, Franklin D. Richards, Theodore M. Burton, Paul H. Dunn, Hartman Rector Jr., Loren C. Dunn, Robert L. Simpson, Rex D. Pinegar, J. Thomas Fyans, Adney Y. Komatsu, Joseph B. Wirthlin, Gene R. Cook, Charles Didier, William R. Bradford, George P. Lee, John H. Groberg, Jacob de Jager, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Royden G. Derrick, Robert E. Wells, James M. Paramore, Hugh W. Pinnock, F. Enzo Busche, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Ronald E. Poelman, Derek A. Cuthbert, Rex C. Reeve Sr., F. Burton Howard, Ted E. Brewerton, Angel Abrea, John K. Carmack, Russell C. Taylor, Robert B. Harbertson, Devere Harris, Spencer H. Osborn, Philip T. Sonntag, John Sonnenberg, F. Arthur Kay, Keith W. Wilcox, Victor L. Brown, H. Burke Peterson,² Hans B. Ringger, Waldo P. Call, and Helio da Rocha Camargo.

¹President Marion G. Romney and Elder David B. Haight were excused due to ill health.

²Elder J. Richard Clarke was away on assignment.

The Presiding Bishopric: Robert D. Hales, Henry B. Eyring, and Glenn L. Pace.

Emeritus General Authorities: Eldred G. Smith, Sterling W. Sill, Henry D. Taylor, Bernard P. Brockbank, James A. Cullimore, Joseph Anderson, John H. Vandenberg, and O. Leslie Stone.

Other authorities present

Other authorities of the Church in attendance included Regional Representatives, presidents of stakes and their counselors, presidents of temples, bishops of wards, and presidencies and members of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood quorums.

Many general, stake, and ward auxiliary officers also attended.

FIRST DAY MORNING MEETING

FIRST SESSION

The first general session of the 155th Semiannual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah on Saturday, October 5, 1985, at 10:00 A.M. President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The music for the opening session was provided by the Tabernacle Choir with Jerold Ottley conducting and John Longhurst at the organ.

Before the commencement of the meeting the Tabernacle Choir sang "All Glory, Laud, and Honor" without announcement.

President Hinckley then made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My beloved brethren and sisters, we greet you this morning from the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City in this, the first general session of the 155th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

President Spencer W. Kimball, President of the Church, is seated on the stand. We are delighted to have him with us this morning. We regret the absence of President Marion G.

Romney, First Counselor in the First Presidency, who is unable to be with us. I am Brother Hinckley and we go forward under delegation of authority and responsibility of President Kimball.

We welcome all who are participating in this conference, whether seated here in the Tabernacle or in the overflow session in the nearby Assembly Hall where Elders A. Theodore Tuttle and Robert B. Harbertson preside, or who are participating by satellite transmission, radio, cable, or television. These proceedings are being carried to over one thousand stake centers throughout the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico by means of satellite transmission.

We acknowledge the General Authorities of the Church who are seated on the stand, the Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary general presidencies and the Activities Committee, who also are seated on the stand. We extend a special welcome to government, education, and civic leaders who are present.

It is a beautiful, bright morning here in Salt Lake City; the mountains are painted with the reds and golds of autumn. It is a delightful and wonderful season, and we welcome all who are here and all who are associated with us wherever you may be.

The Tabernacle Choir is with us this morning. They recently returned from a concert tour in Japan, which was highly successful. Under the direction of Jerold Ottley with John Longhurst at the organ, the choir is providing the music for this session. They opened singing "All Glory, Laud, and Honor." They will now sing "Let the Holy Spirit Guide."

Following the singing, the invocation will be offered by Elder J. Thomas Fyans, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Let the Holy Spirit Guide."

Elder J. Thomas Fyans offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

The choir will sing "Called to Serve."

The choir sang "Called to Serve."

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Joined in faith

It is a wonderful privilege and blessing to be with you in this great conference. Many more of you are participating in gathering places outside of the Tabernacle than are assembled in the Tabernacle. We welcome you most warmly wherever you may be and whatever your circumstances.

At the time of the construction of this Tabernacle, more than a century ago, when we were relatively few in number, the Brethren stated that we could never hope to construct a building large enough to accommodate all of the Latter-day Saints. If that was true then, it is more so today. The membership of the Church is now approaching the six million mark.

Through the miracle of science and by the power of the Spirit, we are joined together in a great world conference. We thank you for your interest and for your presence. We thank you for your great faith and faithfulness. No power under the heavens can stop the growth of this work if we, as a people, will live the gospel of Jesus Christ.

President Kimball's love and blessing

I am so happy that we have President [Spencer W.] Kimball with us this morning. Now in his ninety-first year, he has nevertheless made the effort to come before you. I wish with all my heart that he might speak to us, but that does not appear to be feasible. He has asked that we convey to you his love and blessing. He is our prophet, our seer, our revelator. He was put in place by the God of heaven, and he has been kept there by this same power. He will remain for as long as the Lord wills that he remain. We are blessed with his presence.

Elder McConkie's final testimony

We shall miss in this conference the strong voice of Elder Bruce R. McConkie, who passed away April 19, 1985. He bore his final testimony to the truth of this work when he spoke to us in conference last April. He was a dedicated scholar of the gospel and a fearless advocate of its message. Our lives were enriched and our understanding broadened by the logic of his presentation and the sincerity of his declaration.

He spoke as an Apostle, a special witness of the Christ.

We are grateful for the continuing strength and vitality of President Ezra

Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. He will be our first speaker this morning.

President Ezra Taft Benson

"What think ye of Christ?" (Matthew 22:42). That question, posed by our Lord, has challenged the world for centuries.

Choose the right way

Fortunately for us, God has provided modern scripture, another testament, even the Book of Mormon, for the convincing of the world that Jesus is the Christ. Anyone who will read the Book of Mormon and put it to the divine test that Moroni proposes (see Moroni 10:3-5) can be convinced that Jesus is the Christ. Once that conviction is gained, then comes the question "Will we choose to follow Him?" The devils believe that Jesus is the Christ, but they choose to follow Lucifer. (See James 2:19; Mark 5:7.)

Throughout the ages prophets have exhorted the people to make up their minds. "Choose you this day whom ye will serve," pled Joshua (Joshua 24:15).

Elijah thundered, "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him" (1 Kings 18:21).

When you choose to follow Christ, you choose the Way, the Truth, the Life—the right way, the saving truth, the abundant life. (See John 14:6.)

Fundamental and permanent change

"I would commend you to seek this Jesus," states Moroni (Ether 12:41).

When you choose to follow Christ, you choose to be changed.

"No man," said President David O. McKay, "can sincerely resolve to

apply in his daily life the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth without sensing a change in his own nature. The phrase 'born again' has a deeper significance than many people attach to it. This *changed feeling* may be indescribable, *but it is real*" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1962, p. 7).

Can human hearts be changed? Why, of course! It happens every day in the great missionary work of the Church. It is one of the most widespread of Christ's modern miracles. If it hasn't happened to you—it should.

Our Lord told Nicodemus that "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Of these words President Kimball said, "This is the simple total answer to the weightiest of all questions. . . . To gain eternal life there must be a rebirth, a transformation" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1958, p. 14).

President McKay said that Christ called for "an entire revolution" of Nicodemus's "inner man." "His manner of thinking, feeling, and acting with reference to spiritual things would have to undergo a fundamental and permanent change" (in Conference Report, Apr., 1960, p. 26).

Born of God

Besides the physical ordinance of baptism and the laying on of hands, one must be spiritually born again to gain exaltation and eternal life.

Alma states: "And the Lord said unto me; Marvel not that all mankind, yea, men and women, all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, must be born again; yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being re-

deemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters;

"And thus they become new creatures; and unless they do this, they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God" (Mosiah 27:25-26).

A change of heart

The "change of heart" and "born again" processes are best described in the keystone of our religion, the Book of Mormon.

Those who had been born of God after hearing King Benjamin's address had a mighty change in their hearts. They had "no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually." (See Mosiah 5:2, 7.)

The fourth chapter of Alma describes a period in Nephite history when "the church began to fail in its progress" (Alma 4:10). Alma met this challenge by resigning his seat as chief judge in government "and confined himself wholly to the high priesthood" responsibility which was his (Alma 4:20).

He bore "down in pure testimony" against the people (see Alma 4:19), and in the fifth chapter of Alma he asks over forty crucial questions.

Speaking frankly to the members of the Church, he declared, "I ask of you, my brethren of the church, have ye spiritually been born of God? Have ye received his image in your countenances? Have ye experienced this mighty change in your hearts?" (Alma 5:14).

He continued, "If ye have experienced a change of heart, and if ye have felt to sing the song of redeeming love, I would ask, can ye feel so now?" (Alma 5:26).

From inside out

Would not the progress of the Church increase dramatically today with an increasing number of those who are spiritually reborn? Can you imagine what would happen in our homes? Can you imagine what would happen with

an increasing number of copies of the Book of Mormon in the hands of an increasing number of missionaries who know how to use it and who have been born of God? When this happens, we will get the harvest President Kimball envisions. It was the "born of God" Alma who as a missionary was so able to impart the word that many others were also born of God. (See Alma 36:23-26.)

The Lord works from the inside out. The world works from the outside in. The world would take people out of the slums. Christ takes the slums out of people, and then they take themselves out of the slums. The world would mold men by changing their environment. Christ changes men, who then change their environment. The world would shape human behavior, but Christ can change human nature.

Can change the world

"Human nature *can* be changed, here and now," said President McKay, and then he quoted the following:

"'You can change human nature. No man who has felt in him the Spirit of Christ even for half a minute can deny this truth. . . .

"'You do change human nature, your own human nature, if you surrender it to Christ. Human nature can be changed here and now. Human nature has been changed in the past. Human nature must be changed on an enormous scale in the future, unless the world is to be drowned in its own blood. And only Christ can change it.

"'Twelve men did quite a lot to change the world [nineteen hundred] years ago. Twelve simple men'" (Quoting Beverly Nichols, in *Stepping Stones to an Abundant Life*, comp. Llewelyn R. McKay [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971], pp. 23, 127).

Yes, Christ changes men, and changed men can change the world.

Men changed for Christ will be captained by Christ. Like Paul they will be asking, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6). Peter stated,

they will "follow his steps" (1 Peter 2:21). John said they will "walk, even as he walked" (1 John 2:6).

Witnesses of God

Finally, men captained by Christ will be consumed in Christ. To paraphrase President Harold B. Lee, they set fire in others because they are on fire. (See *Stand Ye in Holy Places* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1974], p. 192.)

Their will is swallowed up in His will. (See John 5:30.)

They do always those things that please the Lord. (See John 8:29.)

Not only would they die for the Lord, but more important they want to live for Him.

Enter their homes, and the pictures on their walls, the books on their shelves, the music in the air, their words and acts reveal them as Christians.

They stand as witnesses of God at all times, and in all things, and in all places. (See Mosiah 18:9.)

Find eternal life

They have Christ on their minds, as they look unto Him in every thought. (See D&C 6:36.)

They have Christ in their hearts as their affections are placed on Him forever. (See Alma 37:36.)

Almost every week they partake of the sacrament and witness anew to their Eternal Father that they are willing to take upon them the name of His Son, always remember Him, and keep His commandments. (See Moroni 4:3.)

In Book of Mormon language, they "feast upon the words of Christ" (2 Nephi 32:3), "talk of Christ" (2 Nephi 25:26), "rejoice in Christ" (2 Nephi 25:26), "are made alive in Christ" (2 Nephi 25:25), and "glory in [their] Jesus" (2 Nephi 33:6).

In short, they lose themselves in the Lord, and find eternal life. (See Luke 17:33.)

They who have overcome the world

President David O. McKay tells of a singular event that happened to him. After falling asleep, he said he "beheld in vision something infinitely sublime." He saw a beautiful city, a great concourse of people dressed in white, and the Savior.

"The city, I understood, was his. It was the City Eternal; and the people following him were to abide there in peace and eternal happiness.

"But who were they?

"As if the Savior read my thoughts, he answered by pointing to a semicircle that then appeared above them, and on which were written in gold the words:

"These Are They Who Have Overcome the World—Who Have Truly Been Born Again!"

"When I awoke, it was breaking day" (*Cherished Experiences from the Writings of President David O. McKay*, comp. Clare Middlemiss [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976], pp. 59-60).

When we awake and are born of God, a new day will break and Zion will be redeemed.

May we be convinced that Jesus is the Christ, choose to follow Him, be changed for Him, captained by Him, consumed in Him, and born again I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "How Great Thou Art" and "For the Strength of the Hills" without announcement.

President Hinckley

We have heard President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. The Tabernacle Choir then presented two beautiful and stirring hymns from the new hymnbook, "How Great Thou Art" and that marvelous hymn from the pen of Evan Stephens, "For the Strength of

the Hills we bless thee, Our God, our Father's God."

We shall now be pleased to listen to Elder James E. Faust, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder James E. Faust

Search for abundant life

My message this morning concerns the search for the abundant life. Without wishing to give any offense, I would sincerely like to try and relate this search to everyone, including those Church members and others who consider themselves to be "loving critics" of the Church. I do so, not out of fear that any criticism or opposition might injure the Church, but rather out of a sincere spiritual concern for the critics themselves. Criticism can be helpful if it is properly motivated and if it reaches those who make the decisions, but it is often a symptom of a problem with which the critics themselves are struggling. I believe those who find fault would be surprised at how often the leadership of the Church prays for them. It is in that spirit I would like to speak today.

President Gordon B. Hinckley reminded us, "As a Church, we encourage gospel scholarship and the search to understand all truth. Fundamental to our theology is belief in individual freedom of inquiry, thought, and expression. Constructive discussion is a privilege of every Latter-day Saint" (*Ensign*, Sept. 1985, p. 5).

Divine and secular knowledge

The Savior said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). How is the abundant life to be obtained? The abundant life involves an endless search for knowledge, light, and truth. President Hugh B. Brown said: "God desires that we learn and continue to learn, but this involves some unlearning. As Uncle

Zeke said: 'It ain't my ignorance that done me up but what I know'd that wasn't so.' The ultimate evil is the closing of the mind or steeling it against truth, resulting in the hardening of intellectual arteries" (in baccalaureate address, Utah State University, Logan, Utah, 4 June 1965).

We gain knowledge from two sources. One is the divine and the other is secular. Rex E. Lee has referred to them as the "rational process and the extrarational process" (in *Speeches of the Year, 1982* [Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1982], p. 131). We are all more familiar with the rational process that we learned in school and through lifelong study. The extrarational, or divine source, is less common. This source is, however, more sure. Both sources may be available to us. Fortunately, we do not have to choose one to the exclusion of the other. Brother Lee continues, "We should feel equally at home in the academy and in the temple. We should regard each as a center of learning" (*Speeches*, p. 132).

The learning process

We are apparently part of an expanding universe. Secular knowledge is expanding very rapidly. Our knowledge of gospel truth is also expanding. Prophets continue to speak. Increased understanding of the scriptures is also possible. And so the opportunities for the abundant life increase as we pursue the quest for truth and knowledge.

In the infinite process of accepting and rejecting information in the search for light, truth, and knowledge, almost everyone may have at one time or another some private questions. That is

part of the learning process. Many are like the biblical father of the child with the "dumb spirit" who pleaded with the Savior: "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24).

Those who are in spiritual peril

The Church has not and, in my opinion, should not speak on every disputed question. But I cannot help wondering if a member of the Church does not place himself in some spiritual peril when publicly disparaging the prophetic calling of Joseph Smith, or his successors, or any of the fundamental, settled doctrines of the Church.

When a member expresses his private doubts or unbelief as a public chastisement of the leadership or the doctrine of the Church, or as a confrontation with those also seeking eternal light, he has entered upon sacred ground. Those who complain about the doctrine or leadership of the Church but who lack the faith or desire to keep God's commandments risk separating themselves from the divine source of learning. They do not enjoy the same richness of the Spirit that they might enjoy if they proved their sincere love of God by walking humbly before Him, by keeping His commandments, and by sustaining those He has appointed to lead the Church.

Some of those who now criticize and find fault have, in the past, felt the peaceful, spiritually settling comfort enjoyed by those in full harmony with the gospel as restored by Joseph Smith. They may also have been lost and forgotten by those who should be more caring.

Divine warrant and commission

No stone wall separates the members of the Church from all of the seductions of the world. Members of the Church, like everyone else, are being surfeited with deceptions, challenges, and temptations. However, to those of enduring faith, judgment, and discernment, there is an invisible wall which

they choose never to breach. Those on the safe side of this invisible wall are filled with humility, not servitude. They willingly accept the supremacy of God and rely upon the scriptures and counsel of His servants, the leaders of the Church. These leaders of the Church are men with human frailties, and are imperfect in their wisdom and judgment. Perfection in men is not found on the earth. But almost without exception these leaders sincerely, humbly, and prayerfully render great and dedicated Christian service to the best of their ability. More important, they hold a divine warrant and commission through which great and eternal blessings come to those who sustain and follow them. They are God's servants.

Absolutes for faithful membership

To what should we subscribe to be correct and sound in doctrine? What are the absolutes upon which faithful membership is based? In my opinion, they rest upon the following:

First, the fatherhood of God, the Eternal Father.

Second, the divinity of Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world.

Third, the mission of Joseph Smith as a prophet of God and the restorer of the fulness of the gospel.

Fourth, the unbroken succession of priesthood line and authority from Joseph Smith to President Spencer W. Kimball, who is the prophet, seer, and revelator on the earth today.

Acceptance of gospel with full heart and soul

A few may lack understanding of the real commitment of the faithful. For instance, a critic recently wrote that obedience to commandments such as tithing is mandatory. In order to claim certain blessings, obedience is certainly obligatory, but compliance is never mandatory—that is, forced. Nothing is mandatory in this church. Free agency is a cardinal principle of obedience. Obedience comes from love

of God and a commitment to his work. The only punishment for serious transgression or apostasy is the removal of members from the society and fellowship of the Church. (See D&C 134:10.)

Is personal self-sufficiency one of the reasons men and women may lack faith? Some seem afraid to look to any source of wisdom and knowledge above themselves. They rely only on the secular source of learning.

A small number may claim fealty and loyalty to the Church but think it smart, sophisticated, or trendy to be a little rebellious, a little bit independent, and to disparage some of the traditional doctrines handed down by the Prophet Joseph Smith and his successors. This may result from a lack of divine knowledge. When I was a boy, one frequently maligned doctrine was the Word of Wisdom. Some took offense when Church leaders taught it. Now scientific proof, unknown in my youth, has established the Word of Wisdom to be a great law of physical health, even though, in my opinion, its greatest benefits are spiritual.

I have heard some say, "Well, I can believe all of the revelations but one." It is hard to understand this logic. If one believes that revelations come from a divine source, how can one pick and choose? Acceptance of the gospel should be complete and absolute, with full heart and soul.

The fulness of the gospel

Some want to justify their criticism by claiming, "But it is the truth." My answer is, "How can you be so sure?" Spiritual truth must be bonded to faith and righteousness to be fully understood. The Apostle Paul reminded us that the misuse of the truth changes it into a lie. (See Romans 1:18-25.)

Since the beginning of the restored Church there have been much opposition and many critics both from within and without. What have been the results of all this opposition and criticism? Some of the spiritually im-

mature, the weak, and incredulous have dropped out. The Church itself, however, not only survives, but it grows and strengthens. In some respects nothing in the world is equal to this work. Despite the many challenges of great growth there are indications of increased faith over much of the earth. For instance, never in the history of the world have so many temples been built.

I do not believe this work will be stopped or seriously injured by its detractors. There are many prophetic statements to the contrary. History has proven quite conclusively that the Church has grown under persecution; it has prospered under criticism. By finding fault with the doctrines, practices, or the leadership of the Church, one can waste much time and effort in a fruitless endeavor. Those who have been washed in the waters of baptism put their eternal soul at risk by carelessly pursuing only the secular source of learning. We believe that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has the fulness of the gospel of Christ, which gospel is the essence of truth and eternal enlightenment. We hold that the great legacy of this church is that it possesses the only full means for eternal life.

Who declares doctrine of the Church?

Who is to declare the doctrine of the Church? It is well established by revelation and practice that the current President of the Church and his counselors have the keys to declare the doctrine of the Church. The investiture of this authority comes from revelation. The Presidency are constituted "a quorum . . . to receive the oracles for the whole church" (D&C 124:126). Of this authority, President Stephen L. Richards stated: "They [the Presidency] are the supreme court here on earth in the interpretation of God's law.

"In the exercise of their functions and delegated powers they are controlled by a constitution, a part of which is written and a part of which is not. The

written part consists in authenticated scripture, ancient and modern, and in the recorded utterances of our latter-day prophets. The unwritten part is the spirit of revelation and divine inspiration which are pertinent to their calling.

"In formulating their interpretations and decisions they always confer with the Council of the Twelve Apostles who by revelation are appointed to assist and act with them in the government of the Church. When, therefore, a judgment is reached and proclaimed by these officers, it becomes binding upon all members of the Church, individual views to the contrary notwithstanding. God's Kingdom is a kingdom of law and order" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1938, pp. 115-16).

Become heirs to truth and the abundant life

We do not wish any who have questions [about the Church] to prove that they are sincere in their feelings by leaving the Church. That is not what we want. We hope that their sincerity would be manifested rather by building upon those feelings that have kept them in the Church. Their faith can be strengthened by following their intuitive judgment and the purest and noblest feelings of their own souls. By looking to a source higher than themselves, they can receive answers to their questions from the divine source. If there have been some mistakes, there is a way back. The doors are wide open; welcoming arms are outstretched. There is a place for all; there is a contribution for each to make.

In the spirit of Wilford Woodruff's letter to Lyman Wight, an Apostle who became separated from the leadership of the Church, we say to all: "Come home to Zion, mingle in our midst, confess and forsake your sins, and do right, as . . . all men have to do,

in order to enjoy the favor of God, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, and have fellowship with the Saints. . . . We all feel interested in your welfare; you have no enemies here; the longer you stay away from us, the more alienated your feelings become" (quoted in Ronald G. Watt, "A Dialogue between Wilford Woodruff and Lyman Wight," *Brigham Young University Studies*, autumn 1976, p. 113).

The leadership of the Church will continue to pray for its critics, its enemies, and those who seek to do it harm.

I believe that few things in life deserve one's complete confidence. I testify that the Church is worthy of our full trust. There is no inconsistency between truth and faith. I know that everyone who sincerely and righteously seeks to know this can have it spiritually confirmed. May we open our minds, hearts, and spirits to the divine source of truth. May we reach above ourselves and beyond our mundane concerns and become heirs to the knowledge of all truth and to the abundant life promised by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I pray that this may be so, in His holy name, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet." Following this, we shall hear from Elder Loren C. Dunn, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation sang "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

Elder Loren C. Dunn spoke without further announcement.

Elder Loren C. Dunn

Love toward fellowmen, love toward God

There is a hymn, which is a favorite hymn among Latter-day Saints, and comes to us from pioneer days. It was also reported to be among the favorite hymns of the Prophet Joseph Smith and was sung in those fateful hours prior to his martyrdom.

The words of the first verse go this way:

A poor wayfaring Man of grief
Hath often crossed me on my way,
Who sued so humbly for relief
That I could never answer nay.
I had not pow'r to ask his name,
Whereto he went, or whence he came;

Yet there was something in his eye
That won my love; I knew not why.

(*Hymns*, 1985, no. 29.)

The other verses of this hymn show that our love toward our fellowmen is indeed an expression of our love toward our God.

The greatest expression of love from our Father in Heaven to the human family is probably the infinite atonement of the Savior. "For God so loved the world," said John, "that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

The most noble expression of love by man is to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. . . .

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37, 39).

Marie Hansen's example

To love our neighbor is a godlike trait and can take many forms.

On the day that no one in the neighborhood saw "Hanse," as she was called, concerned neighbors rang her

doorbell, but to no avail. They were anxious for this gentle and gracious widow who found a place in their hearts. They looked on her as one of their own.

Finally, a member of the bishopric forced open the door and there, in the bedroom, was Marie Woodruff Hansen, as if she had fallen asleep, but never again to awaken in this life.

As the bishopric member paused to take in this sad but peaceful scene, he was startled, when from behind him he heard the words, "I love you." Knowing that Marie lived alone, he turned; and there in the corner was a bird cage. A second time the bird said, "I love you."

It was as if Marie, herself, had paused at the portals that mark the point between life and death to send back one final message before moving on to that new day.

Behind her was a neighborhood of friends, both young and old. She knew them all. They were like family to her; Marie's baked goodies found their way into their homes, and they looked after her like a favorite aunt or a grandmother. Home teaching and visiting teaching were only the beginning as the whole neighborhood was caught up in this love affair. Children were welcomed into her home. They always knew there would be fresh-baked cookies. There was a warmth about that little home that was a reflection of Marie's whole life. Many prayers had been offered here: prayers of gratitude, prayers of thanksgiving.

The words she taught her pet bird were the words she lived by. Even in death they echoed in the ears of those she left behind. Ahead of Marie was a husband who had gone first, too many years ago. She had lived a full life and left one final message of good-bye in the words she knew best: "I love you."

Marie Hansen left a great legacy, probably greater than she realized. For did not the Savior say, "A new com-

mandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (John 13:34)?

Missionaries love the people they serve

There are those who wish to know us better, to understand us better as a religion, as a church. There are those who write about us and study us. But may I suggest that until they take into account this spirit of love, they will never really understand. At the heart of it all is a genuine love of God and of fellowman.

Today, for instance, there are scores of Latter-day Saint missionaries in many countries throughout the world. They are easily identified by their dress and manner. They come on their missions for many reasons: duty, service, the testimony they have of their message. But after serving honorably for eighteen months or two years, virtually all of them develop a deep and profound love for the people they serve among. One missionary put it this way: "Although it was hard, I am thankful for all the experiences I've had here. They were right about the mission field; it's the best place to practice true Christianity, and it's the best time of your life." Another says: "I thank the Lord with all my heart for giving me the opportunity to serve him. I love this great land, and I love these people."

An orphan boy in Colombia

In Cali, Colombia, a few days ago, the mission president visited one of our Church meetings. At the start of the meeting a seven-year-old boy came up on the stand and sat next to him. He was not on the program; he just wanted to be there. When the meeting was nearly over he strode to the pulpit and bore his testimony.

When he finished, he went back and sat next to the president. The two exchanged glances. The mission president smiled approval. The young boy smiled back. In those dark eyes was a

message of love and security. Here was someone who knew he belonged.

Later it was learned the boy had spent his earlier life as an orphan. A couple in the ward had taken him in and were raising him as their own. The whole ward was his home, and he was blossoming in this atmosphere of acceptance.

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40).

President Kimball's concern for others

A few years ago, when President Kimball was a member of the Council of the Twelve, he and Sister Kimball were touring missions overseas.

A change in the airline schedule found them, along with a mission president and his wife, in a cold and drafty airport, late at night, with no place to go but wait for an early morning flight.

Sister Kimball had her coat, but the mission president's wife did not. President Kimball tried to give her his coat, but she would not take it. As they began to fall asleep on those hard benches, President Kimball got up and gently put his coat over the sleeping wife of the mission president. This kind of selfless concern for others is how President Kimball has lived his life. This is the same leader we sustain today as prophet, seer, and revelator. This is the man whom God has called to lead nearly six million Latter-day Saints.

He has literally spent his life in taking off his coat, so to speak, and putting it around the shoulders of those he judged to be in greater need: people of all colors and creeds; men, women, and children. It has never made any difference to him. All are his brothers. All are his sisters.

"And charity suffereth long, and is kind, and envieth not, and is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, and rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all

things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. . . .

"[For] charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever" (Moroni 7:45, 47; see also 1 Corinthians 13).

Young lady in Brazil: "I love you"

Not long ago Sister Dunn and I attended a stake conference in Marilia, Brazil. Marilia is a beautiful city of 100,000 in the southeast interior of the country. The Sunday session had just concluded. The theme was the atonement of Christ and how he is the Savior of the whole world.

Some had traveled by bus for more than three hours to be at this meeting. As we were shaking hands, a young lady came up. She first stopped in front of the mission president and asked how to say "I love you" in English. She then stood in front of Sister Dunn and me and with a broad smile and great sincerity said "I love you." It seemed a little thing, but it touched our hearts. It was the effort of a humble follower of Christ to express herself. The message could have been said in any language and been understood.

The spirit of love reaches across language barriers. There is a purity about it that lifts the soul and causes us all to realize that we are the children of the same God.

The gospel of love

There is a thread running through it all: Marie Hansen; an orphan boy in Colombia; the young lady in Brazil; and our revered President, Spencer W. Kimball.

No one professes to be perfect, but there is a spirit in this work and among

this people that makes them better than they would otherwise be. It is the spirit of love borne on the wings of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. It comes from a God of love. It causes the Church to reach out to the lives of men and women everywhere.

We claim no corner on love of others. We know the world is filled with many good, decent people. We respect and admire them and the righteous things they stand for. We teach the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is a gospel of salvation and exaltation. It is a gospel of love—love of God and love of fellowmen.

The final verse of the hymn that we mentioned in the beginning goes like this:

Then in a moment to my view
The stranger started from disguise;
The tokens in his hands I knew;
The Savior stood before my eyes.
He spake, and my poor name he
named,
"Of me thou hast not been
ashamed.
These deeds shall thy memorial be;
Fear not, thou didst them unto
me."

By way of testimony, I wish to express my love for my Father in Heaven, for his Son Jesus Christ, for each one of you wherever you are, and for these my Brethren and associates of the General Authorities. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have listened to Elder Loren C. Dunn, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Robert L. Backman, also a member of that Quorum, will be our next speaker.

Elder Robert L. Backman

Young people can be so cruel

Fern attended high school in a small town. She was one of those nice but unnoticed girls who don't become much but a face on a yearbook page and a name on the rolls. Her family was poor, and they lived out of town. She was not part of the "in crowd," and the only time her name came up in a conversation of other students was in that mocking, sarcastic way that seems funny when you are young, insecure, and need to ridicule someone else to take the pressure off yourself. Her name became synonymous with anything dumb or out of style. If a thing was unacceptable or ridiculous, the students called it "Ferny."

Young people can be so cruel.

Youth can be so kind

It was an annual tradition in the school to recognize the student who showed the most school spirit and support for the athletic teams. When the assembly came to honor that student, as expected, they called out the name of one of the more popular girls in the school. She bounced up the aisle smiling and waving to all her friends. But then a miracle happened. As she took the stage, she said, "I can't accept this award. Yes, I have loved the teams and cheered for them at every game. But Fern has come to every game, too. I came in a nice, warm car surrounded by my happy friends. She came alone and walked all the way—two and a half miles—sometimes in the rain or snow. She had to sit by herself, but I don't know anyone who cheered with as much spirit as Fern. I would like to nominate her for the most enthusiastic student in the school."

Fern was escorted to the stage to a spontaneous standing ovation from her fellow students.

Youth can be so kind.

"As I have loved you"

Fern is a mature woman today, her hair streaked with gray. Many things have happened to shape her life, but nothing more important than that outburst of acceptance and appreciation from her peers on that memorable day.

And there are mature men and women today who can't remember how many games their teams won or lost that year, but who have never forgotten the warm feeling they had when they stood up and cheered for Fern and welcomed her into their friendship and society.

Attending a stake conference in the Lancaster California Stake, I heard Marianne Mortensen, a lovely Laurel, tell this story as she developed the theme of showing charity toward our peers.

Reaching out to others is not an easy thing to do, particularly when you are young. To take the hand of another at the risk of your own popularity takes a mature, Christlike love. Yet our Savior made no distinction between young and old when he declared, "As I have loved you, . . . love one another" (John 13:34). How desperately we need that kind of caring in our world today!

Positive peer pressure

Young people are being hit on all sides by open and subtle attacks on their faith, their ideals, their morality, their self-confidence, even their identity. The typical teenager is pictured as being of the "ME" generation: self-centered, turned inward, unfeeling toward others, seeking immediate self-gratification. Though some young people might fit that description, and many others are struggling and failing in the battle of life, others are winning in spectacular ways. Young men and women are accomplishing things today we used to assume it took a lifetime to

do. In science, literature, the arts, social, civic, and spiritual work, we can point with pride to millions of talented teenagers who have set lofty goals and are working to attain them.

The question is, How can we help those who are stumbling to lock arms with those who are striding confidently up the road of life?

"Positive peer pressure," as the social scientists call it, may be the salvation of this generation. If this be true, think how admirably suited our Aaronic Priesthood quorums and our Young Women classes are to offer such meaningful service.

Open arms and increase friendships

In her talk, Marianne said:

"Most of us have a difficult time resisting those who have a genuine love for us. Such people have a way of becoming important to us because we know we are genuinely important to them. The cry of youth today is for genuine concern and for meaningful relationships with our peers. . . . And when I speak of meaningful relationships, I think immediately of the Golden Rule, 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.'

"As teenagers, that is a difficult thing to do. Charity for those outside of our circle of friends is difficult to comprehend when we feel so comfortable within the confines of our 'group.' But if we look at the life of our Savior, we see that He didn't leave His 'group,' the Apostles, or those friends about Him. He merely opened His arms to all who would listen. He increased His fold. So . . . we do not have to leave our group to learn to care for the feelings of our peers. We just need to open our arms and increase our friendships."

Marianne Mortensen was right on target.

The real key to happiness

There is another side to this matter of rendering service to others, not just

to our peers, and it applies to those of us who are struggling to find our way.

As a boy I sought happiness as the world measures it. I wanted acceptance, position, fame (particularly as an athlete), and wealth. I had none of these. I was very unhappy. I thought happiness was as elusive as a shadow.

It was not until I was called on a mission that I discovered the real key to happiness. To my surprise, despite the discouragement, the disappointments, and the plain hard work associated with my missionary labors, I was happy. It was then I learned that happiness is really a by-product of service. As I forgot my own desires, my own weaknesses and frailties in my missionary service, I began to understand King Benjamin's profound counsel to his people. "And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God" (Mosiah 2:17).

That is why a missionary can return from the toughest experiences of his life and report, "These have been the happiest two years of my life!"

Examples of love and service

A life can never be happy that is focused inward. So if you are miserable now, forget your troubles. March right out your door, and find someone who needs you.

You want happiness? Find ways to serve. Your happiness will be commensurate with the service you render.

Just think how much that joy can grow as we expand our love and service to more and more people.

Consider the happiness generated in both the giver and the receiver by these examples of service:

1. Youths of the Meridian Idaho East Stake recently participated in a communitywide "Paint Your Heart Out" service project. One hundred and sixty-four youth split into five teams, and each team painted one

house of an elderly person during a seven-hour period.

2. Concerned for the youth of his ward, a good bishop in Bountiful challenged his young people to taste the sweetness of beautiful service. Reluctantly at first, they put aside their entertainment. One project was making quilts for the mentally retarded at the American Fork Training School. Upon completion of their quilts, the girls delivered them. They arrived at the school in time to help feed supper to the "children." And that was an experience. As they left the school, with mashed potatoes, gravy, and assorted vegetables in their hair and on their outfits, one girl, touched by the sweetness of the "child" she had fed, said, "I'll never forget Billy."

3. In a recent letter to the editor, I read:

"One is continually hearing about the 'Terrible Teenagers' with their obnoxious dress and deplorable actions. How refreshing it was to have a most thrilling experience with—yes, four teenagers.

"One evening I was hosting a special guest from New York City. We were on our beautiful Temple Square, admiring the Seagull Monument. As we turned to go, four teenagers approached us. I immediately felt the [in]security of my gentleman guest, when one of the group stepped forward and said, 'Lady, we would like to present you with this rose to make you happy, and hope that you will have a nice evening.'

"There clutched in his hand was a beautiful, long-stemmed American Beauty red rose, with a spray of fern, artistically wrapped in cellophane.

" 'We bought this rose to give to someone, and when we saw you, we thought you were the one.'

"As they turned to leave, I quickly got their names, expressing my most profound appreciation and admiration for their thoughtfulness and kindness to me, which was so unusual, and how I was quite overwhelmed to think that four teenagers would have the desire

for such a gracious act, and that no one would appreciate it more than I would, a little grandmother, as I gave each one a big hug" (Irene E. Staples, *Deseret News*, 22 Sept. 1985, p. A-19).

4. With the knowledge that her little brother had leukemia, Michelle went to Bear River High School sad and despondent. She struggled through the school day, grateful when the dismissal bell rang. As she collected her books, a friend approached, "Michelle, come into the music room with me." Halfheartedly, Michelle accompanied her. Entering the music room, she was surprised to find the entire a cappella choir. In the straightforward manner of youth, they told Michelle they had been fasting for her little brother and wanted her to join them as they prayed together to end their fast.

Those we serve, we love

Emerson said it well: "Serve, and thou shalt be served. If you love and serve men, you cannot, by any hiding or stratagem, escape the remuneration" ("The Sovereignty of Ethics," in *The Complete Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson* [New York: Wm. H. Wise and Co., 1929], p. 1004).

Those we serve, we love. We discover that loving someone else deeply is one of the most joyous feelings we can know, and we begin to understand the bounteous love our Father in Heaven has for us.

"I love you, Brandon"

D. Brent Collette told a stirring story:

"Ronny was not just shy; he was downright backward. As a 17-year-old high school senior, Ronny had never really had a close friend or done anything that included other people. He was famous for his shyness. He never said anything to anybody, not even a teacher. One look at him told you a great deal of the story—inferiority complex. He slumped over as if to hide his face and seemed to be always

looking at his feet. He always sat in the back of the class and would never participate. . . .

"It was because of Ronny's shyness that I was so astonished when he started coming to my Sunday School class. . . .

"His attendance in my class was the result of the personal efforts of a class member, Brandon Craig, who had recently befriended Ronny. Boy, if there had ever been a mismatch, this was it. Brandon was 'Mr. Social.' A good head taller than Ronny, he was undisputedly the number one star of our high school athletics program. Brandon was involved in everything and successful at everything. . . . He was just a neat boy.

"Well, Brandon took to little Ronny like glue. Class was obviously painful for Ronny, but Brandon protected him like the king's guard. I played a low profile—no questions, just a quick smile and once a pat on the back. Time seemed to be helping, but I often wondered if Brandon and company (the rest of the class certainly played it right) would ever be able to break the ice. That's why I was so shocked when Brian, the class president, stood before our Sunday School class one Sunday afternoon and boldly announced that Ronny would offer the opening prayer.

"There was a moment of hesitation; then Ronny slowly came to his feet. Still looking at his shoes, he walked to the front of the room. He folded his arms (his head was already bowed). The class was frozen solid. I thought to myself, 'If he does it, we'll all be translated.'

"Then almost at a whisper I heard, 'Our Father in Heaven, thank you for our Sunday School class.' Then silence—long, loud silence! I could feel poor Ronny suffering. Then came a few snuffles and a muffled sob.

" 'Oh, no,' I thought, 'I should be up front where I can help or something.'

"I hurt for him; we all did. I opened an eye and looked up to make my way to Ronny. But Brandon beat me to it. With an eye still open I watched six-foot-four Brandon put his arm around his friend, bend down and put his chin on Ronny's shoulder, then whisper the words of a short, sweet prayer. Ronny struggled for composure, then repeated the prayer.

"But when the prayer was over, Ronny kept his head bowed and added: 'Thank you for Brandon, amen.' He then turned and looked up at his big buddy and said clear enough for all to hear, 'I love you, Brandon.'

"Brandon, who still had his arm around him, responded, 'I love you too, Ronny. And that was fun.'

"And it was, for all of us" (*New Era*, May 1983, p. 18).

Our Primary children sing that glorious song:

"As I have loved you, Love one another,
This new commandment: Love one another.
By this shall men know Ye are my disciples,
If ye have love One to another.
(*Hymns*, 1985, no. 308.)

And therein lies happiness. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "The Light Divine" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Elder Robert L. Backman of the First Quorum of the Seventy spoke to us, following which the Tabernacle Choir sang "The Light Divine."

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now address us. He will be our concluding speaker for this session.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

Plain and precious truths

In case you hadn't noticed it, in the last days, discipleship is to be lived *in crescendo*. Our adversities and extremities will merely bring out the strong simplicities and the reassuring realities of the gospel. Likewise, brisk challenges to basic beliefs, and some afflictions, will aid in the development of even greater convictions concerning these basic beliefs. Though it will be the key doctrines which are assailed, after the dust of this dispensation has settled it will be the key doctrines which will have prevailed.

Early in the Restoration, by translation and revelation, numerous plain and precious truths appeared in fairly rapid succession. This occurred through Joseph Smith, the "choice seer" (2 Nephi 3:6). As when dinner guests arrive nearly all at once, Joseph, as host, received, welcomed, and duly noted each truth. Only later was there time and matured perceptivity to see their relationships and the antiquity of their credentials.

Doctrine of premortal existence

Among these plain and precious truths was the doctrine of the premortal existence of mankind. (See 1 Nephi 13:39-40.) Early on, Joseph received much concerning this truth, but just as the revelations concerning it came incrementally, so did Joseph's understanding.

One of the "plain and precious things" long ago "kept back" or "taken away" (1 Nephi 13:34, 40), this enormously important truth did not reach the Holy Bible in an abundant degree, though it is surely there. (See Jeremiah 1:5; Ephesians 1:4-5; 2 Timothy 1:9.) It was briefly extant after the original Apostles. Alas, however, just as Paul foresaw, the time soon came when Church members did not "endure sound

doctrine," including this one. (See 2 Timothy 4:3.)

With the later disapprovals of councils, the doctrine of premortal existence demonstrably was not a doctrine which could have been reestablished by research. The doctrine does not abuse logic, for "truth is reason," especially "truth eternal," but is more than logic alone can fully support. (See *Hymns*, 1985, no. 292.) It could only come from restoration by modern revelation. It was certainly not abroad in the land of America until Joseph Smith's articulations.

Furthermore, so much had happened in human history to make the restoration of this key truth necessary. It was needed to confound the false doctrine of a mankind created *ex nihilo*—out of nothing. (See 2 Nephi 3:12.) The "ex nihilo" view, said the Prophet Joseph "lessens man in my estimation" (*Words of Joseph Smith*, Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, comps. [Provo: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1980], p. 359).

Without this truth, existential lamentations prevail about how man spends his entire life trying to prove to himself that his existence is not absurd. Even believers, in Paul's words, if malnourished as to doctrine, can become "wearied and faint in [their] minds" and surrender to circumstance. (See Hebrews 12:3.)

The reality of premortality responds to puzzlings which suggest we are strangers here. It is a curative for the yearnings expressed in music and poetry and literature. There are wonderings such as in these lines:

Not dulled, nor lulled, supined,
secure, replete does Man create;
But out of stern challenge, in
sharp excitement, with a burning
joy;
Man is the hunter still,
Though his quarry be a hope, a
mystery, a dream . . .

From what immortal desire, what sudden sight of the unknown, Surges that desire?

What flint of fact, what kindling light of art or far horizon, Ignites that spark?

(Nancy Newhall, in Thomas F. Horbein, *Everest, the West Ridge* [San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1965], pp. 28, 30.)

There are ponderings, like this one:

"Everything in our life happens as though we entered upon it with a load of obligations contracted in a previous existence . . . obligations whose sanction is not of this present life, [which] seem to belong to a different world, founded on kindness, scruples, sacrifice, a world entirely different from this one, a world whence we emerge to be born on this earth, before returning thither" (Marcel Proust, in Gabriel Marcel, *Homo Viator* [New York: Harper and Row, 1963], p. 8).

And finally, there are these more familiar lines:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting: . . .
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home.
(William Wordsworth, "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood," lines 58, 64-65.)

Vastness of God's love

So far as we know, brothers and sisters, the restoration of this responsive doctrine began with the translation by Joseph Smith of a few verses in the book of Alma, late 1829 or early 1830. (See Alma 13:3-5.) By themselves, however, these verses would not have been adequate. Elder Orson Pratt said: "This same doctrine [premortal existence] is inculcated in some small degree in the Book of Mormon. However, I do not think that I should have ever discerned it in that book had it not been for the new translation of the Scriptures

[Bible]" (*Journal of Discourses*, 15:249).

In June of 1830, while rewording some of Genesis under inspiration, the "choice seer" received revelation now included in the book of Moses. Of that special revelatory moment Joseph wrote, "I will say . . . that amid all the trials and tribulations we had to wade through, the Lord, who well knew our infantile and delicate situation, vouchsafed for us a supply of strength, and granted us 'line upon line of knowledge—here a little and there a little,' of which the following was a precious morsel" (*History of the Church*, 1:98).

Included in that "precious morsel" were words of Moses, further enlarging Joseph's view, about how God's work involves other planets: "But only an account of this earth, and the inhabitants thereof, give I unto you. For behold, there are many worlds that have passed away by the word of my power" (Moses 1:35).

The plans and purposes of God were also made more plain: "For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). Thus, the vastness of space reflects the vastness of God's love for all of His children.

Other revelations to Joseph Smith

Other expanding revelations soon followed. In May 1833, the stunning communication, now known as section 93, declared: "Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be. . . .

"For man is spirit. The elements are eternal, and spirit and element, inseparably connected, receive a fulness of joy" (D&C 93:29, 33).

Several years passed, years of apparent ripening and readying, before the record indicates the Prophet began to communicate this precious doctrine publicly. In 1839, pondering and contemplating in Liberty Jail, Joseph, by

epistle, urged Church members to better behavior, behavior befitting Church members who had been "called . . . from before the foundation of the world" (*The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, Dean C. Jessee, comp. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1984], p. 397).

Joseph also received revelation about what was ordained in "the midst of the Council of the Eternal God . . . before this world was" (D&C 121:32). Imprisoned, Joseph was reassuringly told his own days were known, and his years would "not be numbered less" (D&C 122:9).

Scriptural references on premortal existence

Joseph's first recorded public speech on this powerful doctrine occurred shortly after his release from soul-stretching bondage in Missouri. (See *The Words of Joseph Smith*, p. 9.) Other speeches followed, capped finally by the soaring sermon at King Follet's funeral in the spring of 1844.

This declaration to Jeremiah: "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jeremiah 1:5) was paralleled in the 1842 book of Abraham:

"Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones;

"And God . . . said: These I will make my rulers; . . . and he said unto me: Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born" (Abraham 3:22-23).

The book of Abraham, in corroborating section 93, used words whose full measure you and I have scarcely begun to take: "If there be two spirits, . . . notwithstanding one is more intelligent than the other, [they] have no beginning; they existed before, they shall have no end . . . for they are . . . eternal" (Abraham 3:18).

Conjoined with the truths of the resplendent Restoration, biblical references to this precious doctrine took on enhanced meaning and gave increased illumination. (See John 9:2; see also Romans 8:29; Ephesians 1:4; Jude 1:6; Job 38:7.)

Indeed, a very major stumbling block was thus removed by revelation. Just as prophesied, Jesus also manifested Himself "in word" in the latter days. (See 1 Nephi 14:1.)

Brevity of mortal life

In Moses' day, a generous God let his doctrine "drop as the rain" (Deuteronomy 32:2). In Eli's day, however, "there was no open vision" (1 Samuel 3:1). In Joseph Smith's day, there was a "pouring down" of "knowledge from heaven" (D&C 121:33), a cascade of "plain and precious" truths, including the pivotal doctrine of the premortal existence of man. (See 1 Nephi 13:39-40.)

A few ancient writings, unavailable to Joseph Smith or anyone else at that time, have since appeared. Apocryphal writings may contain truths to be discerned, for "whoso is enlightened by the Spirit shall obtain benefit therefrom" (D&C 91:5). This is an example from the Nag Hammadi Library. In the Apocryphon of James, Jesus reportedly told an afflicted Peter and James, "If you consider how long the world existed before you, and how long it will exist after you, you will find that your life is one single day and your sufferings one single hour" ("The Apocryphon of James," in *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, ed. James M. Robinson [San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978], p. 31).

How like what the Lord told suffering Joseph in jail: "My son, . . . thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment" (D&C 121:7).

One's life, therefore, is brevity compared to eternity—like being

dropped off by a parent for a day at school. But what a day!

Even now, however, many still "stumble at the word" (1 Peter 2:8). Yet, as Paul prescribed, if we blend "longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:2), some who "murmur" about the human predicament "shall learn doctrine" (Isaiah 29:24; 2 Nephi 27:35), by letting this doctrine, "as the dew from heav'n distilling," revive them, "thus fulfilling What thy providence intends" (*Hymns*, 1985, no. 149).

Not a relaxing doctrine

Meanwhile, the adversary relentlessly uses the absence or disbelief of this doctrine to shrink man's perspective. One-dimensional man with only a one-dimensional view of the world will surely focus upon the cares of the world, yielding to the things of the moment.

Latter-day Saints do not, of course, ask others to accept this or any gospel truth against their wills. We ask only for tolerance, and expect such doctrines to be scrutinized and even criticized by others. We reserve the same freedom regarding others' beliefs—but all in mutual good will, however.

Premortality is not a relaxing doctrine. For each of us, there are choices to be made, incessant and difficult chores to be done, ironies and adversities to be experienced, time to be well spent, talents and gifts to be well employed. Just because we were chosen "there and then," surely does not mean we can be indifferent "here and now." Whether foreordination for men, or foredesignation for women, those called and prepared must also prove "chosen, and faithful." (See Revelation 17:14; D&C 121:34–36.)

Identity but accountability

In fact, adequacy in the first estate may merely have ensured a stern, second estate with more duties and no

immunities! Additional tutoring and suffering appears to be the pattern for the Lord's most apt pupils. (See Mosiah 3:19; 1 Peter 4:19.) Our existence, therefore, is a continuum matched by God's stretching curriculum.

This doctrine brings unarguable identity but also severe accountability to our lives. It uniquely underscores the actuality of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

It also reminds us that we do not have all of the data. There are many times when we must withhold judgment and trust God, even in the midst of "all these things." Only with the help of this doctrine can we begin to understand things as they really were, are, and will become. (See Jacob 4:13; D&C 93:24.)

Agreeing to enter this second estate, therefore, was like agreeing in advance to anesthetic—the anesthetic of forgetfulness. Doctors do not deanesthetize a patient, in the midst of what was previously authorized, to ask him, again, if it should be continued. We agreed to come here and to undergo certain experiences under certain conditions.

Flash of memory

Elder Orson Hyde said, "We have forgotten! . . . But our forgetfulness cannot alter the facts" (*Journal of Discourses*, 7:315). Yet, on occasions, there are inklings. President Joseph F. Smith observed how "we often catch a spark from the awakened memories of the immortal soul, which lights up our whole being as with the glory of our former home" (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1939], p. 14.)

There can be sudden surges of *deja vu*. A flash from the mirror of memory can beckon us forward to that far pavilion, filled with "everlasting splendours" and resurrected beings. C. S. Lewis wrote, "We cannot mingle with the splendours we see. But all the leaves of the New Testament are rus-

tling with the rumour that it will not always be so" (*C. S. Lewis at the Breakfast Table and Other Reminiscences*, ed. James T. Como [New York: Collier Books, 1985], p. 34). Thanks to the Prophet Joseph Smith, hundreds more leaves of scripture are rustling, rustling resoundingly for all who have ears to hear.

"I know—again!"

Thus, when we now say "I know," that realization is rediscovery; we are actually saying "I know—again!"

From long experience, His sheep know His voice and His doctrine. Meanwhile, the soul weaving in process for such a long time goes on as described in these anonymous lines:

My life is but a weaving
Between my Lord and me;
I cannot choose the colors
He worketh steadily.

Ofttimes He weaveth sorrow
And I in foolish pride,
Forget that He seeth the upper,
And I the under side.

Not till the loom is silent
And the shuttles cease to fly,
Shall God unroll the canvas
And explain the reason why.

The dark threads are as needful
In the Weaver's skillful hand,
As the threads of gold and silver
In the pattern He has planned.

(In *Sourcebook of Poetry*, comp. Al Bryant [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1968], p. 664.)

May we so believe, so trust, so submit, and so behave, I pray in the name of Him who is the "Lord of the narrow gate and the needle's eye" (C.S. Lewis, *At the Breakfast Table*, p. xxv), even Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has been our concluding speaker.

We express appreciation to the managers and operators of the many television and radio stations and cable systems for offering their facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this conference to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

The choir will now sing "When Faith Endures." The benediction will then be given by Elder John H. Groberg of the First Quorum of the Seventy, after which this conference will be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The choir sang "When Faith Endures."

Elder John Groberg offered the benediction.

FIRST DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

SECOND SESSION

The second general session of the 155th Semiannual General Conference began at 2:00 P.M. on Saturday, October 5, 1985. President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve, conducted.

Music for this session was provided by combined ward choirs from the Granite, Olympus, and Salt Lake Central regions, under the direction of Orman R. Weight with Clay Christiansen at the organ.

At the beginning of the meeting, President Benson made the following remarks:

President Ezra Taft Benson

My beloved brothers and sisters, the First Presidency has asked that I conduct this session of the conference.

We appreciate the presence of President Spencer W. Kimball and regret the absence of President Marion G. Romney.

We are pleased to welcome those who are gathered here in the Tabernacle for this, the second general session of the 155th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We also welcome those who are participating by means of television, cable, or radio and many who are watching in over one-thousand stake centers throughout the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico to which the conference is being carried by satellite transmission.

We note that Bishop Glenn L. Pace and Elder Devere Harris are presiding in the overflow session in the Assembly Hall.

We are pleased to acknowledge especially our guests who are present this afternoon, along with the general and local Church leaders and members from other parts of the world.

We express our appreciation to the owners and operators of many radio and television stations and to the owners and operators of cable systems for their cooperation in making these proceedings available to mem-

bers and friends of the Church in many countries.

The music for this session will be provided by combined ward choirs from the Granite, Olympus, and Salt Lake Central regions under the direction of Orman R. Weight with Clay Christiansen at the organ.

The choir will begin this service by singing "God Bless Our Prophet Dear." The invocation will then be offered by Elder Marion D. Hanks, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "God Bless Our Prophet Dear."

Elder Marion D. Hanks offered the invocation.

President Benson

The choir will now sing "I Believe in Christ," the words for which were composed by our beloved friend, Elder Bruce R. McConkie, following which Bishop Robert D. Hales, Presiding Bishop of the Church, will be our first speaker.

The choir sang "I Believe in Christ."

Bishop Robert D. Hales spoke without further announcement.

Bishop Robert D. Hales

Christ's example

My brothers and sisters, I believe in Christ, and I stand to be accountable for that testimony. I ask the Lord's blessings this day for the sustaining support of my Brethren and for His support in Spirit.

In the gospel of Jesus Christ, there comes a point in time when we must

stand accountable for who we are and what we are going to be. In the atonement of Jesus Christ, we have been given an example to follow—that of the eldest son of God the Father. I would like to talk for just a few minutes today about the atoning sacrifice and what it has meant in my life, from the perspective of a bishop, in helping us endure to the end.

Lesson from the brother of Jared

I'd like first to start in the book of Ether in the Book of Mormon where we are given a very clear lesson as we read about the brother of Jared going before the Lord. Many times when we pray, we merely restate our problems; and this was the case with the brother of Jared. As you may recall, he was directed to take his people across the waters. He had built his barges, but there was no light, there was no air, there was no visible means of propulsion or navigation. And so he went to the Lord and asked, "Behold, O Lord, wilt thou suffer that we shall cross this great water in darkness?" (Ether 2:22). And the Lord replied, "What will ye that I should do that ye may have light in your vessels?" (Ether 2:23).

The brother of Jared just a few short verses before this had been scolded by the Lord for a period of three hours for not praying to him. And in this environment, the brother of Jared went away to devise a specific plan. And when he did, he brought sixteen stones, beautiful crystals, laid them before the Lord on the top of Mount Shelem, and there asked the Lord to touch the stones with His finger.

The lesson I would like to bring out from this story is that when the Lord touched these stones, the brother of Jared saw His finger. The Lord said, as the brother of Jared fell to the ground, "Arise, why hast thou fallen?" (Ether 3:7).

And the Lord got an answer that was quite remarkable when the brother of Jared, looking to the Lord, said, "I knew not that the Lord had flesh and blood" (Ether 3:8). In verse 16 the Lord explained: "Behold, this body, which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit; and man have I created after the body of my spirit; and even as I appear unto thee to be in the spirit will I appear unto my people in the flesh" (Ether 3:16).

The Lord asked if he had seen more of Him than His finger: "Sawest thou more than this?" (Ether 3:9). The

brother of Jared answered, "Nay; Lord, show thyself unto me" (Ether 3:9-10).

The Lord then asked the brother of Jared if he would believe in His words; and he said, "Yea, Lord, I know that thou speakest the truth, for thou art a God of truth, and canst not lie" (Ether 3:12).

The atoning sacrifice

The Lord thus showed Himself twenty-five hundred years before He was actually born as a babe in Jerusalem. He then bore testimony of the fact that He would be Jesus the Christ, that He would come before His people, and that He would be the atoning sacrifice, that all mankind might live.

As we move closer to the atoning sacrifice in the Garden of Gethsemane, we find in John 17 that there Jesus offered an intercessory prayer. "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do . . . before the world was" (John 17:4-5). He then went on to say in verse 24, "For thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24).

And so with the love of God the Father, Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane. He dropped to His knees in prayer, even sweating great drops of blood. And then, as He departed to go out to see His disciples, He found them asleep. He asked, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" (Matthew 26:40).

Trials are part of maturing

How many of us are sleeping when those around us are hurting and are in need? How many of us give our testimonies of the Lord, but then do not listen, as in 1 John 4:20, "For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

He then returned to the Garden of Gethsemane and asked His Father to help Him through this experience which He had to endure. And for you

and me, there is great solace, for "there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him" (Luke 22:43).

Do we not understand that we, too, will have moments in our lives when we will be brought to our knees, when we will need help to endure to the end? Even Joseph Smith showed impatience after being in jail for a few months and wondered why he could not get on with his mission. At that time the Lord said to Joseph, "All these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good" (D&C 122:7). The ways in which we handle our trials are part of the maturing of the physical and spiritual man.

Lessons from the Atonement

As a bishop, I have also learned from the atoning sacrifice a great lesson. In the trial where Pilate knew very well that the man before him was not guilty, he, for political reasons, had to bring in a verdict of guilty. And in this, Jesus was silent. We learn a good deal from this in our lives when enemies contend against us and when we are falsely accused. There are times when it is best to follow the Lord's example and not attempt to answer every accusation made against us.

Many lessons can be learned from the account of the Atonement. It is comforting to know that, though suffering, Jesus Christ was able to look down from the cross and be concerned for His mother, that she should be properly cared for, as He asked for the help of a disciple. This is one of the great messages we have heard this conference—that we turn some of our attention from our own trials and tribulations to concern and caring for others.

Even in the closing moments of the life of Jesus a great lesson is to be learned. Jesus had cried with a loud voice, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." The verse goes on to say, ". . . and having said thus, he gave up the ghost" (Luke 23:46). Jesus had endured to the end.

Rejoicing in heaven

On earth there was great sorrow, and those beholding the Crucifixion smote their breasts. However, in heaven a multitude awaited the advent of the Son of God into the spirit world to declare their redemption from the bands of death. Their sleeping dust was to be restored unto its perfect frame. The spirit and the body were to be united, never again to be divided, that they might receive a fulness of joy. While the vast multitude waited and commenced rejoicing in the hour of their deliverance from the chains of death, the Son of God appeared. He preached to them the everlasting gospel, the doctrine of the resurrection and redemption of mankind from the Fall and from individual sins on conditions of repentance. (See D&C 138:16–19.)

The lesson we can learn is that when a loved one has died and sorrow and despair has taken over our hearts, we can have solace knowing the joy that will come when our loved ones are reunited and continue their eternal progression because of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Act of free agency

With Jesus upon the cross were two other men being crucified, one on either side of Jesus. For me, as I see that setting, it is very clear that one accepted Jesus Christ and gave his testimony that Jesus was the Son of God, and the other rejected Him. This is typical of all mankind. Each one of us will someday, either in this life or in the life to come, have to give our testimony that He is truly the Son of God, the Savior of all mankind, Jesus Christ.

In the last moments upon the cross Jesus asked His Father a very simple question: "Why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46). Are there times in our lives when we think that we have been forsaken by God, or by our fellowmen, or by our families? That is the moment when we have to turn our thoughts back to Christ and endure to

the end. We know there is a great purpose in Christ's suffering because this was an act of free agency. Jesus could have called upon legions of angels to bring Him down from the cross, but He did not. He endured to the end that we would have the benefits of the atoning sacrifice; that mercy could be brought into the world; that justice would be satisfied; that we might be resurrected; and that we might be able to earn, through our obedience, eternal life in the presence of God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Learn to endure

I had an experience recently which further illustrates these principles. A father who was very wealthy asked if I could talk to his family. His daughter had recently been through a divorce. I went to see her and her children. Her father could have provided for all of their needs and cares, but he said it was time for them to live more modestly and to help support themselves, to be more self-sufficient, to be able to stand on their own. This experience is similar to the Lord's asking His Father, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" for the family's reaction was, "Why would father do this now when we need him the most?" But you see, he was preparing them that they might be strengthened by providing for their own needs, so that when they did gain their inheritance, they would be able to endure to the end and remain self-sufficient.

There are times that we, as parents, must be able to cut our own children loose in order that they may learn to make decisions for themselves and have the strength to stand on their own.

The resurrected Christ

Jesus taught us many lessons. But for me, one of the greatest lessons was taught after Jesus had died, and was resurrected, and came out of the sepulchre. There was Mary—she did not recognize Him at first—then upon recognizing Him, came toward Him. He

said, "Touch me not; for I have not yet ascended to my Father" (John 20:17), knowing that he was going to return to His Father in Heaven and then come back and show Himself to many as a resurrected being.

We started with a story from the Book of Mormon. Coming full circle back to 3 Nephi, I think of Jesus coming to the temple as a resurrected being after much devastation of the land, similar to what has happened in Mexico recently with earthquakes and rending of the land. In the account in 3 Nephi, the people who were there returned to the temple, and there the Lord came, introduced by His father: "Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name" (3 Nephi 11:7). They were asked to listen to Him, and He descended among them. The most significant event is that the two thousand or so who were assembled at the temple each had the opportunity of thrusting his hand in the side and in the wounds of the Savior to know of a surety that He lives. And for this they had a few centuries of peace in the land, and all were one.

Importance of the atoning sacrifice

I ask the Lord's blessings to be with us, that we can understand the importance of the atoning sacrifice in our lives, that it is the greatest event in all history. In fact, the Atonement was the very purpose of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, coming to earth. Unfortunately, we sometimes deviate from that which we know.

Some years ago, as a pilot, I was taken by an instructor up in an airplane. By turning the airplane at less than two degrees at a time, the instructor succeeded in turning the airplane completely upside down. My inner ear could not detect the transition because he kept positive gravity upon us at all times. Therefore, I did not know that, when he gave the airplane to me, it was upside down. Everything on the airplane, every instrument, was exactly right except for the landing gear, which

was upside down; and every reaction I made had an opposite reaction from what I thought it would have. This is called vertigo, and it taught me a great lesson.

Spiritual vertigo

I would like to talk for a moment about spiritual vertigo. Although we know of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, of His obedience, of His willingness to serve and to be an example to us, and of His message to "come, follow me," there are times when we get off course, less than a degree at a time, and do not know that we turn totally upside down.

One of the greatest messages that I ever received was from President Harold B. Lee. I was a young man visiting Salt Lake City, and he asked me to come by his office. He knew something I didn't know—that someone would be asking me to represent their organization. He put both of his hands on my shoulders, looked me directly in the eye, and said, "Be careful who you give your name to."

I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is very careful whom He gives His name to. When we go into the waters of baptism, we take upon us His name and promise that we will always be obedient. Every time we take the sacrament, we remind ourselves that we will always remember Him, that we will take His name upon us, and that we will always keep His commandments. For that obedience, we are told that we will always have His Spirit to be with us. We will always have the spiritual gyroscope that will guide us so that we will never have to encounter spiritual vertigo and that we will never be off course.

Endure to the end

I ask the Lord's blessings to be with each of us, that we might be mindful of the small course corrections in our lives—that we might be obedient to the Lord and follow His example of obedience.

We see the love God the Father has for His son, Jesus Christ, because he endured to the end, when He said, "This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." May each of us endure to the end and be greeted by our maker, "Well done thou good and faithful servant," is my prayer.

I want to thank my sweetheart and companion for her love. I was once told by the chairman of an organization, "Your greatest asset is your wife." That is a true statement.

I bear you my testimony that God lives and that Jesus is the Christ. Of this I have no doubt. Of this I have never had a doubt since I was a young boy. I testify that the men who are seated here upon this stand—the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve—are prophets, seers, and revelators. I testify that a prophet of God is among us, even President Spencer W. Kimball, who in his enduring to the end is an example for all of us. That we may watch and be guided by his actions and his love is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Bishop Robert D. Hales, Presiding Bishop of the Church, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder George P. Lee, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He will be followed by Elder Derek A. Cuthbert, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder George P. Lee

True gospel unpopular with the world

The true gospel of the Son of God has always been opposed by those who are caught within the throes of sin. For many, there is simply too much light, too much truth, and too much intelligence. Others who resist the gospel have found its principles too pure, too noble, and much too elevating to accord with their chosen life-style. In all ages of the world since Adam's time, the gospel of Jesus Christ has always met opposition whenever and wherever it has been proclaimed. This negative spirit challenges the truths of God and concerns His servants, even today.

The heavens have been opened to holy men of various ages. In each case, the receiver of the vision has been rejected by his fellowmen. Sometimes his life has been sought and he has had no peace upon the earth. Prophets and Apostles, even the Lord Jesus Christ, have met such adversity and challenges. The true gospel of Christ is very unpopular with the world.

Renew humility, dedication, and commitment

If there is anyone listening who is deeply troubled by the apparent criticism thrown against us periodically, let me say that we have a glorious array of predecessors who have been persecuted and who have met opposition time and time again.

It is a source of consolation and encouragement that we do not stand alone in this respect. In former times, Saints of God have been challenged and scorned for no other cause than for preaching the truth in its fulness and purity, and for standing up in defense of holy and pure principles revealed from God. In fact, the trials they have been called upon to pass through, instead of being an evidence against, are evidence

in favor of the truth of the work they were engaged in.

The Lord Jesus said, "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you!" (Luke 6:26). He warned His disciples of the danger when their names were honored and when all men spoke well of them. In a real sense, we as Latter-day Saints are also being warned. When our names are being honored in connection with all men speaking well of us, we need to renew our humility, dedication, and commitment.

Any good out of Nazareth? out of Palmyra?

My beloved Saints of God, let us remember the warning from our prophets: "Others will he pacify and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion" (2 Nephi 28:21). If anyone finds himself in that position, it is time for renewed humility, commitment, and dedication.

When the Lord came to Jerusalem, He was rejected and despised by many from the day of His birth until His Golgothic death. He spoke and taught as none had ever done before. He worked as none had ever done. He performed miracles and wonderful works among men. But what kind of treatment did He receive? He was rejected by those who were supposed to have loved Him. He was buffeted, scourged, mobbed, and led like a lamb to the slaughter. Jesus, a being in whom there was no guile, bore a rough-hewn cross—that cruel instrument of death which tore at His back as He hung in agony. The scribes, Sadducees, and Pharisees did not welcome Him with open arms. Nor did the learned, the wise, and the noble hail Him. Then need we expect the world to embrace and welcome us with open arms?

Joseph Smith knew and understood by the teachings given unto him of God and angels what he had to do.

He was called of the Lord and raised up for this very purpose. He, too, was not popular among men, nor did the world clamor for his wisdom. Until the day of his death, he was persecuted and reviled for living and teaching the gospel. His blood sealed his testimony.

In the Lord's own day, the proclamation was, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (See John 1:46). Likewise, the life and teachings of Joseph Smith did not appeal to those with worldly thoughts. Joseph's teachings came into conflict with man-made traditions and prejudices. The cry in Joseph Smith's day was much the same as in the day of the Savior: "Can anything good come out of Palmyra? Can anything good come from Joseph Smith?"

Opposition our companion, adversity our fate

Today we hear a similar cry: "Can anything good come from the Mormon people? Can good be wrought by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?" Falsehoods are spoken about the true Saints of God. These will continue to abound until the coming of the Son of God.

Saints of God in all ages have passed through these tests of opposition. Those of today find themselves in no different position. Until evil is bound, this shall ever be the case. This is one of the legacies left to the elect Saints while here in mortality. Opposition may be our companion, and adversity our fate until the Lord comes in a cloud of glory. Latter-day Saints, this is our legacy. We may depend on it.

Said Jesus, "I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (John 15:19).

"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

"If ye were of the world, the world would love his own.

"... If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:18-20).

Pray for our enemies and critics

What if some of us have to sacrifice all that we have for the gospel and testimony of Christ? The Saints have done this in the past, and I am sure the Saints of today have the faith and courage to do whatever the Lord asks them to do. Should we complain or murmur if we are asked to sacrifice in defending the true gospel of the Son of God?

The Lord, Jesus, was poor from the manger to the cross. He descended below all things that He might rise above all. Should we complain if we face challenges ourselves? As an individual, as one who has walked the path of poverty and trials, I am beginning to learn the value of such experiences. The Lord has always been my faith, strength, and courage. I want nothing but the best for my family and others. I desire salvation and eternal life for my family and for my fellowmen. I will pray for our critics and enemies. I will be patient and long-suffering toward them and will return kindness, prayer, and righteousness.

Salvation and eternal life

There is no stopping the true work of God. Some men may resent it. The world may reject it. They may use every means and all their power against this work, but the work of God will roll forth and will gather every honest soul throughout the earth sooner or later. We have the promise of God that this is His work and it shall never be overthrown in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times.

Are we ready, as the Saints of God, to endure all things for the sake of the souls of our fellowmen? We have gone from continent to continent, from land to land, from island to island, wherever there was a door open to preach the gospel. We have left our homes, families, wives, and children. Some have sacrificed their lives for the salvation of their fellowmen. Some have gone without purse or scrip. Some have faced shame and ridicule, even

persecution. We shall continue to do this until we have taken this beloved gospel to the ends of the earth.

This message of salvation and eternal life has been entrusted to us. All mankind shall hear the glad tidings of salvation. They shall receive the blessings of God, or His condemnation, according to their willingness to receive or their determination to reject the gospel.

Priesthood—head and heart of the true church

This work is a never-ending work which we have taken upon ourselves. It will never terminate until this earth shall be redeemed, until the power of Satan shall be subdued, until wickedness shall be banished from the earth, until Christ shall reign, whose right it is to reign, and until every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

In due course of time, all will be redeemed who may be redeemed. God, our Heavenly Father, desires that we should be long-suffering and patient toward those who seek to afflict and oppress us, just as He is long-suffering toward all of His children, in spite of their wickedness and waywardness.

Men of God who hold the holy priesthood are the head and heart of the Lord's true church. We do not have the priesthood for self-aggrandizement or to be used to oppress anyone. There is no priesthood of the Son of God that authorizes any one man to oppress another or to intrude upon his rights in any way.

We ought to be a brother and a friend to all men everywhere. We ought not to entertain a "Big I" and a "Little You" feeling toward our neighbors and fellowmen. Men of God who are approachable and compassionate are putting honor upon the holy priesthood of God.

If there are any in our own flock who err, let us try to reclaim them by kindness and long-suffering. If there are any among us who have a bad spirit,

let us show them a better spirit. If there are any among us who do not do right, let us do right ourselves and say to them, "Come, follow me."

Amen to the priesthood or the authority of any man of God who exercises control, dominion, or compulsion upon a fellow being outside of the Church or upon a fellow member in the Church in any degree of unrighteousness. (See D&C 121:37.)

Prayers, and testimony that work will roll forth

I pray that our conduct day by day will be such that it will bear examination and scrutiny by our fellowmen, and also by our Heavenly Father. I pray that we will be willing to stand by this gospel, this testimony, and this work in life and death, in time and eternity.

I pray that every Latter-day Saint will let his prayers ascend into the ears of our Father in Heaven day and night, whether praying in family circles or in private places, for the Lord to sustain His leaders and people as we work to build up a Zion and to fulfill His promises. I pray that every Latter-day Saint will pray for the First Presidency of this Church and pray for His Apostles and leaders. Let us uphold them by our faith, works, and hopes. History will record one day that President Gordon B. Hinckley was one of the strongest counselors the Church ever had. Let us uphold him by our faith and by our prayers. President Hinckley carries a tremendous burden today.

I bear testimony in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that this work is true. I know that no earthly power can destroy it. Even the combined forces and powers of all the nations in the world cannot stop or retard this work because the Great Elohim and Jehovah have spoken it. I bear testimony that the principles of the gospel will live on, even if the earth wastes away. There is no power beneath the heavens that can hinder, stop, or destroy the progress of truth and the decrees of God, our Eternal Father in Heaven.

I bear testimony that the destiny of every individual, every prince, every emperor, of every king, president, statesman, or ruler under heaven is in the hands of God. He made the world and all that is in it. They may not go further than the Master permits. Adversity will purify Zion. Opposition will make us stronger in our courage and firmer in our faith.

I bear testimony that this work will continue to roll forth in strength and power throughout all the earth until all things which have been predicted by the prophets are fulfilled.

May the Lord bless all the Saints of God throughout the world. May He bless all the house of Israel, all of the dispersed of every tribe, all the righteous, the pure, the holy and good in every nation, is my humble prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

We have just listened to Elder George P. Lee, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Derek A. Cuthbert, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now address us.

Elder Derek A. Cuthbert

Over nineteen hundred years ago, the Apostle Paul, in writing to the Saints at Ephesus, declared: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5). How far we have drifted over the intervening years, for there are now more than a thousand different churches claiming to be Christian.

For the first twenty-four years of my life I was an active member of one of this multitude of churches of Christendom. However, I had many unanswered questions which prompted me to listen to the young Mormon missionaries when they knocked on our door in England. Similar questions remain unanswered for millions of people who claim membership in some church but who do not have a clear understanding of the Savior's teachings.

I would therefore like to suggest ten questions which members of any church might ask our missionaries, or, indeed, any Latter-day Saint. My life was changed, along with my dear wife's, as we met with the missionaries, asked questions, and prayed to know the truth.

Question no. 1: Why doesn't God speak to us today?

My wife and I grew up as teenagers during the Second World War, and this question often came to our minds. We felt strongly the need for God's guidance then, as we do today in these challenging and perilous times. Anciently, through the prophet Amos, the Lord had declared, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). I never felt that revelations had ceased just because those already given had been bound into a book, the Holy Bible.

It was not until five years after the hostilities of war had ceased that I received the answer. God does speak again, through prophets, and revelation once more flows down from the heavens. These and many other wonderful truths enlightened our minds and lifted our souls as the missionaries taught us. How exciting to realize we are living in the latter days, "the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21). How wonderful to learn of another book of scripture, the Book of Mormon, re-

vealed through a latter-day prophet as another testament of Jesus Christ.

Question no. 2: What is God like?

The Lord himself, in his beautiful intercessory prayer, petitioned: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). What a contrast to the teachings of most churches that it is a mystery, that we cannot know and should not know what God is like.

How wonderful that the Almighty God has identified himself to us through his beloved son, Jesus Christ. He has revealed himself as our Father in Heaven, who wants us, his children, to keep in touch with him while we are away from our heavenly home. Ask a little child to close his eyes and think of God and then describe him. Will he describe a spirit? No! He will tell of a loving, kindly faced, white-robed personal being. In his epistle to the Hebrews, Paul describes Jesus, in relation to God the Father, as "being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person" (Hebrews 1:3). Yes, the Holy Bible answers the question as to what God is like, but people have been led astray by nonbiblical teachings and by half-truths. To correct the traditions of error handed down through the centuries, God himself has appeared in a pillar of light, together with his beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Question no. 3: What does your church teach about family life?

The strength and moral fiber of a nation is in its families, and any church purporting to be Christian must cherish family life, both as a precious, God-given heritage and as a priceless, promised inheritance. I shall be eternally grateful that our missionary teachers expanded our vision of family significantly. They encouraged us to gather our children around us night and morning in family prayer. We were then

introduced to family home evening, an institution in Latter-day Saint homes throughout the world. It is indeed a great anchor and fortress to gather together at least one evening a week to discuss applications of gospel principles, have happy, healthful activity, develop talents within the family circle, and to pray together. We often reminisce about the family home evenings we have had over the years, but there is something to be prized even more. Although previously married "until death do you part," we have now been married in a Latter-day Saint temple for "time and eternity." Our family can be forever!

Question no. 4: How can God be just if baptism is essential and many die without knowing this?

I had been baptized by sprinkling as a baby, but I came to realize that baptism is for remission of my own sins, not for Adam's or anyone else's transgressions. I was happy to learn that little children need no baptism, for they are innocent until the age of accountability. But what of those who were accountable who had not received baptism before dying?

I remember a fine minister, visiting Salt Lake City from South Africa, who came to my office inquiring:

"What is the basis for your doctrine of baptism for the dead?"

"Is baptism essential?" I asked.

"Yes," he responded.

"Do you believe God is just?"

"Of course," he replied.

"Then what of those who died without baptism?" I inquired, and he indicated that he had often wondered about that. I asked whether he had overlooked Paul's teaching: "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?" (1 Corinthians 15:29). The minister looked at me and quietly said: "Thank you for explaining that doctrine." I was glad he had been enlightened but sad that he and so many others had failed to

see before. Yes, our Father in Heaven loves all of his children and has provided a way for every one of them to return to him.

Question no. 5: If God loves us so much, why doesn't he warn us about the evils of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs?

So many of God's children degrade themselves by becoming chemically dependent. He is concerned, and in the year 1833 he gave such a warning through the latter-day prophet, Joseph Smith. This health law is called the Word of Wisdom. Oh, that the world would heed this counsel from the Lord through a prophet, for a great part of crime, sickness, and unhappiness in the world is drug related.

Question no. 6: How does your church care for you and fulfill your needs in addition to your Word of Wisdom?

Over the years of my membership in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I have greatly appreciated the opportunities for service, for there is no paid ministry. Every worthy male member of the Church above the age of twelve may hold an office in the priesthood. Similarly, the girls and women of the Church receive many assignments to lead and teach and serve. Each family is visited monthly by priesthood home teachers, who care for their needs, and by visiting teachers from the women's Relief Society, whose motto is "charity never faileth." We also enjoy all kinds of physical, spiritual and social activity, and receive instruction on such subjects as personal and family preparedness, including home production and storage.

For those who fall on hard times due to unemployment or sickness, help is given to rehabilitate and reestablish. Such assistance comes from the general membership, who fast two meals each month and give the money to relieve the poor and the needy. Yes, the Lord does

watch over us and counsel us and warn us through his appointed and ordained ministers. These teachings and inspired programs are now being shared with God's children all over the world.

Question no. 7: Why do you send missionaries all over the world, when most churches concentrate on Third World countries?

I must confess that question was in my mind when the young men knocked on our door and announced they were missionaries. Having studied the New Testament, I should have known the answer, for the Savior gave it so clearly as he instructed his Apostles just before his ascension. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19). The fact that the Lord gave the commission is sufficient justification for carrying the gospel to the ends of the earth. People of all nations need the truth and purpose and happiness which the fullness of the gospel brings. Everyone should be interested in truth, and so we say to people of all faiths, Keep all the truth you have and we will add to it. This is why tens of thousands of young men and women and well over a thousand retired couples are voluntarily giving eighteen months to two years, preaching the restored gospel of Jesus Christ to all the world.

Question no. 8: What is your understanding of the purpose of life?

In its basic form, this question might be expressed as "Why am I here?" There is a yearning deep down in all people to know the answer in order to live a purposeful life. As all loving parents do, our Heavenly Father had made a plan for us, his children, before this earth ever existed. In that period of time, which we call the pre-mortal existence, we lived with God as his spirit children. In order for us to progress further, it was necessary for us

to experience mortality by receiving a physical body provided by earthly parents. Being away from the presence of God for a while, we learn to walk by faith and develop qualities which will eventually qualify us to return to our heavenly home as resurrected beings.

The Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, has declared his great purpose and plan for his children: "For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). Without this period of life on earth, we can achieve neither immortality nor eternal life.

Question no. 9: How do you know the answers you have given are true?

I know because of my testimony, which comes from deep inside me and yet is from a divine source. The wonderful missionaries brought a special gift, which I received following baptism.

"A gift you say? What did they buy for you that has made you so happy and made you so sure that God and Jesus live and that they speak to us in these days through prophets?"

No, it was not a gift purchased, except by the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. He promised that he would send a Comforter, even the Holy Ghost, to guide and bless and comfort and testify of truth.

"You mean you have the gift of the Holy Ghost as was promised and bestowed in the early Church?"

Yes. After I had come up out of the water, hands were laid upon my head by one having authority from Jesus Christ himself, and I received the Holy Ghost to be my constant companion. The Holy Ghost testifies of truth; he bears witness of the Father and the Son.

Question no. 10: How can I know for myself that what you teach is true?

To all who ask this question, the promise found in the Book of Mor-

mon is powerful, true, and of eternal significance.

"And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

"And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things" (Moroni 10:4-5).

Add to the truth you have

Yes, my dear inquiring friend, we will add to the truth you have, for God speaks again through prophets. He has revealed himself to man in modern times. It is possible for families to be forever, for God has restored the sacred temple ordinances for the living and the dead. Furthermore, he has given us a health law, a welfare program, and a missionary system. He has revealed the purpose of life and has given us the Holy Ghost that we might testify to others and know for ourselves that this is the living Church of the living Christ, and that he speaks through a living prophet, even our beloved President Spencer W. Kimball. I so testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

We have just heard from Elder Derek A. Cuthbert, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Now Let Us Rejoice," following which we shall hear from Elder Robert E. Wells, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation sang "Now Let Us Rejoice."

Elder Robert E. Wells spoke without further announcement.

Elder Robert E. Wells

The spirit of adventure

I love the spirit of adventure in life, but I love more the adventures of the spirit. I am comfortable with the positive connotations of the word *adventure*. I like Webster's definition of *adventure*: "An exciting or remarkable experience"; and of *adventurous*: "disposed . . . to cope with the new and unknown" (*Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*).

In my life I have enjoyed many so-called adventures, such as hunting exotic game—jaguars, alligators—waterskiing on rivers full of man-eating piranha fish—an expedition into the danger-filled Amazon jungle—looking for gold plates with a religious history on them—single-engine flights in my own airplanes the length of the hemisphere, the width of the continents—even this Miss America year has been an exciting, Cinderella-like adventure.

One modern philosopher says, "It is an amazing adventure to be born upon this wandering island in the sky and it is an adventure to leave it when death calls. To go to school, to make friends, to marry, to rear children, to face through life the swift changes of circumstances that no man can certainly predict an hour ahead" (*Vital Quotations*, comp. Roy Emerson West [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1968], pp. 203–204).

New horizons through the scriptures

I am grateful that the scriptures encourage us to discover new horizons, to have adventures of the mind and study things "in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth; things which have been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass; . . . the perplexities of the nations . . . ; and a knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms" (D&C 88:79).

And why should we have an adventurous mind or an adventurous spirit? The Lord says, "That ye may be prepared in *all* things . . . [1] to magnify the calling whereunto I have called you, and [2] the mission with which I have commissioned you" (D&C 88:80; italics added).

Missionary adventures

Of the many adventures I have enjoyed in my life, the greatest have been the soul-stirring missionary adventures.

Let me encourage you faithful married couples without children at home to go on missions. The Lord needs you out in the mission field. Forget your fears. We don't expect you to do everything the young missionaries do. In fact, I was in Idaho trying to eliminate the fears of some high priests, and I said, "You retired couples don't have to memorize scriptures like the young missionaries, you don't have to memorize any presentations unless you want to." I told them, "You don't have to get up early in the morning like the young missionaries do to study, and if it is raining or snowing, you don't have to go outside until you feel up to it. . . ." At that point a fellow down in the middle shot up his hand and said, "When can I go? That's a better life than I've got now!"

Joe and Zella Wendel went on a mission. Her legs were bothering her, and they got worse in the mission field instead of better. She wrote home, "I thought we were just to work in the office, but now we find we are to proselyte also. But my knees are so bad we just can't go out looking for people, so we are praying very hard to find someone right here in our apartment building." In three months they had three baptisms—new move-ins from their apartment building! Those missionaries were my parents.

Walter and Ernestine Walser were called to Peru. Former Bishop Walser was soon called as a branch president in the remote interior mountains. With his limited Missionary Training Center Spanish, Elder Walser had to choose counselors, hold meetings, teach, train, reactivate, ordain, and so on. In fasting and prayer he received impressions from the Spirit and went about his work. Elder Walser wrote, "I learned that even with limited language, whenever it was needed, enough Spanish was given me to communicate, and I knew it was from the Lord."

Like many adventures, there were hardships and sacrifices, but the Walsers said that the genuine love and affection of those wonderful Peruvian people and the feeling of being needed more than compensated. They are grateful for their spiritual adventure in serving the Lord.

Now you young unmarried sisters from twenty-one to sixty-nine with good health, there is no obligation to serve, but you are certainly welcome and wanted if the Spirit encourages you to volunteer.

Let me tell you about two sister missionaries who called at a home one morning before the husband went to work. They were welcomed in, so they immediately told about Joseph Smith's first vision, the angel Moroni, the gold plates, and the restoration of the priesthood. Then the senior companion, noting that about forty-five minutes had gone by, said, "We would like to return next week to tell you more."

To which the husband exclaimed, "Next week?" He walked to the door, locked it, put the key in his pocket, and said, "You're not leaving here till you've told us all you know about Joseph Smith and this restored gospel!" They were there all day. The family asked for baptism that same evening.

Now you young men, unmarried, nineteen to twenty-six (eighteen outside the United States), healthy and worthy—from the time of the recent prophets the spiritual adventure of a mission has been emphasized as a

priesthood responsibility of such priority that again today we stress, *your mission comes before marriage, education, professional opportunities, scholarships, sports, cars, or girls.*

President Kimball said, "Should every young man fill a mission? The answer has been given by the Lord. It is *yes*. Every young man should fill a mission." President Kimball then equated this instruction of going on a mission with the commandments of paying tithing, of observing the Sabbath, of marrying in the temple (in Regional Representatives' seminar, 4 Apr. 1974).

In twenty-four months you will have twenty-four years' worth of spiritual adventures. You will see people change; soften; become more humble, more obedient; have their prayers answered; and come to a knowledge that our message is true.

Let me illustrate:

Two elders met and taught a professor with credentials from Heidelberg and the Sorbonne. His mind was not open to their message, but the man had to go to the hospital for surgery. While he was recuperating in the hospital, his yard and garden suffered. The two missionaries felt impressed to use their preparation day to mow his lawn, trim the hedge, and weed the flowers.

The wife told her husband what they had done. He sent for the elders to come to the hospital, and with tears in his eyes he said, "Never in my entire adult life has anyone ever gone out of his way to do anything for me."

His demeanor changed. He listened to the missionary discussions. Previously skeptical, he now paid rapt attention and visibly became more meek and humble. He prayed for the first time since he was a child, and he received a testimony and was baptized.

Two missionaries asked a new family to kneel in prayer, and the senior companion, not knowing why, asked the husband to move over by his wife and take her hand. He hesitated, and the missionary simply said, "That's what

my mom and dad do at home. Please take your wife by the hand."

After they were baptized, the husband and wife tearfully confessed that they were on the verge of divorce when they met the missionaries. The husband had already moved out of the home. He was just there to visit the children when the missionaries appeared. The husband said that as his hand touched his wife's, a healing spirit came over them. Love replaced the wounds and the misunderstandings; they forgave each other, and the husband came home.

Another man said that he would not go to church but that his family could go. The missionaries told him that they would always save him a seat right by the door in case he changed his mind. One Sunday he was prompted to go to church even though his family had left without him. From the foyer he could see his family seated with the missionaries and a space at the end of the pew vacant and easily accessible. He entered the little chapel, and his footsteps were heard. The missionaries turned their heads, and when they saw him, tears came to their eyes. After baptism the husband would say, "Never in my life had anyone ever cried out of happiness just to see me enter a room."

A new senior companion faced a sophisticated woman lawyer who was polite but very intellectual. When the missionary asked her who the boy prophet saw in the column of light, she answered, "I am an atheist." The elder didn't really understand the implication, so he repeated the question. She answered again, "I am an atheist. You want me to say that Joseph Smith saw the Father and the Son, but I do not believe in God."

The elder had never encountered an atheist before, and his first impulse was to give up and leave, but the Spirit said, "No, she will listen. Just answer the questions for her." So the elder proceeded and said, "You are right. He saw the Father and the Son." He continued with the presentation, but instead of asking questions directly, he asked

them indirectly and answered them himself for her.

At the end of the presentation he taught her how we pray, and then courageously asked her to kneel with them and to be the voice. She did kneel and did pray to her Heavenly Father. Never again did she say that she was an atheist. She and her family subsequently were baptized.

Adventures of the Spirit

In the mission field, more than anywhere else, you can enjoy those adventures of the spirit we call "thin-veil experiences" and "liquid-fire experiences," the things so spiritual and miraculous that tongue cannot adequately confess nor the hand of man appropriately write.

The missionary has his own voyages of discovery into the realms of the Spirit, and he sees others uplifted with those heart-warming, peace-producing, mind-opening encounters of a spiritual kind which I choose to call "adventures"—adventures of the Spirit.

For example:

- A verse of the scriptures that glows in your mind, like Joseph reading in James;
- A prayer the Lord responds to with an outpouring of His love so intense that a yes or no answer doesn't really matter;
- A hymn with poetic words of condensed spirituality that causes the soul to soar heavenward;
- An unselfish act of service which leaves you feeling as if you were serving perhaps even the Savior Himself;
- The sacrament covenant to take Christ's name upon oneself pierces the soul so deeply that Christ's atonement truly becomes a personal, saving experience, a rebirth;
- A newly placed Book of Mormon causing an inquisitive person to read half the night in an exciting discovery of the newfound witness for Christ;
- The bad men who become good, the good men and women who become better, the great people who become

greater and more Christlike through the gospel.

Be instruments in His hands.

Build up treasures in heaven.

Discover the missionary adventures of the spirit.

God lives and loves us. He is in His heaven.

Jesus lives and loves us. Resurrected, glorified, exalted, He stands physically at the head of this church which bears His name. His spokesman is a living prophet, and everything that we teach is true.

As a witness, I testify of it in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Robert E. Wells, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

It will now be our pleasure to hear from Elder Russell M. Nelson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Russell M. Nelson

Quest for self-mastery

If our faith be united in prayer that we may be edified together, I should like to speak about our quest for self-mastery. In so doing, I would converse as a loving father counseling one of my own children.

Before you can master yourself, my precious one, you need to know who you are. You consist of two parts—your physical body, and your spirit which lives within your body. You may have heard the expression “mind over matter.” That’s what I would like to talk about—but phrase it a little differently: “spirit over body.” That is self-mastery.

When you arrived as a newborn baby, your little body was master. You had what I call the “I-want-what-I-want-when-I-want-it” philosophy. No amount of discussion could postpone your impatient demands when you wanted to be fed—and *now!* Like all parents, we anxiously anticipated the first smile, a word, a glimpse at the potential of the spirit within your tiny body. Is there a mother who has not cradled her baby as your sweet mother did, in wistful wonder of the destiny of her dear little one? Even Mary, the mother of Jesus, might have asked such questions:

Baby, lyin’ in a manger,
slumberin’ so sweetly,
What you goin’ to be?
Baby, all the world is watchin’, all
the world awaits to see.
What will you be?
Baby, sleepin’ in a stable,
underneath the heaven,
What you goin’ to say? . . .
Baby, lyin’ in a manger,
Will you save the world one day?
(Natalie Sleeth, “Baby, What You
Goin’ to Be?” [New York: Carl
Fisher, Inc.]

Body, tenement for spirit

Through those early years, we parents are properly concerned with physical needs of our children, such as food, clothing, and shelter.

But as you grow older, our concerns shift more toward your spiritual growth, in order that you might achieve your full potential. “For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit . . . and becometh a saint” (Mosiah 3:19).

That requires self-mastery. Remember, “The spirit and the body are the soul of man” (D&C 88:15). Both are of great importance. Your physical

body is a magnificent creation of God. It is his temple as well as yours, and must be treated with reverence. Scripture declares: "Ye are the temple of God. . . . If any man defile [it], him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Corinthians 3:16-17).

Remarkable as your body is, its prime purpose is even of greater importance—to serve as tenement for your spirit. Abraham taught that "these . . . spirits . . . existed before, they shall have no end . . . for they are . . . eternal" (Abraham 3:18).

Learn to control thoughts

Your spirit acquired a body at birth and became a soul to live in mortality through periods of trial and testing. Part of each test is to determine if your body can become mastered by the spirit that dwells within it.

Although your spirit had a veil of forgetfulness placed over it at the time of your birth into mortality, it retained its power to remember all that happens—precisely recording each event of life. Indeed, scriptures warn "that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matthew 12:36). Prophets refer to our "bright recollection" (Alma 11:43) and "perfect remembrance" (Alma 5:18) at that day of decision.

Since thoughts precede deeds, you must first learn to control your thoughts. "As [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7).

Keep the Sabbath day holy

In your quest for self-mastery, full participation in the activities of the Church will help. I'll mention but a few. A first step comes as we learn together to keep the Sabbath day holy. This is one of the Ten Commandments. (See Exodus 20:8; Deuteronomy 5:15.) We honor the Sabbath "to pay [our] devotions unto the Most High" (D&C 59:10), and because the Lord

declared: "It is a sign between me and you . . . that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you" (Exodus 31:13; see also Ezekiel 20:20).

Law of the fast

Another step toward self-mastery comes when you are old enough to observe the law of the fast. As funds are contributed from meals missed, the needs of the poor may be met. But meanwhile, through your spirit, you develop personal power over your body's drives of hunger and thirst. Fasting gives you confidence to know that your spirit can master appetite.

Some time ago your mother and I visited a Third World country where sanitary conditions were much poorer than ours. We joined with a delegation of other doctors from all over the world. The president of our group, an experienced traveler, warned of risks. In order to avoid water that might be contaminated, we were even counseled to brush our teeth with an alcoholic beverage. We chose not to follow that counsel, but simply did what we had learned to do once a month. We fasted that first day, thinking we could introduce simple food and fluids gradually thereafter. Later, we were the only ones in our group without disabling illness.

Fasting fortifies discipline over appetite and helps to protect against later uncontrolled cravings and gnawing habits.

Obedience to Word of Wisdom

Another step toward self-mastery comes from obedience to the Word of Wisdom. Remember, it contains a "promise, adapted to the capacity of . . . the weakest of all saints" (D&C 89:3). It was given "in consequence of evils and designs which do and will exist in the hearts of conspiring men in the last days" (D&C 89:4). Indeed, as you develop courage to say no to alcohol, tobacco, and other stimulants, you gain additional strength. You

can then refuse conspiring men—those seditious solicitors of harmful substances or smut. You can reject their evil enticements to your body.

If you yield to anything that can addict, and thus defy the Word of Wisdom, your spirit surrenders to the body. The *flesh* then enslaves the *spirit*. This is contrary to the purpose of your mortal existence. And in the process of such addiction, your life span is likely to be shortened, thereby reducing the time available for repentance by which your spirit might attain self-mastery over your body.

Creator's law of chastity

Other physical appeals come during your courtship period. In your youth, you may be challenged by restraints of parents hoping to guide you through this wonderful period of life.

Because the adversary is keenly aware of the power of physical temptation, Alma instructed his son and all of us: "See that ye bridle all your passions" (Alma 38:12).

When you marry, you and your eternal companion may then invoke the power of procreation, that you may have joy and rejoicing in your posterity. This divine endowment is guarded by your Creator's law of chastity. All through the years, remember: chastity is the powerful protector of virile manhood and the crown of beautiful womanhood.

In courtship and marriage, virtue seems to come under attack first. Mental turmoil that trails in the wake of weakness from lust has evoked many a tear from innocent loved ones. Without repentance, tumult within self does not quit either.

Shakespeare expressed such self-conflict as one of his characters contemplating conquest in lust spoke these lines:

What win I, if I gain the thing I seek?

A dream, a breath, a froth of fleeting joy.

Who buys a minute's mirth to wail a week?

Or sells eternity to get a toy?

For one sweet grape who will the vine destroy?

("Lucrece," lines 211–15.)

Prophets have repeatedly cautioned about moral sin. One, for example, warned: "O, my beloved brethren, remember the awfulness in transgressing against that Holy God, and also the awfulness of yielding to the enticings of that cunning one. Remember, to be carnally-minded is death, and to be spiritually-minded is life eternal" (2 Nephi 9:39; see also Romans 8:6; Alma 36:4; D&C 29:35, 67:10).

Regular exercise

Now don't misunderstand me. I would not want you to neglect your body. It deserves daily care. Physical conditioning through regular exercise requires self-mastery too. I marvel at Elder Joseph Anderson, now in his ninety-sixth year. For decades, the strength of his spirit over his body has induced him to swim regularly. But his motivation has never been to attain physical longevity. That has come only incidentally. His desire has been to serve God and His anointed. Elder Anderson has followed what I label as the Lord's prescription for a long and useful life. Those faithful in "magnifying their calling, are sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies. They become . . . the elect of God" (D&C 84:33–34).

Elder Anderson's exercise program agrees with the perspective of Paul, who said: "Bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Timothy 4:8).

Handsome and fit, Elder Anderson personifies this scripture: "Glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:20).

Reputation and character through self-mastery

As you work during the productive years of life, whether at home or in the field, in the factory or at a workbench, reputation is built and character is forged as you develop self-mastery. Faithful payment of tithing is part of that process. It defends you against dishonesty or shabby temptations. Courageous accountability for your own actions becomes a cherished prize.

It really matters what you listen to, what you look at, what you think, say, and do. Select music that will strengthen your spirit. Control your speech; keep it free from profanity and vulgarity. Follow the teachings of this proverb: "My mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips."

"All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing . . . perverse in them" (Proverbs 8:7-8).

Emulate the Savior

As you approach old age, you will face new challenges to self-mastery. Symptoms of the deteriorating body can be painful, even disabling. Deep aches of sadness are caused by the departing of loved ones. For some, these deepening trials come early in life. But when yours are thrust upon you, remember a concept expressed by my father some time after my mother had passed away. Your grandparents had been married for sixty-four years. When someone asked how he was doing, my father simply stated, "I'm lonely, but I'm not lonesome." Do you know what he meant? Though he was now without his sweetheart, he was so busy assisting family and friends, he had replaced sorrow with service and had displaced self-pity with selfless love. He had found joy in following the timeless example of the Master.

Jesus, our Savior, was born in the lowliest of circumstances. For his baptism he was immersed in the lowest body of fresh water upon the planet. In

service and suffering, he also "descended below" all things (D&C 122:8), that he could rise above all things. Near the end of his life, he triumphantly declared, "I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). "Look unto me, and endure to the end, and ye shall live; for unto him that endureth to the end will I give eternal life" (3 Nephi 15:9). Scriptures tutor us at least twenty-six times* to endure to the end to attain eternal life. Then we will obtain a resurrected body—one that is incorruptible, glorified, and prepared to live in the presence of God.

To reach your highest destiny, emulate the Savior. He proclaimed, "What manner of men ought ye to be? . . . Even as I am" (3 Nephi 27:27). Our loftiest hope is to grow in spirit and attain "the stature of the fullness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children" (Ephesians 4:13-14).

Prepare to "receive . . . final assignment for eternity"

You will then be well prepared for that pending day of judgment when, as taught by President Spencer W. Kimball, "the soul, composed of the resurrected body and the eternal spirit, . . . will come before the great judge to receive its final assignment for the eternity" (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982], p. 46).

Remember, my dear one, not an age in life passes without temptation, trial, or torment experienced through your physical body. But as you prayerfully develop self-mastery, desires of the flesh may be subdued. And when that has been achieved, you may have

*Matthew 10:22, 24:13; Mark 13:13; 1 Nephi 13:37, 22:31; 2 Nephi 9:24, 31:15-16, 20, 33:4; Omni 1:26; Alma 32:13, 15, 38:2; 3 Nephi 15:9, 27:6, 16-17; Mormon 9:29; Moroni 8:26; D&C 10:69, 14:7, 18:22, 20:25, 20:29, 53:7.

the strength to submit to your Heavenly Father, as did Jesus, who said, "Not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42).

When deepening trials come your way, remember this glorious promise of the Savior: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Revelation 3:21).

Christ is our great Exemplar. I declare, as a special witness, that he is the Son of God and "is the life and the light

of the world" (Alma 38:9; see also D&C 11:28). We develop self-mastery as we become like him, I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Russell M. Nelson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just addressed us.

We will now hear from Elder Thomas S. Monson, also a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Thomas S. Monson

True and abiding love

Driving on the modern freeways during the sunshine of summer is often a pleasant experience. Frequently, one can view the grandeur of majestic mountains and the mesmerizing surf of the sea all in a single drive. However, when the traffic is heavy, the mountains and seas are set aside, and concentration is focused on the car ahead. Such was the occasion when I read with keen interest the words of a bumper sticker readily visible on the highly polished chrome bumper of a car which was weaving in and out of the traffic stream. The words were these: "Honk if you love Jesus." No one honked. Perhaps each was disturbed by the thoughtless and rude actions of the offending driver. Then, again, would honking be an appropriate manner in which to show one's love for the Son of God, the Savior of the world, the Redeemer of all mankind? Such was not the pattern provided by Jesus of Nazareth.

The importance of demonstrating daily a true and an abiding love was convincingly taught by the Master when the inquiring lawyer stepped forward and boldly asked him, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?"

Matthew records that "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy

God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

"This is the first and great commandment.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:36-39).

Mark concludes the account with the Savior's statement, "There is none other commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:31).

Divine example

His answer could not be faulted. His very actions gave credence to His words. He demonstrated genuine love of God by living the perfect life, by honoring the sacred mission that was His. Never was He haughty. Never was He puffed up with pride. Never was He disloyal. Ever was He humble. Ever was He sincere. Ever was He true.

Though He was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by that master of deceit, even the devil; though He was physically weakened from fasting forty days and forty nights and was an hungered; yet when the evil one proffered Jesus the most alluring and tempting proposals, He gave to us a divine example of true love of God by refusing to deviate from what He knew was right. (See Matthew 4:1-11.)

Jesus, throughout His ministry, blessed the sick, restored sight to the

blind, made the deaf to hear and the maimed to walk. He taught forgiveness by forgiving. He taught compassion by being compassionate. He taught devotion by giving of Himself. Jesus taught by example.

As we survey the life of our Lord, each of us could echo the words of the well-known hymn:

I stand all amazed at the love
Jesus offers me,
Confused at the grace that so fully
he proffers me.
I tremble to know that for me he
was crucified,
That for me, a sinner, he suffered,
he bled and died.
("I Stand All Amazed," *Hymns*,
1985, no. 193.)

"Greater love hath no man"

To demonstrate our gratitude, is it required that we, too, lay down our lives as did He? Some have.

In the beautiful city of Melbourne, Australia, there is situated in an impressive setting a historic war memorial. As one walks through the memorial's silent corridors, one sees tablets of marble that note the deeds of valor and acts of courage of those who made the supreme sacrifice. One can almost hear the roar of the cannon, the scream of the rocket, the cry of the wounded. One can feel the exhilaration of victory and, at the same time, sense the despair of defeat.

In the center of the main hall, inscribed for all to see, is the message of the memorial. The skylight overhead permits easy reading. The words almost stand up and speak: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

Love of God, His Son, and our fellowmen

Today, the challenge which we face and must meet is not that we should go forth on the battlefield of war

and lay down our lives. Rather, it is that we, on the battlefield of life, so live and serve that our lives and actions reflect a true love of God, of His Son, Jesus Christ, and of our fellowmen. This is not accomplished by clever signs printed on bumper stickers affixed to automobiles.

Jesus teaches us: "If ye love me, keep my commandments. . . .

"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him" (John 14:15, 21).

Years ago we danced to a popular song, the words of which were, "It's easy to say I love you, easy to say I'll be true, easy to say these simple things, but prove it by the things you do."

Which one loved her best?

From our lessons learned in Primary we remember the poem entitled "Which Loved Best?"

"I love you, Mother," said little [John];

Then, forgetting his work, his cap went on,

And he was off to the garden swing,

And left her the water and wood to bring.

"I love you, Mother," said rosy Nell—

"I love you better than tongue can tell";

Then she teased and pouted full half the day,

Till her mother rejoiced when she went to play.

"I love you, Mother," said little Fan;

"Today I'll help you all I can; How glad I am that school doesn't keep!"

So she rocked the babe till it fell asleep.

Then, stepping softly, she fetched the broom,

And swept the floor and tidied the room;

Busy and happy all day was she,
Helpful and happy as child could be.

"I love you, Mother," again they said,

Three little children going to bed;
How do you think that Mother guessed

Which of them really loved her best?

(Joy Allison, *The World's Best Loved Poems* [New York: Harper and Row, 1955], pp. 243-44.)

Years pass. Childhood vanishes. Truth remains. The transition from Primary's poems to today's truths is not difficult. True love continues to be an outward expression of an inward conviction.

Prayer of dedication at Freiberg

Today, on a gentle rise in the historic city of Freiberg, German Democratic Republic, there stands a beautiful, dedicated temple of God. The temple provides the ultimate—even the eternal—blessings of a loving Heavenly Father to His faithful Saints.

Ten years ago, on a Sunday morning, April 27, 1975, I stood on an outcropping of rock situated between the cities of Dresden and Meissen, high above the Elbe River. I responded to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and offered a prayer of dedication on that land and its people. That prayer noted the faith of the members. It emphasized the tender feelings of many hearts filled with an overwhelming desire to obtain temple blessings. A plea for peace was expressed. Divine help was requested. I voiced the words, "Dear Father, let this be the beginning of a new day for the members of Thy church in this land."

Suddenly, from far below in the valley, a bell in a church steeple began to chime and the shrill crow of a rooster broke the morning silence, each her-

alding the commencement of a new day. Though my eyes were closed, I felt a warmth from the sun's rays reaching my face, my hands, my arms. How could this be? An incessant rain had been falling all morning. At the conclusion of the prayer, I gazed heavenward. I noted a ray of sunshine which penetrated an opening in the heavy clouds, a ray which engulfed the spot where our small group stood. From that moment I knew divine help was at hand.

Members in East Germany

Full cooperation of government officials was forthcoming. President Spencer W. Kimball and his counselors provided enthusiastic approval. A temple was planned, a site selected, ground-breaking services held, and construction commenced. At the time of dedication, the attention of the international press was focused on this temple in its unusual setting. Words like "How?" and "Why?" were voiced frequently. This was particularly in evidence during the public open house, when 89,872 persons visited the temple. At times the waiting period stretched to three hours, occasionally in the rain. None wavered. All were shown God's house.

During the actual dedicatory services when President Gordon B. Hinckley offered the dedicatory prayer, hymns of praise, testimonies of truth, tears of gratitude, and prayers of thanksgiving marked the historic event. To understand *how*, to comprehend *why*, it is necessary to know the faith, the devotion, the love of the members of the Church in that nation. Though fewer than five thousand in number, the activity levels exceed those found anywhere else in the world.

During the many years I have served on assignment in that area, I have noted the absence of spacious chapels with multiple teaching stations and grounds featuring the greenery of lawns and the blossoms of flowers. The meetinghouse libraries, as well as the

personal libraries of our members, consist only of the standard works, a hymnbook, and one or two other volumes. These books do not remain on bookcase shelves. Their teachings are engraved on the hearts of members. They are displayed in their daily lives. Service is a privilege. A branch president, forty-two years of age, has served in his calling for twenty-one years—half his life. Never a complaint—just gratitude. In Leipzig, when the meetinghouse furnace failed one cold winter day, the meetings were not dismissed. Rather, the members met in the chill of the unheated building, sitting shoulder to shoulder, wearing their coats, singing the hymns of Zion and worshipping Him who counseled, “Be not weary in well doing,” “Follow me,” “Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers” (2 Thessalonians 3:13; Matthew 4:19; D&C 112:10).

The Apostle Paul taught the Corinthians, “If any man love God, the same is known of him” (1 Corinthians 8:3). The love which these faithful members have for God, for His Son, Jesus Christ, and for His everlasting gospel is confirmed by their very lives. It is reminiscent of the love demonstrated by the brother of Jared as described in the Book of Mormon. The blessings of a loving, caring, and just Heavenly Father simply could not be withheld. Faith preceded the miracle. Eternal ordinances are now performed. Everlasting covenants are now made. The love of God has again blessed His people.

Those who love Jesus

For those who love Jesus, these prophetic words have sublime meaning:

“Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth, and rejoice ye inhabitants thereof, for the Lord is God, and beside him there is no Savior.

“Great is his wisdom, marvelous are his ways. . . .

“His purposes fail not. . . .

“For thus saith the Lord—I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto those who fear me, and delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end.

“Great shall be their reward and eternal shall be their glory” (D&C 76:1–3, 5–6).

Such is the blessing reserved for those who love Jesus. May each of us qualify for this great reward, this eternal glory, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, whom I love and of whom I testify, amen.

President Benson

Elder Thomas S. Monson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has been our concluding speaker.

We remind the brethren of the general priesthood meeting which will convene here in the Tabernacle this evening at 6:00 P.M.

The nationwide CBS Radio Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those desiring to attend this broadcast must be in their seats no later than 9:15.

The singing for this session has been by combined choirs from the Granite, Olympus, and Salt Lake Central regions. We are grateful for the presence of these choir members and for the inspiration of their beautiful music. This has added greatly to this meeting.

The choir will now sing in closing “Be Still, My Soul.” Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder Royden G. Derrick, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang “Be Still, My Soul.”

Elder Royden G. Derrick offered the benediction.

GENERAL PRIESTHOOD MEETING

THIRD SESSION

The general priesthood meeting convened in the Tabernacle at 6:00 P.M. on Saturday, October 5, 1985.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for this session was provided by a combined men's choir from the Tabernacle Choir and the Mormon Youth Chorus directed by Donald Ripplinger with Robert Cundick at the organ.

President Hinckley opened this session with the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Brethren, we greet you in this tremendous meeting of the priesthood of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. President Spencer W. Kimball is observing these proceedings on closed-circuit television in his apartment, as is President Marion G. Romney. They send their love and blessing.

These services are being relayed by closed-circuit transmission to members of the priesthood gathered in the Assembly Hall here on Temple Square and in well over seven-hundred locations in many countries around the world. They are being put on the screen in the Marriott Center on the BYU campus and to stake centers across the United States and Canada.

We extend our love and blessings to all who are participating in this great gathering.

Elders Joseph B. Wirthlin and Spencer H. Osborn are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall, and Elders Gene R. Cook and Russell C. Taylor preside at the BYU Marriott Center.

The singing for this priesthood session will be given by the combined Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth men under the direction of Donald Ripplinger with Robert Cundick at the organ.

We shall begin this service with the choir singing "See the Mighty Priesthood Gathered." Following the singing, Elder Adney Y. Komatsu of the First Quorum of the Seventy will offer the invocation.

The men's choir sang "See the Mighty Priesthood Gathered."

Elder Adney Y. Komatsu offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

The choir will now favor us with "Jesus, Once of Humble Birth." Following their singing, President Ezra Taft Benson will speak to us.

The men's choir sang "Jesus, Once of Humble Birth."

President Ezra Taft Benson spoke without further announcement.

President Ezra Taft Benson

I speak to you tonight on the subject of worthy fathers, worthy sons. The Book of Mormon was meant for

us. It was written for our day. Its scriptures are to be likened unto ourselves. (See 1 Nephi 19:23.)

Worthy fathers, worthy sons

With that understanding, let us consider from the Book of Mormon the responsibility fathers have to teach their sons, and the responsibility sons have to take direction from their fathers. Since this is a general priesthood meeting, I will speak of fathers and sons. But of course, this counsel also applies to all parents and their children.

The opening lines of the Book of Mormon read: "I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father" (1 Nephi 1:1).

Good fathers teach their sons, and good sons listen and obey. Teaching is done by precept and example, and by word and deed. A good model is the best teacher. Therefore, a father's first responsibility is to set the proper example.

Lehi, Nephi's father, lived an exemplary life. He had a vision in which he "beheld a tree, whose fruit was desirable to make one happy" (1 Nephi 8:10). This tree represented the love of God. (See 1 Nephi 11:25.) Lehi partook of its fruit, which "filled [his] soul with exceeding great joy" (1 Nephi 11:12). After he had a personal testimony of its goodness, he took the next step of inviting his family to also partake.

By example, then by word

Fathers, here is a divine pattern: As the leader of the family, Lehi first taught by example. He led out in righteousness—in conversion to Christ. Then he taught by word, saying, "Believe as I believe."

What then was Nephi's responsibility after receiving this kind of direction from his father? The Book of Mormon states that Nephi, having heard all the words of his father concerning the things which he saw in vision, was desirous that he might "know of these things, by the power of the Holy Ghost, which is the gift of God

unto all those who diligently seek him" (1 Nephi 10:17).

Nephi had listened to his father, had believed his father, but he wanted to know through the same source his father knew—revelation. Worthy sons are entitled to receive from their Heavenly Father confirmation concerning the direction their mortal father gives them. It takes revelation to perceive revelation. So Nephi diligently sought the Lord and received a revelation which reaffirmed the revelation his father had given to the family.

Taught in the nurture and admonition of the Lord

What did the righteous fathers of the Book of Mormon teach their sons? They taught them many things, but the overarching message was "the great plan of the Eternal God"—the Fall, rebirth, Atonement, Resurrection, Judgment, eternal life. (See Alma 34:9.) Enos said he knew his father was a just man, "for he taught me in his language, and also in the nurture and admonition of the Lord—and blessed be the name of my God for it" (Enos 1:1).

Those in the Book of Mormon who were taught nothing concerning the Lord but only concerning worldly knowledge became a cunning and wicked people. (See Mosiah 24:5, 7.)

Liberty and eternal life or captivity and death

All truths are not of the same value. The saving truths of salvation are of greatest worth. These truths the fathers taught plainly, frequently, and fervently. Are we fathers doing likewise?

Lehi taught his son Jacob about the sacrifice of the Messiah and the need for "a broken heart and a contrite spirit." He told his son that there is "opposition in all things" and that men are "free to choose liberty and eternal life" through the Lord or "captivity and death" through the devil, who desires

all men to "be miserable like unto himself" (2 Nephi 2:7, 11, 27).

Faithful Book of Mormon fathers

Repetition is a key to learning. Our sons need to hear the truth repeated, especially because there is so much falsehood abroad. Devoted Book of Mormon fathers constantly reminded their sons of saving truths. "O remember, remember, my sons, the words which king Benjamin spake unto his people," said Helaman. "Yea, remember that there is no other way nor means whereby man can be saved, only through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ" (Helaman 5:9). "My sons, remember, remember," Helaman continued, "that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation" (Helaman 5:12).

In the Book of Mormon, faithful fathers constantly bore their testimonies to their sons. "Remember that these sayings are true, and also that these records are true," King Benjamin testified to his sons (Mosiah 1:6). Alma bore witness to his son Helaman saying, "I do know; and the knowledge which I have is of God" (Alma 36:26).

Great family legacies are kept alive in the Book of Mormon. Alma taught Helaman about how he had heard Helaman's grandfather prophesy. (See Alma 36:17.)

King Benjamin caused that his three sons "should be taught in all the language of his fathers" (Mosiah 1:2). They needed to understand and use the language of holy writ. If they didn't know the right words, they wouldn't know the plan. The Mulekites had no scriptures, and their language and faith became corrupted. (See Omni 1:17.)

In the Book of Mormon, loving fathers commended their sons when they deserved it. Alma complimented Shiblon, saying, "You have commenced in your youth to look to the Lord" (Alma 38:2). Mormon told his son Moroni, "I recommend thee unto God" (Moroni 9:22). Our sons

need to be encouraged in their righteous endeavors.

If their sons strayed, stalwart Book of Mormon fathers still continued to teach them. Lehi exhorted two wayward sons with "all the feeling of a tender parent, that they would hearken to his words" (1 Nephi 8:37). He preached to them and bade them keep the commandments of God. (See 1 Nephi 8:37-38.)

Alma reproved his son Corianton for his immoral behavior. This loving father said that it was no excuse that many others were also guilty. (See Alma 39:4.) Alma told Corianton frankly that his conduct made it so that some people would not believe Alma's words. (See Alma 39:11.) Alma then taught him the principle that "wickedness never was happiness" (Alma 41:10).

Why did righteous fathers in the Book of Mormon go to so much trouble to teach their sons the word of God? King Benjamin said it was to fulfill the commandments of God. (See Mosiah 1:4.) He further stated that were it not for their having the brass plates which contained the commandments, they would have "suffered in ignorance" (Mosiah 1:3). Could the lack of teaching the scriptures in our homes be a source of our suffering in ignorance today?

Have the commandments "always before our eyes"

As the brass plates blessed Lehi and his descendants, so our scriptures should bless us. "And now, my sons," said King Benjamin, "I would that ye should remember to search them diligently, that ye may profit thereby; and I would that ye should keep the commandments of God" (Mosiah 1:7). In other words, first read them, then heed them.

At what age do we begin teaching our sons these gospel truths? Alma taught his son Helaman while he was in his youth. (See Alma 36:3.) Our youth ought not to wait until the mission field

to get a grasp of the scriptures and a closeness to the Lord. Lehi said that his son Jacob beheld the glory of the Lord in his youth. (See 2 Nephi 2:4.) Imagine what would happen to missionary work if we sent out that kind of young men.

How often should fathers teach these truths to their sons? King Benjamin speaks of having the commandments "always before our eyes" (Mosiah 1:5).

Enos describes the beginning of a great spiritual experience that happened to him this way: "Behold, I went to hunt beasts in the forests; and the words which I had often heard my father speak concerning eternal life, and the joy of the saints, sunk deep into my heart" (Enos 1:3). Note the phrase, "I had often heard my father speak."

Major responsibility rests with fathers

In summary, the Book of Mormon, which is the most correct book on earth, demonstrates that the major re-

sponsibility for teaching our sons the great plan of the Eternal Father—the Fall, rebirth, Atonement, Resurrection, Judgment, eternal life—rests with fathers. It should be done individually as well as in the family. It should be preached and discussed so our children will know the commandments. It should be done from their youth up—and often.

May we fathers teach our sons as the exemplary Book of Mormon fathers taught their sons. And may our sons, like Nephi, listen and obey, knowing that because of those teachings they too were born of goodly parents, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

President Ezra Taft Benson has just spoken to us.

Brother Don Lind, a space physicist and pilot who participated in the recent flight of the space shuttle *Challenger*, will now address us, and he will be followed by Elder Rex D. Pinegar of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Brother Don Lind

Priesthood will last forever

Brethren, I am honored to be with you this evening. In my professional life I associate with some very well-known and accomplished people, both astronauts and scientists. As an astronaut, I am a member of several scientific and governmental organizations. I have been a member of some committees that have made some rather important decisions in the space program that have involved a lot of money and many people's careers. But I can honestly tell you that I am more impressed to be a member of the priesthood of this Church than of any other organization to which I belong. The other organizations are organizations of men. It is an honor to belong to them, but they will

last only a few years. The priesthood will last forever. I am more anxious to be worthy to associate with you brethren of the priesthood than with any other group of men I have ever worked with.

Excitement of *Challenger* lift-off

Just after last April conference I was getting ready to take one of the most exciting trips that I can imagine. On April 29 our crew rode the space shuttle *Challenger* into orbit to conduct a scientific mission called Spacelab 3. This was a personal thrill for me and a very impressive ride. Most of you, I am sure, have seen a space shuttle lift-off on television. I can assure you that it's as exciting as it looks.

I was surprised how calm I felt as we strapped into our seats about two and one-half hours before lift-off. As the count moved closer and closer to launch, I allowed myself just a little bit of excitement. When I heard the rumble of the main engines coming up to speed way down below me, the adrenaline flow picked up noticeably. And when I heard that incredible thunderclap of the solid rocket boosters lighting off and felt *Challenger* lift off, I was as excited as a little boy going to the circus.

With seven and one-half million pounds of thrust pressing you back into your seat with three times your normal weight, you quickly pick up speed. By the time the fuel runs out, you want to be going fast enough so that centrifugal force will keep you in orbit—and that takes 17,500 miles per hour. Traveling at that speed is quite an experience. As we went into orbit, we traveled from Cape Canaveral, which is in Florida, to north of Boston in just over eight minutes.

Finally in space

When you reach orbital velocity, the engines shut down rather abruptly. It is very quiet. I floated up against my shoulder straps. A couple of the procedures books drifted up to the end of their tethers and waved in front of me as I have seen the kelp do when I go scuba diving. I knew that this was zero gravity. And I just sat in my seat for a few minutes savoring the fact that I was finally in space.

For the next week our crew conducted a set of fifteen rather sophisticated experiments in the laboratory that was mounted in the cargo bay of the space shuttle.

Reentry—demanding, clever

The ride into orbit had been exciting. The trip out of orbit was not quite as novel, because by then I was quite used to space. But it was just as serious. When you are properly trained, you are not frightened in any sense. But you

have a great respect for the tremendous energy involved and thus for the inherent risk. You are well aware that every procedure has to be performed exactly right.

We were to land at Edwards Air Force Base just north of Los Angeles, but we started our reentry just to the northeast of the island of Madagascar. We swept down south of Australia and up across the Pacific Ocean as we came home. The reentry is quite demanding. There is no way that you can carry enough fuel into orbit to slow down by rocket propulsion. You have just enough fuel to nudge your orbit down into the upper edge of the atmosphere. And then you do something that's really quite clever. You come into the atmosphere in the worst possible aerodynamic attitude—belly first. This creates a terrible aerodynamic shock wave. But the shock wave slows you down without using a drop of rocket fuel. Your kinetic energy is converted into the heat of the shock wave.

Special, personal, private feelings

This is all very clever, except for the fact that the shock wave is fifty-four hundred degrees Fahrenheit, which is well above the melting point of astronauts. That is why we worry so much about the thermal tiles on the underside of the shuttle. During reentry they glow red hot. In fact, the very air around the shuttle glows red hot. From the ground we look exactly like a meteor crossing the sky. Looking out the windows through that fireball is a fairly impressive experience. You realize that you are in a fiery furnace significantly hotter than the furnace prepared for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. (See Daniel 3:12-30.) And NASA cannot guarantee you the Lord's protection that they had.

The space shuttle on which our lives depended worked flawlessly. I am personally convinced that the Lord was watching over us. I had been promised that in a special blessing I received before lift-off. That blessing was fulfilled

in every detail, and I thank our Heavenly Father for that.

I am sure the general image of space flight is one of impressive machines and billowing flames and the precision of high technology. That is not incorrect. But for me, there were also many special, personal, private feelings. Some of them were fun. Living in weightlessness is delightful. The Peter Pan ability to float to any corner of the laboratory and perch like a sparrow on the slightest protrusion made me feel as though I was living my little boy dreams.

Closeness to my Father in Heaven

Some of my personal feelings were very spiritual. To look down on the earth from space is absolutely incredible. I knew ahead of time just exactly what I was going to see. I was intellectually prepared, but I was not prepared emotionally for what I saw. The world is very large. I knew that. But to see this huge, magnificent sphere slowly rotating beneath me was overwhelming. I have no ability to describe what it was really like, and no photographic emulsion can even start to do it justice. The visibility, of course, was excellent. But I was amazed at the intensity of the colors. I estimated that there were twenty shades of intense blue as the earth's atmosphere changes from the gray of the curved horizon into the incredible black void of space. And when you look at an archipelago of islands, there are hundreds of shades of blue and green and yellow tan that are just beyond description.

The first time I had a minute to stop and just look at the earth, the absolute beauty of the scene brought tears to my eyes. In weightlessness tears do not just quietly roll down your cheeks. They stay in front of your eyeballs and get bigger and bigger, and in a few moments you feel like a guppy looking up through the surface of the aquarium.

Now, try to imagine what it was like for me to have that scene in front of me and then have the fragments of

half a dozen scriptures pop into my mind. "The heavens declare the glory of God" (Psalm 19:1). If you have seen the heavens, you have "seen God moving in his majesty and power" (D&C 88:47). I am sure you can imagine the closeness I felt to my Father in Heaven as I looked down at one of His beautiful creations. I was really stirred by an increased awareness of what He did for us as the Creator of our earth. That was one of the most moving experiences of my life.

Renewing baptismal covenants in orbit

Another experience that is very close to me was to have the sacrament in orbit. We were in space for a full week, so of course, we were up there on a Sunday. Our bishop had given me permission to hold my own sacrament service. It was a little unusual. You priests in the audience might consider what it would be like to try to kneel down in weightlessness—you keep drifting off. For privacy I held my sacrament service in my sleep station—something like a Pullman berth. I kneeled on what you would think of as the ceiling and braced my shoulders against my sleeping bag so I would not float away. It was a very special experience. I will remember that sacrament service and the renewing of my baptismal covenants high above the earth all my life. It had some of that special feeling that you usually have only when you go to the temple.

Keep right side up

Shortly after the flight I had the opportunity to show Sister Sharlene Wells, our Miss America, around the space center. She asked me if it didn't seem uncomfortable going into space upside down. I explained that in space you always feel right side up and stationary. The earth turns below you. If somebody's head is pointing toward your feet, he is the one who is upside down. At lift-off, the earth simply ro-

tates to a position above your head, but that is the earth's problem.

Later at a fireside, Sister Wells made a comment about that situation that I think is very meaningful. In many things we do, the world thinks we are completely upside down. They think our moral values are foolish, our standards are restrictive, and our beliefs are quaint but outdated. The important thing is that we make sure that we keep ourselves right side up, aligned with the Lord, even if it makes the whole world look upside down.

Prepare for what you will become

It took me a long time, many years of preparation, to make it into orbit. I learned that important things don't come easily or quickly. I learned that persistence pays off. I also learned that you have to be prepared when the opportunity comes. I started preparing for the space program long before there was a space program. I could pass the six-day astronaut physical examination

because I had lived the Word of Wisdom all my life. When they started accepting applications for the astronaut program, I had already completed my education. I already knew how to fly jet airplanes. When they ran an FBI check on me, there was nothing in the record that would disqualify me. Now, you young men of the Aaronic Priesthood, this evening you have already started to prepare for what you will someday become. I encourage you to prepare well.

Brethren, it's an honor to be with you this evening. I bear you my testimony that we are engaged in the work of the Lord. He lives; He guides His Church; these Brethren on this stand are His chosen servants. I bear you that testimony in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Dr. Don Lind. We are in fast company tonight!

We shall now hear from Elder Rex D. Pinegar.

Elder Rex D. Pinegar

Retrieving a fighter plane

Some years ago as a seaman on the USS *Bairoko*, I had an experience that taught me the importance of having a reliable lifeline. Our aircraft carrier was operating off the coast of Korea in rather choppy seas. As one of the Corsair fighter planes was attempting a landing, the ship rolled sharply, and the plane bounced off the flight deck, flipped over, and landed upside down, dangling partly on the ship and partly in the water. The pilot was rescued by a team of men linked together by a lifeline that enabled them to make their way down the wing to the plane's cockpit. It became necessary, however, to rig a large crane to retrieve the plane.

The boom, or arm, of the crane was stored in a cradle, or saddlelike

device, approximately six to eight feet out from the side of the flight deck over the water. The rather dangerous assignment to release the boom was given to me.

I put on a life jacket, and a lifeline secured to a steel cleat on the deck was placed about my waist and between my legs. Three men stood on the flight deck holding on to the line to save me should I slip from my precarious position.

With my arms and legs straddling the boom, I inched my way along over the churning waters. The men holding the lifeline kept assuring me that they would not let me fall—at least not very far.

Guarded and safe with lifeline

When I reached the cradle where the boom rested, the nut and key bolt securing it appeared to be somewhat rusted from months at sea. It appeared that a great deal of force would be needed to jar it free. This would be no small trick while I was sitting astride the slick, round boom. The lifeline team readied themselves, knowing that the push with my rigger's spike might throw me off balance and cause me to fall.

With the spike in place, I leaned forward, making a quick, heavy thrust, expecting the nut to resist my effort. Unexpectedly, the nut spun free, and the force of the thrust sent me quickly off the boom. Surprisingly, however, rather than tumbling down into the water, I spun completely around and stopped atop the boom in an upright position. By grasping the steel cradle, I was able to steady myself. The men holding the lifeline had stood firmly in place, carefully managing the line, making my situation as guarded and safe as possible.

Soon the boom was rigged, the plane lifted aboard, and the crew returned to their regular duties.

Lifeline to eternal life

Several days later we arrived in port in Japan. Waiting to welcome me there was a letter from my mother. After words of greeting and family news, Mother had written: "We try not to worry too much about you, Rex. We pray for you every day."

My recent harrowing experience at sea had made me grateful for the strength and support of a lifeline in the hands of strong and reliable men. My mother's letter reminded me of the lifeline of the greatest security and trust, the gospel of Jesus Christ. That lifeline is secured in the hands of God. If I would hold to it and live by it, it would hold me secure to eternal life.

The gospel lifeline

A few weeks ago I attended the baptism of a man I have known for many years. It was a joyful occasion. Surrounded by his wife of forty-seven years and his children and grandchildren and other loved ones, this good man entered the baptismal covenant. He became a member of the Church he has long sustained and supported.

From the time he brought his Mormon bride to make a home in his beloved Southland, he had respected her beliefs and her desire to teach them to their children. Because there wasn't a branch of the Church in their small city, their home became the first meeting place for the few Church members his wife could locate and invite to worship with her. Their home was always open to the missionaries, where a good meal and a place to sleep could be counted on. (His wife recalls as many as fourteen missionaries sleeping wall-to-wall in their small home on one particular night.)

As his faithful wife and children labored with the missionaries to build up the Church and the membership outgrew the walls of their home, he gave financial support for the branch, the ward, and finally the stake center as they came to be built.

During these many years, the gospel has been a lifeline that has enabled this woman to maintain her hope and trust in the Lord. It has been the strength that has bound their family together.

However, the full blessings which the Lord has to offer were unattainable by this family until this husband and father became worthy and willing to enter the covenant of baptism and receive the priesthood of God. Now this family can look forward to the exalting temple ordinances and the lifeline to eternal life which they could not provide for themselves.

A great and magnificent responsibility

The *World Book Dictionary* defines *lifeline* as "anything that maintains or helps to maintain something that cannot exist by itself."

A lifeline must be anchored to an immovable object which can withstand the pressure and strain of opposing forces and remain firmly in place.

The priesthood anchors the gospel lifeline to Heavenly Father just as every effective lifeline is anchored to a sure place. "Therefore, all those who receive the priesthood, receive this oath and covenant of my Father, which he cannot break, neither can it be moved" (D&C 84:40).

As bearers of this priesthood, brethren, we have a great and magnificent responsibility.

The fulness of God's blessings and promises in the lives of our wives and children is dependent upon our worthiness and righteous leadership.

President N. Eldon Tanner, in addressing a priesthood assembly, said:

"You cannot realize and appreciate the influence the priesthood in this church could have on the whole world if every man would magnify his priesthood. Brethren, the priesthood, if magnified, is a stabilizing influence and strength. It should be. Every wife and mother has a perfect right and responsibility to look to her husband who holds the priesthood for guidance, for strength, and for direction. And he has the responsibility of magnifying his priesthood so he might be able to give this direction, this security, this strength that is needed in the home" (*Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1973], p. 177).

Factors determining young man's future

Some recent studies done for the Church's Priesthood Executive Council sought to determine what factors in a young man's background in the

Church might predict his future course. (See *Ensign*, Dec. 1984, pp. 66-68.)

We have learned that there are two factors which exert the greatest influence on whether young men desire to be morally clean, serve a mission, and marry in the temple. These are (1) religious activity in the home (such as family prayer, family home evening, family scripture study) and (2) agreement with parents on values and on goals for the future. These two influences were found to have a greater impact than all other factors combined in creating these essential desires.

These findings affirm the importance of a father, as patriarch to his family and its chief priesthood officer, setting a righteous example by making the gospel lifeline operative and effective in his own life and then extending it to his family. Just as Lehi in the Book of Mormon saw in a vision the significance of the fruit of the gospel of Jesus Christ and then invited his family to partake, so should fathers in the Church today partake of the fruit of the gospel and hold out this lifeline to their wives and children. And, just as Nephi was obedient to his father and came forward faithfully and partook of the gospel's fruit and received its blessings, so should every son today grasp firmly the iron rod, the lifeline of the gospel spoken of by Nephi, and, like Nephi, follow his father's and his priesthood leaders' righteous examples.

Young men's responsibility to young women

President Tanner told the young men of the priesthood: "Boys, we have a responsibility to our sisters." He said that young women should be able to look to one who holds the priesthood, whether he is twelve years of age or older, and that "she has a right to expect in him a living example of what the priesthood should be, and to look to him for strength and counsel and direction and to feel safe with him" (*Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God*, p. 177).

He said every sweetheart should be able to feel a bearer of the priesthood would do anything, "even to the giving of his life, to protect her womanhood and her virtue, and would never think of depriving her of it, if he is magnifying his priesthood; and he will not be tempted if he is thinking of the priesthood that he holds and the responsibility that he has" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1973, p. 124).

Mediators and managers of the Lord's lifeline

A priesthood holder acts as a type of mediator between the people and God, representing them officially in worship and in holy ordinances. Because he represents God, he cannot take this office to himself but must be called of God. In a special sense, a bearer of this priesthood power and authority delegated by God belongs to God. He must be holy and clean before Him. He represents the Lord and acts as His agent when officiating in or performing his priestly duties. Such priesthood rights are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven and can, therefore, be handled or utilized effectively only on the basis of personal righteousness. (See D&C 121:36.)

We needn't try to chart our own course, brethren. The Lord's lifeline is already in place as a sure guide and strength. When a priesthood leader fails to follow the program of the Lord, he cuts the lifeline and denies the divine guidance of the Lord to himself and to those he is called to lead.

As stewards of this great priesthood power and authority, we share eternal responsibility with the Lord. We who hold the Lord's lifeline to His people must stand firmly in place, as did those three seamen on the *Bairoko*, and carefully and prayerfully manage the gospel lifeline so that those depending on it may be maintained in a safe place.

Extending His lifeline to others

There was another time in my short navy career when lifelines became very important to me. Our ship was in the south Sea of Japan when a typhoon struck. The sea became so turbulent that lifelines were rigged along the weather decks and in every passageway below. For three days the raging storm caused the ship to pitch and roll, making it dangerous to walk anywhere without holding to a lifeline. Even the common tasks of shipboard life became difficult to perform without a lifeline. Only a foolish or inexperienced seaman ventures topside in a storm without a lifeline. He knows that even in a calm sea a lifeline is kept within ready reach.

Priesthood bearers, let us hold firmly to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Let us anchor ourselves to the Lord's lifeline by accepting him as our Savior and extending His lifeline to others—our families, our friends, and those we have been called to serve. It is our eternal lifeline to support us not only in times of emergency and crisis, but to provide us with guidance and direction in meeting daily decisions and challenges.

"His lifeline pulled me through"

I shall close with words from one of my favorite poets.

The LifeLine

By Kristen Pinegar
September 30, 1985

My life was once
Without an aim,
Confused was I, with heart so cold
Til truth and light
Became my course,
For I was in the Lifeline's hold.

Now when upset
By stormy seas
Of questioning what's right and
wrong,
When comes the urge
To fall, the Lifeline
Pulls me up where I belong.

When wicked wants
Of greed and fame
Coax me to live the ways of men
The Lifeline lassos
Evil thoughts
And whips me into shape again.

When all the world
Is crashing down,
When friends and family all
desert,
Within the rubble
Comfort comes—
The Lifeline takes away my hurt.

Holding fast,
It gives me strength
And power beyond my human
being
To bless and give
To those in need
And share with them the love I'm
seeing.

Life's pathway leads
To joy unknown
When the Lifeline is my guide—
Each step I take
Brings peace of mind
While grasping to it by my side.

The much relied-on
Faithful friend

Is anchored in an unseen place—
I long to know
My Lifeline's source
And meet this Savior face to face.

Oh, when I die
And all my life
Is lain before my eyes to view,
I'll recognize
The Savior's hand
And know His lifeline pulled me
through.

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Rex D. Pinegar has just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Praise to the Man," following which Elder Carlos E. Asay, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will speak to us.

The choir and congregation sang "Praise to the Man."

Elder Carlos E. Asay spoke without further announcement.

Elder Carlos E. Asay

The oath and covenant of the priesthood

Of all the holy agreements pertaining to the gospel of Jesus Christ, few, if any, would transcend in importance the oath and covenant of the priesthood. It is certainly one of the most sacred agreements, for it involves the sharing of heavenly powers and man's upward reaching toward eternal goals. None of us can afford to be ignorant of the terms of this contract. To do so might cause us to miss the mark in our performance of duty and result in the forfeiture of promised blessings.

A gospel covenant is a holy contract. "God in his good pleasure fixes the terms, which man accepts" (Bible Dictionary, LDS ed., s.v. "covenant").

The two parties to the priesthood covenant are man and God. Man covenants to do certain things or meet certain conditions; God cites promises that he will give in return.

Man's covenant

1. *Receive the Melchizedek Priesthood in Good Faith.* When a man has the Melchizedek Priesthood conferred upon him, he is expected to re-

ceive it in good faith. The word *receive* is used generously in the Doctrine and Covenants verses that describe the oath and covenant of the priesthood:

"All they who receive this priesthood receive me, saith the Lord; . . .

"And he that receiveth me receiveth my Father;

"And he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father's kingdom" (D&C 84:35, 37-38).

As people are confirmed members of the Church, those in authority lay hands upon their heads and command, "Receive the Holy Ghost." Does not the same apply to the conferral of priesthood power? Several years ago, my father laid his hands upon my head to confer upon me the Melchizedek Priesthood and, as described in the Old Testament, to "put some of [his] honour upon [me] . . . and gave [me] a charge." (See Numbers 27:18-23.) I knew that he had power to bestow, I knew that that power was real, and I knew the ultimate source of that power. So I received the holy priesthood in good faith.

2. *Magnify Callings.* President Kimball defines *priesthood*, in part, as "the means whereby the Lord acts through men to save souls" (*Ensign*, June 1975, p. 3). This definition suggests action, not inaction. It implies that priesthood power is to be exercised in behalf of other people; it is not something to sit upon or to simply glory in. It suggests that priesthood callings are to be *magnified*.

The transcendent blessings of the priesthood do not come by ordination alone. We are instructed:

"Ordination to the priesthood is a prerequisite to receiving [blessings], but it does not guarantee them. For a man actually to obtain them, he must faithfully discharge the obligation which is placed upon him when he receives the priesthood" (Marion G. Romney, in Conference Report, Apr. 1962, p. 17).

What does it mean to magnify one's calling? According to *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*,

"to magnify" is "to increase the importance of: cause to be held in greater esteem or respect . . . to make greater." One magnifies a calling—

- By learning one's duty and executing it fully. (See D&C 107:99-100.)

- By giving one's best effort in assigned fields of labor.

- By consecrating one's time, talents, and means to the Lord's work as called upon by our leaders and the whisperings of the Spirit. (See Spencer W. Kimball, *Ensign*, Mar. 1985, p. 5.)

- By teaching and exemplifying truth.

Jacob, the Book of Mormon prophet, testified, "We did magnify our office unto the Lord, taking upon us the responsibility, . . . [teaching] them the word of God with all diligence; . . . [and] laboring with our might" (Jacob 1:19).

I underscore the words *taking responsibility, teaching the word of God, and laboring with might* in this inspired quotation. These are critical actions related to the exercise of priesthood power.

3. *Obey the Commandments.* In the revelation on priesthood, we read, "And I now give unto you a commandment . . . to give diligent heed to the words of eternal life" (D&C 84:43). "To give diligent heed," I believe, includes to *obey* the commandments.

No commandment or requirement of the gospel is nonessential. Each has its place, and all are to be respected. Not one is to be trifled with or placed aside as inconvenient.

A person who chooses to obey one commandment and ignore others is as foolish as the driver who adheres strictly to the posted speed limit but runs every stop sign and flaunts other rules of the road.

Let us remember that with every commandment, God has promised a blessing. If we expect to claim the blessing, we must keep the commandment. Otherwise, if we ignore or break the commandment, we are cursed by losing the blessing. (See

Deuteronomy 11:26–28.) It is a very simple but serious arrangement.

4. *Live by Every Word of God.* Addressing priesthood bearers, the Lord says, “For you shall live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God” (D&C 84:44; italics added). This statement reinforces the need for obedience. It also suggests the need to know the word of the Lord.

Words of eternal life come from one source: God. They are made available to us through the fountain of the holy scriptures and the fountain of living prophets and reconfirmed by personal revelation through the power of the Holy Ghost.

When we search the scriptures, we sit at the feet of prophets like Abraham, Isaiah, Peter, Paul, Nephi, Moroni, and Joseph Smith. These men received revelations in a former day and have much wisdom to share with us. Their counsel may be likened to a light positioned behind us. That light helps us understand things of the past and gives us partial vision for the future.

To receive added light, light positioned over and ahead of us, we must sit at the feet of living prophets, just as we are doing tonight. None of us need stumble along the way or depart from the path in the presence of such light. All we need to do is keep our eyes upon the prophets, heed their warnings, and live by their inspired words.

Men of the priesthood should burn these words into their minds:

“What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; . . . my word . . . shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:38; see also 1:11–14).

I have indicated that a man who receives the Melchizedek Priesthood agrees (1) to receive it in good faith, (2) to magnify callings given, (3) to obey all the commandments, and (4) to live by every word of God. These four expectations compose man’s covenant as applied to the oath and covenant of the priesthood.

God’s Promises and Oath

Next, let’s consider God’s promises and oath. You might ask, “If I fulfill my terms of the agreement, what has God promised in return?” Let us consider three promises:

Promise 1: We Will Be Sanctified by the Spirit. Note these words:

“For whoso is faithful unto the obtaining these two priesthoods of which I have spoken [Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood], and the magnifying their calling, are sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies” (D&C 84:33).

On one occasion, President Hugh B. Brown testified that President David O. McKay had been sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of his body. And, he added, “Some of the rest of us are better off today than we were many years ago so far as physical health is concerned—and we attribute that fact to [the Lord’s] blessing” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1963, p. 90).

Many of us have felt the influence of this “renewal promise.” Without it, scores of our assignments might have gone unfinished.

Promise 2: We Will Be Numbered with the Elect of God. It is said of those who receive the holy priesthood and remain true to their covenants, “They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God” (D&C 84:34).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie explains:

“These are the portion of church members who are striving with all their hearts to keep the fulness of the gospel law in this life so that they can become inheritors of the fulness of gospel rewards in the life to come” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966], p. 217).

We do not become saints automatically by entering the waters of baptism. We become saints, in the true sense of the word, as we live saintly

lives and cultivate Christlike attributes. Similarly, we do not become the elect of God instantaneously by receiving the priesthood. Such honor will come only so fast as we remember and perform according to the priesthood covenant.

Promise 3: We Will Be Given All That God Has. This all-encompassing promise is stated by Christ in these words: "All that my Father hath shall be given unto him" (D&C 84:38).

Few of us, I suppose, can comprehend all that this promise means. Even though we know that it includes eternal life, or the inheritance of exaltation, still it is so great and so wonderful that it defies proper explanation. It is sufficient for me to know that God in heaven is my Father and that he will bless me with all he has to offer, if I prove myself to be a faithful son.

I stand in humble adoration of my Maker when I realize that he has sworn and confirmed his part of the agreement with an oath. (See Hebrews 6:13-17.) He will never fall short of his promise, nor will he void it or compromise it in the slightest degree.

Perhaps I can place in clearer perspective all that I have said about the oath and covenant of the priesthood by relating a story based on a true experience.

The son of a very wealthy man was called to serve a full-time mission. He entered the mission field and began his work. At first things went well; however, as he met rejections and as other challenges of finding and teaching surfaced, the young man's faith wavered.

Mission associates gave encouragement, but it did not seem to help. One day the young man announced to the mission president that he was abandoning his call; he was returning home. The mission president did all within his power to dissuade the missionary. It was to no avail.

When word of the missionary's decision reached the father, he obtained permission to visit his son in the mission field. In one of many tense conver-

sations, the father said, "My son, I have lived for the day when you would serve a full-time mission. I did so because I love you and I love God. And I know that there is no work more essential than that of teaching truth to the peoples of the world."

Somewhat sobered by his father's words, the son meekly replied, "Dad, I didn't realize that a mission meant so much to you."

"It means everything to me," the father declared. Then he added with some emotion, "All my life I have worked and saved with one person in mind: you. And my one goal has been to provide you a decent inheritance."

"But Dad," the son interjected, "the work is difficult and I don't enjoy . . ."

The father didn't allow him to finish his sentence. Instead he asked, "How can I trust my businesses to your care if you cannot prove yourself by serving the Lord for two short years?"

There was an awkward pause as the son pondered the father's question and studied his anxious countenance.

Then with measured words, the father promised, "My son, my only heir, if you will be faithful in this calling and prove yourself worthy in every respect, all that I possess will be yours."

Noticeably touched by these earnest pleadings, the son rose to his feet, embraced his father, and sobbed, "I will stay."

The son did stay in the mission field; he did serve faithfully from that day forward. And yes, in due time, he received from his father the promised inheritance, even all that his father had to share.

My brethren, we are the sons of God. He has endowed us with his power, and he has called each of us to serve missions in a place called mortality. Our missions mean very much to him, and they should mean everything to us. In this mortal life, we are to prove ourselves worthy of his love and worthy of the inheritance he has offered.

What is that inheritance? It is all that he has, even eternal life. This blessed and promised gift will be ours only if we keep the covenants, particularly the covenant of the priesthood, and remain faithful to the end.

I pray that we will do so, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Carlos E. Asay of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy has just addressed us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder L. Tom Perry

A special chat

I have invited a special young man to assist me with my presentation tonight. I would like to introduce Terry Haws, my oldest grandson.

Terry, how old are you?

Terry: Twelve.

What special event has happened in your life this year?

Terry: I received the Aaronic Priesthood and was ordained a deacon.

Terry, again I would like to congratulate you on the preparation you have made in your life to be worthy of receiving this great gift. As I stood in the circle on that special occasion and listened to the blessing you received from your father as he conferred the Aaronic Priesthood upon you and ordained you a deacon, I was impressed with the special privilege this is in your young life.

I wanted to have a little grandfather-to-grandson chat right afterward, but unfortunately I had an appointment with an airplane. So I'm taking advantage of this assignment to have our little visit. Let's make it public just in case what we talk about might be of benefit to other young bearers of the Aaronic Priesthood listening to us tonight. All right?

Terry: Okay.

Conditions in the world today

Terry, I am not overly pleased with worldly conditions that you and

other young men are inheriting as you assume your role in moving toward manhood. While those of us who are older have been of an age and position to influence the world, I believe we've greatly failed you in what we have allowed the conditions in the world to become. This places you in a position where many of those with whom you must associate have not been reared with an understanding of or respect for traditional values. Thus, peer pressure becomes much more difficult and extreme.

We have brought into our homes radios, record players, and television sets. While each has the potential of providing wholesome entertainment, so much of what has been produced for our listening and watching pleasure is not of the caliber to inspire and encourage young men. In fact, most of what is produced is degrading. The flip of a switch right in your own home has the potential of destroying within you a sense of what is right and what is wrong.

Some athletes today who are the heroes of many young men like you have lowered themselves to endorsing products that can only destroy your body. Recently some of these celebrated athletes have found themselves on trial for violating laws governing the distribution and use of drugs.

Apply scriptures to actual happenings

However, Terry, there is still one place where you can turn to find heroes with the right set of values, which, if followed, will bring you the greatest joy and happiness in life. Of course, these heroes can be found in the stories contained in the holy scriptures. They tell of events recorded by prophets of old, which are timeless in their application. The principles they proclaim to the world are right and true and will never change.

There's an exciting way to read the scriptures to make them come alive. Read them as though the events were occurring today. The great lessons taught by the prophets of old can be applied to actual happenings in this modern era. Let me give you an example of what I mean.

Story of Daniel in the Old Testament

One of the heroes I have always enjoyed reading about is Daniel in the Old Testament. During the period of time in which he lived, Israel was not faithful in keeping the commandments of the Lord. Because of this she lost her power and was not able to defend herself against her enemies. Strategically, she was in an awkward position. The powerful nations of Egypt and Syria bordered her on the south and on the north. Instead of doing battle on their own lands, these two nations took turns overrunning Israel and making her their battleground.

It was under these conditions that Daniel was born. When he was just a child, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, besieged Jerusalem. As part of the spoils of his conquest, he went into the holy temple and took the sacred vessels back as trophies. Then, to make his nation even stronger, he took hostage all of the bright and promising children of the Israelites. As the scriptures record, the king took those "children in whom was no blemish, but well fa-

voured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans" (Daniel 1:4).

Daniel was one of those who was taken back to the palace as a slave of Nebuchadnezzar, to be trained in the king's ways in order that Nebuchadnezzar might use him and his knowledge to make his empire stronger.

First test: followed the Lord's way

It was not long after Daniel had been taken from his home in Jerusalem that he faced his first test. The young men of Israel had been apportioned a daily amount of the king's food, consisting of meat and wine.

Daniel knew in his heart, because of the training he had received, that the food and the wine provided by the king would not be good for him. He knew it would defile his body. So he went to the prince who was over them and pleaded with him that he not be required to eat the meat and drink the wine of the king.

The prince was astonished at this request. He did not dare allow Daniel the privilege of eating anything other than what the king had ordered. He was afraid he would lose his position, or perhaps his life, if the king found out. Daniel understood this, but he had been taught correct principles. He bargained with the prince this way: He would eat only the foods he had been taught were good for him for just ten days. If after ten days his countenance was not fairer and his appearance more healthy than all the rest, he would then eat the king's portion of meat and drink the wine.

Of course, because Daniel followed the Lord's way, at the end of the tenth day he was the strongest of all who were taken before the king. (See Daniel 1.)

The Lord's laws are eternal

Terry, many times in your life you will be tested, tried, and tempted to use things that you have been taught are not good for your body. You may be ridiculed and laughed at when you refuse to partake of them. But just as Daniel of old received strength by obeying the Lord's commandments, you too will be blessed in the same way.

The Lord's laws are eternal. Just as surely as we follow them, we will receive His blessings. He has promised us that "all saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health, . . . wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures; And shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint" (D&C 89:18–20). Daniel passed the first test and was blessed by the Lord.

Second: a test by the king

At the end of the three-year training period, these young men were brought before the king to be judged. Daniel had not wasted his time and had studied hard. His efforts had blessed him with "knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom" (Daniel 1:17). He was now prepared for the test to be given him by the king.

As the king met with them, he found none to be like Daniel. In all matters of wisdom and understanding that the king inquired of him, Daniel was found to be ten times better than all of the king's wise men.

Prepare for this life and the life to come

Terry, you have been blessed with a great mind. Sometimes you may be tempted not to study as hard as you could, thinking you do not need to. No doubt conditions may not always be the best in all the schools you will attend, but still the power is within you to grow and to gain knowledge and understand-

ing. You can achieve if you will apply yourself!

Seek wisdom out of the best books. Challenge this great mind of yours with diligent study. The Lord has promised that what you learn here will rise with you in the resurrection and be to your eternal good. Your mind has such great power and ability. Prepare yourself for this life and for the life to come.

Daniel passed his second test. He prepared himself better than any of the others and was selected to be one of the king's wise men.

Third test: interpret writings for the king

The third challenge which came to Daniel resulted from a change in administration. Nebuchadnezzar died, and a new king came to rule Babylon. The new king was drunk with his wealth and power. After he was crowned king, he held a grand party and invited the heads of state from the lands round about to be his guests. It was a very worldly affair with much drinking, dancing girls, rich foods, and other attractions of the world.

In his drunken state the king sent for the sacred vessels which had been taken from the holy temple by Nebuchadnezzar. He desecrated these vessels by drinking wine from them. His actions so displeased God that the Lord wrote some words on the wall with His finger. This frightened the king, and he trembled so much that his knees knocked together in front of his royal guests.

When not one of all the noble and wise men present could interpret the writings on the wall, they sent for Daniel who, of course, with the power of the Lord, could interpret what was written there. Daniel let the king know that the Lord's displeasure with him was so great that his life would be taken. (See Daniel 5.)

Distance yourself from evil practices and places

This story has always been interesting to me because those at the party had to send for Daniel. Even though he was one of the most prestigious of all the wise men, he did not attend such an event. He would not permit himself to be present in such evil and worldly surroundings. He had met the third test. He had separated himself from the evil environment which could only fill his mind with unrighteous thoughts and actions.

Terry, be as strong as Daniel in keeping distance between yourself and the evil practices and places of the world. Don't let the wrong kinds of books, pictures, and other reading material be near you to tempt you to take even the slightest glance. Such materials can intoxicate and destroy your mind just as surely as liquor and drugs can intoxicate and destroy your body.

Have the courage to turn off unfit television programs, and stay away from movies and videotapes that would fill your mind with thoughts of evil and violence. Remember, the scripture has said, "For as [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7).

Fourth challenge: Daniel's faith in the living God

The fourth challenge which came to Daniel was far, far more important to him than life itself. The king had selected 120 princes to preside over his entire kingdom. Over the princes he placed three presidents to be their leaders. Daniel was selected to be the first president. You see, he did not have to go along with their riotous, unrighteous living to be recognized and sought after as a person of great worth.

The other princes and presidents were envious of the power given to Daniel, and they sought to find ways to discredit him in the eyes of the king. The scriptures record how frustrated they were, for they found him to be faithful in all things and without error

or fault. When attempts to find him in error failed, they had to devise another plan. By observation they knew that three times a day Daniel went into his chambers to pray and give thanks to his God. The only plot they could devise against Daniel was to make prayer unlawful, thus subjecting him to their laws. They were successful in obtaining a royal statute outlawing any petition to anyone, save it be the king, for thirty days. The king signed the statute, making it law, and anyone violating this law would be cast into the lions' den.

Daniel's faith in the living God was strong and vigorous. He continued his prayers, and of course was quickly discovered and brought before the king. The king was bound by law, and even though it grieved him greatly, he was required to sentence Daniel to the lions' den.

After the sentence was passed, the king was so troubled that he could not sleep all night. Early in the morning he rushed to the lions' den to see if Daniel's God had protected him from the lions. His joy was exceedingly great when he found Daniel had been protected by the Lord and was alive and unharmed. The king was in awe over this great miracle and declared that Daniel's God was the living God and steadfast forever. (See Daniel 6.)

Terry, this story of Daniel teaches us of the great blessings in store for those who place their trust in the Lord, even the protection of life itself.

Scripture stories teach faith, courage, love, confidence, and trust

These stories in the scriptures will never grow old. They will be just as exciting for you when you are reading them as a deacon, a teacher, a priest, a missionary, a home teacher, an elders quorum president, or whatever the Lord calls on you to do. They will teach you to have faith, courage, love for your fellowmen, confidence, and trust in the Lord.

Build your life on a foundation of truth and righteousness. It is the only foundation that will stand the pressures of this life and endure through the eternities. The priesthood you bear is a special gift, for the giver is the Lord Himself. Use it, magnify it, live worthy of it. I want you to know that I have a direct testimony of its power. It has blessed my life in so many ways.

We love you and ask the Lord's blessings to continually be with you. I bear witness of His work, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

That was Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve with his

grandson. He has given good instruction for every boy who is here tonight.

Before I give my closing remarks, I should like to remind you that the Tabernacle Choir broadcast will emanate from this hall at 9:30 tomorrow morning, and that those who wish to attend must be in their seats before 9:15 A.M.

The music for this session has been furnished by the combined Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth men. We thank you very much for your wonderful music.

They will conclude this service after my remarks by singing "The Priesthood of Our Lord," after which Elder F. Enzo Busche of the First Quorum of the Seventy will offer the benediction.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Brethren, I have appreciated this meeting and all that has been said. I pray for the Spirit of the Lord to guide me in that which I say in conclusion.

Questions and answers

Notwithstanding our repeated requests that members of the Church discuss their questions and problems with their bishops and stake presidents, a vast amount of mail constantly comes to the office of the First Presidency. Many of these letters are fraught with sadness. They tell of personal tragedies, of families in distress, of broken homes and broken hearts. In reading them, I am at times almost overwhelmed by the great burdens that many people carry. Some also ask questions of fact concerning the Church and its operations; others ask questions on policy and doctrine.

Rather than speak in the usual way tonight, I have thought that I might conduct an interview with myself based on some of these questions, as well as on questions we frequently receive when the media confront us. I will ask

the question, and then attempt an answer, as time permits.

1. How is President Kimball?

Wherever we go, this question is invariably asked, particularly by members of the Church who feel a deep love for this remarkable man. My answer is candid. President Kimball is not very strong. He suffers from the infirmities of age. He is now in his ninety-first year. He has endured much of serious illness during his lifetime. There has been a cumulative effect from these adversities. He has been preserved by the power of the Lord. Of that I am convinced.

What a great and wonderful leader he has been. He has been the epitome of kindness and forbearance. He has reached down to help those in distress. At the same time, he has been immovable in his allegiance to the Lord and in his determination to carry forward the work of the Church as that work has come to us through revelation. During the period he has served as President, there has been a tremendous expansion of the work in many fields, in many

aspects, in many areas. He motivated the entire Church to greater activity with his call to lengthen our stride.

Now his vitality has ebbed appreciably. But he rises and dresses each morning. He still meets with us, and we meet with him. It is an inspiration to be in his presence. He is the President of the Church, the prophet of the Lord. While he is not able to take care of many responsibilities incident to the office of the Presidency, we consult with him on all decisions of importance, and we will not proceed with any such without his consent and approval. I assure you that the work of the Presidency is current. God bless our prophet dear.

2. How is the Church doing?

The Church is in good health. It is robust and strong and growing ever stronger. The statistics which we use as a gauge of its vitality all point to improvement. We have many wards and stakes where the sacrament meeting attendance now reaches 70 and even 80 percent. Such was unheard of when I was a young man, or even when I was a stake president thirty years ago. We have more young men and women on missions. We are constructing more buildings than at any other period in the history of the Church, to accommodate the needs of a growing membership and their increased activity. You may be interested to know that there are now 10,035 wards and 1,558 stakes in the Church.

When I thus speak with optimism, I do not wish to imply that we are where we ought to be. There is room for much improvement, and we must work with greater diligence to bring it about. This work concerns the eternal progress of our Father's children, and there is no more important work on earth.

I am pleased to report, my brethren, that there is harmony, there is total unity, among the General Authorities and among Church officers and leaders throughout the world wherever the work is organized.

3. Is the Church an institution of great wealth, as some claim?

The Church does have substantial assets, for which we are grateful. These assets are primarily in buildings in more than eighty nations. They are in ward and stake meeting facilities. They are in schools and seminaries, colleges and institutes. They are in welfare projects. They are in mission homes and missionary training centers. They are in temples, of which we have substantially more than we have ever had in the past, and they are in genealogical facilities. But it should be recognized that all of these are money-consuming assets and not money-producing assets. They are expensive to build and maintain. They do not produce financial wealth, but they do help to produce and strengthen Latter-day Saints. They are only a means to an end. They are physical facilities to accommodate the programs of the Church in our great responsibility to teach the gospel to the world, to build faith and activity among the living membership, and to carry forward the compelling mandate of the Lord concerning the redemption of the dead.

We have a few income-producing business properties, but the return from these would keep the Church going only for a very short time. Tithing is the Lord's law of finance. There is no other financial law like it. It is a principle given with a promise spoken by the Lord Himself for the blessing of His children.

When all is said and done, the only real wealth of the Church is the faith of its people.

4. Why is the Church in commercial business of any kind?

Essentially, the business assets which the Church has today are an outgrowth of enterprises which were begun in the pioneer era of our history when we were isolated in the valleys of the mountains of western America. For instance, a newspaper was then needed

to keep the people advised of what was going on at home and abroad. The result was the *Deseret News*, which has been published now for 135 years. In the 1920s, government officials encouraged newspapers to set up radio stations. That was in the infancy of the broadcasting industry. One such radio station was established by the *Deseret News* here in Salt Lake City. From that has grown, by the natural process of development, holdings of a number of broadcasting properties.

As all of you will recognize, the ability and the facilities to communicate are among our great and constant needs. The ownership of these properties, both newspaper and broadcasting facilities, while they are operated as commercial entities, both directly and indirectly helps us in our responsibility to communicate our message and our point of view.

The Church was a pioneer in the sugar beet industry to help our farmers who needed a cash crop. One of our present properties is an outgrowth of that.

A beautiful hotel was constructed adjacent to Temple Square seventy-five years ago to provide a comfortable hospitality for visitors to this city.

Merchandising interests are an outgrowth of the cooperative movement which existed among our people in pioneer times. The Church has maintained certain real estate holdings, particularly those contiguous to Temple Square, to help preserve the beauty and the integrity of the core of the city. All of these commercial properties are tax-paying entities.

I repeat, the combined income from all of these business interests is relatively small and would not keep the work going for longer than a very brief period.

I should like to add, parenthetically for your information, that the living allowances given the General Authorities, which are very modest in comparison with executive compensation in industry and the professions,

come from this business income and not from the tithing of the people.

5. Why is there so much controversy over the Brigham Young University Center now under construction in Jerusalem?

I cannot understand why there should be. Fears have been expressed that it will be used as a means to proselytize the Jewish people. University officials have given assurance that this will not be the case. All legal requirements were fully met, including the requisite public notice in Jerusalem papers, before the government granted construction permits. This is a facility designed to accommodate a program which has been carried on continuously for many years. It is intended to accommodate the needs of students who, in an academic atmosphere, can become better acquainted with the history, the culture, the nations, and the people of Israel and the Middle East. Experience has shown that those who have participated in the program have come away with increased appreciation for the influences and the people to whom they have been exposed there. BYU officials have received from many Jewish people and from people of other faiths expressions of support for this project. I am confident that in the long term it will redound to the good of the people of Israel as well as to the educational interests of BYU and its students.

6. What about some of the distressing problems that afflict our society, such as child abuse?

As you know, we have recently issued a booklet on child abuse. We deplore this terrible thing which seems to be growing in the world. Of course, it is not new. It has gone on for generations. It is serious, and we so regard it. Sexual abuse of children on the part of fathers, or anyone else, has long been a cause for excommunication from the Church. No man who has been ordained to the priesthood of God can

with impunity indulge in either spouse or child abuse. Such activity becomes an immediate repudiation of his right to hold and exercise the priesthood and to retain membership in the Church.

I am glad that there is a growing public awareness of this insidious evil. The exploitation of children, or the abuse of one's spouse, for the satisfaction of sadistic desires is sin of the darkest hue.

7. What about fathers who fail to pay child support?

Every man who fails to meet his responsibility to care for those he has fathered may find his standing in the Church in jeopardy, and particularly his eligibility for a temple recommend. Paul wrote to Timothy, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (1 Timothy 5:8).

There may be extenuating circumstances in some cases, but those cases will be exceptional. We have followed the principle, in cases of men who have been excommunicated for misconduct and who later have desired to return to the Church and to again receive their former blessings, that as an evidence of sincere repentance they must demonstrate that they have been and are meeting those family support payments mandated by law and obligated by the principles of our religion.

The responsibilities of parenthood have been set forth by the Lord and have been emphasized by our leaders from the beginning of the Church.

8. Lotteries are now becoming government-operated entities across the United States and in many other countries. Does the Church have a position on this matter?

I have my own feelings concerning them.

I am advised that some twenty-two states in the United States now

have state lotteries. Proposals have been placed before Congress for a federal lottery.

There can be no question about the moral ramifications of this practice. A lottery is a form of gambling, regardless of the high-sounding purpose it may be advocated to meet. Lottery fever recently peaked when New York State announced that three winning tickets would split \$41 million. People lined up to buy tickets. One winning ticket was held by 21 factory workers, with 778 second-place winners, and 113,000 who received token amounts. That may sound pretty good.

But there were also 35,998,956 losers, each of whom had paid for a chance to win.

The question of lotteries is a moral question. That government now promotes what it once enforced laws against becomes a sad reflection on the deterioration of public and political morality in the nation.

President Brigham Young spoke out against gambling. President Lorenzo Snow spoke against it. President Joseph F. Smith spoke very strongly against it; and, in 1925, President Heber J. Grant and his counselors said, "The Church has been and now is unalterably opposed to gambling in any form" (*Improvement Era*, Sept. 1926, p. 1100).

Lotteries are advocated as a means of relieving the burden of taxation. That may be a political matter. But a tax by any other name is still a tax, except in this case the burden usually falls on the poor who can least afford to pay it. As an editorial in *USA Today* stated recently: "Lotteries aren't painless—the overwhelming majority of players always lose. The game takes bread and money from the poor. And it is one more temptation for the compulsive gamblers who ruin careers and families with their addiction" (*USA Today*, 26 Aug. 1985, p.). In this context, it becomes a moral question.

9. What about the arms race, and particularly the nuclear arms buildup?

Again, it is a sad commentary on our civilization that the peace of the world hangs on a balance of terror. No one understanding the facts can doubt that a rash decision could lead to the extermination of the race. It is to be hoped that representatives of the great powers will continue to talk and will seek with sincere and earnest desire to find ways to ameliorate the terrible threat which hangs over the world.

I am of the opinion that if a catastrophe is to be avoided, there must be widely cultivated a strong and compelling will for peace on the part of men and women in all nations. Let us, who are followers of the Prince of Peace, pray with great faith, in His name, that the world may be spared a consuming catastrophe that could come from some misadventure.

10. What about the critics of the Church who have been so vocal of late?

We have them. We have always had them. They are not as vociferous as they once were. Noisy as they are, they are not as threatening. People ask whether we are fearful of research of our history. My reply to this is no, of course not, provided it is done with balance and integrity, as has been done by some scholars both in and out of the Church.

However, we are under no obligation to spend tithing funds to provide facilities and resources to those who have demonstrated that it is their objective to attack the Church and undermine its mission. These funds are sacred. They have been consecrated by the faithful to advance the work, and that is the way they will be used.

Our responsibility is to teach the gospel to the nations of the earth, to bear witness of the reality of God our Eternal Father, to declare the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, to testify that

Their work has been restored in this dispensation for the accomplishment of Their eternal purposes, and to move that work forward under the mandate given us. This will require our time, our energies, and the resources available to us.

When we are called before the bar of God to give an accounting of our performance, I think it unlikely that any of us will be commended for wearing out our lives in an effort to find some morsel of history, incomplete in its context, to cast doubt on the integrity of this work. Rather, I believe we will be examined on what we did to build the kingdom, to bring light and understanding of the eternal truths of the gospel to the eyes and minds of all who are willing to listen, to care for the poor and the needy, and to make of the world a better place as a result of our presence.

I come now to the final question.

11. What about the spiritual strength of our people?

I have opportunity to see them. I have met with tens of thousands of them in recent months as we have dedicated temples in many parts of the world. There is much faith. There is strong conviction. There is vibrant testimony. There is power and a great residual of spiritual capacity. These are Latter-day Saints in the full meaning of that term. They pray. They rear their families in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. They work in His service, giving generously of their time and means. They reach out to help their fellowmen without selfishness and even at the jeopardy of their own welfare. They labor in the temples without expectation of thanks from those in whose behalf they serve.

God be thanked for the Latter-day Saints—you my brethren, your wives, your children, your associates. We love you. We pray for you and hope that you will pray for us. We are all a part of this great cause, each with a responsibility to make it succeed. We do not need critics standing on the sidelines. We

need men of faith and capacity who love the Lord and who work to accomplish His purposes. God bless you, each of you, including you boys who are growing to manhood and upon whose shoulders must rest the burden of this kingdom. Live worthy of that coming responsibility. Prepare for it.

I leave you my testimony. This is the work of the Almighty. This is the work of His Beloved Son. This is the

work of salvation, of eternal blessings for all who will accept. May our Father help us to be true and faithful, I humbly ask in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

The men's choir sang "The Priesthood of Our Lord."

Elder F. Enzio Busche offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY MORNING MEETING

FOURTH SESSION

The fourth general session of the conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, October 6, 1985. President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music for this session with Jerold Ottley directing and Robert Cundick at the organ.

Prior to the beginning of the session, the choir sang "Hark, All Ye Nations!" without announcement.

President Hinckley then made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My beloved brethren and sisters, we are assembled in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City for this, the fourth general session of the 155th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We welcome all who are in attendance whether in the Tabernacle, in the Assembly Hall where Elders Vaughn J. Featherstone and Philip T. Sonntag preside, or who are participating by radio, television, cable, or satellite transmission.

We are grateful for the presence of President Spencer W. Kimball at this

session of the conference. He was with us for two sessions yesterday. We are always delighted with his presence and inspired by it. We excuse President Marion G. Romney, who is unable to attend and who is watching the session at home.

We acknowledge this morning the presence of government, education, and civic leaders, and officers and members of the Church from many lands, who have assembled to worship and to counsel together in this conference.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Jerold Ottley with Robert Cundick at the organ, is providing the music for this session.

The choir opened these services by singing "Hark, All Ye Nations!" and will now sing "O Love That Glorifies the Son," following which Elder Charles Didier of the First Quorum of the Seventy will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "O Love That Glorifies the Son."

Elder Charles Didier offered the invocation.

The choir sang "Go Forth with Faith" without announcement.

President Gordon B. Hinckley spoke without announcement.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My beloved brethren and sisters, I feel profoundly grateful for the sustaining faith and prayers of the Latter-day Saints. To stand before you in this capacity is a most serious and sacred responsibility. I claim no special talent. I hope that all of you realize that I am not here of my own choice. I did not seek this responsibility. It was placed upon me by the prophet of the Lord. It is one from which I cannot shrink.

Resolutions and gratitude

I am driven by two resolutions. The first is to serve the Lord to the very best of my ability. I think I understand, in some small measure at least, what that means. The second is to serve His chosen prophet, President Spencer W. Kimball, and lift from his shoulders every burden that I legitimately can. I consider these to be sacred and binding obligations and more important than all other considerations.

I am profoundly grateful to my brethren of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, who consistently and without exception have met every request and every assignment given them. They have been most supportive. The same holds true for the members of the First Quorum of the Seventy and the Presiding Bishopric. I repeat what I have said before at this pulpit, that there is perfect unity among the Brethren. They are not yes-men. Each is a man of understanding, of conviction, of great proven ability. Each is also a man of humility, with a willingness to subdue all personal considerations and place first the work of the Lord.

A constantly unfolding miracle

My constant association with these able and dedicated Brethren is for me a constantly unfolding miracle. We deal with many problems of a serious nature, with many forces impacting on the solution to those problems. Each

man is encouraged and is free to give his opinion and express his judgment. It is a most remarkable and wonderful thing to witness how, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, there is a gradual melding of judgment, which invariably leads to a united decision.

No policy of importance, no action of consequence, is taken without consideration in the highest councils of the Church and without unanimity of feeling on the decisions reached. No such action is taken without earnest and sincere prayer and without a plea to the Almighty for guidance and revelation, and, further, without the approval of the President of the Church.

Some wonder about who is directing the Church. I give you my solemn testimony that inspiration from on high is received and that it is our Father in Heaven and His Beloved Son, the Redeemer of the world, who are guiding and directing this church to bring to pass their eternal purposes in behalf of the sons and daughters of God.

Tribute to modern prophets

These are important and vital days in the work of the Lord. For instance, we are living in one of the most significant and important epochs in the history of the Church and in the history of God's work among His people. We are living in the greatest era of temple building ever witnessed, and of that I wish to speak for a few minutes.

I sing with conviction our great Latter-day Saint hymn, "We thank thee, O God, for a prophet, to guide us in these latter days" (*Hymns*, 1985, no. 19). I sing it in appreciation for and tribute to the Prophet Joseph Smith, through whom the foundation of this work was revealed in this the dispensation of the fulness of times. I sing it in appreciation for and tribute to him whom we today honor as our prophet, President Spencer W. Kimball.

Temple building and opposition

Temple building and the dedication of temples have gone on at such a pace in the last few years that some pay little attention and feel it is of small significance.

But the adversary has not been unmindful of it. The building and dedication of these sacred edifices has been accompanied by a surge of opposition from a few enemies of the Church as well as criticism from a few within. This has brought to mind a statement of Brigham Young in 1861 while the Salt Lake Temple was under construction. Evidently when someone with previous experience was asked to work on the Salt Lake Temple, he responded, "I do not like to do it, for we never began to build a Temple without the bells of hell beginning to ring."

To which Brigham Young replied, "I want to hear them ring again. All the tribes of hell will be on the move, if we uncover the walls of this Temple. But what do you think it will amount to? You have all the time seen what it has amounted to" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 8:355-56).

Yes, in these recent times we have felt much of opposition, but we have also noted the frustration of those who have tried to stop this work. We have been strengthened, and we have moved forward under the promise of the Lord, who said: "I will not suffer that they [the enemy] shall destroy my work; yea, I will show unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the devil" (D&C 10:43).

Experiences at temple dedications

In little more than two and a half years we have dedicated sixteen new temples and rededicated the restored Manti Temple. Before the end of the year, we shall dedicate at least one more, so that we will have dedicated six in 1983, six in 1984, and six in 1985. This great impetus in temple building was given by President Kimball under revelation from the Lord, whose work

this is. The sacred and important work that goes on in temples must be accelerated, and for this to happen, it is necessary that temples be taken closer to the people rather than having the people travel so far to temples.

I wish that anyone who has any doubt concerning the strength and power of this cause could have had the experiences that I have had in recent months in these dedicatory services in the United States, in Asia and Australia, in Mexico, Central America, and South America, in Europe and Africa. I have looked into the faces of tens of thousands of Latter-day Saints. Their skins are of varying colors and hues. But their hearts beat as one with testimony and conviction concerning the truth of this great restored work of God. I have heard their testimonies spoken with sincerity. I have listened to their prayers. I have heard them lift their voices in anthems of praise. I have seen their tears of gratitude. I have known of their sacrifices made in appreciation for the blessings that have come to them.

Their languages have been many, but they have spoken as with one voice in testimony of divine and eternal truth restored to earth. These are men and women who love the Lord, who understand His eternal plan, who are imbued with a selflessness that prompts dedicated service without expectation of thanks or reward. It has been the same everywhere we have been. I wish there were time to speak of experiences in each of these many temple dedication services. I can touch only lightly on three or four.

Mexico City Temple

I have been to Mexico a number of times extending over a period of many years. Once our people there seemed so poor, their education so meager. They appeared to be seriously handicapped in many ways.

Now, recently, when the Mexico City Temple was dedicated, they came by the thousands. They were clean, their faces bright and smiling, their

clothes neat and attractive. They bore every mark of education and refinement. There was something of greatness apparent in them. Most of them have the blood of Lehi in their veins. The shackles of darkness have fallen from their eyes, as promised by the prophets of the Book of Mormon. They have become "a pure and a delightful people" (2 Nephi 30:6). What a wonderfully uplifting experience it was to be with them and to witness the miraculous power of God in their lives.

Philippines temple

I could not hold back the tears when we were in the Philippines. It was my privilege to participate in the opening of missionary work in that land in 1961. At that time we did not have a building of any kind, and we had only one native member of the Church of whom we were aware. In 1984, only twenty-three years later, it was our privilege to dedicate a beautiful temple of the Lord in a choice area of the great metropolis of Manila. I looked into the faces of those thousands of enlightened and faithful Latter-day Saints on whom the Lord is pouring out His blessings in a marvelous and wonderful way. In less than a quarter of a century, from the one native member we found in 1961, the Church has grown to well over a hundred thousand. These are my friends, the people I love, among whom I have worked and to whom I have taught the gospel. The opening of the temple represented the fulness of gospel opportunity for them, the longed-for fruition of their dreams.

Freiberg Temple

In Freiberg, Germany, this past August we dedicated another beautiful and sacred house of God. Before the dedication, when the building was open for public viewing, only a few less than ninety thousand came to enter its precincts. Many stood in the rain for hours.

The faithful Saints sacrificed their money, their jewelry, their comfort to assist in building that temple.

One of their number who attended the dedication wrote: "There was a solemn stillness, and there was not a dry eye. The sun was shining after a long time. . . . You could sense gladness and enthusiasm and the wish for a never-ending harmony. . . . Tears, laughter, and gladness; everything was present."

While recognizing the different political philosophies under which we live, I express sincere appreciation to the officials of the government of that nation for their help in making possible this sacred edifice for the blessing of our brethren and sisters in that land.

Johannesburg Temple

We recently returned from Johannesburg, South Africa. Here in the United States we see in the public press and on television much of conflict in that area. But in the house of God, that beautiful Johannesburg Temple, there was peace, the peace of the Lord, the peace that "passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7). Mingling together as brethren and sisters, bound by eternal covenants with the Almighty, were people with different roots. Among them were those descended from the Dutch who long ago went to that land, those who descended from the British who had fought the Dutch, and also those who came of the native peoples of Africa. There was fellowship, there was love, there was unity and mutual respect among all assembled in the house of the Lord.

We experienced much of rejoicing on these sacred occasions, not only in the temples I have named, but in every other as well. Following the dedication of each of these temples, the ordinance work was begun, and it has gone forward without let or hindrance to the blessing of thousands on this side of the veil and tens of thousands on the other side of the veil. If there is any work in all the world that demonstrates the uni-

versality of God's love, it is the selfless work that goes on in these sacred houses.

"Fulness of the priesthood"

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, gave His life on Calvary's cross as an atonement for the sins of mankind. His was a vicarious sacrifice for each of us. Through that sacrifice came the promise of the resurrection for all. This has come through the grace of God, without effort on the part of men. And beyond this, through the keys of the holy priesthood conferred upon the Twelve by the Lord when He walked among them, which keys were restored in this dispensation by those who held them anciently—through these have come great added blessings, including those unique and remarkable ordinances administered in the house of the Lord. Only in those ordinances is there realized the exercise of "the fulness of the priesthood" (D&C 124:28).

I assume there is no Christian who does not acknowledge the necessity for and the importance of baptism "of water and of the Spirit." None could legitimately deny this necessity in view of the statement given by the Master to Nicodemus: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

Baptism for the dead

Are the uncounted millions who have died without baptism to be denied the blessings of the kingdom of God because they were innocent of the requirement?

It is inconceivable to me that anyone could believe that the God who is the Father of us all would so discriminate among His children in terms of their eternal blessings.

No, there must be universal opportunity if there is to be universal justice.

Paul's question to the Corinthian Saints offers scriptural confirmation of the practice of proxy baptism in behalf

of the deceased: "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?" (1 Corinthians 15:29).

The word of Jesus to Nicodemus did not allow for exemption. In each of the temples of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a font wherein living proxies may be baptized in behalf of the dead. I do not like to speak of them as "the dead." I believe that under the great plan of our Eternal Father and through the atonement of Christ, they are living. Though they have died as to their mortal bodies, they have retained their identity as individuals. They are personalities as much so as are we, and as entitled to the blessings that pertain to eternal life. Am I more worthy of these transcendent blessings than are my forebears through whom has come my inheritance?

A house of purity

The house of the Lord is a house of purity. Those who serve therein dress in spotless white. They participate in sacred ordinances. They are instructed in the eternal plan of the Lord. They make covenants enjoining personal morality and rectitude, unselfishness and service. Their activities are anticipatory of that scene described by John the Revelator: "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? . . .

"Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

"They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

"For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Revelation 7:13, 15-17).

Keys of the kingdom

Here in these holy houses husbands and wives are sealed together under that same authority which the Lord gave His Apostles anciently. "When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi," he conversed with His disciples, and out of that conversation came Peter's moving declaration: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:13, 16).

The Savior then spoke of the power of revelation through which that knowledge had come and of that principle of revelation upon which His church should be built. He then went on to say to these, His chosen brethren: "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:19).

Marriage, solemnized in the temples of the Church, is performed in the authority of that same holy priesthood, not only for this life, but for the next as well.

The separation of loved ones in death is always fraught with sorrow. It would be fraught with hopelessness if there were not some alternative to the finality of the "until death do thee part" pronouncement in most marriage ceremonies.

It need not be so. Reason would deny that the Father who loves us all would tear asunder the most sacred relationship of all human experience and banish the companionship of marriage by those who love, honor, and respect one another. But there must be rules. There must be compliance. There must be obedience. The way is clear, made so through the exercise of the holy priesthood in these sacred temples.

The other day I sat beside a friend who had lost his beloved companion. He wept in loneliness, now bereft of an association of more than half a century which had been the very bulwark of his life. But shining through his tears and towering above his doubts was the cer-

tain conviction that the marriage performed many, many years ago had been joined by an authority whose power reached beyond the veil of death and which would be as efficacious there as it had been here.

Blessing of harmony

Small wonder, my brethren and sisters, that with the opening of these new temples I have seen the tears of strong men who have embraced their wives at the altars in these sacred houses. I have seen the tears of fathers and mothers as they have embraced their children at these same altars. Through the power here exercised they have come to know that neither time nor death can destroy the bonds which bind them together.

And just as these bonds are efficacious for the living, so are they for the dead when living proxies stand in their stead to receive these ordinances. This work, unselfishly given in behalf of those on the other side, comes nearer to the unparalleled vicarious work of the Savior than any other of which I know. The great and important work of teaching the gospel of Christ to the people of the world is incomplete, at best, if it does not also provide for that teaching to those in another sphere and making available to them those gospel ordinances required of all if they are to move forward on the way of eternal life.

These temples are there to be used, and those who use them will reap a blessing of harmony in their lives. They will draw nearer unto the Lord, and He will draw nearer unto them.

There are those few who mock our temple work. They may mock the language, but they cannot mock the Spirit, nor can they mock the truth. I bear testimony of the universality of our Father's love, of the universality of the salvation from death which came through the sacrifice of the Savior, of the universality of the opportunity for all generations of men and women to the great blessings of our Father, who

said, "This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). I so testify in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "Lord, Accept into Thy King-

dom," following which Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will address us.

The choir sang "Lord, Accept into Thy Kingdom."

Elder Dallin H. Oaks spoke without further announcement.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks

Spirituality—a lens and a gauge

As faithful members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we have a distinctive way of looking at life. We view our experiences in terms of eternity. As we draw farther from worldliness, we feel closer to our Father in Heaven and more able to be guided by his Spirit. We call this quality of life *spirituality*.

To the faithful, spirituality is a lens through which we view life and a gauge by which we evaluate it. The Apostle Paul expressed this thought in two of his letters:

"We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:18).

"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:5–6).

Evaluate experiences

To be spiritually minded is to view and evaluate our experiences in terms of the enlarged perspective of eternity.

Each of us has a personal lens through which we view the world. Our

lens gives its special tint to all we see. It can suppress some features and emphasize others. It can also reveal things otherwise invisible. Through the lens of spirituality, we can know "the things of God" by "the Spirit of God" (1 Corinthians 2:11). As the Apostle Paul taught, such things are "foolishness" to the "natural man." He cannot see them "because they are spiritually discerned." (See 1 Corinthians 2:14.)

How we *interpret* our experiences is also a function of our degree of spirituality. Some interpret mortality solely in terms of worldly accomplishments and possessions. In contrast, we who have a testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ should interpret our experiences in terms of our knowledge of the purpose of life, the mission of our Savior, and the eternal destiny of the children of God.

Spirituality is not a function of occupation or calling. A scientist may be more spiritual than a theologian; a teacher may be more spiritual than an officer. Spirituality is determined by personal outlook and priorities. It is evident in our words and actions. Elder John Taylor showed his spirituality in these words, uttered as he reported on his mission to Europe in 1852:

"Some people have said to me, sometimes, Are you not afraid to cross over the seas, and deserts, where there are wolves and bears, and other fero-

cious animals? . . . Are you not afraid that you will drop by the way, and leave your body on the desert track, or beneath the ocean's wave? No. Who cares anything about it? What of it, if we should happen to drop by the way? . . . These things don't trouble me, but I have felt to rejoice all the day long, that God has revealed the principle of eternal life, that I am put in possession of that truth, and that I am counted worthy to engage in the work of the Lord" (*Journal of Discourses*, 1:17).

"Mary chose that good part"

The scriptures contain great illustrations of spirituality as it relates to everyday living. One of these, recorded in the tenth chapter of Luke, tells how the Savior came to a particular village:

"And a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

"And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

"But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

"And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

"But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:38-42).

This scripture reminds every Martha, male and female, that we should not be so occupied with what is routine and temporal that we fail to cherish those opportunities that are unique and spiritual.

Contrast between temporal and spiritual

The contrast between the spiritual and the temporal is also illustrated by the twins Esau and Jacob and their different attitudes toward their birthright. The firstborn, Esau, "despised his

birthright" (Genesis 25:34). Jacob, the second twin, desired it. Jacob valued the spiritual, while Esau sought the things of this world. When he was hungry, Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. "Behold," he explained, "I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?" (Genesis 25:32). Many Esaus have given up something of eternal value in order to satisfy a momentary hunger for the things of the world.

The Roman soldiers of Pilate provided an unforgettable illustration of the different perspectives of the carnal mind and the spiritual mind. During a tragic afternoon on Calvary, a handful of soldiers waited at the foot of a cross. The most important event in all eternity was taking place on the cross above their heads. Oblivious to that fact, they occupied themselves casting lots to divide the earthly property of the dying Son of God. (See Matthew 27:35; Luke 23:34; John 19:24.) Their example reminds each of us that we should not be casting our lots for the things of the world while the things of eternity, including our families and the work of the Lord, suffer for our attention.

Here is an example of a spiritual and a temporal evaluation of an everyday experience. In a BYU devotional several years ago, Elder Loren C. Dunn described how his father, a busy stake president in Tooele, gave his two young sons the responsibility of raising cows on the family farm. He gave the boys large latitude in what they could do, and they made some mistakes. These were observed by an alert neighbor, who complained to their father about what the young cow-raisers were doing. "Jim, you don't understand," President Dunn replied. "You see, I'm raising boys, not cows" ("Our Spiritual Heritage," in *Speeches of the Year, 1981-82* [Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1982], p. 138). What a marvelous insight! What an example for parents who are inclined to view and evaluate their children's performance solely in temporal terms.

What we *see* around us depends on what we *seek* in life. The Spanish conquerors took irreplaceable objects of art from the craftsmen of the New World and melted them down into gold bullion. The enemies of the young prophet, Joseph Smith, hounded him to get possession of the golden plates from which he was to translate the Book of Mormon. They sought the golden plates to get money, not a message. The temporal value of the plates had a price; their spiritual value was priceless.

Find spiritual meaning

Elder John A. Widtsoe taught that "there is a spiritual meaning of all human acts and earthly events. . . . It is the business of man to find the spiritual meaning of earthly things. . . . No man is quite so happy . . . as he who backs all his labors by such a spiritual interpretation and understanding of the acts of his life" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1922, pp. 96-97).

The Latter-day Saint men and women who settled these valleys of the mountains acted upon that principle. Judged in terms of the values and aspirations of the world, some pioneer enterprises were failures. The iron mission did not succeed in making significant quantities of iron. The cotton mission did not give the Utah Territory self-sufficiency in cotton production. Efforts to manufacture sugar did not achieve material success for forty years. The Perpetual Immigration Fund did not perpetuate itself because many immigrants were unable to pay their debt to it.

Measure eternal values

But, when measured against the eternal values of loyalty, cooperation, and consecration, some of the most conspicuous worldly failures are seen as the pioneer enterprisers' greatest triumphs. Whatever their financial outcome, these enterprises called forth the sacrifices that molded pioneers into Saints and prepared Saints for exalta-

tion. Unto God, "all things . . . are spiritual" (D&C 29:34.)

In another great event in Mormon history, several hundred men marched from Ohio to give military relief to the persecuted Saints in Zion—western Missouri. But when the men of Zion's Camp approached their intended destination, the Prophet Joseph Smith disbanded them. According to its ostensible purpose, the expedition was a failure. But most of the men who were to lead the Church for the next half-century, including those who would take the Saints across the plains and colonize the Intermountain West, came to know the Prophet Joseph and received their formative leadership training in the march of Zion's Camp. As Elder Orson F. Whitney said of Zion's Camp:

"The redemption of Zion is more than the purchase or recovery of lands, the building of cities, or even the founding of nations. It is the conquest of the heart, the subjugation of the soul, the sanctifying of the flesh, the purifying and ennobling of the passions" (*The Life of Heber C. Kimball*, 2d ed. [Salt Lake City: Stevens and Wallis, 1945], p. 65).

Nature of spirituality

The first of the Ten Commandments—"Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3)—epitomizes the nature of spirituality. A spiritual person has no priorities ahead of God. A person who seeks or serves other objectives, such as power or prominence, is not spiritual.

The primacy of the spiritual over the temporal is evident in the teachings of the Savior's three senior Apostles. Peter taught:

"All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

"But the word of the Lord endureth for ever" (1 Peter 1:24-25).

James asked: "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity

with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4).

And the Apostle John wrote:

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

"And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:15-17).

Materialism, opposite of spirituality

Materialism, which gives priority to material needs and objects, is obviously the opposite of spirituality. The Savior taught that we should not lay up "treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal" (Matthew 6:19). We should lay up treasures in heaven: "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:21).

Like other Book of Mormon prophets, Samuel the Lamanite warned the Nephites that they were cursed because of their riches, "Because ye have set your hearts upon them, and have not hearkened unto the words of him who gave them unto you" (Helaman 13:21; see also Helaman 6:17; 7:21).

The Apostle Paul counseled young Timothy, "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (1 Timothy 6:17).

There is nothing inherently evil about money. The Good Samaritan used the same coinage to serve his fellowman that Judas used to betray the Master. It is "*the love of money* [which] is the root of all evil" (1 Timothy 6:10; italics added). The critical difference is the degree of spirituality we exercise in

viewing, evaluating, and managing the things of this world and our experiences in it.

If allowed to become an object of worship or priority, money can make us selfish and prideful, "puffed up in the vain things of the world" (Alma 5:37). In contrast, if used for fulfilling our legal obligations and for paying our tithes and offerings, money can demonstrate integrity and develop unselfishness. The spiritually enlightened use of property can help prepare us for the higher law of a celestial glory.

How we react to apparent misfortunes

The qualities of spirituality we have been able to embody in our lives are often evident in the way we react to death or other apparent tragedies or misfortunes. As faithful Latter-day Saints, we can bear the death of loved ones because we have faith in the resurrection and the eternal nature of family ties. We can repent and rise above our mistakes and inadequacies because we know that our Savior "suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent" (D&C 19:16).

Seen with the perspective of eternity, a temporal setback can be an opportunity to develop soul power of eternal significance. Strength is forged in adversity. Faith is developed in a setting where we cannot see what lies ahead.

Lehi promised his son Jacob that God "shall consecrate thine afflictions for thy gain" (2 Nephi 2:2). In the midst of the Missouri persecutions, the Lord assured the Saints that "all things wherewith you have been afflicted shall work together for your good" (D&C 98:3). Those who can look upon their afflictions in this manner have spirituality.

How we achieve spirituality

How do we achieve spirituality? How do we attain that degree of holiness where we can have the constant

companionship of the Holy Ghost? How do we come to view and evaluate the things of this world with the perspective of eternity?

We seek spirituality through faith, repentance, and baptism; through forgiveness of one another; through fasting and prayer; through righteous desires and pure thoughts and actions. We seek spirituality through service to our fellowmen; through worship; through feasting on the word of God, in the scriptures and the teachings of the living prophets. We attain spirituality through making and keeping covenants, through conscientiously trying to keep all the commandments of God. Spirituality is not acquired suddenly. It is the consequence of a succession of right choices. It is the harvest of a righteous life.

Invitations to blessings

Through the lens of spirituality, we see all the commandments of God as invitations to blessings. Obedience and sacrifice, loyalty and love, fidelity and family all appear in eternal perspective. The words of the Savior, given to the world in the Prophet Joseph Smith's inspired translation of the Bible, have renewed significance:

"And whosoever will lose his life in this world, for my sake, shall find it in the world to come.

"Therefore, forsake the world, and save your souls; for what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 16:28-29).

The fruits of spirituality were revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith in the eighty-eighth section of the Doctrine and Covenants:

"And if your eye be single to my glory, your whole bodies shall be filled with light, and there shall be no darkness in you; and that body which is filled with light comprehendeth all things.

"Therefore, sanctify yourselves that your minds become single to God" (D&C 88:67-68).

Sanctify ourselves through spirituality

I testify that we are the children of God the Eternal Father. Through the atoning sacrifice of his Only Begotten Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, he has given us the means by which we may be cleansed of our sins. Through his prophets he has given us the eternal perspective of spirituality.

May we strive to attain that level of spirituality where we sanctify ourselves that our minds become single to God. (See D&C 88:68.) As we do so, we will enjoy his promised blessings, including the blessing of eternal life, "the greatest of all the gifts of God" (D&C 14:7). Of this I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Dallin H. Oaks has just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "The Spirit of God," following which we shall hear from Elder Theodore M. Burton of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation sang "The Spirit of God."

Elder Theodore M. Burton spoke without further announcement.

Elder Theodore M. Burton

Many people, both Church members and nonmembers, wonder what General Authorities do. They ask me: "How do you spend your time? I know you travel a lot, hold stake conferences, and speak on Sundays, but what do you do with the rest of your time—just study and prepare your sermons?" When someone asks me that question, I feel like answering, "What extra time?" I prepared this sermon on planes and in airports waiting for planes to leave. If it sounds a little bumpy, I hope you'll understand.

Learned to live by faith

I was called to be a General Authority twenty-five years ago and had no idea at first what I would be asked to do. I was assigned to hold a stake conference the very next weekend and went for advice to my former stake president, Elder Harold B. Lee, who was then a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. I asked him to tell me what to do. His answer both shocked and frightened me. He said, "Theodore, you are a General Authority now. No one tells a General Authority how to act in his special calling. If you have questions, ask the Lord and He will instruct you." I had prayed before, never expecting a direct answer, but now I prayed soberly and with real intent.

The Lord did answer my prayers—not in ways I expected, but by speaking things into my mind. But that only happened after I had studied the problem and prepared myself to receive an answer. I have been startled by some of the things that have come to me. Scriptures I had not understood before suddenly were made meaningful. Answers I had previously passed over in reading the scriptures took on new significance. I have truly learned over these years line upon line and precept on precept. I have learned to follow living prophets as well as those proph-

ets who have passed on. Of necessity I have learned to live by faith.

During the course of my service, I have been given many different assignments. Each General Authority is given one or more special duties to perform which occupy his full time. Some are research or teaching assignments; some are difficult administrative responsibilities. Some are highly spiritual experiences such as managing temples where work begins early in the morning and continues until late in the evening. All General Authority assignments require managerial ability, and General Authorities have to bring spiritual and organizational skills into financial, personnel, or other administrative work. The work is demanding of time and energy, and I often marvel at how well my associates carry out these assignments.

Assisting those who have strayed

I am presently serving on a special committee to assist the First Presidency in bringing back into full Christian fellowship those individuals who have strayed from the fold and who now have reached a point in their lives where they feel a need to regain their full priesthood and temple blessings. Each case requires the personal approval of the First Presidency. Our committee assignment is to organize each of these cases with full information in concise form so that the First Presidency can make a final disposition of each case, based on justice and mercy.

I have been asked the question, "Isn't it depressing to have to review the sins and transgressions of people involved in such difficulties?" It would be if I were looking for sins and transgressions. But I am working with people who are repenting. These are sons and daughters of God who have made mistakes—some of them very serious. But they are *not* sinners. They

were sinners in the past but have learned through bitter experience the heartbreak that results from disobedience to God's laws. Now they are no longer sinners. They are God's repentant children who want to come back to Him and are striving to do so. They have made their mistakes and have paid for them. Now they seek understanding, love, and acceptance.

"Wickedness never was happiness"

I often wish that in the first place they had believed the words of the prophet Alma which he spoke to his wayward son, Corianton:

"And now behold, my son, do not risk one more offense against your God upon those points of doctrine, which ye have hitherto risked to commit sin.

"Do not suppose, because it has been spoken concerning restoration, that ye shall be restored from sin to happiness. Behold, I say unto you, wickedness *never* was happiness" (Alma 41:9-10, *italics added*).

Just as a sewing pattern determines the dress or clothes we wear, so our present lives determine our future existence. Why do people have to go through the "school of hard knocks" to learn this truth? The scriptures and instructions from our spiritual leaders teach us how to avoid the heartache which *always* results from sin.

I have had people tell or write me how much they have learned as they have overcome their sins and thus have brought new happiness to themselves and their families. But how much better had it been if husbands and wives had learned to be kind and considerate, loving and thoughtful, virtuous and true, and had avoided that heartbreak right from the beginning? Many people have done so and have been happy. Others have had to learn to do the right things the hard way before they found happiness.

General Authorities as spiritual healers

But the people I work with are on the road back. So I rejoice as I organize and summarize each case for First Presidency consideration. If an application from a former transgressor is approved by the Presidency, one of the General Authorities is assigned to interview that person to determine his or her present worthiness and readiness to receive back those priesthood and temple blessings which he or she possessed before excommunication occurred. Thus, when President Benson appoints me, for example, to such a task, I interview the applicant to determine that repentance truly has taken place.

Then I take time to teach that person how to avoid a recurrence of the problem. Once a person has transgressed, Satan tries hard to discourage that individual and take away his (or her) hope of ever being completely freed from that sin. I explain that God truly loves him and that through the love and atonement of Jesus Christ even personal sins can and will be forgiven, and completely wiped away, if he will only forsake sin and never give way to that temptation again. As General Authorities, we are spiritual healers trying to help people put their lives—and where possible their families—back in order again so that the person involved, if he or she will continue to live righteously, can eventually return to the very presence of God, the Eternal Father.

Overtures in spirit of compassion

It saddens me when I hear how some of our members and even sometimes our local leaders treat people who have to be disciplined for transgression. I realize there is a tendency to equate the word *discipline* with the word *punish*, but there is a difference between these words. In English, at least, the word *discipline* has the same root as the word *disciple*. A disciple is a student, to be taught. In dealing with

transgressors, we must remember that they desperately *need* to be taught. Oftentimes the transgressor is so belligerent that it is impossible to teach him at the moment.

However, if we can remember that he or she is a child of God, we will never abandon him or her. For a branch president or bishop to advise his people to avoid further contact with transgressors is most unwise and unkind. It is at such moments of rebellion or anger when they most need help. We should continue to make friendly overtures to them, not in a spirit of challenge or criticism, but in a spirit of compassion.

Teach, befriend, and help to repent

The more I study the Book of Mormon, the more I appreciate the spirit of kindness and love with which that book was written. In speaking of those not yet ready to repent, Jesus told his disciples:

"And behold, ye shall meet together oft; and ye shall not forbid any man from coming unto you when ye shall meet together, but suffer them that they may come unto you and forbid them not;

"But ye shall pray for them, and shall not cast them out; and if it so be that they come unto you oft ye shall pray for them unto the Father, in my name" (3 Nephi 18:22-23).

Unworthy persons are not to partake of the sacrament that they may not mock that holy ordinance in which we covenant to obey and keep the laws of God. The Savior then continues: "Nevertheless, ye shall not cast him out from among you, but ye shall minister unto him and shall pray for him unto the Father, in my name" (3 Nephi 18:30).

I understand that to "minister" means we should teach, befriend, and help that person to understand, repent, and return to God. If that person then repents and is baptized, that is good. But if that person refuses to repent, he or she is not yet ready to be numbered among the members of the Church of

Christ. The Savior then instructs us how to treat those who have not yet repented:

"Nevertheless, ye shall not cast him out of your synagogues, or your places of worship, for unto such shall ye continue to minister; for ye know not but what they will return and repent, and come unto me with full purpose of heart, and I shall heal them; and ye shall be the means of bringing salvation unto them" (3 Nephi 18:32).

Families of transgressors

I urge you especially to consider the problems which families of transgressors have to face. When a person has to be disciplined, remember the impact this has on his or her family. That family is already crushed by what has occurred. The family has been betrayed and abused, and individual family members often feel the taint of that transgression upon them even though they may be personally innocent. Do not abandon them in their hour of need. Never will they need friends more than at that moment. Never will they need acceptance, kindness, and understanding more than in those first few months after their betrayal. Do not widen the breach. Do not further condemn the offender in the minds of family members. That will only delay the healing process and make forgiveness more difficult. Put yourself in their place. They need strength and encouragement and often financial or physical aid. A spouse left alone finds it difficult to cope with the many changes that have to be made. I ask you just to *be* there—a pillar of friendship on which they can lean, a comforter and protector of the children within that family.

Thus, as one of the General Authorities, and in fulfilling part of my present duty, I plead with you to be kind to these distressed children of God who need you now more than ever. May we heed the advice of our Savior: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as

I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34-35).

That we may do so I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Theodore M. Burton of the First Quorum of the Seventy has just spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Dean L. Larsen, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum.

Elder Dean L. Larsen

Tests of religious work

In recent months, several items of historical interest have surfaced in one way or another, stirring a renewed interest in the life of Joseph Smith and the means through which he established the Church. A wide range of opinions has been expressed regarding the extent to which these new disclosures should affect our perceptions of the traditional and scriptural accounts of Joseph's divine calling and his part in bringing about the restoration of the gospel and the church of Jesus Christ.

In my remarks today I do not wish to make any assessment of the validity of the newly discovered documents nor the extent to which they might, in the eyes of some, affect the reconstruction of Church history. I would like, instead, to point to some ultimate tests that can be applied to determine the divine nature of any religious work. These are tests which the Lord himself prescribed. They overreach the tentative significance of any historical document that may survive the passage of time, whether it relates to specific events or to the people who participated in the events. The Lord's work is known by its fruits. Often, documents of historical interest reflect, at best, the way one individual recalls or perceives events or the actions and motives of those who participated in them. Such reflections may be interesting, but they may not always be accurate. They may even tell more about the one doing the

reflecting than the one being reflected upon.

In any case, the Lord's test is the only one that will stand with the passage of time and reveal the truth about those who claim to do his work.

"Know them by their fruits"

The Savior acknowledged that there would be imposters who would attempt to pass themselves off as his authorized representatives. He warned of false prophets who would come in sheep's clothing but who would have their own selfish motives to fulfill. "Ye shall know them by their fruits," he said.

"Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

"Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruits; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

"A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. . . .

"Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:15-20).

It is interesting that this declaration by the Savior was made in response to accusations from the scribes and the Pharisees that he was performing his miracles and healings by the power of the devil. "This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils," they protested (Matthew 12:24).

Eternal Father's testimony of Jesus and Joseph Smith

The attempts by the Savior's enemies to destroy his work by discrediting him were futile. All he said and did has stood the test of time and has borne good fruit in the lives of millions of people.

In addition to the record of the good works performed by the Savior, we are given the personal affirmation and testimony of the Eternal Father regarding Jesus' divine nature and calling. Those who were present at the baptism of the Master heard the Father's voice declare from the heavens, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). Again, on the Mount of Transfiguration, the chosen Apostles of the Lord heard the repeated affirmation: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matthew 17:5).

In a similar fashion we have the Lord's own testimony as to the divine calling of Joseph Smith.

"Wherefore, I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments" (D&C 1:17).

Also: "I, the Lord, am God, and have given these things unto you, my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and have commanded you that you should stand as a witness of these things; . . .

"For hereafter you shall be ordained and go forth and deliver my words unto the children of men. . . .

"But this generation shall have my word through you" (D&C 5:2, 6, 10).

And: "The ends of the earth shall inquire after thy name, and fools shall have thee in derision, and hell shall rage against thee;

"While the pure in heart, and the wise, and the noble, and the virtuous, shall seek counsel, and authority, and blessings constantly from under thy hand.

"And thy people shall never be turned against thee by the testimony of traitors" (D&C 122:1-3).

Fruits of the restored gospel

Joseph Smith declared that his work was the Lord's work. His credentials as a prophet of God are not adequately tested by historical relics.

The fruits of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ are the real test of Joseph and his work.

Among these fruits which are easily available for assessment today are the scriptures that came from his efforts. These, of course, include the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. They are tangible fruits that cannot be displaced by all of the commentary of those who have an interest in reconstructing history. They contain the revelations of God. The value of the eternal principles which they propound can be tested by daily application.

The only true test

In fact, this is the only true test. Alma, in his segment of the Book of Mormon record, issues a challenge for such a test. "Behold," he says, "if ye will awake and arouse your faculties, even to an experiment upon my words, and exercise a particle of faith, yea, even if ye can no more than desire to believe, let this desire work in you, even until ye believe in a manner that ye can give place for a portion of my words" (Alma 32:27).

Comparing this experiment to the planting of a seed, Alma continued: "Now, if ye give place, that a seed may be planted in your heart, behold, if it be a true seed, or a good seed, if ye do not cast it out by your unbelief, that ye will resist the Spirit of the Lord, behold, it will begin to swell within your breasts; and when you feel these swelling motions, ye will begin to say within yourselves—It must needs be that this is a good seed, or that the word is good, for it beginneth to enlarge my soul; yea,

it beginneth to enlighten my understanding, yea, it beginneth to be delicious to me" (Alma 32:28).

The Savior's sure test

For more than 150 years, since the founding of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, millions of people have tried the experiment proposed by Alma as it pertains to the gospel that Joseph Smith restored. They and others in increasing numbers throughout the world today bear testimony to the good fruit that the experiment has borne. They have applied the Savior's sure test.

Within the context of the Savior's prescribed testing of the fruit lies an implied challenge and warning for all who receive the restored gospel of Christ, who accept Joseph Smith as a prophet of God, and who claim membership in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The challenge is given by the Savior in the Sermon on the Mount;

"Ye are the salt of the earth: . . .

"Ye are the light of the world. . . .

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:13-16).

Beacon or stumbling block

Those who receive the gospel are expected to manifest its fruits in their lives, not only for their own benefit and blessing, but for the purpose of drawing others to the truth.

This does not suggest that all who are obedient to the principles of truth will be free of all earthly cares and concerns, for all are tested. But those who are compliant with the Lord's plan of life will be able to meet the tests and not be overcome. They will endure. In significant ways their lives will manifest the fruits of the gospel and set them apart as a beacon to all who are seeking for light and truth.

When we fail to measure up to this trust, we betray the covenants we have made. Not only do we then fail to gain the full benefits of the gospel for ourselves, but we become a stumbling block for others. In such a case it is with us as it was with the disobedient missionary son of Alma, who fell to the temptations of the world, and of whom Alma mourned: "Behold, O my son, how great iniquity ye brought upon the Zoramites; for when they saw your conduct they would not believe in my words" (Alma 39:11).

The Savior warned those who, knowing the truth, pursue another course: "But if the salt shall have lost his savour, . . . it is henceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under the foot of men" (Matthew 5:13).

Manifest fruits of the gospel

Enjoying the fruits of the gospel should not make us arrogant and aloof, but it should set us apart from the world in much of our conduct.

It is, perhaps, well in these times, when so many of the fundamental truths of the Restoration and the validity of the Lord's work are being challenged, that we ask ourselves to what degree our conduct sets us apart and manifests the fruits of the gospel. In our homes and in our families, are we enjoying and qualifying for the love and support of family members? In our business dealings, are we fair and honest and prompt in meeting our obligations; is our word as good as our bond? Are our private and innermost thoughts free from the contaminations of the world? Do they reflect our absolute loyalty and fidelity to those with whom we have made eternal vows? Are we nourishing through prayer and a regular study of the Lord's revealed truths the spiritual and moral strength which is required in today's environment? In the entertainment and recreation we seek, are we keeping ourselves unspotted from the world and in harmony with the Lord's holy Sabbath? Are we generous

with our means and inclined to be serviceable to others? Do we acknowledge our faults and shortcomings and seek forgiveness from those whom we have wronged or offended?

Let me repeat again that those who do the Lord's work demonstrate it by the fruits of their labors. Analyzing and criticizing others, either from a historical perspective or from what we may view of a contemporary life, will be of little consequence unless it balances with the Lord's assessment. The Apostle Paul said:

"But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. . . .

"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

"Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way" (Romans 14:10, 12-13).

Testimony

I bear testimony that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God through whose instrumentality the Lord has reestablished his true church and the only plan of life that can bring eternal happi-

ness and exaltation. I further testify that those who have succeeded him in his prophetic role down to the present day have been men who are chosen and endowed with power and authority to accomplish the Lord's work.

I humbly acknowledge the responsibility I share with you to make manifest in my life the fruits of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And to those who may question the validity of this work, I leave the Savior's challenge: "Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit" (Matthew 12:33).

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "Ye Simple Souls Who Stray" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Elder Dean L. Larsen, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has addressed us, followed by the choir singing "Ye Simple Souls Who Stray."

Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our concluding speaker.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

Peace that surpasseth all understanding

Many years ago I heard a story that impressed me. I share it with you today as I endeavor for a few minutes to direct your thinking toward the important word *peace*. A beautiful little blind girl was sitting on the lap of her father in a crowded compartment in a train. A friend seated nearby said to the father, "Let me give you a little rest," and he reached over and took the little girl on his lap.

A few moments later the father said to her, "Do you know who is holding you?"

"No," she replied, "but you do."

Some might be inclined to say, "What a perfect trust this child had in her father." Others may say, "What a wonderful example of love." And still others might say, "What an example of faith." To me it indicates a beautiful blending of all of these principles, which brought a priceless inner peace to the child. She knew she was safe because she knew her father *knew* who was holding her. Affection, respect,

and care over the years had placed in this little girl's heart a peace that surpasseth all understanding. She was at peace because she knew and trusted her father.

Trust and relationship with our Heavenly Father

We plead for peace in our prayers and thoughts. Where is peace? Can we ever enjoy this great gift while wars, rumors of wars, discord, evil, and contention swirl all around us? The answer is yes. Just as the little blind girl sat on the stranger's lap with perfect contentment because her father knew him, so we can learn to know our Father and find inner peace as we live his principles.

It is very significant that when Jesus came forth from the tomb and appeared to his disciples, his first greeting was, "Peace be unto you" (Luke 24:36). Peace—not passion, not personal possessions, not personal accomplishments nor happiness—is one of the greatest blessings a man can receive. Our trust and our relationship with our Heavenly Father should be one similar to that of the little blind girl and her earthly father. When sorrow, tragedy, and heartbreaks occur in our lives, wouldn't it be comforting if when the whisperings of God say, "Do you know why this has happened to you?" we could have the peace of mind to answer "No, but you do."

Worshipping in peace

Certainly peace is the opposite of fear. Peace is a blessing that comes to those who trust in God. It is established through individual righteousness. True personal peace comes about through eternal vigilance and constant righteous efforts. No man can be at peace who is untrue to his better self. No man can have lasting peace who is living a lie. Peace can never come to the transgressor of the law. Commitment to God's laws is the basis for peace. Peace is something we earn. It is not a gift.

Rather, it is a possession earned by those who love God and work to achieve the blessings of peace. It is not a written document. It is something that must come from within.

The Salt Lake Valley was settled by those who trekked over the plains under extremely difficult conditions so they could worship God in peace. Left behind was Nauvoo, a deserted city desecrated by the uninformed, misinformed, embittered enemies of the Church. Peace had flown from the City Beautiful. What a price some of those who have gone before us have paid for the privilege of worshipping in peace.

In times of adversity

Never will peace and hatred be able to abide in the same soul. Permanent peace will elude those individuals or groups whose objective is to condemn, discredit, rail at, or tear down those whose beliefs are different from their own. These people live by hatred and would destroy others insofar as it is in their power to do so. True Christians have no time for contention. Lasting peace cannot be built while we are reviling or hating others. Those who preach hate, ridicule, and untruths cannot be classified as peacemakers. Until they repent they will reap the harvest to which those engaged in the business of hatred are entitled. Feelings of enmity and malice can never be compatible with feelings of peace.

"The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

"There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isaiah 57:20–21).

However, only those at peace can properly cope with accusations and slander. Inner peace is the prized possession of God's valiant. A testimony of the truthfulness of the teachings of our Savior gives personal peace in times of adversity.

"A triumph of principles"

There are those who dangle false enticements of peace before us. These are they who are greedy and power hungry. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: . . . He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption" (Galatians 6:7-8). Inner peace flees from those who sacrifice virtue for sexual promiscuity. There are some who advocate and promote new sexual exploits under the guise of "relief from stress." These people are only sowing unto the flesh and peddling devilish deeds. Wickedness, no matter how it is labeled or camouflaged, will eventually bring grief and heartache and wipe out inner peace.

Peace will never be the possession of those who participate in vulgar conversations and behavior. Let us not be planters of poisonous seeds. Rather let us nourish roots of peace in the soil of righteous principles.

It was Ralph Waldo Emerson who declared the mighty truth, "Nothing can bring you peace but yourself. Nothing can bring you peace but a triumph of principles" ("Self-Reliance," in *Ralph Waldo Emerson: Essays and Lectures* [New York: The Library of America, 1983], p. 282).

Eternal personal quest

Peace is not a purchase away. Peace is not when the final installment is paid. Peace is not when marriage comes nor when all the children are enrolled in school. Peace is not when the last child returns from the mission field. Peace is not when an inheritance is received. Peace is not when the scars of death start to heal.

True peace must not be dependent upon conditions or happenings. Peace must stem from an inward contentment built upon trust, faith, and goodwill toward God, fellowmen, and self. It must be constantly nurtured by the individual who is soundly anchored to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Only then can a person realize that the trials and tribula-

tions of daily life are less important than God's total goodness.

Lasting peace is an eternal personal quest. Peace does come from obedience to the law. Peace comes to those who develop character and trust.

Foundation of eternal principles

We have a young grandson who loves gymnastics. He is progressing well and delights in showing us what he can do. While he develops these performance skills his body is maturing in limberness and strength. The last time he invited me to feel the muscles in his arms, I congratulated him. I was proud. As he jumped away from me (gymnasts, it seems, are always jumping and springing), I was impressed with the thought that his parents, grandparents, teachers, and others have an obligation to teach him one of life's great truths. Flabbiness of character should always be more of a concern than flabbiness of muscles. Body building and body conditioning are worthwhile goals, but there is more needed to gain true inner peace. We must blend balance in our lives and increase in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man (see Luke 2:52) to reach our full potential.

No peace will be lasting unless it is built upon the solid foundation of eternal principles such as love of God, love of neighbor, and love of self. Those who love their neighbors can bring peace and happiness to many. Love can build bridges to understanding and tear down walls of suspicion and hate. Christlike love can bring peace into any neighborhood. With that kind of love each of us can help resolve petty differences, be they in the home or community.

Peace within ourselves

While living in another nation just before World War II was to begin, a leading government official had been working hard to maintain peace for his country. He had in his hands a signed document guaranteeing peace. After

negotiating in good faith, he seemingly had achieved that for which millions of his countrymen had been hoping and praying. He publicly assured all of us that it was peace for our times.

Soon, however, he realized that he had been deceived. The men with whom he had negotiated were selfish, greedy, and power hungry. They were only bargaining for time to solidify their position. War came.

We learned that peace can never be achieved when we deal with those who deceive and ignore the basic principles taught by our Savior.

At such times external events make it even more imperative that we seek peace within ourselves. It is futile to seek it from outward sources.

"The bond of perfectness and peace"

It was George C. Marshall who wisely said, "We must take the nations of the world as they are, the human passions and prejudices of people as they exist, and find some way to secure . . . a peaceful world."

Peace must be a triumph of principles. Selfishness and lack of patience seem to block the way. We cry out today with urgency, "Have mercy, O Lord, upon all the nations of the earth; have mercy upon the rulers of our land; may those principles, which were so honorably and nobly defended, namely, the Constitution of our land, by our fathers, be established forever" (D&C 109:54). The respected Winston Churchill once said, "The day will come when . . . victorious nations will plan and build in justice and freedom a house of many mansions, where there will be room for all."

We would pray earnestly today that all leaders of nations, large and small, free or oppressed, would know: "And above all things, clothe yourselves with the bond of charity, as with a mantle, which is the bond of perfectness and peace" (D&C 88:125).

Develop loyalty and love

Despite the challenges of curbing federal budget deficits and riots and terrorism, of controlling the arms race and inflation, and of winning an ambitious battle for tax reform, thank God America is at peace. Thank God for those other nations who teach and live in peace. Thank God for worthy men who work to keep it that way. Our responsibility as a nation and its people is to continue to take the lead in furthering peace on earth and goodwill toward all men. (See Luke 2:14.) To all mankind worldwide who would anxiously engage themselves in lasting peace, we share: "But learn that he who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come" (D&C 59:23).

The individual, the home, the Church, the school, the government are the fundamental institutions upon which lasting peace depends. The main purpose of schools must always be to develop character, to develop loyalty to the government, loyalty to the home, and loyalty to the individual. This is what real peace is all about—internal and external. No peace, even though temporarily achieved, will be lasting unless it is built upon the solid foundation of such eternal principles as love of God, love of neighbor, love of self. Most men yearn for peace, cry for peace, pray for peace, and work for peace, but there will not be lasting peace until all mankind follow the path pointed out and walked by the living Christ. There can be no peace in sin and disobedience. If I do not have peace within me, others around me will suffer.

Stability in anxious times

God has a special love for those of his children who promote and advocate peace. Our responsibility as Church members is to instill in an ever-growing number of people the fact that our personal attitudes and behavior can bring

a measure of peace to our troubled world and a sense of stability to anxious times. With peace in our hearts we can know that the trends of the world and the criticisms of men cannot alter the truths of God.

When we properly blend into our lives true principles of love, honesty, respect, character, faith, and patience, peace will become our priceless possession. Peace is a triumph of correct principles.

Just as the little girl could sit peacefully on the stranger's lap because her father knew him, so we can find peace if we know our Father and learn to live by his principles.

None of us will avoid the storms of life. The winds and the waves will periodically interfere with our chosen course. The laws of the gospel can bring us back on course and guide us to peaceful waters.

To this I bear my special witness in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Marvin J. Ashton has just spoken to us.

We appreciate the courtesies shown by the owners and operators of the many radio and television stations and cable systems, who have offered their facilities as a public service to make the proceedings of this conference available to a large audience in many areas of the world.

The Tabernacle Choir will sing in closing "Hear Thou Our Hymn, O Lord," and the benediction will then be pronounced by Elder Angel Abrea of the First Quorum of the Seventy. This conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The choir sang "Hear Thou Our Hymn, O Lord."

Elder Angel Abrea offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

FIFTH SESSION

The fifth and final general session of the 155th Semiannual General Conference commenced at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, October 6, 1985.

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, conducted this session.

Music was provided by a women's choir from the Tabernacle Choir and the Mormon Youth Chorus directed by Robert C. Bowden with John Longhurst at the organ.

President Benson made the following remarks at the outset of the meeting:

President Ezra Taft Benson

The First Presidency has asked that I conduct this concluding session of the conference.

President Spencer W. Kimball is seated on the stand. We are pleased to have him with us this afternoon. We extend our love and blessings to President Marion G. Romney, who is watching at home.

We extend a sincere welcome to all assembled this afternoon in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah in the fifth and concluding session of the 155th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We also welcome those seated in the Assembly

Hall where Elders Jacob de Jager and John Sonnenberg preside.

We send our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere who are participating in these proceedings by radio, television, cable, and satellite transmission.

The combined women's choir from the Tabernacle Choir and the Mormon Youth Chorus, with Robert C. Bowden directing and John Longhurst at the organ, is providing the music for this session.

The women's choir will begin this service by singing "Love at Home."

The invocation will then be offered by Elder William R. Bradford, a member of the First Quorum of Seventy.

The women's choir sang "Love at Home."

Elder William R. Bradford offered the invocation.

President Benson

President Gordon B. Hinckley will present a matter of business at this time.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Sustaining of General Authorities and general officers

My brothers and sisters, I shall now present to you the General Authorities and general officers of the Church for your sustaining vote.

It is proposed that we sustain President Spencer W. Kimball as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. All in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed, by the same sign. Marion G. Romney as First Counselor in the First Presidency and Gordon B. Hinckley as Second Counselor in the First Presidency. All in favor, please signify. Any opposed.

It is proposed that we sustain as President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles Elder Ezra Taft Benson, and the following as members of that council: Ezra Taft Benson, Howard W. Hunter, Thomas S. Monson, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, and M. Russell Ballard. It is proposed that we sustain the Counselors in the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators. All in

favor, please manifest it. Any opposed may so manifest it.

We have asked Elder J. Thomas Fyans, a man of great ability and great faith, to go to Buenos Aires, Argentina, to serve as Area President of the South America South Area of the Church. He and his wife will be traveling there shortly. And I'd like to say that we have no more faithful or competent man in the Church, and the marvelous thing is he speaks Spanish.

We also release Elder M. Russell Ballard, who, along with Elder Fyans, has served as a President in the First Quorum of the Seventy. All who wish to extend a vote of appreciation to these Brethren who have served so faithfully in these capacities may do so.

We sustain as the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy: Carlos E. Asay, Dean L. Larsen, Richard G. Scott, Marion D. Hanks, William Grant Bangerter, Jack H. Goasling Jr., and Robert L. Backman. All other members of the First Quorum of the Seventy, the Presiding Bishopric, the emeritus Brethren, and all general officers of the Church as at present constituted. All in favor, please signify. Any who may feel opposed may so indicate.

It appears that the voting has been unanimous in the affirmative. Thank you.

President Benson

The choir will now sing "Our Savior's Love." Following the singing, we shall hear from Elder Howard W.

Hunter, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The women's choir sang "Our Savior's Love."

Elder Howard W. Hunter spoke without further announcement.

Elder Howard W. Hunter

Fasting unique to Church

If it were not for general conference, we would be attending fast day services in our own wards today because it is the first Sunday of the month. Not only would we be attending the service, but we would be fasting in compliance with the established practice of members of the Church. In this respect, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is unique, although the principle of fasting has been observed down through ecclesiastical history.

It seems to be impossible to determine, from the records that are available to us, the circumstances under which fasting originated in ancient times, or what its purpose was in the beginning. Nevertheless, we find reference to it as having been practiced in the earliest of times as an expression of grief or emotion. It was associated with serious and heartfelt sorrow for sin, with times of mourning, and with occasions of strong emotion.

Fasting among early Israelites

The early Israelites practiced fasting, although there are very few references to it. Usually such references as are made are associated with some particular occasion or in connection with attempts to receive communications from God, as was the case of the fasting of Moses and Elijah. (See Exodus 34:28; 1 Kings 19:8.)

Prior to the period of the exile, there are few records of fasting by the people of Israel as a whole, except those fasts held for the needs of special occasions such as the deaths of Saul and Jonathan. (See 1 Samuel 31:13; 2 Samuel 1:12.) There were other public fasts to seek divine assistance before wars or battles. (See Judges 20:26; 2 Samuel 14:24; 2 Chronicles 20:3.) It can be presumed that Moses fasted because he mentioned fasting, without advocating any particular fast in his writings.

After the period of the exile, however, both public and private fasts began to be observed, sometimes accompanied by weeping and wearing sackcloth and ashes. The most prominent fast was the annual Day of Atonement. It also became a custom of the pious in Judaism to fast on two days of the week—the second and fifth days, which were the days Moses went up and came down from Mount Sinai.

Changes in practices of fasting

Approaching the Christian era, we find a great devotion to fasting among the extreme groups of the Jews, particularly the Pharisees; but Jesus did not instruct his disciples by setting down any specific requirements regarding the nature or frequency of fasting. In his Sermon on the Mount, however, he said: "When ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance" (Matthew 6:16). This would indicate

that there should be sincerity when fasting was observed. He himself had fasted forty days and forty nights. (See Matthew 4:2.)

Many of the things established by the early Church during the time of Christ were changed and corrupted after the death of the last of the Apostles. Fasting and prayer had been matters of voluntary observance, but eventually they became subject to ecclesiastical rules and regulations which all communicants were expected to follow and observe under pain of excommunication for the disobedient.

Modern revelation

When the early colonists settled the eastern seaboard of this country, they did not follow the customary fasts of the churches from which they had departed. They established their own fast days, many of which have been perpetuated to the present time. Some of these fast days were supported by legislative bodies or public officials.

Many of the early members of this Church were from New England or had a background of the religious culture of the colonists, and fasting was part of their religious beliefs. Because of this background, it may be that many of them felt the need of close communion with their Heavenly Father. They followed the teaching of the Lord by fasting in secret (see Matthew 6:17-18), but no mention is made of this principle in the early history of the Church.

Modern revelation as contained in the Doctrine and Covenants makes little mention of fasting and gives no specific instructions regarding it. A year and a half after the Church was organized, the Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation which mentions observance of the Lord's day and incidentally refers to fasting, without additional comment. This is the portion of the revelation that makes mention of it:

"And on this day thou shalt do none other thing, only let thy food be prepared with singleness of heart that

thy fasting may be perfect, or, in other words, that thy joy may be full.

"Verily, this is fasting and prayer, or in other words, rejoicing and prayer" (D&C 59:13-14).

This is an echo from Old Testament times, and the principle of fasting in the spirit of prayer is confirmed in this dispensation.

The following year came a more explicit revelation on the subject from the Lord in which he said, "Also, I give unto you a commandment that ye shall continue in prayer and fasting from this time forth" (D&C 88:76).

"Continue in prayer and fasting"

Prior to this time there had been no observance of a fast in the Church on any regular basis. The wording of this revelation that "ye shall continue in prayer and fasting from this time forth" would seem to suggest the institution of fast meetings, but apparently there were none until the building of the Kirtland Temple in 1836.

The only other mention of fasting in modern revelation is in reference to the building of the Kirtland Temple and in the prayer of dedication, in which the temple is referred to as "a house of prayer, a house of fasting." (See D&C 88:119; 95:7, 16; and 109:8, 16.) There is frequent mention in the Book of Mormon of fasting, but these are ancient writings, as are those in the Bible. The scriptures of this dispensation give us little information.

Brigham Young's instructions

We do not know when fasting was adopted in the Church as a regular observance, but there are records that indicate that some fast meetings were held in the Kirtland Temple on the first Thursday of each month in the year 1836. There is no indication that these fasts were associated with donations to the poor, except a remark made by Brigham Young more than thirty years later in the Old Tabernacle in Salt Lake City. He had this to say:

"You know that the first Thursday in each month we hold as a fast day. How many here know the origin of this day? Before tithing was paid, the poor were supported by donations. They came to Joseph and wanted help, in Kirtland, and he said there should be a fast day, which was decided upon. It was to be held once a month, as it is now, and all that would have been eaten that day, of flour, or meat, or butter, or fruit, or anything else, was to be carried to the fast meeting and put into the hands of a person selected for the purpose of taking care of it and distributing it among the poor" (*Journal of Discourses*, 12:115).

Although Brigham Young indicated that this was the decision that was made, there is no record that it was ever observed.

Special fasts

There were occasional fasts held in Nauvoo with some special objective in view, but no fasts on a regular basis. It was not until 1845 that a fast was held in Nauvoo to provide for the poor. In the *History of the Church* we find this notation made by Brigham Young:

"Thursday, 15 . . . *Fast Day*: all works were stopped. Meetings were held in the several wards and donations made to the bishops for the poor; enough was contributed to supply the wants of the poor until harvest" (*History of the Church*, 7:411).

Special fast days for various purposes were held during the exodus from Nauvoo, and after the Saints arrived in the Salt Lake Valley, some fasts were held on the first Thursday of the month. It cannot be determined with any certainty when fast days became established on a regular basis, but during the difficult years of 1855 and 1856, because of prolonged drought and famine, the exceptionally hard winter, and the plague of grasshoppers, many of the Saints were in desperate circumstances. This is what Brigham H. Roberts wrote of it:

Fast days, fast offerings, and care for the poor

"To meet the very great demands of charity upon Latter-day Saints in those trying years, our fast day came into existence; the servants of the Lord instituted the first Thursday in every month as fast day, with a view of taking what was saved by this sacrifice and minister unto those who otherwise would be in want. This plan of meeting that emergency became an established institution" (in *Conference Report*, Apr. 1913, p. 120).

Fast meeting changed to Sunday

Prior to this time the poor had been sustained by donations, but now the care of the poor became associated with fast day and what was donated became known as fast offerings, which were brought to the monthly fast meetings. From this early period when the Saints came to the valleys of the mountains to 1896, a regular fast day was held on the first Thursday of each month, and offerings were brought and given largely in kind.

In the early days when the membership of the Church was small, the holding of fast day on Thursday was not a problem, but as time went on it caused employees to take time from their work to attend fast meeting, merchants had to close their businesses, and many other difficulties resulted from weekday observance. A decision was made by the First Presidency and the Twelve that the monthly fast meeting should be held on the first Sunday of each month. The first Sunday of December, 1896, was the date set for the change. From that time to the present—nearly a century—the fast day has been observed, in most instances, on the first Sunday of the month as a religious practice.

Fasting defined

Members of the Church may fast at any time as they have a need, but the

fast contemplated on the day referred to as fast day, as defined by President Joseph F. Smith, "is that food and drink are not to be partaken of for twenty-four hours, 'from even to even.'" From even to even has been given the meaning of going without two meals—from the evening meal on the night before to evening meal on fast day. President Smith went on to say:

"In addition, the leading and [principal] object of the institution of the fast among the Latter-day Saints, was that the poor might be provided with food and other necessities. It is, therefore, incumbent upon every Latter-day Saint to give to his bishop, on fast day, the food that he or his family would consume for the day, that it may be given to the poor for their benefit and blessing; or, in lieu of the food, that its equivalent amount, or, if the person be wealthy a liberal donation, in money be so reserved and dedicated to the poor" (*Improvement Era*, Dec. 1902, p. 148).

Fasting brings us in tune with God

Are we not wealthy if the Lord has blessed us with something we can share with others?

To discipline ourselves through fasting brings us in tune with God, and fast day provides an occasion to set aside the temporal so that we might enjoy the higher qualities of the spiritual. As we fast on that day we learn and better understand the needs of those who are less fortunate.

May the Lord bless us as we live his commandments and share with our brothers and sisters, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

We have just heard from Elder Howard W. Hunter, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

We shall now hear from Elder Hartman Rector Jr., a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He will be followed by Elder M. Russell Ballard, a new member of the Council of Twelve Apostles.

Elder Hartman Rector, Jr.

The gospel of Jesus Christ

My brothers and sisters, I would like to spend a few moments discussing with you the power of God unto salvation, or the gospel of Jesus Christ. I think more properly for us, the gospel is the way to salvation, and surely there is no other way. Mortals will get there through the gospel of Jesus Christ, or they will not receive salvation, meaning eternal life.

The word *gospel* means literally "glad tidings" or "good news." If you were to receive the news that a long-lost relative of whom you had never heard had died and left you a million dollars, that quite possibly could be considered good news, but it would not be the

gospel. The gospel is, then, a particular kind of good news. It is the good news about Jesus Christ and his atoning sacrifice for our sins and the original transgression that took place in the Garden of Eden.

If we were to search for the best definition of what is contained in the gospel of Jesus Christ, we could hardly do better than look to the Lord Jesus Christ's definition of what his gospel is. We read from 3 Nephi 27, beginning with verse 13, "Behold I have given unto you my gospel, and this is the gospel which I have given unto you—that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me." I presume we—you and I—also came into this world to do the

will of the Father because our Father sent us, too. We have not been sent to do precisely the same thing that Jesus Christ was sent to do, but it is vitally important to us that we also do the will of the Father.

Jesus continues telling us precisely what he was sent to do, "And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me, . . . to stand before me, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil" (3 Nephi 27:14).

The will of the Father

Jesus came to give his life upon the cross to save all mankind on condition of their acceptance of what he did. It might be permissible to ask, Did he seek to die on the cross? I think not. If so, why should he pray, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). It appears that he did not seek to die on the cross, but he did want to do the will of the Father.

I learned this lesson from my father at a very early age. My dad was smarter than I was when I was seven years old. Of course, I was smarter than he was when I was seventeen, but that changed later, too. He said to me one time, "You are not big enough to milk the cows."

Now, I knew I was. I was seven years old, and I knew I could milk the cows. So I proved to him that I could.

My dad said, "You know, I believe you can milk. You've got the job." For the next ten years I milked eight to twelve cows night and morning. You may rest assured I got to the place where I did not want to milk, and once I said to Dad, "Dad, I don't want to milk." He said, "That's all right. You don't have to want to—as long as you do it." This seems to be what the Lord says to us at times when the going gets rough and we feel—"I really don't want to go to the temple," or "It is inconvenient to pay tithing," or "I don't

want to go home teaching." I know for sure that Jonah did not want to go on a mission. But he went.

Resurrected to be judged

Jesus was lifted up upon the cross so that he might draw all men unto him. The question could be asked, How could being lifted up upon the cross possibly draw all men unto him? Many men have been crucified without drawing all men to them. Well, it is necessary to understand who he was and what he was doing upon the earth. He was the sinless Son of God who had been sent to the earth to pay the price for sin (see 1 Corinthians 6:20), both the original transgression in the Garden of Eden, and individual sins. The transgression in the Garden of Eden brought death into the world—both temporal death, the separation of the spirit from the body, and spiritual death, the separation of the spirit from the presence of God. In atoning for the original transgression he would bring to pass the resurrection, the rejoining of the spirits and bodies of all mankind. By paying the price for individual sins, he would open the door to eternal life for all to return to live in the presence of God, thereby eliminating spiritual death. Neither of these acts could man do for himself. Only Jesus could provide the way and the means to save fallen man. He did it because he loved mankind. Said he: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

When we understand this, it is easy to love our Redeemer. His sacrifice demonstrates infinite love for us; it begets infinite love in us for him who gave his life as a ransom for all. "There was no other good enough to pay the price of sin" (*Hymns*, 1985, no. 194). As he was lifted up (crucified) by men, wherein he made the resurrection a reality, so shall all men, whether they be good or bad, be lifted up, or resurrected, by the Father. Resurrection is a free gift from Jesus Christ. There needs to be nothing done to receive it except

to be born on the earth. However, those who are filthy, in the resurrection will be filthy still; and those who are righteous will be righteous still. In the words of the Master, the resurrection takes place so we can be judged. From this statement it appears that the Judgment requires the spirit and the body inseparably connected in order to receive a fulness of joy, meaning exaltation—or damnation. And what will be the basis of the Judgment? It will be according to the deeds done in the flesh—not what we did before we were born or what we do after we die, but what we do while we are here in mortality. (See Alma 5:15.) We were all born; we will all die. So the word of the Lord is: “This life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors. . . .

“Ye cannot say, when ye are brought to that awful crisis, that I will repent, that I will return to my God. Nay, ye cannot say this; for that same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life, that same spirit will have power to possess your body in that eternal world” (Alma 34:32, 34).

Judged according to our works

It appears that we do not change when we die, which means that if we are addicted to drugs, bad habits, and evil desires when we go out of this life, those influences will probably follow us. Therefore, repentance and forgiveness, which come under the heading of fearing God and keeping his commandments, are our whole duty here in mortality. (See Ecclesiastes 12:13.) Mortality is, in reality, a very, very short period. It is literally a snap of the fingers compared to an eternity. It is so short that we can do it. We can prevail. Why, you can stand your foot in a vise for a while if you know it's going to be released soon. It is when you can see no relief in sight that it becomes unbearable. Yes, earthly probation is short compared to eternity, but so very much

is riding on how we handle the trials and temptations of the flesh. It is, as the Lord said in essence to the Prophet Joseph: thine afflictions will be but for a small moment, then if thou endureth it well thy God shall stand by thee forever and ever. (See D&C 121:7–8; 122:4.)

Therefore, it appears that one reason we are being resurrected is so we can be judged. The Master continues, “And for this cause have I been lifted up; therefore, according to the power of the Father I will draw all men unto me, that they may be judged according to their works” (3 Nephi 27:15). The works the Master refers to here, I believe, are the works that he inspires us to do by his Holy Spirit. Paul, speaking of those who through the gospel have covenanted to do the will of Jesus, said, “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do” (Philippians 2:13). Paul further stated, “Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily” (Colossians 1:29).

Faith, repentance, and baptism

The works which we do of ourselves are not sufficient to exalt us. In the words of King Benjamin, “I say, if ye should serve him with all your whole souls yet ye would be unprofitable servants” (Mosiah 2:21). It seems you and I can do little of ourselves, but through Christ we can do all things. (See Philippians 4:13.) Therefore, when we do well we are receiving credit for his works. In the words of Nephi, we are “relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save” (2 Nephi 31:19). Moroni echoes the same theme when he says people of the Church were “relying alone upon the merits of Christ, who was the author and the finisher of their faith” (Moroni 6:4). Then the Master tells us how we can make his atoning sacrifice effective in our lives and get credit for his works of righteousness. “And it shall come to pass, that whoso repenteth and is baptized in my name shall be filled; and if he en-

dureth to the end"—and I would add in repentance, including obedience and forgiving others—"behold, him will I hold guiltless before my Father at that day when I shall stand to judge the world" (3 Nephi 27:16). Ah, then you and I must be guiltless at the last day, and being the sinners that we are, that would be impossible without Christ paying for our sins and our acceptance of his payment through our own faith, repentance, and baptism.

Mercy can satisfy justice through repentance

The Master continues, "And he that endureth not unto the end, the same is he that is also hewn down and cast into the fire, from whence they can no more return, because of the justice of the Father" (3 Nephi 27:17). All too often, the justice of God seems to be relegated to the back burner, while the mercy of God seems to get the lion's share of attention. I presume this is true because we are all hoping for mercy and trying to avoid justice if at all possible. But it is a fact that God is just, and mercy cannot rob justice. Justice will have her due! It is also a fact that mercy, while it cannot rob justice, can satisfy the demands of justice in one instance and one instance only. That is beautifully stated by Amulek in the Book of Mormon:

"And behold, this is the whole meaning of the law [of Moses], every whit pointing to that great and last sacrifice; and that great and last sacrifice will be the Son of God, yea, infinite and eternal.

"And thus he shall bring salvation to all those who shall believe on his name; this being the intent of this last sacrifice, to bring about the bowels of mercy, which overpowereth justice, and bringeth about means unto men that they may have faith unto repentance.

"And thus mercy can *satisfy* the demands of justice, and encircles them in the arms of safety, while he that exercises no faith unto repentance is exposed to the whole law of the *demands* of justice; therefore only unto

him that has faith unto repentance is brought about the great and eternal plan of redemption" (Alma 34:14-16; *italics added*).

Then, while mercy cannot rob justice, mercy can satisfy the demands of justice, but only in the instance where we exercise faith in Jesus Christ unto repentance.

"This is my gospel"

The Master told the Nephites:

"And this is the word which he [the Father] hath given unto the children of men. And for this cause he fulfilleth the words which he hath given, and he lieth not, but fulfilleth all his words" (3 Nephi 27:18). Because the Lord has spoken it, you can believe it. He is a god of truth and cannot lie. The Master further states that "no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood." And how is this done? "Because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end" (3 Nephi 27:19).

The Master then finishes his gospel statement with these words:

"Now this is the commandment: *Repent*, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, *this is my gospel*" (3 Nephi 27:20-21; *italics added*).

I say as did King Benjamin, "There shall be no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent" (Mosiah 3:17), of which I bear witness in Jesus' name, amen.

Elder M. Russell Ballard spoke without further announcement.

Elder M. Russell Ballard

My brothers and sisters, I am deeply humbled at the confidence of the Lord and my Brethren and pledge to you that I will do the very best I know how. The past nine and a half years, as I have been sent on errands for the Lord throughout the earth, have caused me to know that this Church is filled with righteous, good, dedicated men. Each of us obediently learns that we will come forth as we are called, to try to do the very best we can in our callings, whether it be home teacher, whether it be stake president, or whether it be General Authority.

Source of the call

I understand the source of the call. I have learned during the past nine and a half years that this is our Heavenly Father's church. The errands that I have been sent on to act in the name of the Lord enable me to witness to you today that I know, as I know that I stand before you, that Jesus is the Christ, that he lives. He is very close to this work and very close to all of us who are asked to perform the work throughout the earth in his name.

I would like also to bear witness that in my particular case the veil between here and the hereafter is rather thin. I acknowledge that it has been a great blessing in my life to be born of goodly parents, grandparents, and

great-grandparents who have given everything they have been asked to give to the building of the kingdom of God upon the earth.

Now, my brothers and sisters, I would ask for an interest in your faith and prayers. I express my affection to my wife and my children, who sustain me in whatever the Lord might ask me to do. I am grateful for this abundant blessing and pray humbly that I might serve you, the membership of this Church, in a way that would be pleasing and acceptable unto our Heavenly Father, and ask this prayer humbly, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder M. Russell Ballard, a new member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just addressed us. The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Come, Come, Ye Saints." Elder Rex C. Reeve, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will then speak to us. Following him, we will hear from Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The choir and congregation sang "Come, Come, Ye Saints."

Elder Rex C. Reeve spoke without further announcement.

Elder Rex C. Reeve

Spirit in this conference

I am humbled and privileged to have participated with you in this great conference, whether you have been viewing it by satellite or at home, or whether you will yet see it on video. I am thrilled and touched by the calls which have been announced here today and sustain the Brethren with all my

heart. I am grateful to be part of the Lord's work.

The Lord has said:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, as I said unto my disciples, where two or three are gathered together in my name, as touching one thing, behold, there will I be in the midst of them—even so am I in the midst of you" (D&C 6:32).

We have surely been blessed by the fulfillment of this promise at this great conference.

Restored gospel and authority

All truth and all hope are centered in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The scripture defines the gospel in just two brief verses:

"And this is the gospel, the glad tidings, which the voice out of the heavens bore record unto us—

"That he came into the world, even Jesus, to be crucified for the world, and to bear the sins of the world, and to sanctify the world, and to cleanse it from all unrighteousness" (D&C 76:40-41).

In our day he restored again to earth his gospel and also his authority to preach and administer in its saving ordinances.

Joseph Smith, the chosen instrument

Joseph Smith the Prophet was the chosen instrument through which the Restoration took place. He was selected of the Lord before his birth to fill this most important mission. The ancient prophets knew of him and spoke of him.

Joseph who was sold into Egypt prophesied of him—he even knew his name and his father's name.

"For Joseph truly testified, saying: A seer shall the Lord my God raise up. . . .

"Behold, that seer will the Lord bless; . . .

"And his name shall be called after me; and it shall be after the name of his father. And he shall be like unto me; for the thing, which the Lord shall bring forth by his hand, by the power of the Lord shall bring my people unto salvation" (2 Nephi 3:6, 14-15).

Ordained in the Grand Council in heaven

When the Lord wants to change the world, he doesn't send armies or use powerful groups.

When it was time to lead the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage, the Lord didn't send an army; he sent a baby boy to a Levite home. This baby boy was later to be known as Moses, whom we know as the great lawgiver and the one who delivered the children of Israel from bondage.

In the meridian of time, the Father sent his own Son to be born of a virgin mother in a lowly manger. The whole world was affected by his brief life's mission, and he still remains the only hope of mankind, here and hereafter.

When it was time to restore his gospel to prepare the world for the second coming of his Son, he again sent a baby boy to the home of a righteous father and mother. On 23 December 1805, a baby boy came to the home of Joseph and Lucy Mack Smith.

He was born of noble, God-fearing parents who loved the Lord.

His paternal grandfather, Asael Smith, stated years before Joseph was born (and I quote):

"It has been borne in upon my soul that one of my descendants will promulgate a work to revolutionize the world of religious faith" (in Joseph Fielding Smith, *Essentials in Church History*, Classics in Mormon Literature [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1979], p. 25).

Joseph Smith said: "Every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of heaven before this world was. I suppose I was ordained to this very office in that Grand Council" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 365).

I testify to you he *was* and he *is* a prophet of God and did restore the gospel of Jesus Christ in our day, together

with the power and keys of authority to administer therein.

Where Joseph lived and served

My assignments have taken me to the areas where he was born, where he lived and served, and where he died as a martyr.

Near South Royalton, Vermont, a thirty-eight-foot, fifty-ton granite obelisk (a one-piece granite shaft, one foot for each year of his life) stands to mark the place of his birth. There is surely a hallowed feeling there.

It was interesting to me to learn from the history of this area that there were three winters in a row when the snowfall was extra heavy, making farming difficult and almost non-productive, causing the Smith family to move west to upper state New York in the Manchester/Palmyra area, where they hoped to better their condition. This brought Joseph to the Hill Cumorah area, where he needed to be.

In his need to know which church to join, he read from James in the Holy Bible these words:

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5).

The Sacred Grove

In the Sacred Grove where he went to pray, he did see and he did hear God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. In answer to his question as to which church he should join, he was answered (and I quote his words):

"I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; . . . 'they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof'" (Joseph Smith—History 1:19).

There is something special about this grove. The feeling, the spirit there

is different. A hallowed reverence pervades the area.

The Hill Cumorah and the Book of Mormon

Not far from the Sacred Grove is the Hill Cumorah, in which the angel Moroni, an ancient American prophet, had placed in a stone box the golden plates which contained an abridgment of the record of the Lord's dealings with a people who had lived on the American continent years before.

By the gift and power of God, Joseph translated the record from these plates and published a sacred volume known as the Book of Mormon, which is another testament of Jesus Christ.

This book was published in Palmyra, New York, by E. B. Grandin. The Grandin building is now a visitors' center where the story of the Book of Mormon's publication is told. From this small beginning the Book of Mormon has been published in seventy languages, making it available to 73 percent of the people of the earth.

It is a sacred record translated by the gift and power of God. Its preface, given by revelation, states its purpose: to convince Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God. It teaches and testifies of Jesus Christ and contains a fulness of his gospel.

Joseph Smith said this about it: "I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book" (*History of the Church*, 4:461).

The move to Ohio, and the Whitney store

The Lord commanded the Saints to go to Ohio. I quote his words:

"Wherefore, for this cause I gave unto you the commandment that ye should go to the Ohio; and there I will give unto you my law; and there you

shall be endowed with power from on high" (D&C 38:32).

As I studied the great events which took place in Ohio, I found that many marvelous things transpired. There was the incident at the Whitney store as the Prophet Joseph and Emma were driven up to the store for the first time in a horse-drawn sleigh, and the Prophet Joseph alighted and greeted Newell K. Whitney, the store owner, in these words.

"Newell K. Whitney! Thou art the man! . . . You've prayed me here, now what do you want of me?" (*History of the Church*, 1:146).

The upper room in the Whitney store was the meeting place of the first School of the Prophets; the revelation on the Word of Wisdom and many other revelations were given there.

Christ accepts the Kirtland Temple

The temple in Kirtland was built by the Saints in their dire poverty. It was erected at great sacrifice.

Joseph himself worked in the stone quarry. The drill marks can still be seen where the stones were cut.

Following the dedication of this first temple, which was a glorious occasion, the risen Christ appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery as they knelt in prayer. I quote their words:

"The veil was taken from our minds, and the eyes of our understanding were opened.

"We saw the Lord standing upon the breastwork of the pulpit, before us; and under his feet was a paved work of pure gold, in color like amber.

"His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying:

"I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father. . . .

"Let the hearts of your brethren rejoice, and let the hearts of all my people rejoice, who have, with their might, built this house to my name.

"For behold, I have accepted this house, and my name shall be here; and I will manifest myself to my people in mercy in this house. . . .

"And the fame of this house shall spread to foreign lands; and this is the beginning of the blessing which shall be poured out upon the heads of my people. Even so. Amen" (D&C 110:1-4, 6-7, 10).

Following this vision, Moses, Elias, and Elijah appeared to Joseph and Oliver, to bring keys of the priesthood which are of such great worth to us and to all mankind.

Nauvoo, city and temple

The Saints were forced to leave Ohio and their temple, built at so much sacrifice and such a great cost, and move to Missouri where they suffered again. Some lost their lives. Others found refuge at Commerce, Illinois, a swampy area on the east bank of the Mississippi River, where with their industry and faith they built the beautiful city of Nauvoo and erected another temple to their God. Nauvoo became the largest city in the great state of Illinois.

But they could find no lasting peace and were yet to be forced to leave Nauvoo and their temple and seek a desert place no one else would want.

Joseph and Hyrum sealed testimonies with blood

This baby boy from Vermont now neared the completion of his work. He had translated and brought forth the Book of Mormon, had received the keys and authority from God, and had organized The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The earthly scene for the Prophet Joseph and Hyrum Smith comes to a close at Carthage, Illinois.

Under a pretended promise of protection from the governor of the state of Illinois, they placed themselves in the custody of the law. They received no protection, and there, at the hands of a lawless mob, their mortal lives closed. As martyrs, they sealed their testimonies with their own blood.

It is difficult to put in words the feelings one has as one stands in that sacred place.

The governor of Illinois, Thomas B. Ford, who had promised Joseph protection, said of him after his death (and I quote):

"Thus fell Joe Smith, the most successful impostor in modern times" (in *History of the Church*, 7:35).

Second temple dedicated in Illinois

This summer, as we attended the dedication of the second temple to be built in Illinois and realized that over one hundred thousand of our friends had attended the open house for this

beautiful Chicago Temple, these prophetic words of Joseph Smith had new meaning as to who directs this work: "No unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done" (*History of the Church*, 4:540).

Of this I testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord, amen.

President Benson

We have just heard from Elder Rex C. Reeve, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Council of the Twelve, will now address us.

Elder Boyd K. Packer

Sacred brotherhood

We believe that a man must [not could be, or might be, but must] be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof" (Articles of Faith 1:5). In this manner we receive our commissions to move forward.

Today we have all participated in the sustaining of Elder M. Russell Ballard as a new member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. I'm sure Brother Bruce R. McConkie, with whom Brother Ballard worked on a daily basis in missionary work, is rejoicing this day in what has transpired.

I think the world little understands the significance of this sacred priesthood body, and I join my Brethren in

welcoming you, Brother Ballard, to this sacred brotherhood.

In a former day, it was Peter, James, John, Andrew, Phillip, Bartholomew, and the others. And in just as real and literal a way, the same office, the same calling, the same sacred relationship with the Lord exists today. In our day, it is Spencer and Marion and Gordon and Ezra and Howard and Thomas and the others, with the same obligation, the same sustaining power to see this work move forward.

I feel humble that it was my privilege with you to raise my hand on this sacred occasion.

The only true church

I desire, for the few minutes allotted me, to encourage you who feel inadequate when someone rejects one or

another of the fundamental doctrines of the gospel.

The Lord said that "every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world" (D&C 1:20). So humble men and women, and even young people, not professionally trained for the ministry, carry on the work of the Lord—many of us with little more than the spiritual conviction that it is true.

Surely we must appear at times to be very amateurish when compared to the professional clergy of other churches.

One doctrine presents a particular challenge. It is our firm conviction that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is, as the revelations state, "the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth" (D&C 1:30).

This doctrine often generates resistance and repels the casual investigator.

Should we set this doctrine aside?

Some have said, "We want nothing to do with anyone who makes so presumptuous a claim as that."

The early Latter-day Saints were bitterly persecuted for holding to this doctrine. They were the butt of many clever stories. We, of course, are not free from that today.

Should we not then make one accommodation and set this doctrine aside? Would it not be better to have more accept what would be left of the gospel than the relatively few who are converted now?

Our missionaries sift through thousands to find one convert. Our harvest may seem impressive, but we are but gleaners. As the scriptures have foretold, we gather "one of a city, and two of a family" (Jeremiah 3:14).

Some have recommended that we confine ourselves strictly to evidences of the gospel: happy family life, and temperate living, and so on.

Could we not use the words *better* or *best*? The word *only* really isn't the

most appealing way to begin a discussion of the gospel.

If we thought only in terms of diplomacy or popularity, surely we should change our course.

But we must hold tightly to it even though some turn away.

It is little wonder that our missionaries are sometimes thought to be overbearing, even when they are most courteous.

If our main desire is to be accepted and approved, surely we will feel uncomfortable when others reject the gospel.

"I was accepted"

I recall an experience from pilot training in World War II. Air cadets were posted to colleges for ground training. We were assigned to Washington State University at Pullman. Eight of us who had never met were assigned to the same room. The first evening we introduced ourselves.

The first to speak was from a wealthy family in the East. He described the private schools he had attended. He said that each summer their family had "gone on the Continent." I had no way of knowing that meant they had traveled to Europe.

The father of the next had been governor of Ohio and at that time was in the president's cabinet.

And so it went. I was younger than most, and it was my first time away from home. Each had attended college, I had not. In fact, there was nothing to distinguish me at all.

When finally I got the courage to speak, I said, "I come from a little town in Utah that you have never heard of. I come from a large family, eleven children. My father is a mechanic and runs a little garage."

I said that my great-grandfather had joined the Church and come west with the pioneers.

To my surprise and relief, I was accepted. My faith and my obscurity were not a penalty.

From then until now I have never felt uncomfortable among people of wealth or achievement, of high station or of low. Nor have I been ashamed of my heritage or of the Church, or felt the need to apologize for any of its doctrines, even those I could not defend to the satisfaction of everyone who might ask.

“Join none of them”

Inevitably (and properly) the “true church” doctrine emerges very early in any serious discussion of the gospel, for there is no better place to start such a discussion than with the First Vision. And there, in that very first conversation with man in this dispensation, the Lord presented it in unmistakable clarity.

Joseph Smith sought answer to the question “which of all the sects was right . . . and which . . . should [he] join?” (Joseph Smith—History 1:18). Surely he supposed that somewhere the “right” church was to be found. A simple direction to it would end his search. He could then join that church, live the tenets it proclaimed, and that would be that.

But that was not to be. In response to his humble prayer, the Father and the Son appeared to him. When he gained possession of himself so as to be able to speak, he asked “which of all the sects was right, that [he] might know which to join” (Joseph Smith—History 1:18).

He recorded this:

“I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: ‘they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.’

“He again forbade me to join with any of them” (Joseph Smith—History 1:19–20).

“The only true and living church”

That is very blunt language. Little wonder that when he repeated it, the troubles began.

If ever he was tempted to disregard those words, they were repeated and sustained in subsequent revelations. A little more than a year after the Church was organized, the first section of the Doctrine and Covenants was revealed. In it the Lord said that the Book of Mormon was given in order that his servants “might have power to lay the foundation of this church, and to bring it forth out of obscurity and out of darkness, *the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth*, with which I, the Lord, am well pleased, speaking unto the church collectively and not individually” (D&C 1:30; italics added).

After making it clear that he was “speaking unto the church collectively and not individually,” the Lord warned, “I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance” (D&C 1:31).

Covenants and the ordinances essential

We know there are decent, respectable, humble people in many churches, Christian and otherwise. In turn, sadly enough, there are so-called Latter-day Saints who by comparison are not as worthy, for they do not keep their covenants.

But it is not a matter of comparing individuals. We are not baptized collectively, nor will we be judged collectively.

Good conduct without the ordinances of the gospel will neither redeem nor exalt mankind; covenants and the ordinances are essential. We are required to teach the doctrines, even the unpopular ones.

Yield on this doctrine, and you cannot justify the Restoration. The doctrine is true; it is logical. The opposite is not.

One path to heaven

A few weeks ago I was returning from the East with President Hinckley. We conversed with a passenger who said something to the effect that all churches lead to heaven. How often have you heard that—the parallel path to heaven philosophy?

They claim one church is not really better than another, just different. Eventually the paths will converge. One is, therefore, quite as safe in any church as in any other.

While this seems to be very generous, it just cannot be true.

I find it so interesting that those who condemn us reject the parallel path philosophy themselves when it comes to non-Christian religions.

For if they do not, they have no reason to accept the Lord as our Redeemer or regard the Atonement as essential. And what could they do with his statement that “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned”? (Mark 16:16).

Converging path idea

While the converging path idea is very appealing, it really is not reasonable.

Suppose schools were operated on that philosophy, with each discipline a separate path leading to the same diploma. No matter whether you study or not, pass the tests or not, all would be given the same diploma—the one of their choice.

Without qualifying, one could choose the diploma of an attorney, an engineer, a medical doctor.

Surely you would not submit yourself to surgery under the hands of a graduate of that kind of school!

But it does not work that way. It cannot work that way—not in education, not in spiritual matters. There are essential ordinances just as there are required courses. There are prescribed standards of worthiness. If we resist them, avoid them, or fail them, we will

not enter in with those who complete the course.

“One Lord, one faith, one baptism”

Do you realize that the notion that all churches are equal presupposes that the true church of Jesus Christ actually does not exist anywhere?

Now, others may insist that *this* is not the true church. That is their privilege. But to claim that it does not exist anywhere, that it does not even *need* to exist, is to deny the scriptures.

The New Testament teaches of “one Lord, one faith, one baptism” and speaks of “[all coming] in the unity of the faith” (Ephesians 4:5, 13) and of a “restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:21).

From the Lord

We did not invent the doctrine of the only true church. It came from the Lord. Whatever perception others have of us, however presumptuous we appear to be, whatever criticism is directed to us, we must teach it to all who will listen.

The Lord commanded the Latter-day Saints that “notwithstanding the tribulation which shall descend upon you,” the Church must “stand independent above all other creatures beneath the celestial world” (D&C 78:14).

In obedience we remain independent. While we cooperate with others to reach mutual objectives, we do it in our own way. We do not recognize the ordinances performed in other churches. We will not exchange baptisms, a practice which has become commonplace in the Christian world.

We do not join associations of clergy or councils of churches. We keep our distance from the ecumenical movements. The restored gospel is the means by which Christians must ultimately be united.

We do not claim that others have no truth. The Lord described them as having "a form of godliness." Converts to the Church may bring with them all the truth they possess and have it added upon.

We are not free to alter this fundamental doctrine of the gospel, not even in the face of the tribulation prophesied in that revelation (D&C 78). Popularity and the approval of the world perhaps must remain ever beyond our reach.

"I had taught the truth"

Some years ago I was invited to speak to a group at Harvard University. At that time a member of the Church was campaigning for national office and this created much interest.

Both faculty members and students were to be present. I, of course, hoped that the gospel message would be accepted and that the meeting would end in harmony of views.

As I prayed that this might result, there came to me the strong impression that this prayer would not be answered.

I determined that however preposterous talk of angels and golden plates and restoration might be to them, I would teach the truth with quiet confidence, for I have a testimony of the truth. If some must come from the meeting unsettled and disturbed, it would not be *me*. Let *them* be disturbed, if they would.

It was as the Spirit foretold. Some shook their heads in amazement, even cynical amusement, that anyone could believe such things.

But I was at peace. I had taught the truth, and they could accept it or reject it as they pleased.

There is always the hope, and often it is true, that one among them with an open mind may admit one simple thought: "Could it possibly be true?" Combine that thought with sincere prayer, and one more soul enters a private sacred grove to find the answer to "Which of all the churches is true, and which should I join?"

As I grow in age and experience, I grow ever *less* concerned over whether others agree with us. I grow ever *more* concerned that they understand us. If they do understand, they have their agency and can accept or reject the gospel as they please.

It is not an easy thing for us to defend the position that bothers so many others.

Plant a seed for testimony

Brethren and sisters, never be ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Never apologize for the sacred doctrines of the gospel.

Never feel inadequate and unsettled because you cannot explain them to the satisfaction of all who might inquire of you.

Do not be ill at ease or uncomfortable because you can give little more than your conviction.

Be assured that, if you will explain what you know and testify of what you feel, you may plant a seed that will one day grow and blossom into a testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Bear witness without shame

I bear testimony that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is, as the Lord declared, the only true and living church upon the face of the earth; that with it, he is well pleased, speaking of the Church collectively. And that, individually, if we are humble and faithful, we can stand approved of Him.

If we can stand without shame, without hesitancy, without embarrassment, without reservation to bear witness that the gospel has been restored, that there are prophets and Apostles upon the earth, that the truth is available for all mankind, the Lord's Spirit will be with us. And that assurance can be affirmed to others. Of this I bear witness in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

We have just heard from Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Before hearing President Hinckley's concluding remarks, we should like to express appreciation and our sincere gratitude to those who have provided the music for this conference—to the Tabernacle Choir, the Mormon Youth Chorus, the combined ward choirs from the Granite, Olympus, and Salt Lake Central regions, and to their conductors and organists.

We thank our city officials for the cooperation given this conference; the Relief Society and Church Health Unit nurses, who have been on hand to render service throughout the conference; and the ushers and interpreters.

We express appreciation to the local and national press representatives for the coverage given to the conference, and to the owners and managers of the many radio and television stations and cable systems, who have given public service time to carry these sessions of the conference in many lands.

We shall now be pleased to listen to President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, who will be the concluding speaker of the conference, after which the choir will sing "The Lord Is My Shepherd." The benediction will be offered by Elder John K. Carmack, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

This conference will then stand adjourned for six months.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My brethren and sisters, we now bring to a conclusion the 155th Semi-annual General Conference of the Church. We have enjoyed a rich and rewarding two days. We have been enlightened and blessed by those who have spoken to us. Our hearts have been lifted by the wonderful music to which we have listened. The prayers have been both inspired and inspiring.

All of us have appreciated the attendance of President Spencer W. Kimball in all four of the general sessions. Although he has not been able to speak to us, we have been able to look into his face, and that has been an inspiration. We know that he still stands as the prophet of the Lord in this day.

Spirit of obedience

I pray that as we return to our homes, we may do so with stronger resolution to live the gospel and to teach our children by precept and example to do so. Nephi's great words to

his father, when he and his brothers were asked to go back to Jerusalem for the record of their forebears, are quoted frequently among us. They are familiar to all of you; nonetheless, I wish to repeat them, with the suggestion that each of us return to our homes with these words as a motto for the months ahead: "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them" (1 Nephi 3:7).

In the last two days we have been reminded frequently of the commandments of the Lord. We have had set forth before us the counsel of his prophets. All of the counsel will have been in vain if those of us who have heard it do not have added resolution in our hearts to go forth now with a fortified spirit of obedience to the will of the Lord.

I know that frequently it is not easy to face up to that which is expected of us. Many think they cannot do it. We need a little more faith. We should know that the Lord will not give us commandments beyond our power to observe. He will not ask us to do things for which we lack the capacity. Our problem lies in our fears and in our appetites.

Response to Church calls

We shall soon be extending calls to sixty or more men to go out and preside over missions. We will give them more time than the Brethren gave mission presidents many years ago when they simply read their names in such conferences as this. Those with whom we will be speaking in the next two or three months will not be leaving until next July. We live in a very complex society, and we recognize that men need a period of time to get their affairs in order.

Over the past years it has been my responsibility to extend calls to scores of men, their wives, and their families to leave all behind and go into the mission field. Those with whom we shall speak in coming months will respond in the same way that those in the past have responded. They will, in effect, say, "Of course, I am ready to go whenever and wherever the Lord calls."

They and their wives will gather their children around them. There will be tears as the children think of leaving their schools and their friends. The family will kneel together in prayer, and when they arise from their knees, although their eyes will be moist, they will say in unison, "We'll go where you want us to go, dear Lord; we'll do what you want us to do." (See *Hymns*, 1985, no. 270.)

I confess that at times I feel reluctant to ask people to do things in the Church because I know they will respond without hesitation. And I know also that those responses will entail great sacrifice. But I know this also, in the case of mission presidents and their

families, there will be more tears shed when they leave the mission field to return home than will be shed when they leave home to go into the field. It is so with temple presidents and with many others who are called by the Church to leave their homes to serve in the harvest field of the world.

Spirit of consecration

In all of my experience I have never had anyone turn down such a call. There have been a few who, when I have inquired concerning their circumstances, we have felt that they should not go, at least at that time. But even in those cases a strange thing happens. Once a man has been talked with concerning such an assignment, even though a call was not extended, he never seems to get over it. Before long he is writing a letter or telephoning to say that he is ready to go.

Someone occasionally says that there was so much of sacrifice in the early days of the Church, but there is no sacrifice today. The observer goes on to say that in pioneer days people were willing to lay their fortunes and even their lives on the altar. "What has happened to the spirit of consecration?" some of these ask. I should like to say with great emphasis that this spirit is still very much among us. I have discovered that no sacrifice is too great for faithful Latter-day Saints.

Only a week ago a man was recommended for a responsibility in a distant land. After I had checked out his worthiness and his capacity, I called him and talked with him. I wanted to know about his circumstances. I asked when he would be due for retirement from his employment. He indicated in about five years. I asked what leaving now would do to his future retirement income. He told me that it would mean a very substantial cut in that income. After going into this and other matters, I felt to excuse him.

He called back the next morning to tell me that he and his wife had discussed it, and they were ready to leave

any time. He said they would not worry about the future, that they had faith to believe that a way would be opened to them to take care of their needs if they were willing to do that which the Lord asked of them. He went on to say that the Lord had been so good and generous to them and to their children that they would be willing to do anything to show their gratitude. They did not have a great abundance of the things of the world, but they had enough for their basic needs; and more importantly, they had the gospel of Jesus Christ and all of the blessings that flow therefrom.

Live the gospel more fully

Now, my brothers and sisters, most of you will not be asked to make such sacrifices or to respond to such calls. But what you do with your lives as you live them from day to day is no less important.

Let us now return to our homes with determination to live the gospel more fully. There is nothing the Lord expects of us that we cannot do. His requirements are essentially so easy. For instance, He said concerning the Word of Wisdom that it is "a principle with promise, adapted to the capacity of the weak and the weakest of all saints, who are or can be called saints" (D&C 89:3).

Observe the Word of Wisdom

We *can* observe that Word of Wisdom. We receive numerous letters inquiring whether this item or that item is proscribed by the Word of Wisdom. If we will avoid those things which are definitely and specifically defined, and beyond this observe the spirit of that great revelation, it will not involve a burden. It will, rather, bring a blessing. Do not forget: it is the Lord who has made the promise.

Pay tithing

We *can* pay our tithing. This is not so much a matter of money as it is a

matter of faith. I have yet to find a faithful tithe payer who cannot testify that in a very literal and wonderful way the windows of heaven have been opened and blessings have been poured out upon him or her.

I urge you, my brethren and sisters, every one of you, to take the Lord at His word in this important matter. It is He who has given the commandment and made the promise. I go back to Nephi, who in that time of worry and concern said to his brothers: "Let us be faithful in keeping the commandments of the Lord; for behold he is mightier than all the earth" (1 Nephi 4:1).

Fast, and pay offerings

It is not a burden to refrain from two meals a month and give the value thereof to assist in caring for the poor. It is, rather, a blessing. Not only will physical benefits flow from the observance of this principle, but spiritual values also. Our program of the fast day and the fast offering is so simple and so beautiful that I cannot understand why people everywhere do not take it up. Hearings have recently been held in the Congress of the United States on a proposal to recommend to the president a day of fasting to raise funds for the starving people of Africa. Our own experience last spring was so easy of execution and so tremendously productive that our consecrations have blessed thousands without causing any of us to suffer in the least.

Attend sacrament meetings, and study the scriptures

We *can* attend our sacrament meetings, there to partake of the emblems of the sacrifice of our Savior. As we do so, we will renew our covenants and be reminded of sacred obligations falling upon those who have taken upon themselves the name of the Lord. In these meetings we will hear counsel for our blessing. We can share the association of wonderful neighbors and friends

in the gospel, and what a priceless boon this can be.

We can read the scriptures, ponder their meaning, and develop familiarity with them for our everlasting blessing. We can do so in our family home evenings, and as we do there will grow within our children a love for the Lord and His holy word.

Cultivate spirit of brotherhood

We can reach out to help one another as neighbors and associates, extending even beyond our own brothers and sisters in the Church, to assist any in trouble or want wherever they may be. There is so much of sorrow in the world. There is so much of loneliness and fear. There is so much of hate and bitterness, of man's inhumanity to man.

Let us as Latter-day Saints cultivate a spirit of brotherhood in all of our associations. Let us be more charitable in our judgments, more sympathetic and understanding of those who err, more willing to forgive those who trespass against us. Let us not add to the measure of hatred that periodically sweeps across the world. Let us reach out in kindness to all men, even toward those who speak evil of us and who would, if they could, harm us.

Move this work forward

In a word, let us more nearly live the gospel of the Master, whose name we have taken upon us. Let us move

this work forward; let our lives be such as to be worthy of emulation.

As I conclude and as we close this conference, I think of the charge given by the dying King David to his son Solomon: "Be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man;

"And keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself:

"That the Lord may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel" (1 Kings 2:2-4).

If we will so conduct ourselves as Latter-day Saints, this work will never fail nor even lag. It will move forward toward that destiny given it by Him whose name it bears. Our Father will smile with favor upon us, and we shall look to Him and live.

For these great blessings I humbly pray as I express unto you my appreciation, my love, and my gratitude, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The women's choir sang "The Lord Is My Shepherd."

Elder John K. Carmack offered the benediction.

GENERAL WOMEN'S MEETING

"Draw Near unto Me" was the theme of this year's general women's meeting held Saturday evening, September 28, 1985, in the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, Utah. Latter-day Saint women and girls ten years of age and older met in the Tabernacle and Assembly Hall on Temple Square and

gathered in meetinghouses to view the proceedings by satellite coverage. It was also carried on television in the Wasatch Front area.

The program included music by a choir of women and girls from the Kaysville, Layton, and Clearfield Utah regions and talks by President Gordon

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B. Hinckley of the First Presidency, Elder J. Thomas Fyans of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and the general presidents of the Primary, Young Women, and Relief Society.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, gave the following talk at that meeting.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

I am confident there is no one in this vast audience who has not been deeply touched by the things we have seen and heard.

I have been impressed with the great burdens which many people carry. There is so much of sorrow in the world. There is so much of pain. There is so much of loneliness and fear and misery. There are so many whose circumstances are desperate and who cry out in deep distress.

President Kimball is not with us. I wish he were. What a wonderful man he is. What a wonderful life he has lived. Now he is elderly, trapped by the infirmities of age. But the great, overflowing goodness of his heart is felt by all of us who see him. We bring you his love, his blessing.

President Romney celebrated his eighty-eighth birthday only a week ago. He, too, has been touched and bent by the storms of life. He also sends his love to each of you.

Remarkable blessings and spiritual gifts

In behalf of these, our Brethren and leaders, in behalf of the First Presidency of the Church, I thank you, all of you, wherever you may be, you great Latter-day Saint women, both old and young, who look to the Lord and walk in faith and strive to keep his commandments. May your prayers be answered. May you have peace and strength and love and gladness in your lives. I urge you to lift your heads and walk in gratitude. Spare yourselves from the indulgence of self-pity. It is always

self-defeating. Subdue the negative and emphasize the positive. Count your blessings and not your problems.

Some are prone to complain that you are discriminated against. All of us rejoice in the enlargement of opportunities for women. Under the law, there are few opportunities afforded men that are not now also open to women. With this enlargement of opportunity, a few Latter-day Saint women are asking why they are not entitled to hold the priesthood. To that I can say that only the Lord, through revelation, could alter that situation. He has not done so, so it is profitless for us to speculate and worry about it. May I suggest, rather, that you dwell on the remarkable blessings that are yours, the great positive privileges of your lives as women of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the transcendent spiritual gifts that may be yours. I should like to name ten of these, with their coincident responsibilities. I shall have time to comment only briefly on each.

Gift of doing good

1. *You have the gift, the opportunity, and the responsibility of doing good.* You possess an instinctive inclination to help those in distress, and you have a peculiar and remarkable way of doing so. There are so many who need your help. There are boys and girls who flounder and drift and waste their lives for want of someone interested in them to counsel and reassure and comfort and direct them.

Nursing homes are filled with the aged and the infirm who cry out for a

listening ear and a comforting word. There are so many who are lonely and afraid for whom a little companionship would mean so very, very much. There are the sick and dying who live in pain and fear for whom the holding of a hand and a few quiet words could make all the difference in the world.

It was Florence Nightingale, the frail English girl, who out of a great sense of concern went to the Crimea and nursed the wounded and out of whose efforts has grown the great International Red Cross.

We live in a world where peace exists only by reason of a balance of terror. I have often thought that if great numbers of the women of all nations were to unite and lift their voices in the cause of peace, there would develop a worldwide will for peace which could save our civilization and avoid untold suffering, misery, plague, starvation, and the death of millions.

Jesus was described as one "who went about doing good" (Acts 10:38). Can you, as His followers, do less? In organizing the Relief Society, the Prophet Joseph Smith said concerning the women, "They will pour in oil and wine to the wounded heart of the distressed; they will dry up the tears of the orphan and make the widow's heart to rejoice" (*History of the Church*, 4:567).

Prayer

2. *Prayer.* Here is a great spiritual gift available to all. Every woman has as certain a right to approach the throne of deity in prayer as does any man. I am convinced that our Father in Heaven loves his daughters as much as He loves His sons and that He is as ready to hear their pleas and grant their petitions. The words of James concerning the blessing of the sick are interesting:

"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

"And the prayer of faith shall save the sick" (James 5:14-15).

I repeat, "the prayer of faith shall save the sick." It is the privilege and the responsibility of those holding the priesthood to anoint and bless. It is their privilege also to pray. And it is likewise your privilege to pray, with the full expectation that your Father in Heaven will hear that prayer when it is offered in faith.

It is your privilege to pray in the meetings of the Church—not only in the meetings of the women's organizations, but in the sacrament meetings when all of the Saints are admonished to gather together. It is your privilege to pray in such tremendous gatherings as this. I hope you noted the beautiful and touching prayer of Sister Perezgea at the opening of this meeting. Each of you has available the great spiritual gift of prayer.

Privilege and right to teach

3. *It is your privilege and right to teach.* You come within the province of the admonition given by the Lord:

"And I give unto you a commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom.

"Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you, that you may be instructed more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God, that are expedient for you to understand" (D&C 88:77-78).

And further: "And as all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith" (D&C 88:118).

When I was a boy growing up in the First Ward in Liberty Stake, the president of the Relief Society was Elder Mark E. Petersen's mother-in-law, Sister Sarah McDonald. She was also the teacher of the Gospel Doctrine class in the Sunday School. The men, as well as the women, profited from her down-to-earth wisdom, her unique sense of humor, her tremendous scholarship and

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familiarity with the scriptures, and her unyielding testimony which came of the great sacrifice she had made for membership in this Church.

Yours, my sisters, is the privilege to teach, yours the responsibility, yours the opportunity. There are few resources of which we are in greater need than dedicated teachers of the gospel who teach with faith, with conviction, and with the knowledge that comes of study.

Opportunity to preside

4. *Yours is the opportunity to preside.* You have heard from Sister Young, who presides over the Primary Association, with combined enrollments of 825,000. You have heard from Sister Kapp, who presides over some 300,000 young women. You have heard from Sister Winder, who presides over the Relief Society, which includes 1,682,000 women across the world.

When one of the candidates for the presidency of the United States visited us a year ago, I introduced these three women to him. I stated that Sister Winder presided over more than 1,600,000 women. He seemed incredulous. He possibly had heard some of the nonsense that Mormon women are subjugated and have no opportunities. When he met this charming woman and was told that she presided over 1,600,000 other women, he looked as if he could scarcely believe it.

These women have counselors. They have general boards. They have their counterparts in stakes and wards. They deal with vast responsibilities, vast resources, and large numbers of people. They are executives in the truest sense.

Sister Winder and Sister Kapp serve as members of the Board of Trustees of Brigham Young University, the largest private university in America. They likewise serve as members of the Church Board of Education. Their views carry as much weight as do the views of any of the Brethren. Sister

Winder and her counselors serve as members of the General Welfare Committee. This is the policy-making body governing all Church welfare activities. Sister Young serves on the National Cub Scout Committee.

My dear sisters, you, as women, have tremendous executive responsibilities in this Church. And no one appreciates more than I the wonderful contributions you make and the great wisdom you bring.

Spirit of prophecy

5. *Yours may be the spirit of prophecy.* That may sound strange to some of you. Miriam in the Old Testament is spoken of as a prophetess. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, repeated the words of the prophet Joel, saying:

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

"And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy" (Acts 2:17-18).

Can anyone doubt that many women have a special intuitive sense, even a prescient understanding of things to come?

John the Revelator makes a very interesting statement: "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19:10). As much so as any man in the world, each of you has the opportunity and the responsibility to develop a testimony of Jesus as the Savior of mankind. That testimony is the "spirit of prophecy." It is a gift that may be yours.

Proclaim the gospel

6. *Yours is the opportunity to proclaim the gospel.* Exclusive of missionary couples, we now have 5,872 sister missionaries serving in the field. For the most part, these are young women who are called as other missionaries are

called. Many mission presidents give their sister missionaries credit for being more effective than the elders in opening doors and minds to the teaching of the gospel. One mission president told me, perhaps facetiously, that if he had four pairs of sister missionaries doing the finding and the teaching, he could keep a pair of elders busy doing the baptizing.

You will immediately ask why, then, are lady missionaries not called until they are twenty-one, when young men are called at nineteen? While we recognize the vast good that sister missionaries do, and while we greatly appreciate their tremendous service, we are reluctant to have in the field the same or a larger number of sister missionaries than elders. I believe there is great wisdom in this.

Furthermore, we regard a happy marriage as the greatest mission any young woman can enjoy, and we feel that the opportunities for such will be increased if there is some delay in young women going into the mission field.

Nevertheless, you have the privilege. You have the right, conditioned upon worthiness. You have the opportunity, whether serving as full-time missionaries or on a local basis, to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ with power and conviction.

Blessings of the temple

7. *Women have the great opportunities of the blessings of the temple.* The right to receive the temple ordinances pertains as much to women as it does to men. The blessings to be received through that experience are as great for women as they are for men. While we discourage young women from going to the temple, just as we do young men, unless they serve as full-time missionaries, yet in the long term, in life or eternity, every worthy woman in the Church may qualify to receive the blessing of the temple endowment.

For the woman who is married in the temple, there is afforded the oppor-

tunity for happiness and for security, for time and for all eternity, to a degree to be found in no other type of marriage. In fact, only in marriage in the house of the Lord can there be the promise of eternal companionship, conditioned, of course, upon the faithfulness of both parties to that marriage. The man cannot be exalted without the woman; neither the woman without the man. (See 1 Corinthians 11:11.)

Minister in the temples

8. *Yours is also the privilege to minister in the temples.* Women do the vicarious work for women. It is as important that this work be done in behalf of those beyond the veil in the case of women as it is in the case of men. The work you so do is as acceptable to the Lord. It is necessary for the accomplishment of his purposes. It is as spiritually uplifting as is that which men do.

Furthermore, women fill very important responsibilities as ordinance workers in the temple. As surely as there is a temple president, there is also a temple matron. There must be many who assist her in carrying forward the sacred ordinance work of the house of the Lord.

God-given privilege of motherhood

9. *I mention next the unique and God-given privilege of motherhood.* There is no miracle in all the world like the creation of new life. There is no responsibility greater than rearing children in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

Without a mother's efforts, her pain, her family concerns and service, it goes without saying that the race would soon die. The purposes of God would be totally frustrated.

Her partnership with the Almighty in bringing to pass His eternal plan is a blessing that no man can enjoy in the same sense.

I recognize, of course, that there are many within the sound of my voice who are not married and who may

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never be married in this life. The number of adult women who are presently unmarried constitutes approximately a third of the female members of the Church in the United States and Canada. However, this blessing is afforded two-thirds of the women of the Church. To you who are mothers, I wish to say that I know that your labors are heavy, that your burdens are many, that the task of rearing children in this complex age is a serious and demanding one. But there can be no doubt that as the years pass you will enjoy a sense of satisfaction that will come in no other way. You will enjoy a measure of peace, of love, of that gladness which is deep and sweet and good and that can come from no other source.

To you who are single parents with families to rear, I know that yours is a particularly heavy burden. We pray that the Lord will bless you and sustain you and that you will have resources to do that which must be done and to do it well. The resources of the Church can be mobilized to help you when you need help.

I think of my wife's grandmother who, as a young married woman, went to Manti with her husband, who was called to work on the temple when it was being constructed there. While so working, he suffered an injury which took his life. She lived a widow for more than sixty years, working and struggling, most of the time alone, to rear and educate her children. Her lot was hard, but her satisfaction was great and her accomplishment heroic.

I recognize that there are many unmarried women who long to have a child. Some think of bringing this about by artificial impregnation. This the Church strongly discourages. Those who do so may expect to be disciplined by the Church. A child so conceived and born cannot be sealed to one parent. This procedure frustrates the eternal family plan.

Educate yourselves, refine your talents, and work in the society in which you live

10. I conclude with the tenth great privilege and opportunity you have. This is the opportunity and the encouragement to educate your minds and hands, to refine your talents, and to so qualify yourself to work in the society in which you will live.

I am grateful that women today are afforded the same opportunity to study for science, for the professions, and for every other facet of human knowledge. You are as entitled as are men to the Spirit of Christ, which enlightens every man and woman who comes into the world. (See D&C 84:46.) Set your priorities in terms of marriage and family, but also pursue educational programs which will lead to satisfying work and productive employment in case you do not marry, or to a sense of security and fulfillment in the event you do marry.

It is also important to enhance one's appreciation of the arts and culture which are of the very substance of our civilization. Can anyone doubt that good music is godly or that there can be something of the essence of heaven in great art? Education will increase your appreciation and refine your talent.

Differences come of designation

God bless you, my beloved sisters. Please know that you are deeply appreciated. Please know that your place in the divine plan is no less important, no less great, and no less necessary than that of men. Paul has said, "Neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 11:11).

Count your wonderful blessings. Do not worry away your lives with concerns over "rights," so-called, but move forward, concerned with responsibilities and opportunities. Your potential is limitless. You are daughters of God, endowed by inheritance with marvelous gifts and immeasurable po-

tential. Accept the challenge. Go forward with confidence in the knowledge that the differences you face are not those which come of discrimination so much as those which come of designa-

tion. That you may be happy, and that your lives may be rich with that satisfaction which comes from the development of your spiritual gifts, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

SALT LAKE TABERNACLE CHOIR AND ORGAN BROADCAST

The following broadcast, announced by J. Spencer Kinard and originating with KSL Radio and Television, Salt Lake City, Utah, was presented from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, October 6, 1985, through the courtesy of the Columbia Broadcasting System's network throughout the United States, parts of Canada, and through other facilities to several points overseas:

Announcer: Once more we welcome you within these walls with Music and the Spoken Word from the crossroads of the West.

CBS and its affiliated stations bring you at this hour the Mormon Tabernacle Choir from Temple Square in Salt Lake City, with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducting the choir, Robert Cundick, Tabernacle organist, and the Spoken Word given by Spencer Kinard.

(Choir without announcement: "With a Voice of Singing"—Shaw).

Announcer: With Jerold Ottley conducting, the Tabernacle Choir opened today's broadcast with an anthem by English composer Martin Shaw, on a text drawn from the forty-eighth chapter of Isaiah: "With a Voice of Singing, declare ye this, and let it be heard . . . The Lord hath delivered his people, Alleluia."

We next hear words from the first chapter of John in the New Testament, set to music by contemporary American composer, Paul Sjölund: "In the Beginning Was the Word, and the

Word was with God, and the Word was God."

(Choir: "In the Beginning Was the Word"—Sjölund)

Announcer: Tabernacle organist, Robert Cundick, next plays "Allegro Maestoso," from the second organ sonata of Felix Mendelssohn.

(Organ: "Allegro Maestoso"—Felix Mendelssohn)

Announcer: The choir continues with an anthem by the early twentieth century composer, Robert Nathaniel Dett, with text and music reflecting his black heritage: "Listen to the Lambs all a-crying."

(Choir: "Listen to the Lambs"—Dett)

Announcer: As long as language survives and men's hearts are pure, the Sermon on the Mount [following is abstracted from Matthew 5] will be rehearsed with reverence; for, within that short expression, lie the hope and glory of mankind. Across the boundaries of time and geography, the words still whisper their message of hope and consolation.

"Blessed," he said.

Blessed are the peacemakers—those who have conquered the enemy within, who have defeated the causes of conflict upon the battlefield of self, remaining rational and calm through life's turmoils: at little league parks, in boardrooms, through neighborhood squabbles and family disputes, calming the troubled waters of life wherever

they may be—for these shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they that mourn—those of broad shoulders who share the burden of sorrow with those who grieve, standers over open graves, bakers of casseroles and cakes, embracers of bewildered widows and orphans, shedders of tender tears to douse the burning pain of grief. Blessed are they, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the pure in heart—those of internal beauty, who carry their own light, untainted by the pornography of an age too smart to be wise, untouched by the skepticism of a generation more stylish than devout. The pure in heart—the quaint and ridiculed of humanity, fools for virtue's sake, receiving no earthly fame; nor needing any—for they shall see God.

Blessed are the merciful. We are all at the mercy of God and of one another. There is no corner of the world so quiet or obscure that the emissaries of mercy are not needed: visitors to prisons, givers of loans, volunteers in hospitals and schools, forgivers of friend and foe. Grateful we are for the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the meek—the strong and majestic meek, as strong and majestic as the Lamb of God, who submitted silently to shame and death without protest or grudge. The patient meek, who wait their turn upon the freeways and in the supermarkets. The quiet meek, who pay their taxes and bills, obey the laws and rules without complaint. The humble meek, who care not who receives the credit or fame, as long as the job is well done. “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5).

Yes, blessed are these: the peacemakers, they who mourn, the pure in heart, the merciful, and the meek—for of such is the kingdom of God.

(Choir without announcement: “Nearer, My God, to Thee”—Mason/Manookin)

Announcer: With Donald Ripplinger conducting, we have heard a hymn tune by Lowell Mason, arranged by Robert Manookin, on a text by Sarah F. Adams: “Nearer, My God, to Thee.”

The choir concludes today's broadcast with the chorus, “Hallelujah, Amen,” from the oratorio, *Judas Macabaeus*, by George Frideric Handel.

(Choir: “Hallelujah, Amen”—Handel)

Announcer: Again we leave you from within the shadows of the everlasting hills. May peace be with you this day . . . and always.

Announcer (on radio): This concludes the two-thousand, nine-hundred, twenty-ninth performance continuing the fifty-seventh year of this traditional broadcast from the Mormon Tabernacle on Temple Square, brought to you by CBS and its affiliated stations, originating with Station KSL in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducted the choir, Robert Cundick was at the organ, the Spoken Word was given by Spencer Kinard.

In another seven days at this same hour, Music and the Spoken Word will be heard again from the crossroads of the West.

This is the CBS Radio Network.

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE MUSIC

The Mormon Tabernacle Choir furnished the choral numbers for the Saturday morning and Sunday morning

sessions of the conference with Jerold Ottley conducting.

The music for the Saturday afternoon session was provided by the

combined ward choirs from the Granite, Olympus, and Salt Lake Central regions with Orman R. Weight conducting.

For the Sunday afternoon session the music was furnished by a combined women's choir from the Tabernacle Choir and the Mormon Youth Chorus with Robert Bowden conducting.

At the general priesthood meeting a combined men's choir from the Tabernacle Choir and the Mormon

Youth Chorus directed by Donald Ripplinger and Robert Bowden furnished the music.

Prelude, postlude, and interlude music and accompaniments on the Tabernacle organ throughout the conference sessions were played by Robert Cundick, John Longhurst, and Clay Christiansen, Tabernacle organists.

Francis M. Gibbons
Clerk of the Conference

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THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY
SAINTS

Official Report of the
One Hundred Fifty-sixth
Annual General

CONFERENCE

of The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints

held in the Tabernacle
Salt Lake City, Utah

April 5 and 6, 1986

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THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-SIXTH ANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The 156th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 5, 1986, at 10:00 A.M.

The general sessions of the conference were held at 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday, April 5 and 6, 1986. The general priesthood meeting was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, April 6, 1985 at 6:00 P.M.

President Ezra Taft Benson presided at all sessions of the conference and conducted the Sunday morning session. President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday morning and Sunday afternoon sessions. President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday afternoon and general priesthood sessions.

Television and radio stations carried portions or all of some of the conference sessions to large audiences throughout the world. In addition, the general sessions and the priesthood session were carried via satellite transmission to more than 1,000 stake centers. The general priesthood session was also carried by closed-circuit transmission to approximately 892 locations in many countries.

General Authorities present

The following General Authorities of the Church attended one or more of the general sessions:

The First Presidency: Ezra Taft Benson, Gordon B. Hinckley, and Thomas S. Monson.

The Council of the Twelve:

¹Howard W. Hunter, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal

A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, and M. Russell Ballard.

The First Quorum of the Seventy: Presidents: Carlos E. Asay, Dean L. Larsen, Richard G. Scott, Marion D. Hanks, Wm. Grant Bangerter, Jack H. Goaslind, and Robert L. Backman. *Additional Members of the Seventy:* A. Theodore Tuttle, Franklin D. Richards, Theodore M. Burton, Paul H. Dunn, Hartman Rector, Jr., Loren C. Dunn, Robert L. Simpson, Rex D. Pinegar, J. Thomas Fyans, Adney Y. Komatsu, Joseph B. Wirthlin, Gene R. Cook, Charles Didier, William R. Bradford, George P. Lee, John H. Groberg, Jacob de Jager, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Royden G. Derrick, Robert E. Wells, James M. Paramore, Hugh W. Pinnock, F. Enzo Busche, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Ronald E. Poelman, Derek A. Cuthbert, Rex C. Reeve, Sr., F. Burton Howard, Ted E. Brewerton, Angel Abrea, John K. Carmack, Russell C. Taylor, Robert B. Harbertson, Devere Harris, Spencer H. Osborn, Philip T. Sonntag, John Sonnenberg, F. Arthur Kay, Keith W. Wilcox, Victor L. Brown, H. Burke Peterson, J. Richard Clarke, Hans B. Ringger, Waldo P. Call, Helio da Rocha Camargo, H. Verlan Andersen, George I. Cannon, Francis M. Gibbons, and Gardner H. Russell.

The Presiding Bishopric: Robert D. Hales, Henry B. Eyring, and Glenn L. Pace.

Emeritus General Authorities: Eldred G. Smith, Sterling W. Sill, Henry D. Taylor, Bernard P. Brockbank, James A. Cullimore, Joseph Anderson, and John H. Vandenberg.¹

¹President Marion G. Romney and Elder O. Leslie Stone were excused due to ill health.

Other authorities present

Other authorities of the Church in attendance included Regional Representatives, presidents of stakes and their counselors, presidents of temples,

bishops of wards, and presidencies and members of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood quorums.

Many general, stake, and ward auxiliary officers also attended.

FIRST DAY MORNING MEETING

FIRST SESSION

The first general session of the 156th Annual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 5, 1986, at 10:00 A.M. President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The music for the opening session was provided by the Tabernacle Choir with Donald Ripplinger conducting and Robert Cundick at the organ.

Prior to the meeting the Tabernacle Choir sang "For All the Saints" without announcement.

President Hinckley made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked me to conduct this session.

We greet you this morning from the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City in this, the first general session of the 156th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We welcome all who are participating in this conference, whether seated here in the Tabernacle or in the overflow session in the nearby Assembly Hall where Elders Dean L. Larsen and F. Enzo Busche are seated on the stand, or who are participating by satellite transmission, radio, cable, or tele-

vision. These proceedings are being carried by satellite to over one thousand stake centers throughout the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico.

We acknowledge the General Authorities of the Church, all of whom are in attendance except President Marion G. Romney and Elder O. Leslie Stone who because of illness are unable to be with us. We acknowledge the Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary general presidencies who are seated on the stand. We extend a special welcome to government, education, and civic leaders who are present.

We note with sadness the death of President Spencer W. Kimball, the twelfth President of the Church, who passed away on Tuesday, November 5, 1985 in his ninety-first year, after having served as an Apostle of the Lord, Jesus Christ, for a period of over forty-two years. During the last twelve of these years he served as God's prophet on the earth and as President of the Church. We pay our honor and respect to this great deceased leader whose ministry blessed the lives of thousands.

The Tabernacle Choir under the direction of Donald H. Ripplinger with Robert Cundick at the organ opened this session by singing "For All the Saints." The choir will now sing "I Stand All Amazed at the Love Jesus Offers Me." Following the singing, the invocation will be offered by Elder Rex D. Pinegar, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "I Stand All Amazed."

Elder Rex D. Pinegar offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

It will now be our privilege to listen to President Ezra Taft Benson, President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

President Ezra Taft Benson

My beloved brethren and sisters, as we commence another general conference of the Church, I earnestly seek an interest in your faith and prayers that what I say may bless and edify our souls. I realize my dependence upon the Lord, and I also know that Jesus Christ is the head of this church and that through Him we can do all things that are needful.

Dedication, devotion, and service

I commend those of you who are present here this morning, as well as you who are listening or watching these proceedings and those who will later take the opportunity to hear or read the messages of this conference.

Our hearts are filled with overwhelming gratitude to you for all you do to contribute to the building of the kingdom of God on earth. Surely the Lord is pleased with the consecrated time, love, and generous support of so many of His Saints throughout the world.

Your dedication, devotion, and service are indications that faith has indeed increased in the earth. Seldom have the efforts of so few resulted in the blessing of so many!

Watchmen—what of the night?

As I have sought direction from the Lord, I have had reaffirmed in my mind and heart the declaration of the Lord to "say nothing but repentance unto this generation" (D&C 6:9; 11:9).

This has been a theme of every latter-day prophet, along with their testimony that Jesus is the Christ and that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God.

Repentance was the cry of our late and great prophet, Spencer W. Kimball. This theme permeated his talks and the pages of his writings, such as his marvelous book *The Miracle of Forgiveness*. And it must be our cry today, both to member and to non-member alike—repent.

Watchmen—what of the night? We must respond by saying that all is not well in Zion. As Moroni counseled, we must cleanse the inner vessel (see Alma 60:23), beginning first with ourselves, then with our families, and finally with the Church.

Changed people!

A prophet of God stated, "Ye shall clear away the bad according as the good shall grow . . . until the good shall overcome the bad" (Jacob 5:66). It takes a Zion people to make a Zion society, and we must prepare for that.

During the past few years a number of resources have been set in place in the Church to help us. New editions of the scriptures have been published—are we taking advantage of them? More temples are located closer to our people—are we going to the house of the Lord more frequently? The consolidated meeting schedule was set up—are we taking advantage of the increased time with our families? A special home evening manual was

provided—are we using it? A new hymnal has just been published—are we singing more songs of the heart? (See D&C 25:12.) And so the list goes on and on. We have received much help. We don't need changed programs now as much as we need changed people!

We remember our beloved President Kimball for many marvelous words of counsel, among which was his encouragement to “lengthen our stride.” We needed that direction, for the Book of Mormon warns us of the tactics of the adversary in the last days: “And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well—and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell” (2 Nephi 28:21).

There are many “awake” passages in the Book of Mormon, such as: “O that ye would awake; awake from a deep sleep, yea, even from the sleep of hell . . . awake . . . [and] put on the armor of righteousness. Shake off the chains with which ye are bound, and come forth out of obscurity, and arise from the dust” (2 Nephi 1:13, 23). As a people, it seems we can survive persecution easier and better than we can peace and prosperity.

Sexual immorality

The plaguing sin of this generation is sexual immorality. This, the Prophet Joseph said, would be the source of more temptations, more buffetings, and more difficulties for the elders of Israel than any other. (See *Journal of Discourses*, 8:55.)

President Joseph F. Smith said that sexual impurity would be one of the three dangers that would threaten the Church within—and so it does. (See *Gospel Doctrine*, pp. 312–13.) It permeates our society.

In the category of sins, the Book of Mormon places unchastity next to murder. (See Alma 39:5.) As Alma states, “Now . . . I would that ye

should repent and forsake your sins, and go no more after the lusts of your eyes, . . . for except ye do this ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God” (Alma 39:9). If we are to cleanse the inner vessel, we must forsake immorality and be clean.

Do more with the Book of Mormon

Unless we read the Book of Mormon and give heed to its teachings, the Lord has stated in section 84 of the Doctrine and Covenants that the whole Church is under condemnation: “And this condemnation resteth upon the children of Zion, even all” (D&C 84:56). The Lord continues: “And they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given them, not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written” (D&C 84:57).

Now we not only need to *say* more about the Book of Mormon, but we need to *do* more with it. Why? The Lord answers: “That they may bring forth fruit meet for their Father’s kingdom; otherwise there remaineth a scourge and judgment to be poured out upon the children of Zion” (D&C 84:58). We have felt that scourge and judgment!

The Prophet Joseph said that “the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than any other book” (Book of Mormon, Introduction). The Book of Mormon has not been, nor is it yet, the center of our personal study, family teaching, preaching, and missionary work. Of this we must repent.

President Romney on reading the Book of Mormon

I do not know of a man living today who has been more true to the Book of Mormon than President

Marion G. Romney. In a general conference address, he declared that the Book of Mormon was "the most effective piece of missionary literature we have." He quoted the Doctrine and Covenants, which states that "the Book of Mormon and the holy scriptures are given of me for your instruction" (D&C 33:16) and that "the elders, priests and teachers of this church shall teach the principles of my gospel, which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon" (D&C 42:12). President Romney added, "It is of course obvious that unless we read, study, and learn the principles which are in the Book of Mormon, we, the elders, priests, and teachers of this church, cannot comply with this direction to teach them."

"But there is another reason why we should read it," President Romney continued. "By doing so we will fill and refresh our minds with the constant flow of that 'water' which Jesus said would be in us—a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14). We must obtain a continuing supply of this water if we are to resist evil and retain the blessings of being born again. . . .

"If we would avoid adopting the evils of the world, we must pursue a course which will daily feed our minds with and call them back to the things of the Spirit. I know of no better way to do this than by reading the Book of Mormon. . . ."

And then he concluded: "And so, I counsel you, my beloved brothers and sisters and friends everywhere, to make reading in the Book of Mormon a few minutes each day a lifelong practice. . . ."

"I feel certain that if, in our homes, parents will read from the Book of Mormon prayerfully and regularly, both by themselves and with their children, the spirit of that great book will come to permeate our homes and all who dwell therein. The spirit of reverence will increase; mutual respect and consideration for each other will grow. The spirit of contention will depart.

Parents will counsel their children in greater love and wisdom. Children will be more responsive and submissive to that counsel. Righteousness will increase. Faith, hope, and charity—the pure love of Christ—will abound in our homes and lives, bringing in their wake peace, joy, and happiness" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1960, pp. 110–13).

Pride

May I now discuss a subject of grave concern that deserves deeper development than we have time. It is the subject of pride.

In the scriptures there is no such thing as righteous pride. It is always considered as a sin. We are not speaking of a wholesome view of self-worth, which is best established by a close relationship with God. But we are speaking of pride as the universal sin, as someone has described it.

Mormon writes that "the pride of this nation, or the people of the Nephites, hath proven their destruction" (Moroni 8:27). The Lord says in the Doctrine and Covenants, "Beware of pride, lest ye become as the Nephites of old" (D&C 38:39).

"Humble yourselves before God"

Essentially, pride is a "my will" rather than "thy will" approach to life. The opposite of pride is humbleness, meekness, submissiveness (see Alma 13:28), or teachableness.

In the early days of the restored church, the Lord warned two of its prominent members about pride. To Oliver Cowdery, He said, "Beware of pride, lest thou shouldst enter into temptation" (D&C 23:1). To Emma Smith, He said, "Continue in the spirit of meekness, and beware of pride" (D&C 25:14).

"Thou shalt not be proud in thy heart," the Lord warns us (D&C 42:40). "Humble yourselves before God," says the Book of Mormon (Mosiah 4:10).

When the earth is cleansed by burning in the last days, the proud shall be as stubble. (See 3 Nephi 25:1; D&C 29:9; 64:24.)

The great and spacious building which Lehi saw was the pride of the world where the multitude of the earth was gathered. (See 1 Nephi 11:35–36.) Those who walked the straight and narrow path and held onto the word of God and partook of the love of God were mocked and scorned by those in the building. (See 1 Nephi 8:20, 27, 33; 11:25.)

“The humble followers of Christ” are few (2 Nephi 28:14).

Not my will but thine

Pride does not look up to God and care about what is right. It looks sideways to man and argues who is right. Pride is manifest in the spirit of contention.

Was it not through pride that the devil became the devil? Christ wanted to serve. The devil wanted to rule. Christ wanted to bring men to where He was. The devil wanted to be above men.

Christ removed self as the force in His perfect life. It was not *my* will, but *thine* be done.

Pride is characterized by “What do I want out of life?” rather than by “What would God have me do with my life?” It is self-will as opposed to God’s will. It is the fear of man over the fear of God.

Humility responds to God’s will—to the fear of His judgments and the needs of those around us. To the proud, the applause of the world rings in their ears; to the humble, the applause of heaven warms their hearts.

Someone has said, “Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man.” Of one brother, the Lord said, “I, the Lord, am not well pleased with him, for he seeketh to excel, and he is not sufficiently meek before me” (D&C 58:41).

The “learned, and the rich”

The two groups in the Book of Mormon that seemed to have the greatest difficulty with pride are the “learned, and the rich” (2 Nephi 28:15). But the word of God can pull down pride. (See Alma 4:19.)

With pride, there are many curses. With humility, there come many blessings. For example, “Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers” (D&C 112:10). The humble will “be made strong, and blessed from on high, and receive knowledge” (D&C 1:28). The Lord is “merciful unto those who confess their sins with humble hearts” (D&C 61:2). Humility can turn away God’s anger. (See Helaman 11:11.)

Must cleanse the inner vessel

My beloved brethren and sisters, as we cleanse the inner vessel, there will have to be changes made in our own personal lives, in our families, and in the Church. The proud do not change to improve, but defend their position by rationalizing. Repentance means change, and it takes a humble person to change. But we can do it.

We have made some wonderful strides in the past. We will be lengthening our stride in the future. To do so, we must first cleanse the inner vessel by awaking and arising, being morally clean, using the Book of Mormon in a manner so that God will lift the condemnation, and finally conquering pride by humbling ourselves.

We can do it. I know we can. That we will do so is my prayer for all of us. God bless you for all the good you have done and will be doing. I leave my blessings on all of you and do so in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang “Know This, That Every Soul Is Free” without announcement.

President Hinckley

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, has just spoken to us.

The Tabernacle Choir then sang "Know This, That Every Soul Is Free."

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder David B. Haight of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder David B. Haight

My dear brethren and sisters, I rejoice with you in being present this morning to hear the voice of our prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, and to feel of his spirit and loving concern for all of mankind as he has counseled the Church and the people of the world.

Principle of common consent

This conference is historic because we will be given the opportunity to raise our hands to personally sustain a newly called prophet of God, his counselors, and other Church leaders. A solemn assembly grants to members the right to participate in the principle of common consent, instituted by revelation, authorizing members to sustain those called to official positions. Individual histories and personal accounts of this historic conference will be a highlight throughout our lives.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints proclaims to the world that this church is a restoration of Christ's church. A restoration was necessary because prophets and Apostles, who were the foundation of the Lord's original church, were put to death or otherwise taken. The Church today is built on a foundation of prophets and Apostles, with Jesus Christ as its chief cornerstone. It is therefore not a reformation, a revision, a reorganization, or a mere sect. It is the Church of Jesus Christ restored in these latter days.

Continuous revelation from the Lord

A distinguishing feature of the Church is the claim to continuous revelation from the Lord—"the making known of divine truth by communications from its heavens" (James E. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith*, 12th ed. [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1924], p. 296). Today, the Lord's Church is guided by the same relationship with Deity that existed in previous dispensations.

This claim is not made lightly. I know there is revelation, as I am a witness to sacred things also experienced by others who administer His work.

The principle of revelation by the Holy Ghost is a fundamental principle of the Lord's Church. Prophets of God receive revelation by this process. Individual members of the Church may also receive revelation to confirm truth. The Prophet Joseph Smith told us that "no man can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelation" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1977], p. 328).

"Give heed unto all his words and commandments"

On April 6, 1830—the day the Church was organized in this dispensation—the Lord revealed to members of His church how they should regard the words of His appointed prophet with these instructions:

"Thou shalt give heed unto all his words and commandments which he shall give unto you as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me;

"For his word ye shall receive, *as if from mine own mouth*, in all patience and faith" (D&C 21:4-5; italics added).

From the day of that revelation, faithful members of the Church have looked to the First Presidency for their instruction, and Zion has prospered.

Revelation from the Lord and sustaining by the people

When one Church President passes away, how is a new President selected?

In 1835 the Lord gave a revelation on this matter that provides for orderly succession. The revelation states that the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles is a body equal in authority to the First Presidency. (See D&C 107:24.) That means that when the President of the Church dies, the First Presidency is dissolved and the Quorum of the Twelve automatically becomes the presiding body of the Church. That pattern was established with the death of the Church's first President, Joseph Smith.

Following the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph and his brother Hyrum in 1844, the Quorum of the Twelve, with Brigham Young as quorum president, presided over the Church for the next three and one-half years.

Then, on the banks of the Missouri River in Winter Quarters on December 5, 1847, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles met in council at the home of Orson Hyde. Each of the twelve Apostles expressed his views regarding the matter of reorganizing the First Presidency. Present in that meeting was Ezra T. Benson, great-grandfather of President Ezra Taft Benson. On that occasion, Brigham Young, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, was unanimously sustained by members of that body as President of the Church. He selected

Heber C. Kimball and Willard Richards as Counselors. This action created a new First Presidency, which was later sustained by the unanimous vote of the Saints at a general conference of the Church held December 24, 1847, in a log tabernacle constructed at Winter Quarters by the Saints for this special conference. This action was later ratified by members of the Church at conferences in Iowa, Salt Lake City, and the British Isles.

This divinely revealed procedure for installing a new First Presidency of the Church—revelation from the Lord and sustaining by the people—has been followed to our present day. The First Presidency is to be "upheld by the confidence, faith, and prayer of the church" (D&C 107:22).

Prophet called of God

Several years ago President Spencer W. Kimball, then a member of the Twelve Apostles, on such an occasion as this, said:

"It is reassuring to know that [a new President is] . . . not elected through committees and conventions with all their conflicts, criticisms, and by the vote of men, but [is] called of God and then sustained by the people. . . .

"The pattern divine allows for no errors, no conflicts, no ambitions, no ulterior motives. The Lord has reserved for himself the calling of his leaders over his church" (*Ensign*, Jan. 1973, p. 33).

Calling and preparation of President Ezra Taft Benson

The calling of Ezra Taft Benson as the thirteenth President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will long be remembered, particularly by the seven newest members of the Quorum of the Twelve, who experienced for the first time the holy direction we received in the calling of a President of the Church. After much fasting and prayer, and the seeking of personal

revelation to know the mind and will of God, it was confirmed to our souls who should be called—even Ezra Taft Benson. This I know! With that heavenly confirmation to each of those present, Ezra Taft Benson was ordained and set apart on Sunday, November 10, 1985, as prophet, seer, and revelator, and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

What kind of preparation had the Lord given to this servant whom we will sustain as God's prophet, seer, and revelator?

He was reared on a small farm in Whitney, Idaho, the eldest of eleven children. His stalwart parents had great faith in God. They taught their children that, in spite of difficulties and hardships, they could always go to the Lord and He would give them strength and help.

President Benson's father lovingly counseled his young son: "Remember that whatever you do or wherever you are, you are never alone. Our Heavenly Father is always near. You can reach out and receive His aid through prayer." On many occasions, our beloved prophet has stated: "[This is] prized above any other advice I have ever received. It has become an integral part of me, an anchor, a constant source of strength" (Frederick W. Babbel, *On Wings of Faith* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1972], p. 85).

Prayer has sustained him throughout his life, including during his early missionary experiences in England, where on one occasion his very life was in peril.

Both President and Sister Benson came from stalwart families. They have reared their family with the same teachings they received in their early homes—with a fervent trust in Almighty God.

Europe after World War II

Called as a new Apostle in 1943, Elder Benson soon received from the

First Presidency a most challenging and significant assignment. He was assigned to give assistance to members of the Church in Europe who had been devastated by World War II. He witnessed the ravages of war. He saw the hungry, the cold, the destitute.

Frederick W. Babbel, called to serve as executive secretary to Elder Benson while he was in Europe, wrote to his family:

"The Lord knew what he was doing when he sent [Elder] Benson over here. He is a living apostle of God in every way. . . . I continue to marvel at his unwavering faith, his unflinching courage, his resolute determination and undaunted spirit. . . . He not only speaks to God, but he listens, and I'm sure God speaks with him even as he did with his apostles of old. . . . [He is] one of the humblest, most devoted men I have ever known, so kind in spirit and manner . . . a man surpassing all men I have known" (*On Wings of Faith*, p. 125).

In this special assignment, President Benson was responsible for perhaps the largest distribution of welfare supplies to members that has been undertaken. Thousands of tons of food, clothing, bedding, and medical supplies were delivered to Saints in thirteen nations. It is significant that he will now be sustained as the President of the Church during the fiftieth anniversary of the welfare program.

During that historic mission away from his family, Elder Benson held meetings with the Saints, reorganized the branches and missions, and lifted members' spirits. To them he was an angel of mercy.

Only by prayer and divine intervention was he able to accomplish that mission and gain entrance into some countries. He said, "I assure you I know the source of the success which attended our labors. . . . It would [have been impossible] . . . to accomplish the mission . . . without the directing power of the Almighty" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1947, p. 152).

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture

For eight years he served in the cabinet of the president of the United States. Before the first Cabinet meeting, then-Secretary Benson suggested to President-elect Eisenhower that they commence with prayer. President Eisenhower spoke of the weight of responsibility on the new administration and the need for divine guidance, then called on the secretary of agriculture to open the meeting with prayer. That practice continued throughout the Eisenhower administration.

As secretary of agriculture, he met with world leaders and traveled to most parts of the world. That experience also found him threatened by whirlwinds of the politically ambitious. But seeking strength from the Almighty, as he had done so often in the past, he stood firm in principle and survived efforts to bring about a more politically expedient course of action. Today, the name of Ezra Taft Benson is synonymous with integrity.

Love for all people and for his family

In things that matter most, President Benson has few peers. I know he loves the Lord and depends upon Him for strength, inspiration, and direction. He loves all our Father's children everywhere and will go to extraordinary lengths to respond to their spiritual and temporal needs. He loves people of all faiths, of all creeds, of all colors, and of differing philosophies. I know I can speak for all of my Brethren of the General Authorities in saying that we have felt of his love and concern for each of us and for our families and loved ones. We wholeheartedly reciprocate that love to President and Sister Benson and their family.

President Benson loves his family and keeps in constant touch with them—his six children (all faithful in

the Church), thirty-four grandchildren, and twenty great-grandchildren. He and Sister Benson have a motto in their family, that in this life and the next there will be "no empty chairs." Can you think of a more heavenly goal?

Witness for Jesus Christ

As the Lord's prophet, he stands as a preeminent witness for Jesus Christ. He has borne witness of the name of Christ in almost every nation of the world.

I bear my personal witness to you, my brethren and sisters, that President Ezra Taft Benson has been chosen by our Heavenly Father to "move the cause of Zion in mighty power for good." As with Joseph Smith, the Lord can say of President Benson, "his diligence I know, and his prayers I have heard" (D&C 21:7).

May God bless each of us with listening ears, to heed the counsel of our new First Presidency, whom we love and sustain with all of our hearts, to the end that our lives will be blessed and the cause of Zion will prosper and expand throughout the world, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder David B. Haight, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "High on the Mountain Top a Banner is Unfurled." Following the singing, we shall hear from Elder Richard G. Scott, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation sang "High on the Mountain Top."

Elder Richard G. Scott

I come to you in humility, mindful of my own weakness, yet prayerful that the preparation preceding this message may qualify me to act as an instrument in the hands of the Lord to bring help to some who are in serious need.

We love you

I reach out to you who yearn for companionship at almost any price and are tempted to believe it can be purchased or bartered. You may feel excluded from some circles of friendship, but don't look downward for companionship where the price of entry is abandonment of principle and the sacrifice of ideals.

We love you, and want your happiness more than you can possibly imagine.

Come back

You have learned that fair-weather friends are always available at the bottom of the path that leads to worldliness and unrighteousness, and that their companionship always comes with many strings attached. You have seen how each seeks only to satisfy selfish interests. In quiet moments of reflection, you realize that such companionship is hollow and valueless and leads to weakened resolve, compromised ideals, and eventual yielding to serious sin.

To you who have taken this path, I plead, come back. Come back to the cool, refreshing waters of personal purity. Come back to the warmth and security of your Father in Heaven's love. Come back to the serenity that distills from the decision to live the commandments of your Elder Brother, Jesus the Christ.

Apply the teachings from the Book of Mormon

You know well the process of repentance and the vital role of a judge in Israel, yet you may have difficulty taking that first step to return. With all the love of my heart, may I offer you a way back. You can begin alone and proceed at your own pace.

I invite you to study carefully the Book of Mormon, to ponder each page and pray for understanding. Strive to apply its teachings in your own life and to find within it the companionship that comes to all who with real intent search its message and diligently strive to apply its teachings in their lives. Through the multitude of verses that speak of the Savior, the Redeemer, the Prince of Peace, seek prayerfully to know Him. Ask our Father to strengthen your faith in His Son and to plant in your heart a love of His teachings.

May I share with you some of the insight that will come as you carefully study the Book of Mormon.

Of his own repentance, Alma declares:

"I was . . . in the most bitter pain and anguish of soul; and never, until I did cry out unto the Lord Jesus Christ for mercy, did I receive a remission of my sins. But behold, I did cry unto him and I did find peace to my soul.

"And now, . . . I have told you this that ye may learn wisdom, . . . that there is no other way or means whereby man can be saved, only in and through Christ" (Alma 38:8-9).

Forgiveness through faith in Christ

From this scripture you can see that suffering does not bring forgiveness. It comes through faith in Christ and obedience to His teachings, so that His gift of redemption can apply.

You will learn that sincere, repeated prayer, study, and meditation bring a fuller understanding of the atonement of Jesus Christ. Consider His statement from the Book of Mormon:

"Behold, I have come . . . to bring redemption unto the world, to save the world from sin.

"Therefore, whoso repenteth and cometh unto me as a little child, him will I receive, for of such is the kingdom of God. . . . Therefore repent, and come unto me . . . and be saved" (3 Nephi 9:21–22).

Selfishness at root of sin

As you ponder such teachings, your own forgiveness will seem more attainable. As you pray from the depth of humility, with total honesty, our Father will hear you and the easing of the burden will begin.

By studying the lives recorded in the Book of Mormon, you will see that selfishness is at the root of all sin. It leads to unrighteous acts that bring anguish and misery.

You will observe that the antidote for selfishness is love, especially love of the Lord. Love can overpower the undermining effect of selfishness. Love engenders faith in Christ's plan of happiness, provides courage to begin the process of repentance, strengthens the resolve to be obedient to His teachings, and opens the door of service, welcoming in the feelings of self-worth and of being loved and needed.

The Lord will forgive

In time, with the help of a caring, compassionate bishop, you will complete the process of repentance. Then you will have peace and the assurance—even the witness of the Spirit—that the Lord has forgiven you. For some, full relief comes there. Yet there are others who cannot forgive themselves for past transgressions, even knowing the Lord has forgiven them. Somehow they feel compelled to

continually condemn themselves and to suffer by frequently recalling the details of past mistakes.

Should there be one such within the sound of my voice, I plead with all of my soul that the Lord will touch your heart and cause you to ponder his declaration:

"Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, *remember them no more.*

"By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them" (D&C 58:42–43; italics added).

Christ can bring salvation

Can't you see that to continue to suffer for sins, when there has been proper repentance and forgiveness of the Lord, is not prompted by the Savior but by the master of deceit, whose goal has always been to bind and enslave the children of our Father in Heaven? Satan would encourage you to continue to relive the details of past mistakes, knowing that such thoughts make progress, growth, and service difficult to attain. It is as though Satan ties strings to the mind and body so that he can manipulate one like a puppet, discouraging personal achievement.

I testify that Jesus Christ paid the price and satisfied the demands of justice for all who are obedient to His teachings. Thus, full forgiveness is granted, and the distressing effects of sin need no longer persist in one's life. Indeed, they *cannot persist* if one truly understands the meaning of Christ's atonement.

Ammon, in the Book of Mormon, shows you how to respond when thoughts of past, forgiven transgressions return. Recalling his missionary experiences among the Lamanites, Ammon said:

"Behold, thousands of them do rejoice and have been brought into the fold of God."

Aaron, his brother, cautioned:

"Ammon, I fear that thy joy doth carry thee away unto boasting."

Ammon replied:

"I do not boast in my own strength, nor in my own wisdom; but behold, . . . my heart is brim with joy, and I will rejoice in my God. . . .

"Who could have supposed that our God would have been so merciful as to have snatched us from our awful, sinful, and polluted state?

"Oh then, why did he not consign us to an awful destruction, yea, why did he not let the sword of his justice fall upon us, and doom us to eternal despair?

" . . . Behold, he did not exercise his justice upon us, but in his great mercy hath brought us . . . the salvation of our souls" (Alma 26:4, 10-11, 17, 19-20).

The miracle of forgiveness

That is the secret, stated simply by a servant of God. When memory of prior mistakes encroaches upon your mind, turn your thoughts to Jesus Christ, to the miracle of forgiveness and renewal that comes through Him. Then your suffering will be replaced by joy, gratitude, and thanksgiving for His love.

If you, through poor judgment, were to cover your shoes with mud, would you leave them that way? Of course not. You would cleanse and restore them. Would you then gather the residue of mud and place it in an envelope to show others the mistake that you made? No. Neither should you continue to relive forgiven sin. Every time such thoughts come into your mind, turn your heart in gratitude to the Savior, who gave His life that we, through faith in Him and obedience to His teachings, can overcome transgression and conquer its depressing influence in our lives. I promise you that if you will read the Book of Mormon with sincerity of purpose, striving to be obedient to its precepts, you will find

two beloved friends. They will change your life and give it meaning and purpose as they have mine.

Book of Mormon and Jesus Christ

The first friend is the Book of Mormon itself. It will make you feel good and stimulate you to worthwhile accomplishment. You will be uplifted and receive greater wisdom and insight. That will require much pondering, prayer, and sincere application of the counsel received. In the process, this book will become your beloved friend.

You will also discover the greatest friend of all, Jesus the Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, full of perfect love and boundless compassion, with the power to forgive and forget. It is difficult for me to speak of Him, for I love Him so deeply. May the Spirit bear witness of that love and somehow touch your heart that you may find the courage to take those steps that will bring you peace and tranquility, that will restore your feelings of self-worth and place you on the path to happiness.

We love you; we need you. Please come back. Don't wait until all is in perfect order. We'll walk beside you. We love you. Please come back. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Father, Cheer Our Souls Tonight" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Elder Richard G. Scott, for your beautiful message. Thanks to the choir for the singing of that beautiful hymn—"Father, Cheer Our Souls Tonight."

Elder M. Russell Ballard, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our next speaker.

Elder M. Russell Ballard

My dear brothers and sisters, my wife, Barbara, our family, and I express to you our deep appreciation for your messages of love and support since my call last October to the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Calling of an Apostle

All of my life I have held the Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in great esteem. From the early days of my childhood, the term *Apostle* has been one that my father and mother used with deep reverence. Since my ordination to this special calling, I have had many hours to ponder the sacred responsibility that now rests upon my shoulders.

The calling of an Apostle is to be a special witness of the name of Jesus Christ in all the world, particularly of his divinity and of his bodily resurrection from the dead. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles is "a Traveling Presiding High Council, to officiate in the name of the Lord, under the direction of the Presidency of the Church, agreeable to the institution of heaven; to build up the church, and regulate all the affairs of the same in all nations, first unto the Gentiles and secondly unto the Jews" (D&C 107:33).

The Lord said to Thomas B. Marsh, the President of the Council of the Twelve:

"Now, I say unto you, and what I say unto you, I say unto all the Twelve: Arise and gird up your loins, take up your cross, follow me, and feed my sheep.

"And again, I say unto you, that whosoever ye shall send in my name, by the voice of your brethren, the Twelve, duly recommended and authorized by you, shall have power to open the door of my kingdom unto any nation whithersoever ye shall send them" (D&C 112:14, 21).

South America dedicated

Twelve days ago I returned from South America, where I had visited the people of Uruguay, Argentina, and Colombia. Last December I visited Peru and Brazil. Reflecting upon these two recent assignments, I observed the dramatic growth of the Church among these people.

Elder Parley P. Pratt visited South America in 1851. The work was attempted again in 1925. On Christmas Day of 1925, in the park of Tres de Febrero in Buenos Aires, Argentina, my grandfather, Elder Melvin J. Ballard, dedicated South America for the preaching of the gospel. I quote from the dedicatory prayer:

"Bless the presidents, governors, and the leading officials of these South American countries, that they may kindly receive us and give us permission to open the doors of salvation to the people of these lands. . . .

"And now, oh, Father, by authority of the blessing and appointment by the President of the Church, and *by the authority of the holy apostleship* which I have, I turn the key, unlock, and open the door for the preaching of the Gospel in all these South American nations, and do rebuke and command to be stayed every power that would oppose the preaching of the Gospel in these lands; and we do bless and dedicate these nations of this land for the preaching of thy Gospel. And we do all this that salvation may come to all men, and that thy name may be honored and glorified in this part of the land of Zion" (*Crusader for Righteousness* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966], p. 81; italics added).

The words "by the authority of the holy apostleship" have special meaning to me now as my ministry bears that same authority to accomplish the purposes of our Heavenly Father.

Early missionary work—South America

The original recorded history of the three General Authority missionaries who visited Buenos Aires in 1925 was found there a few days before my arrival this last March 14. I read with great interest of the extreme difficulties that they encountered. The trip from Salt Lake City to Buenos Aires for Elders Melvin J. Ballard, Rey L. Pratt, and Rulon S. Wells was by land and sea, taking thirty-four days. In comparison, my recent trip covering the same distance took twenty-one hours.

There were only four members of the Church in South America in 1925; they greeted the missionaries upon their arrival. To conserve resources, the missionaries rented one hotel room to house all three of them. They moved several times until they finally located a low-cost apartment in which the three of them could live.

Efforts to advertise the first public meetings in the Buenos Aires newspapers were fruitless. The newspapers refused to print an ad. Elder Pratt prepared a handbill in Spanish. Elder Ballard, who spoke only English, distributed these handbills each day. Elder Pratt spent most of his time translating doctrine and hymns into Spanish. Elder Wells, who spoke German, became ill and returned to Church headquarters shortly after his arrival in Argentina.

My brothers and sisters, it is difficult to express my feelings as I read of the early beginnings of missionary work in South America. I am deeply touched to realize that for nearly eight months my grandfather walked the streets of Buenos Aires giving out two hundred to five hundred handbills every day but Sunday, inviting the people to learn the message of the Restoration.

The work among the native Argentines was very difficult. Only one was baptized during the first eight months. On 4 July 1926, Grandfather said:

"The work of the Lord will grow slowly for a time here just as an oak grows slowly from an acorn. It will not shoot up in a day as does the sunflower that grows quickly and then dies. But thousands will join the Church here. It will be divided into more than one mission and will be one of the strongest in the Church. The work here is the smallest that it will ever be. The day will come when the Lamanites in this land will be given a chance. The South American Mission will be a power in the Church" (Vernon Sharp diary, in *Melvin J. Ballard*, p. 84).

Growth of the Church

Sixty years later, the Church in South America has 30 missions, with 5,140 full-time missionaries, of which approximately 60 percent are natives of South America. One hundred eighty-six stakes cover the land, with 2,148 wards and branches dotting the countryside. Approximately 776,000 members of the Church are an evidence of the fulfillment of the dedicatory prayer.

At the regional conference last month in Montevideo, President and Sister J. Thomas Fyans and I met with 3,350 Saints. President and Sister Helio R. Camargo and I met with more than 3,100 Saints in Bogota, Colombia, the following Sunday. The work is prospering in this part of the Lord's vineyard.

Faith, commitment, and love for the Lord

The effective work of the General Authorities of the past and of those of today is evidenced in the faithful lives of the Saints. Thousands of missionaries have served with distinction. Dedicated men and women are leading the Church in their own countries in a magnificent way. It is a joy to see second- and third-generation members living worthy to be leaders in South America.

My brothers and sisters, as I visited with the Saints in South America, the words of Nephi came to mind:

"He doeth not anything save it be for the benefit of the world; for he loveth the world, even that he layeth down his own life that he may draw all men unto him. Wherefore, he commandeth none that they shall not partake of his salvation" (2 Nephi 26:24).

The gospel of Jesus Christ radiates in the faces of the Saints. They express faith and commitment and love for the Lord. They are seeking to be worthy of the full blessings of the gospel. Several Aaronic Priesthood boys dressed in their Scout uniforms greeted me in Bogota. Without hesitation they all told me they will serve as missionaries as soon as they are old enough. With such a spirit, the future of the Church in South America will be in good hands.

I visited the temple in Buenos Aires. Feelings of gratitude welled up within me to know that within the four dedicated temples of South America the fulness of the gospel is blessing the members of the Church.

An example of the marvelous commitment of the Saints of South America was demonstrated by the dear sisters hand crocheting sixty-four altar cloths for the Buenos Aires Temple when only seven were requested.

Responsibility to prepare for temple blessings

My dear brothers and sisters, as a member of the Council of the Twelve, I now know as never before that we live in a big world. Nearly five billion of our Heavenly Father's children live on it. The responsibility of taking the gospel to them rests upon our shoulders. I am impressed, as I now start to see the larger picture, that the stake presidents must take more of the responsibility for preparing their people to receive all the blessings of the gospel. Bishops and branch presidents must do likewise. Our work is not complete until our Father's children enter the temple to receive all of the necessary ordinances to prepare them for celestial living in the presence of our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

Teaching and preparing the members of the Church to be worthy of the temple blessings rests upon the shoulders of the priesthood. There is no substitute, in my opinion, for inspired local leaders. I was most impressed with the conversion stories told by the stake presidencies in Bogota. One stake president, who has served for more than eight years, reported that he was called after only two and one-half years of membership in the Church. The Lord does bless his leaders when they put their trust in him.

Understanding of the Lord's plan

The Church is organized properly. We need to be sure that every man learns his duty and acts "in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence" (see D&C 107:99).

It seems clear to me, as this great work continues to roll forth, that the leaders of the Church at every level, and particularly at the stake and ward levels, need to understand God's plan for his children and then teach these principles to their people.

The building up of the Church will surely be enhanced if all Church leaders will teach the pure, simple, doctrinal truths that bring the children of God to a spiritual understanding. The Lord said:

"And I give unto you a commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom.

"Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you" (D&C 88:77-78).

In my judgment, the greatest motivator that we have in the Church is to have Church members understand the plan of salvation. Stake presidents and bishops, you are the key to having your members come to this understanding.

Every leader should strive to motivate the people to good works by teaching the doctrines of the kingdom. The scriptures are our text, for "in them ye think ye have eternal life" (John 5:39). From them we glean the truths that will open to us a clear understanding of man's eternal possibilities.

Power of priesthood to bless lives of the Saints

I very humbly commit to you, my dear brothers and sisters, that in my calling as a member of the Council of the Twelve, I will do everything within my power to teach the plan of our Father in Heaven for the redemption and exaltation of his children. I will strive to clarify the truths that can provide eternal life for the sons and daughters of God. I pledge to the First Presidency and to you that I will so live that if I ever should be sent to unlock the way for the restored gospel to enter a nation of the earth, I will be prepared the way the first missionaries were when they dedicated and blessed the lands of South America.

We are living in a most exciting time. What a joy it is to know that the power of the holy priesthood is operating throughout the Church to bless the lives of the Saints. It is wonderful to know that the priesthood vested in the latter-day Apostles has, in this dispensation, opened many nations to the preaching of the gospel. Surely in the

future we will see other nations opened in the same remarkable way.

I testify to you that Jesus Christ is the Only Begotten Son of our Eternal Heavenly Father. He is our Savior, our Redeemer, our Friend and Brother. I love him with all my heart and count it the greatest privilege that could ever come to a man to be a special witness to his name throughout the world.

May the Lord bless us, my brothers and sisters, in doing his work, is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Though Deepening Trials" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Elder M. Russell Ballard, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has spoken to us, following which the choir sang "Though Deepening Trials."

President Howard W. Hunter, Acting President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us.

President Howard W. Hunter

Christ conquered death

Alexander the Great, king of Macedonia, pupil of Aristotle, conqueror of most of the known world in his time, was one of the world's great young leaders. After years of exercising military pomp and prowess and after extending his kingdom from Macedonia to Egypt and from Cyprus to India, he wept when there seemed to be no more world to conquer. Then, as evidence of just how ephemeral such power is, Alexander caught a fever and died at thirty-three years of age. The vast kingdom he had gained virtually died with him.

Quite a different young leader also died at what seems such an untimely

age of thirty-three. He likewise was a king, a pupil, and a conqueror. Yet he received no honors from man, achieved no territorial conquests, rose to no political station. So far as we know, he never held a sword nor wore even a single piece of armor. But the kingdom he established still flourishes some two thousand years later. His power was not of this world.

The differences between Alexander and this equally young Nazarene are many. But the greatest difference is in their ultimate victories. Alexander conquered lands, peoples, principalities, and earthly kingdoms. But he who is called the Perfect Leader, he who was and is the Light and Life of the world—Jesus Christ the Son of God—

conquered what neither Alexander nor any other could defeat or overcome: Jesus of Nazareth conquered death. Against the medals and monuments of centuries of men's fleeting victories stands the only monument necessary to mark the eternal triumph—an empty garden tomb.

Easter

Last week, we and all the rest of the Christian world celebrated Easter. In our great general conference of the Church, we lengthen the Easter season today to remember him and honor this pivotal event in the lives of all mankind. As Easter in the Northern Hemisphere ushers in an awakening of life following the barrenness of winter, so Christ's resurrection ushers in the blessing of immortality and the possibility of eternal life. His empty tomb proclaims to all the world, "He is not here, but is risen" (Luke 24:6). These words contain all the hope, assurance, and belief necessary to sustain us in our challenging and sometimes grief-filled lives.

Easter is the celebration of the free gift of immortality given to all men, restoring life and healing all wounds. Though all will die as part of the eternal plan of growth and development, nevertheless we can all find comfort in the Psalmist's statement, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psalm 30:5).

Triumph over physical and spiritual death

It was Job who posed what might be called the question of the ages: "If a man die, shall he live again?" (Job 14:14). Christ's answer rings down through time to this very hour: "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19).

Even with the logic of nature's regeneration and even with the testimony of that empty garden tomb, there are still those who feel the grave is a final destination. But the doctrine of the

Resurrection is the single most fundamental and crucial doctrine in the Christian religion. It cannot be overemphasized, nor can it be disregarded.

Without the Resurrection, the gospel of Jesus Christ becomes a litany of wise sayings and seemingly unexplainable miracles—but sayings and miracles with no ultimate triumph. No, the ultimate triumph is in the ultimate miracle: for the first time in the history of mankind, one who was dead raised himself into living immortality. He was the Son of God, the Son of our immortal Father in Heaven, and his triumph over physical and spiritual death is the good news every Christian tongue should speak.

Witnesses of the Resurrection

The eternal truth is that Jesus Christ arose from the grave and was the firstfruits of the Resurrection. (See 1 Corinthians 15:23.) The witnesses of this wonderful occurrence cannot be impeached.

Among the chosen witnesses are the Lord's Apostles. Indeed, the call to the holy apostleship is one of bearing witness to the world of the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Joseph Smith said, "The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it" (*History of the Church*, 3:30).

Peter, one of the Apostles chosen by the Master during His ministry, made these statements concerning the role of the Apostles as witnesses of the death and resurrection of Jesus:

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36).

"But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, . . . and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the

dead; whereof we are witnesses" (Acts 3:14-15).

"And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him" (Acts 5:32).

Apostles as witnesses

The Apostle Paul commented on what Peter had stated about the Apostles being witnesses of the death and resurrection of Jesus. These are his words:

"And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.

"But God raised him from the dead:

"And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people" (Acts 13:29-31).

On Mars Hill in Athens, Paul said: "[God] hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31), and before King Agrippa he asked this question: "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" (Acts 26:8).

Paul bore his apostolic witness of the Resurrection again in his letter to the Saints at Corinth:

"Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? . . . For the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 9:1-2).

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. . . . In Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:20, 22).

Special witnesses of the name of Christ

I humbly testify of my privilege to bear the holy apostleship and to work daily with a modern Quorum of Twelve Apostles who are disciples of the Lord

Jesus Christ. We are to go forth as "special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world" (D&C 107:23). And so have the Apostles always testified.

In our own day, Apostles and prophets are carrying on the work of bearing witness to the world of Jesus Christ. If I may have the privilege, I wish to repeat what President Marion G. Romney, the President of our present apostolic quorum, said concerning the resurrection of Jesus. Not long ago he made this statement to a general conference of the Church:

"At this Easter season, I am grateful for this opportunity to bear witness to the resurrection of Jesus and to set forth, in part at least, the basis upon which that witness rests.

"He is risen; he is not here" (Mark 16:6). These words, eloquent in their simplicity, announced the most significant event of recorded history, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus—an event so extraordinary that even the Apostles, who had been most intimately associated with Jesus in his earthly ministry and who had been carefully taught of the coming event, had difficulty grasping the reality of its full significance. The first accounts which reached their ears 'seemed to them as idle tales' (Luke 24:11) as well they might, for millions of men had lived and died before that day. In every hill and dale men's bodies mouldered in the dust, but until that first Easter morning not one had risen from the grave. . . .

"That the whole of his mortal life moved toward this consummation, he had repeatedly taught. It was foreshadowed in his statement about laying down his life and taking it up again. To the sorrowing Martha he had said, 'I am the resurrection, and the life' (John 11:25); and to the Jews, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up' (John 2:19). . . .

"The evidence that Jesus was resurrected is conclusive" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1982, pp. 5-7; or *Ensign*, May 1982, p. 6).

Apostolic witness of the Resurrection

To the testimony of President Romney and the witnesses of my Brethren, I add my own apostolic witness that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God; that he was born into mortality and fulfilled his ministry as related in the scriptures, which record his birth, his life, his teachings, and his commandments.

In teaching his Apostles, Christ made known to them "that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again" (Mark 8:31). So it was. He was crucified and placed in the tomb. On the third day, he did arise to live again—the Savior of all mankind and the first-fruits of the Resurrection. Through this atoning sacrifice, all men shall be saved from the grave and shall live again. This always has been the testimony of the Apostles, to which I add my witness, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, President Hunter, for that great testimony.

We thank the managers and operators of the many television and radio systems and cable systems for offering their facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this conference to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

The Tabernacle Choir will sing in conclusion "Where Can I Turn for Peace?" The benediction will then be given by Elder Russell C. Taylor of the First Quorum of the Seventy, after which this conference will be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The choir sang "Where Can I Turn for Peace?"

Elder Russell C. Taylor offered the benediction.

FIRST DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

SECOND SESSION

The second general session of the 156th Annual General Conference began at 2:00 P.M. on Saturday, April 5, 1986. President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

Music for this session was provided by the combined institute choir from Utah Technical College, LDS Business College, University of Utah, Weber State College, and Utah State University under the direction of Don B. Castleton with Clay Christiansen at the organ.

At the beginning of the meeting, President Thomas S. Monson made the following remarks:

President Thomas S. Monson

My beloved brethren and sisters, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked that I conduct this session.

We are pleased to welcome those who are gathered here in the Tabernacle for this, the second general session of the 156th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We also welcome those who are participating by means of television, cable, or radio, and many who are watching in over one thousand stake centers throughout the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico to which the conference is being carried by satellite transmission.

We note that Elders Robert L. Simpson and Yoshihiko Kikuchi are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall.

We are pleased to acknowledge especially our guests who are present this afternoon, along with general and local Church leaders and members from many parts of the world.

We express our appreciation to the owners and operators of many radio and television stations and to the owners and operators of cable systems for their cooperation in making these proceedings available to members and friends of the Church in many countries.

The music for this session will be provided by the combined institute choir from Utah Technical College, LDS Business College, University of Utah, Weber State College, and Utah State University under the direction of Don B. Castleton with Clay Christiansen at the organ.

The choir will begin this service by singing "Come, Follow Me." The invocation will be offered by Elder Franklin D. Richards, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Come, Follow Me."

Elder Franklin D. Richards offered the invocation.

President Monson

The choir will now sing "We Listen to a Prophet's Voice," following which Brother Wilford G. Edling will read the auditor's report and Brother F. Michael Watson will present the statistical report of the Church for the year 1985.

The choir sang "We Listen to a Prophet's Voice."

Auditor's Report 1985

Wilford G. Edling

We have reviewed the annual financial report of the Church as of 31 December 1985 and the operations for the year then ended. The financial statements and operations reviewed by the committee include the general funds of the Church and of other controlled organizations, the accounts of which are maintained by the Finance and Records Department of the Church. We have also examined the budgeting, accounting, and auditing procedures employed and the manner in which funds are received and expenditures are controlled. We determined that expenditures of general Church funds were authorized by the First Presidency and by budgetary procedures. The budget is authorized by the Council on Disposition of Tithes, composed of the First Presidency, the

Council of the Twelve, and the Presiding Bishopric. The Appropriations Committee, in weekly meetings, administers major expenditures under the budget.

Modern accounting technology and equipment are employed by the Finance and Records Department and other departments in keeping abreast of rapid Church expansion and changing methods of electronic data processing.

The Auditing Department, which is independent of all other departments, functions in the threefold capacity of performing financial audits, operational audits, and audits of the computer systems employed by the Church. These services are performed on a continuing basis for Church departments and other Church-controlled organizations, the accounts of which are maintained by or under the direction of the Finance and Records Department.

These comprise worldwide operations including missions, schools, administrative offices, and departmental activities. The extent and scope of the Auditing Department services in safeguarding the resources of the Church are expanding to encompass the growth and widening activities of the Church. The audits of local funds of wards and stakes are performed by stake auditors, the reports of which are reviewed by the Church Auditing Department. Incorporated businesses owned or controlled by the Church, for which accounts are not maintained in the Finance and Records Department, are audited by an internal staff of certified public accountants, independent professional auditing firms, or government regulatory agencies.

Based on our review of the annual financial report and other data, and our study of the accounting and auditing methods by which financial operations are controlled, together with continuing discussions with personnel of the Finance and Records and Auditing departments and Church legal representatives, we are of the opinion that the general funds of the Church, received and expended during the year 1985, have been properly accounted for in accordance with established procedures outlined herein.

Respectfully submitted,

Church Audit Committee
Wilford G. Edling
David M. Kennedy
Warren E. Pugh
Merrill J. Bateman
Ted E. Davis

Statistical Report 1985

F. Michael Watson

For the information of the members of the Church, the First Presidency has issued the following statistical report concerning the growth and status of the Church as of 31 December 1985. (Membership figures include estimates based on 1985 reports available prior to conference.)

Church Units

Number of stakes	1,582
Number of districts	352
Number of missions	188
Number of wards	10,168
Number of branches	
in stakes	2,766
Number of branches	
in missions	2,071
Number of sovereign countries	
with organized wards	
or branches	95
Number of territories, colonies,	
and possessions with organized	
wards or branches	20

(These statistics reflect an increase of 75 stakes and 542 wards and branches during 1985.)

Church Membership

Total membership at the close of 1985	5,920,000
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Church Growth during 1985

Increase in children	
of record	95,000
Children of record	
baptized	70,000
Converts baptized	197,640

Priesthood

Deacons	248,000
Teachers	186,000
Priests	375,000
Elders	481,000
Seventies	33,000
High Priests	208,000

Missionaries

Full-time Missionaries	29,265
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Genealogical Data

Names cleared in 1985 for temple
endowments 10,552,130

Temples

Number of endowments performed
during 1985:
For the living 54,554
For the dead 4,857,052
Temples in operation 37
Temples planned or under
construction 10
Temples closed during the year
for renovation 1
Five temples were dedicated and one
rededicated in 1985.

Church Educational System

Total enrollment during 1984-85
school year:
Seminaries and Institutes, including
special programs 349,827
Church schools and
colleges 45,558
Continuing education 366,257

Welfare Services

Persons assisted by LDS Social
Services 82,804
Persons placed in gainful
employment 34,552

Man-days of labor donated to
Welfare Services 244,766
Bishop's orders from
storehouses 344,562

**Prominent Members Who Have
Passed Away Since Last April**

President Spencer W. Kimball, twelfth President of the Church, at age ninety, on November 5, 1985; Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles; Norma P. Anderson, wife of Elder Joseph Anderson; Dorothy C. Stone, wife of Elder O. Leslie Stone; and Richard P. Condie, director of the Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir for seventeen years.

President Monson

Thank you, Brother Edling and Brother Watson.

It will now be our opportunity to hear from Elder James E. Faust, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. He will be our first speaker, and he will be followed by Bishop Glenn L. Pace, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric.

Elder James E. Faust**Care for poor and needy, and
become self-reliant**

I wish to speak of the basic principles that keep our feet on the ground economically. This is important to our happiness. Let us examine ourselves and, like pilots in the sky, take our bearings to see if we are on course financially. We must build upon sound principles. The bedrock principle of which I speak is that the responsibility for welfare rests with me and my family. In 1936 the First Presidency said in a great statement of purpose, "The aim of the Church is to help the people to

help themselves" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1936, p. 3).

Some of us are children of the Great Depression in the United States over fifty years ago. Most of us who passed through that period will never forget the difficult economic times almost everyone experienced. At that time many banks failed; people lost their life's savings; a great many were unemployed, and some of them lost their homes because they could not pay the mortgage. Many went hungry. If we didn't eat our oatmeal cereal for breakfast, we would often have it fried for lunch or dinner. Such widespread

economic problems could come again. But any of us, at any time, could meet with a personal calamity, such as sickness or an accident, which could limit or destroy our income.

The purpose of the welfare program is to care for the poor and the needy and make the members of the Church, by their obedience to gospel principles, strong and self-reliant. At the center of caring for the poor and the needy in a worldwide church is a generous contribution to the fast offerings, and personal and family preparedness. At the very heart of taking care of our own needs is our own energy and ability, with help to and from our own families.

I should like to discuss five prescriptions which, if followed, will make each of us better able to control our destinies.

First prescription: Practice thrift and frugality

There is a wise old saying: "Eat it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without." Thrift is a practice of not wasting anything. Some people are able to get by because of the absence of expense. They have their shoes resoled, they patch, they mend, they sew, and they save money. They avoid installment buying, and make purchases only after saving enough to pay cash, thus avoiding interest charges. *Frugality* means to practice careful economy. (See *Webster's New World Dictionary*, 2d. college edition.)

The old couplet "Waste not, want not" still has much merit. Frugality requires that we live within our income and save a little for a rainy day, which always seems to come. It means avoiding debt and carefully limiting credit purchasing. It is important to learn to distinguish between wants and needs. It takes self-discipline to avoid the "buy now, pay later" philosophy and to adopt the "save now and buy later" practice.

There are some investment counselors who urge speculative credit prac-

tices described as "leverage," "credit wealth," and "borrow yourself rich." Such practices may work successfully for some, but at best they succeed only for a time. An economic reversal always seems to come, and many who have followed such practices find themselves in financial ruin and their lives in shambles.

Elder Ezra Taft Benson stated: "A large proportion of families with personal debt have no liquid assets whatsoever to fall back upon. What troubles they invite if their income should be suddenly cut off or seriously reduced! We all know of families who have obligated themselves for more than they could pay" (*Pay Thy Debt, and Live*, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year [Provo, 28 Feb. 1963], p. 10).

Owning a home free of debt is an important goal of provident living, although it may not be a realistic possibility for some. A mortgage on a home leaves a family unprotected against severe financial storms. Homes that are free and clear of mortgages and liens cannot be foreclosed on. When there are good financial times, it is the most opportune time to retire our debts and pay installments in advance. It is a truth that "the borrower is servant to the lender" (Proverbs 22:7).

Many young people have become so hypnotized by the rhythm of monthly payments they scarcely think of the total cost of what they buy. They immediately want things it took their parents years to acquire. It is not the pathway to happiness to assume debts for a big home, an expensive car, or the most stylish clothes just so we can "keep up with the Joneses." Payment of obligations is a sacred trust. Most of us will never be rich, but we can feel greatly unburdened when we are debt-free.

Second prescription: Seek to be independent

The Lord said that it is important for the Church to "stand independent

above all other creatures beneath the celestial world" (D&C 78:14). Members of the Church are also counseled to be independent. Independence means many things. It means being free of drugs that addict, habits that bind, and diseases that curse. It also means being free of personal debt and of the interest and carrying charges required by debt the world over.

President J. Reuben Clark's classic statement on interest bears repeating:

"Interest never sleeps nor sickens nor dies; it never goes to the hospital; it works on Sundays and holidays; it never takes a vacation; it never visits nor travels; it takes no pleasure; it is never laid off work nor discharged from employment; it never works on reduced hours; it never has short crops nor droughts; it never pays taxes; it buys no food; it wears no clothes; it is unhoused and without home and so has no repairs, no replacements, no shingling, plumbing, painting, or whitewashing; it has neither wife, children, father, mother, nor kinfolk to watch over and care for; it has no expense of living; it has neither weddings nor births nor deaths; it has no love, no sympathy; it is as hard and soulless as a granite cliff. Once in debt, interest is your companion every minute of the day and night; you cannot shun it or slip away from it; you cannot dismiss it; it yields neither to entreaties, demands, or orders; and whenever you get in its way or cross its course or fail to meet its demands, it crushes you" (in Conference Report, Apr., 1938, p. 103).

Extended economic dependence humiliates a man if he is strong, and debilitates him if he is weak.

Payment of our tithes and offerings can help us become independent. President Nathan Eldon Tanner said: "Paying tithing is discharging a debt to the Lord. . . .

"If we obey this commandment, we are promised that we will 'prosper in the land.' This prosperity consists of more than material goods—it may include enjoying good health and vigor of

mind. It includes family solidarity and spiritual increase" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1979, p. 119; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, p. 81).

It is my firm belief, after many years of close observation, that those who honestly pay their tithes and offerings do prosper and get along better in almost every way. It is my testimony that in discharging this debt to the Lord, one enjoys great personal satisfaction. Unfortunately this great satisfaction will be known only by those who have the faith and strength to keep this commandment.

Third prescription: Be industrious

To be industrious involves energetically managing our circumstances to our advantage. It also means to be enterprising and to take advantage of opportunities. Industry requires resourcefulness. A good idea can be worth years of struggle.

A friend who owned some fertile fields complained to his sister about his lack of means. "What about your crops?" asked the sister. The impoverished man replied, "There was so little snow in the mountains, I thought there would be a drought, so I did not plant." As it turned out, unforeseen spring rains made the crops bountiful for those industrious enough to plant. It is a denial of the divinity within us to doubt our potential and our possibilities.

The great poet Virgil said, "They conquer who believe they can" (*International Dictionary of Thoughts*, comp. John P. Bradley, Leo F. Daniels, Thomas C. Jones [Chicago: J.C. Ferguson Publishing Co., 1969], p. 661). Alma testified, speaking of a just God, "I know that he granteth unto men according to their desire" (Alma 29:4).

To be industrious involves work. It involves creativity. It also involves rest. It includes both aspects of Sabbath day observance. On the one hand, we are to labor six days. On the other hand, we are to rest one day. This rest will leave us with more energy and re-

sources to make the rest of the week more productive and fruitful.

Fourth prescription: Become self-reliant

I have always admired those who have the ability and skills to make things with their hands. When those skills were passed out in the previous world, I must have been out to lunch. The ability to make repairs around the home, to improvise, to take care of our own machinery, to keep our automobiles running, is not only an economic advantage, but it also provides much emotional resilience.

President Spencer W. Kimball counseled: "I hope that we understand that, while having a garden, for instance, is often useful in reducing food costs and making available delicious fresh fruits and vegetables, it does much more than this. Who can gauge the value of that special chat between daughter and Dad as they weed or water the garden? How do we evaluate the good that comes from the obvious lessons of planting, cultivating, and the eternal law of the harvest? And how do we measure the family togetherness and cooperating that must accompany successful canning? Yes, we are laying up resources in store, but perhaps the greater good is contained in the lessons of life we learn as we live providently and extend to our children their pioneer heritage" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1977, p. 125; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, p. 78). This heritage includes teaching our children how to work.

Fifth prescription: Strive to have a year's supply of food and clothing

The counsel to have a year's supply of basic food, clothing, and commodities was given fifty years ago and has been repeated many times since. Every father and mother are the family's storekeepers. They should store whatever their own family would like to have in the case of an emergency. Most of us cannot afford to store a

year's supply of luxury items, but find it more practical to store staples that might keep us from starving in case of emergency. Surely we all hope that the hour of need will never come. Some have said, "We have followed this counsel in the past and have never had need to use our year's supply, so we have difficulty keeping this in mind as a major priority." Perhaps following this counsel could be the reason why they have not needed to use their reserve. By continued rotation of the supply it can be kept usable with no waste.

The Church cannot be expected to provide for every one of its millions of members in case of public or personal disaster. It is therefore necessary that each home and family do what they can to assume the responsibility for their own hour of need. If we do not have the resources to acquire a year's supply, then we can strive to begin with having one month's supply. I believe if we are provident and wise in the management of our personal and family affairs and are faithful, God will sustain us through our trials. He has revealed: "For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare; yea, I prepared all things, and have given unto the children of men to be agents unto themselves" (D&C 104:17).

Much of our own well-being is bound up in caring for others. Good King Benjamin, speaking through the pages of the Book of Mormon, counsels, "I would that ye should impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally, according to their wants" (Mosiah 4:26).

A lamp to light the way

You may ask, "How can I discern which of the prophetic utterances of this conference have a particular message for me?" My answer is, you can know. You can know by the whisperings of the Holy Spirit if you righ-

teously and earnestly seek to know. Your own inspiration will be an unerring vibration through the companionship of the Holy Ghost. As the Lord spoke to Elijah, this will come, not in the great strong wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in a still, small voice. (See 1 Kings 19:11-12.) This will help us, if necessary, to make the required change in our lives and life-styles to get onto a sure course.

The parable of the ten virgins, five wise and five foolish, has both a spiritual and a temporal application. Each of us has a lamp to light the way, but it requires that every one of us put the oil in our own lamps to produce that light. It is not enough to sit idly by and say, "The Lord will provide." He has prom-

ised that they who are wise and "have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide" will have the earth given unto them (D&C 45:57-58). It is further promised that "the Lord shall be in their midst, and his glory shall be upon them, and he will be their king and their lawgiver" (D&C 45:59). May it ever be so I pray humbly in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder James E. Faust, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Bishop Glenn L. Pace, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric.

Bishop Glenn L. Pace

Meetings with President Marion G. Romney

Five years ago I was asked to be the managing director of the Welfare Services Department of the Church. Within a few days I received a phone call from President Marion G. Romney. He said, "Brother Pace, do you know anything about welfare?"

Under the circumstances, this was a sobering question, and I responded, "President, I'm sure I have much to learn."

He asked me to set aside 3:00 P.M. each Friday for a meeting with him in which we could discuss welfare principles.

When I arrived at his office on the first Friday, President Romney's secretary went into his office and announced, "Glenn Pace is here, President."

He replied, "Oh yes, I'd like to see him, if he doesn't stay too long."

On my second visit, with "if he doesn't stay too long" still ringing in my ears, I covered two items and then started shuffling my feet and papers, subtly signaling I was ready to leave.

President Romney leaned across his desk with that twinkle in his eye and with a chuckle in his voice said, "Brother Pace, am I getting the impression you think you have something better to do?"

Purpose of welfare program

How I cherish those precious sessions spent with a man who has dedicated fifty years of service to the kingdom, especially in the area of welfare. He helped me to know President Harold B. Lee, President J. Reuben Clark, and other great leaders who emphasized the principles of welfare. I was counseled to measure all recommendations by the stated purpose of the welfare program as given by President Heber J. Grant in 1936.

President Romney would quote it from memory: "Our primary purpose was to set up, in so far as it might be possible, a system under which the curse of idleness would be done away with, the evils of a dole abolished, and independence, industry, thrift and self respect be once more established amongst our people. The aim of the

Church is to help the people to help themselves" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1936, p. 3).

Seek after the poor

Many times President Romney emphasized that the notion of the welfare program beginning in 1936 was a myth. He quoted President Lee, who said: "There wasn't any beginning to the welfare program. There isn't any ending of the welfare program, we are always in the middle of it. No endings, no beginnings, only middles" ("Listen and Obey," Welfare Agricultural Meeting, 3 Apr. 1971).

He quoted scriptures relating to the commandment to seek after the poor—scriptures given to the Saints in Kirtland, Ohio, and Jackson County, Missouri, at a time when almost all members were poor. He pointed out what was done relative to keeping these commands in Nauvoo in the 1840s and in the West in the late 1800s and in the early 1900s. He quoted Book of Mormon passages and used the New Testament to emphasize how much of the Savior's time was spent helping the poor and needy.

He made the process sound so simple. "Brother Pace, don't make things so complicated! All we have been trying to do is make our people self-reliant, because the more self-reliant one is, the more able to serve he becomes, and the more he serves, the greater his sanctification."

Principles and objectives

Over the years, there have been numerous approaches taken with the common goal of helping people become self-reliant. The welfare plan unveiled to inspired leaders in 1936 has become famous and is held up as an enviable example by leaders of other religions as well as government officials in high places.

As great as the various programs of the Church are, they carry with them a potential danger. If we are not care-

ful, it is possible to get so wrapped up in the plan that we forget the principles. We can fall into the trap of mistaking traditions for principles and confusing programs with their objectives.

One Saturday morning I was on my way to fulfill an assignment on a welfare farm. We were to clean the weeds out of an irrigation ditch. My route took me past the home of an elderly widow in my ward, who was weeding her front yard. The temperature was already in the mid-eighties and she looked like she was near to having a sunstroke. For a fleeting moment I thought I should stop and lend a helping hand, but my conscience allowed me to drive on by because, after all, I had an assignment on the welfare farm. I wonder what would have happened if I had followed the spontaneous prompting of the Spirit and unleashed the genuine compassion I was feeling. I wonder what would have happened to her; I wonder what would have happened to me. But I couldn't do that because I hadn't been assigned. We need more spontaneous acts of compassionate service.

Principles and programs

In 1983 some major modifications were made to the welfare program being followed in the United States and Canada. In making the announcement, President [Gordon B.] Hinckley said, "Permit me to say at the outset that that which you will hear has been considered in depth in all of its implications by the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve. . . .

"We reaffirm the basic principles of the welfare program. There will be no departure from those foundation principles. We feel the need to emphasize with greater clarity the obligation for members of the Church to become more independent and self-reliant, to increase personal and family responsibility, to cultivate spiritual growth and to be more fully involved in Christian service" (Regional Representatives' seminar, 1 Apr. 1983).

Since these changes have been announced, some have asked if the Church is abandoning or de-emphasizing welfare. This question is common only to those who are having trouble distinguishing the difference between a principle and a program.

At the conclusion of a General Welfare Services Executive Committee meeting, where I felt I had waxed eloquent in discussing farms, trucks, silos, and canneries, President Romney invited me into his office for an unscheduled meeting. He asked one question, "Brother Pace, why is it we never discuss principles and doctrine anymore?"

I have not been the same since I heard that penetrating inquiry. From that time until my release as the managing director of Welfare Services three years later, I vowed to be more diligent in evaluating programs to see if they were still accomplishing their objective relative to principles.

Still true is President Lee's statement: "Nobody changes the principles and doctrines of the Church except the Lord by revelation. But methods change as the inspired direction comes to those who preside at a given time. . . . You may be sure that your brethren who preside are praying most earnestly, and we do not move until we have the assurance, so far as lies within our power, that what we do has the seal of divine approval" (*Ensign*, Jan. 1971, p. 10).

"Welfare program" in other countries

As I travel into various countries, I am often asked, "When are we going to get the welfare program in this country?" I have responded by asking if they have a Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price. I also ask if they have bishops or branch presidents, and if there are people with needs and people who can help. When they answer yes, I explain they already have all the ingredients

necessary to activate a welfare program in their country.

During a trip to South America a few years ago, I spoke with a stake president whose stake had experienced over 50 percent unemployment during the previous three years. I knew the stake had received less than \$200 from the Area office during that period. I asked him how the members had been able to survive without a large infusion of outside help. His answer was the families had helped each other—not just father, mother, sons, and daughters, but uncles, aunts, and cousins. When a cousin got a job, the money earned went to benefit everyone. In addition, ward members looked after each other and shared what they had, however so meager. With tears in his eyes he explained how close his stake members were to each other and to the Lord. Their spirituality had increased manifold. Did they have the welfare program? Yes—and in its purest form.

Disposition to do good

I fear we have learned too much over the years about programs at the expense of insufficient understanding of principles. If we had learned more principles, priesthood leaders all over the world would be solving local problems with local resources without waiting for something to come from Church headquarters. Members would be helping each other without waiting for an assignment.

Programs blindly followed bring us to a *discipline* of doing good, but principles properly understood and practiced bring us to a *disposition* to do good.

I visited Ethiopia last year with Elder Ballard. We came home with vivid pictures of degradation and poverty etched indelibly in our minds. However, I am haunted more often with memories of the conditions under which some of our own members are living in other areas of the world. If every member could travel and observe

these conditions, our fast-offering donations would increase substantially.

Generosity and compassion of members

Moroni was prophesying of our day when he said: "Behold, I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not. But behold, Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing. . . .

"For behold, ye do love money, and your substance, and your fine apparel, and the adorning of your churches, more than ye love the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted" (Mormon 8:35, 37).

I have great faith in the generosity and compassion of the membership of this church. Never has it been demonstrated more clearly than during the special fasts held in January and November of last year. Over ten million dollars were raised for people we don't even know. Our members respond when they are aware of a need. Brothers and sisters, that need has not passed. There is much to be done among our own members.

Create independence and self-reliance

Poverty is a relative term. It means something much different in one country than in another. There is no common solution or program for every situation. However, principles are universal. We cannot bring everyone to the same economic level. To do so would violate principles and foster dependence rather than independence. People living in each country have the primary responsibility for solving their own problems. They must sacrifice for each other because, as the Prophet Joseph Smith said, "A religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation" (*Lectures on Faith* 6:7).

Members of the Church everywhere should ask themselves not

"What can the Church do for me?" but "What can I do for myself, for the Church, and for my neighbors?"

The solutions to poverty are extremely complex, and the balance between too much aid and not enough is very elusive. Our compassion can lead to failure if we give aid without creating independence and self-reliance in the recipient.

Challenges of our generation

However, there is a state of human misery below which no Latter-day Saint should descend as long as others are living in abundance. Can some of us be content living affluent life-styles while others cannot afford the chlorine to purify their water? Can we ignore the most basic temporal needs of our brothers and sisters and profess belief in President Joseph F. Smith's statement that "a religion that has not the power to save people temporally . . . cannot be depended upon to save them spiritually"? (quoted in Albert E. Bowen, *The Church Welfare Plan*, Sunday School Gospel Doctrine course, 1946, p. 36).

In 1936 we had a depression in the United States. Based on principles, a program was designed to fit the circumstances. Today we are an international church, and in many countries, the Saints face problems far more serious than those. Using welfare principles, solutions can be found to the challenges of today and tomorrow. May the Lord bless President Marion G. Romney and those with whom he labored for bringing to us an understanding of welfare principles. May we be as successful in meeting the challenges of our generation as our predecessors were in meeting theirs, is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have just listened to Bishop Glenn L. Pace, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric. The choir and congregation will now join in singing "I

Need Thee Every Hour," following which Elder Russell M. Nelson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will address us.

The choir and congregation sang
 "I Need Thee Every Hour."

Elder Russell M. Nelson

Poor and needy always with us

Since my previous medical work took Sister Nelson and me to a number of developing nations, we have been exposed to many challenging scenes. In one country, so many people were sleeping in the streets and on sidewalks that we literally had to step over them as we walked. In another nation, our compassion was stretched almost to the breaking point as we yearned to help countless people in need. Young mothers with babies bundled on their backs begged for money while paddling their little sampan boats, which served both as their shelter and as their mode of transportation. And, oh, how our hearts ached for young men and women of another country who, one by one, were strapped as beasts of burden to wooden-wheeled carts heavily laden with weighty cargo. As far as our eyes could see, the endless caravan of vehicles continued, pulled by dint of human toil.

Although reasons vary according to time and place, the poor and the needy have nearly always been present. Regardless of cause, our Heavenly Father is concerned for them. They are all his children. He loves and cares for them.

Old Testament: Blessings to those who care for the poor

Lessons from the Old Testament remind us that when the Lord sent prophets to call Israel back from apostasy, in almost every instance, one of the first charges made was that the poor had been neglected.

Scriptures teach us that the poor—especially widows, orphans, and strangers—have long been the concern

of God and the godly. The poor have been especially favored by the law. Old Testament teachings authorized poor persons at harvest time to glean after the reapers. At fruit-picking time, what was left hanging on branches belonged to the poor. In the sabbatical seventh year, and in the jubilee fiftieth year, land was not planted nor tilled, and what grew of itself was free for the hungry.

To those who cared for the poor, blessings were promised. The Lord would deliver them in time of trouble. (See Psalm 41:1.) Truths were taught by these proverbs: "He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he" (Proverbs 14:21). "The righteous considereth the cause of the poor: but the wicked regardeth not to know it" (Proverbs 29:7).

New Testament: A binding obligation to care for the poor

During the Savior's earthly ministry, he reemphasized his timeless concern for the poor. Remember the reply the Lord gave to the question of the rich man: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell [all] that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me" (Matthew 19:21; see also Luke 18:22).

In one of the Master's precious parables, he illustrated this doctrine with the story of one who was hungry and was given meat, another who was thirsty and was given drink, and a stranger who was welcomed. The Lord related those as favors to him when he taught, "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40).

And when they were *not* ministered unto, he admonished, "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it *not* to one of the least of these, ye did it *not* to me" (Matthew 25:45; italics added).

Indeed, the Church in New Testament times also had a binding obligation to care for the poor. (See also Luke 14:12-14, 16:19-31; Acts 2:44-45, 4:32, 6:1-6, 11:27-30; Romans 15:26; Galatians 2:10; James 2:1-9.)

Book of Mormon: Obligation for poor

The Book of Mormon repeatedly declares this doctrine. From it we learn that care of the poor is an obligation that we take upon ourselves at the time of baptism. The prophet Alma so taught:

"Ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light;

"Yea, and [ye] are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, . . . even until death. . . .

"Serve him and keep his commandments" (Mosiah 18:8-10).

Every person so baptized who receives the gift of the Holy Ghost, which seals the ordinance, is under solemn covenant with the Lord to obey his commandments. *Caring for the poor is one of those commandments.* Surely, in Book of Mormon times, members of the Church had a sacred obligation to care for the poor. (See 2 Nephi 9:30; Mosiah 4:16-27; Alma 1:29-31, 32:2-6, 34:28; Helaman 4:11-12; Mormon 8:35-39.)

Doctrine and Covenants: Relief to the poor and needy

Few, if any, of the Lord's instructions are stated more often, or given greater emphasis, than the commandment to care for the poor and the needy. Our dispensation is no exception.

In December 1830, the very year in which The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized, the Lord declared that "the poor and the meek shall have the gospel preached unto them, and they shall be looking forth for the time of my coming, for it is nigh at hand" (D&C 35:15).

Bishops were designated and their duties defined: "They shall look to the poor and the needy, and administer to their relief that they shall not suffer" (D&C 38:35).

In 1831, the Lord said: "Remember the poor. . . . Inasmuch as ye impart of your substance unto the poor, ye will do it unto me" (D&C 42:30-31). A little later, he again declared, "Visit the poor and the needy and administer to their relief" (D&C 44:6). Later the same year, he warned: "Wo unto you rich men, that will not give your substance to the poor, for your riches will canker your souls" (D&C 56:16).

"In mine own way"

With these teachings throbbing in our ears, stated and restated in accounts to all people in all days of recorded scripture, let our thoughts return to the homeless, beggars in boats, human beasts of burden, and to multitudes stricken with poverty.

Is it possible to be faithful to our solemn obligation to care for the poor and needy, to lift them and to love them—worldwide?

Where shall we begin?

When?

How?

Hear the answer of Almighty God:

"I, the Lord, stretched out the heavens, and built the earth, my very handiwork; and all things therein are mine.

"And it is my purpose to provide for my saints, for all things are mine.

"But it must needs be done in mine own way; and behold this is the way that I, the Lord, have decreed to provide for my saints, that the poor shall be exalted, in that the rich are made low.

"For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare; yea, I prepared all things, and have given unto the children of men to be agents unto themselves.

"Therefore, if any man shall take of the abundance which I have made, and impart not his portion, according to the law of my gospel, unto the poor and the needy, he shall, with the wicked, lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment" (D&C 104:14-18).

The Lord's prescription

I repeat the Lord's prescription: "But it must needs be done *in mine own way*!" We begin where we are, now, and work according to his plan. His "own way" includes these principles:

"Women have claim on their husbands for their maintenance. . . . [And] all children have claim upon their parents. . . . And after that, they have claim upon the church, or . . . upon the Lord's storehouse, if their parents have not. . . . And the storehouse shall be kept by the consecrations of the church; and widows and orphans shall be provided for, as also the poor" (D&C 83:2, 4-6).

An important part of the Lord's storehouse is maintained as a year's supply, stored, where possible, in the homes of faithful families of the Church.

Now, some may ask, "What about those who are poor because they are idle and unwilling to work?" They should heed these words of warning:

"Thou shalt not be idle; for he that is idle shall not eat the bread nor wear the garments of the laborer" (D&C 42:42).

"Wo unto you poor men . . . who will not labor with your own hands!" (D&C 56:17).

Judgment of worthiness is made by the bishop, and ultimately by the Lord, as taught by Nephi: "With righteousness shall the Lord God judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth" (2 Nephi 30:9).

Ours is not to judge; ours is a covenantal obligation to care for the poor and the needy, to prepare for their re-joining when the Messiah shall come again. (See D&C 56:18-19.)

Reliance on self, then family, then the Church

The Lord's "own way" includes, first, reliance on self, then on the family. As parents care for their children, they, in turn, may reciprocate when parents become less able. Family pride promotes solicitude for each member, taking priority over other assistance.

If one's family can't help, the Lord's "own way" includes the Church organization. The bishop is assisted by priesthood quorums and good sisters of the Relief Society, organized to look "to the wants of the poor, searching after objects of charity and . . . administering to their wants" (*Handbook of the Relief Society*, 1931, pp. 22).

Members of priesthood quorums and groups have a duty to rehabilitate, spiritually and temporally, their erring or unfortunate brethren. While a bishop extends aid to one temporarily out of work, the quorum arranges for his employment until fully self-supporting again.

As individual members of the Church, you and I participate in the Lord's "own way." At least once a month, we fast and pray and contribute generous offerings to funds that enable bishops to disperse aid. This is part of the law of the gospel. Each of us truly can help the poor and the needy, now, and wherever they are. And we, too, will be blessed and protected from apostasy by so doing.

"We have so much!"

Limitations do exist. Measures of relief are at best temporary. Storehouses can provide only for some temporal needs. All people cannot be

brought to the same living standards. And all needed things cannot be achieved by goods or gold.

To care fully for the poor, we must help the poor to change. As they are taught and abide doctrines of Deity, spiritual strength will come that enlightens the mind and liberates the soul from the yoke of bondage. When people of the earth accept the gospel of Christ, their attitudes change. Their understanding and capabilities increase.

A poet sensed the great power of the Spirit of the Lord to lift an individual when he wrote:

The chief of all thy wondrous
works,
Supreme of all thy plan;
Thou hast put an upward reach
Within the heart of man.
(Author unknown)

That upward reach, drawn from a knowledge of divine doctrines, transforms souls! May I share an illustration with you? Once, Sister Nelson and I were invited to the humble home of Polynesian Saints who had relatively recently joined the Church. By walking carefully on wooden planks, we approached their house, built on wooden piles emerging from the floor of the sea. We climbed a ladder to enter their little one-room dwelling. As we were invited to be seated on freshly woven grass mats, we could peek through holes in the floor and view sea water below. That home was starkly devoid of furniture, except for a used sewing machine provided by sisters of the Relief Society. But the love and warmth of this special family were apparent as our visit continued.

"We would like to sing for you," the father said through an interpreter. He put one arm about his wife and the other about the children, as did his wife. Five little ones, dressed in newly sewn clothing, joined their parents in singing songs the father had composed.

Concluding, he said: "These songs express our feelings of deep gratitude. Before we joined the

Church, we had so little. Now we have so much!"

While wiping tears from our moistened cheeks, Sister Nelson and I looked at each other, comprehending that the gospel brings spiritual wealth which may bear little relation, at first, to tangible abundance. Conversely, people with plenty can be spiritually poor. Yet the Lord is concerned for them all!

In the Lord's "own way"

Missionary work throughout the world is part of his plan. It brings the light of the gospel to those who embrace the truth. Then, as Saints learn and obey the commandments of God, they will prosper. This promise has been recorded by prophets throughout time and in diverse places. (See Joshua 1:7; 1 Kings 2:3; 2 Chronicles 24:20, 31:21; Ezra 6:14; 1 Nephi 2:20, 4:14; 2 Nephi 1:9, 20, 4:4; Jarom 1:9; Omni 1:6; Mosiah 1:7, 2:22, 31; Alma 9:13, 36:1, 30, 37:13, 38:1, 48:15, 25.)

Working with a will, Saints gain a new appreciation of who they are and of their eternal worth. Righteousness, independence, thrift, industry, and self-reliance become personal goals. These qualities transform lives. In time, in the Lord's "own way," the poor will no longer be poor.

The Church of Jesus Christ has been restored to the earth. The power of God is among men. Angelic ministrants communicate to legal administrators once again. A living prophet, the everlasting priesthood, covenant people, and the Lord's "own way" are upon the earth to bless mankind, all races, in every clime—yes, all people, young and old, wealthy and poor, now and forever more. This I testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Russell M. Nelson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us. Prior to

his remarks we sang "I Need Thee Every Hour." Perhaps you would wish to know that that hymn was President Spencer W. Kimball's favorite hymn. It is a favorite hymn of President Ezra Taft Benson, and the hymn we most frequently sing, more than any other, in

the temple meetings of the General Authorities.

We shall now hear from Bishop Robert D. Hales, Presiding Bishop of the Church. He will be followed by Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Bishop Robert D. Hales

Welfare taught by prophets

My brothers and sisters, throughout the history of the world, the Lord has been concerned for the eternal welfare of the souls of his children. Over the past fifty years, inspired leaders have taught welfare principles to help us plan ahead for difficult times that may come in our lives. The Church has grown and is now spread over many countries throughout the world. But the strength of the Church and the Lord's real storehouse is in the homes and hearts of his people.

A few months ago, after returning home from an assignment abroad, I became very ill from an amoebic disorder. With pain, dehydration, fever, and total enervation, an important welfare lesson was learned—that one could suddenly be thrust into a condition of intense need. Experiences such as this help us to become more aware of the needs of others and to realize that many people throughout the world live with these problems every day.

During the past few months, I have read and pondered the scriptures as well as discourses on welfare given at general conferences over the past fifty years. The great teachings of priesthood welfare principles have been taught by many prophets who have gone before in this and other dispensations, and by living prophets here today. They give us direction for the conduct of our lives.

The following seven welfare principles are essential to our happiness and spiritual development:

1. The welfare plan is an integral part of the plan of salvation.

2. The scriptures provide the spiritual framework for the welfare plan.

3. The welfare plan builds faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. By living welfare principles, we can develop self-reliance.

5. The welfare plan builds love and compassion for our fellowmen.

6. The welfare plan sanctifies both the giver and the receiver.

7. The welfare plan builds a Zion people.

1. The welfare plan is an integral part of the plan of salvation

Some have become confused about what "welfare" really means. Some approaches to welfare in the world foster idleness, give subsidies with no labor required, create a burden of debt, and promote greediness—an appetite for things of this world rather than the riches of eternity.

Too often rich and poor alike shut their hearts to the divine attributes of love and compassion. The rich languish in their abundance and justify turning the poor away as "welfare cases." The poor are likewise entrapped, becoming dependent on others in a system destined to trample initiative, undermine family responsibility, foster divisiveness, and erect barriers to equity, opportunity, and fellowship.

The Lord rejects such welfare programs. His plan meets the needs of all, however abundant or modest their cir-

cumstances. His purpose is to provide for our eternal welfare. "The prime duty of help to the poor [in body and spirit] . . . is not [solely] to bring temporal relief to their needs, but salvation to their souls" (J. Reuben Clark, Jr., address given 9 July 1941, transcript, Church Historical Department).

We are also told that "the Lord in his great infinite goodness doth bless and prosper those who put their trust in him" (Helaman 12:1). However, it is the disposition of many men that when all things are done for them, they "harden their hearts, and do forget the Lord their God, and do trample under their feet the Holy One—yea, and this because of their ease, and their exceedingly great prosperity.

"And thus we see that except the Lord doth chasten his people with many afflictions, . . . they will not remember him" (Helaman 12:2–3).

It is a sobering thought that the purpose of having opposition in all things, trials and tribulations in our lives, commands a concern for the needy in order to humble us and draw us closer to the Lord our God and nearer to perfection.

2. The scriptures provide the spiritual framework for the welfare plan

Turn to the Book of Mormon index and glance at the references listed under the word *welfare*. You will see, and the Spirit will testify, that the Lord's welfare plan focuses first and foremost on the eternal well-being of His children. These scriptures indicate that—

- Nephi sought his brothers' *eternal welfare* (see 2 Nephi 1:25) and labored all his days for his people's welfare (see Jacob 1:10).

- Jacob was desirous for the *welfare of his people's souls* (see 2 Nephi 6:3) and was weighted down with anxiety for the welfare of the souls of the Nephites (see Jacob 2:3).

- In turn, the Nephites were filled with anguish for the *welfare of the souls* of the Lamanites. (See Mosiah 25:11.)

- The Church *met oft* to speak one with another concerning the *welfare of souls*. (See Moroni 6:5.)

Take special note of the repeated reference to the *welfare of souls*. This implies much more than just food, clothing, and shelter for temporal needs.

3. The welfare plan builds faith in the Lord Jesus Christ

It shares this position in common with other gospel activities. Temporal challenges humble us and become spiritual opportunities. Temporal challenges bring us to our knees in prayer, seeking heavenly guidance and assistance from the Lord as well as from our brothers and sisters.

As we persist in putting welfare principles to work, adding our strengths and resources to those possessed by others, we can overcome our adversities. Overcoming temporal obstacles demonstrates to us that nothing is too hard for the Lord. Our faith in Christ is confirmed.

4. By living welfare principles, we can develop self-reliance

The welfare program requires that we develop self-reliance and live providently. Provident living requires us to develop proper attitudes—a willingness to forego luxuries, to avoid excess, and to fully use what we have—learning to live within our means.

Unrestricted by programs and projects, bricks and mortar, the Lord's real storehouse is indeed in the homes and the hearts of His people. As the members of the Church follow the counsel to become self-reliant, they represent an immense pool of resources, knowledge, skills, and charity available to help one another. This storehouse, the Lord has said, is "for the poor of my

people, . . . to advance the cause, which ye have espoused, to the salvation of man, and to the glory of your Father who is in heaven" (D&C 78:3-4).

5. The welfare plan builds love and compassion for our fellowmen

As we live the principles of welfare, love and compassion will abound in our homes, in our worship, and in our service to others. Gone will be the lamentable practices of intemperance and abuse of wives and children. Abused children become abusive parents. It is everybody's responsibility to see that this cycle of abuse is stopped. It is hypocritical to talk of compassion to others while we are rude or abusive within our own families. Let us put our own homes in order, seeing that the spiritual and emotional needs of our families are met. Then no one will escape our empathy and concern—be they rich or poor; old or young; family, neighbors, or strangers within our reach.

There are many Christian acts of charity in our community that have come to my attention. There are many guardian angels in our communities who care for the transients with a hot meal and a warm place to sleep for an evening. There are many who take custody of orphans and homeless to share their quiet love and compassion. Alma (34:28) says if Saints turn away the needy, they are "as hypocrites who do deny the faith."

I know of a family who once a month holds a "provident living family council." With mother and father, the children determine how \$25 out of their budget—in addition to their tithes and offerings—will be distributed to an individual in need. Last month, \$25 went to a young child in the Primary Children's Medical Center. This is one way to teach compassion to children, especially as they visit the sick child in the hospital. (By the way, the children now want to save more money to give to the needy in next month's budget.) This

family does other charitable acts, too. They do not give money and feel that they have done their compassionate service.

One family made room in their small home for a neighbor family whose home was being repaired after a fire. They were giving not what was convenient for them, but rather what was *needed* by the neighbor.

Another family invited their eighteen-year-old son's friend who needed a home to stay with them for a year while he prepared for a mission. They provided an environment of emotional support and spiritual example and enabled him to earn his own money for his mission. On his mission he grew in maturity, self-esteem, and confidence. Since his mission, with self-reliance, he has gone forward to strengthen others.

Financial need is an important part of welfare, but there are other equally important essential elements that, through love and compassion, build self-reliance—emotionally and physically—helping one to be useful and productive and to be a help.

6. The welfare plan sanctifies both the giver and the receiver

We are all both givers and receivers. President Marion G. Romney has said, "There is an interdependence between those who have and those who have not. The process of giving exalts the poor and humbles the rich. In the process, both are sanctified" (*Ensign*, Nov. 1982, p. 93).

No one is exempt from giving to the impoverished. The counsel is: "And again, I say unto the poor . . . I mean all you who deny the beggar, because ye have not; I would that ye say in your hearts that: *I give not because I have not, but if I had I would give*" (Mosiah 4:24; italics added).

No one is exempt from receiving. To the rich, the reality is: "For behold, are we not all beggars? Do we not all depend upon the same Being, even God, . . . calling on his name, and

begging for a remission of [our] sins" through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ? (Mosiah 4:19–20).

7. The welfare plan builds a Zion people

Zion is characterized in scripture as a city in which the people "were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them" (Moses 7:18). Zion is "every man seeking the interest of his neighbor, and doing all things with an eye single to the glory of God" (D&C 82:19). This promised Zion always seems to be a little beyond our reach. We need to understand that as much virtue can be gained in progressing toward Zion as in dwelling there. It is a process as well as a destination. We approach or withdraw from Zion through the manner in which we conduct our daily dealings, how we live within our families, whether we pay an honest tithe and generous fast offering, how we seize opportunities to serve and do so diligently. Many are perfected upon the road to Zion who will never see the city in mortality.

So, my brothers and sisters, when we think of welfare, let us think of the plan revealed by our Lord for the eternal welfare of our souls. It is a plan to build faith, love, compassion, self-reliance, and unity. When adapted to local needs throughout the world by vigorous priesthood leaders, the plan sanctifies both givers and receivers and prepares a Zion people.

With these basic welfare principles in mind, today we are being

asked to teach and practice the doctrine of work, self-reliance, provident living, giving, and caring for the poor; to increase our generous fast-offering donations to help those in need; to increase our compassionate service, involving the family in charitable acts of service to one another and to our neighbors.

I bear you my testimony that we live in a dispensation of time when there have been ministering angels. The angel Moroni was one such heavenly messenger. His visit was essential to the restoration of the gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith. But, Joseph Fielding Smith taught us that "it is contrary to the law of God for the heavens to be opened and messengers to come to do anything for man that man can do for himself" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 3 vols., comp. Bruce R. McConkie [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954–57], 1:196).

That you and I might realize that we have the power and responsibility to help those in need, as ministering angels for the Lord Jesus Christ, that we will be loved because we love, be consoled because we are compassionate, be forgiven because we have demonstrated the capacity to forgive, is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Thank you, Bishop Robert D. Hales, Presiding Bishop of the Church.

Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now be our concluding speaker.

Elder L. Tom Perry

Good and difficult times

The great lessons of the scriptures teach us over and over again how foolish it is for mankind to desert the ways of the Lord and rely on the arm of flesh. One of the certainties of life is that

mankind, individually and collectively, will cycle through their mortal experience with periods of good and difficult times. How many of our family histories contain paragraphs similar to this?

"Economically, our family had its ups and downs. Like many Americans, we did well during the 1920s. My father started making lots of money in real estate, in addition to his other businesses. For a few years we were actually wealthy. But then came the Depression.

"No one who's lived through it can ever forget. My father lost all his money, and we almost lost our house. I remember asking my sister, who was a couple of years older, whether we'd have to move out and how we'd find somewhere else to live. I was only six or seven at the time, but the anxiety I felt about the future is still vivid in my mind. Bad times are indelible—they stay with you forever" (Lee Iacocca and William Novak, *Iacocca: An Autobiography* [New York: Bantam Books, 1984], p. 7).

But as surely as we can rely on change being a part of life, there is also the absolute assurance that we are children of an eternal Father in Heaven. As the supreme example of a kind and loving father, He has charted a well-defined course for His children to follow, the destination of which is the blessing of returning to His presence.

The law of the fast

He has marked the path with true principles, which will stand the test of time. In this session of general conference this afternoon, we have been reviewing welfare principles as they have been revealed to us for our application over the last fifty years.

There is one additional principle basic to this whole welfare plan which I would like to discuss with you this afternoon. It is the law of the fast. I always marvel as I study the principles the Lord has designed for us to follow—how simple they are in concept, how easy they are to administer, and how compliance always brings forth additional blessings.

The law of the fast is basic in the Church. Isaiah declared:

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? . . .

"Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry?" (Isaiah 58:6-7).

Like many other biblical practices, it was restored by the Lord in our day through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

The law of the fast has three great purposes. First, it provides assistance to the needy through the contribution of fast offerings, consisting of the value of meals from which we abstain. Second, a fast is beneficial to us physically. Third, it is to increase humility and spirituality on the part of each individual.

First purpose: Contributions to assist needy

An important reason for fasting is to contribute the amount saved from the meals not eaten to care for the poor and the needy. One of the strongest admonitions the Lord has given to His children on earth is that we have the responsibility and obligation of caring for those in need. It was King Benjamin who said in his great address, "And now, for the sake of these things which I have spoken unto you—that is, for the sake of retaining a remission of your sins from day to day, that ye may walk guiltless before God—I would that ye should impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally, according to their wants" (Mosiah 4:26).

Do we need to be reminded that included in our baptismal covenant is our pledge to bear one another's burdens that they may be light, to mourn with those that mourn, and to comfort those that stand in need of comfort? (See Mosiah 18:8-9.)

The Lord's system

The longer I live, the more impressed I am with the Lord's system of

caring for the poor and needy. Surely no man would think of such a simple yet profound way of satisfying human needs—to grow spiritually and temporally through periodic fasting and then donating the amount saved from refraining from partaking of those meals to the bishop to be used to administer to the needs of the poor, the ill, the down-trodden, who need help and support to make their way through life.

It was President [J. Reuben] Clark who said: "The fundamental principle of all Church relief work is that it must be carried on by fast offerings and other voluntary donations and contributions. This is the order established by the Lord. Tithing is not primarily designed for that purpose and must not be used except in the last extremity" (quoted in Marion G. Romney, "Our Primary Purpose," address delivered in Welfare Agricultural Meeting, 3 Apr. 1971, p. 1).

Throughout religious history we have found how the Lord blesses the people when they reach out and care for the poor and the needy. Of the days of Hezekiah we read this in the scriptures:

"And concerning the children of Israel and Judah, . . . they also brought in the tithe of oxen and sheep, and the tithe of holy things which were consecrated unto the Lord their God, and laid them by heaps.

"And when Hezekiah and the princes came and saw the heaps, they blessed the Lord, and his people Israel.

"Then Hezekiah questioned with the priests and the Levites concerning the heaps" (2 Chronicles 31:6, 8-9).

The answer was, "Since the people began to bring the offerings into the house of the Lord, we have had enough to eat, and have left plenty: for the Lord hath blessed his people; and that which is left is this great store" (2 Chronicles 31:10).

We have said a lot today about President Romney and what he has declared about the welfare program. Could I add another statement:

"I am thoroughly in harmony with what the Bishop said about our need to

contribute liberally to the fast-offerings fund and to every other fund that the Church officially calls upon us to contribute to. I am a firm believer that you cannot give to the Church and to the building up of the kingdom of God and be any poorer financially. I remember a long time ago, over 50 years, when Brother [Melvin J.] Ballard laid his hands on my head and set me apart to go on a mission. He said in that prayer of blessing that a person could not give a crust to the Lord without receiving a loaf in return. That's been my experience. If the members of the Church would double their fast-offering contributions, the spirituality in the Church would double. We need to keep that in mind and be liberal in our contributions" (Welfare Agricultural Meeting, 3 Apr. 1971, p. 1).

With all these promises of the Lord over the expanse of man's sojourn on earth, how shocking it is to find that sometimes it is necessary to use tithing funds of the Church to make up for deficits in our fast-offering contributions. Oh, where is our faith? Oh, how we deprive ourselves of the blessings of the Lord by not being generous in our fast-offering contributions.

Let us have the faith to bind the Lord to bless this people because we are following His order to care for the poor and the needy among us by being generous in our fast-offering contributions.

Second purpose: Fasting beneficial to us physically

Fasting is also beneficial to us physically. Some time ago I read an article in *Science News* written by Charles L. Goodrich, which stated that the advantages of modern eating habits extend far beyond the cosmetic. Numerous animal studies have demonstrated that caloric restriction early in life leads to an increased life span and reduces the risk of certain diseases.

There is also evidence of health-promoting effects of periodic fasting. Some experiments have shown that periodic fasting not only promotes a lon-

ger life, but encourages a more vigorous activity later in life. (See *Science News*, 1 Dec. 1979, p. 375.)

Fasting is also one of the finest ways of developing our own discipline and self-control. Plato said, "The first and the best victory is to conquer self; to be conquered by self is, of all things, the most shameful and vile" (*Laws*, Book 1, section 626E).

Fasting helps to teach us self-mastery. It helps us to gain the discipline we need to have control over ourselves.

Again we can conclude that if we are wise in following the Lord's law of the fast, we too will receive benefits, physically.

Third purpose: Increase humility and spirituality

Finally, let us examine the humility and spiritual strength derived from fasting. The Savior certainly recognized the need for this principle, for after His baptism we find the scriptures recording:

"And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

"Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered" (Luke 4:1-2).

And the devil used all his cunning ways to tempt the Savior to abandon His mission. To this the Savior responded: "Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

"And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.

"And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about" (Luke 4:8, 13-14).

Fasting had blessed Him with the power of the Spirit.

There is also the account in the Book of Mormon of Alma as he trav-

eled southward on his way to Manti. He was astonished to meet his friends, the sons of Mosiah, journeying toward the land of Zarahemla. It was a joyous meeting as they exchanged accounts of their missionary journeys. Alma was delighted to see how the sons of Mosiah had waxed strong in the knowledge of the truth. The scripture records:

"But this is not all; they had given themselves to much prayer, and fasting; therefore they had the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation, and when they taught, they taught with power and authority of God.

"And they had been teaching the word of God for the space of fourteen years among the Lamanites, having had much success in bringing many to the knowledge of the truth; yea, by the power of their words many were brought before the altar of God, to call on his name and confess their sins before him" (Alma 17:3-4).

These are only two examples of the many we can find in the scriptures where fasting and prayer for a purpose bring forth a special spiritual power. This same blessing is available to each of us if we will only take advantage of it.

Testimony of this inspired program

I would like to add my testimony this afternoon to the others who have given witness to the blessings of those who have given to and received from this great, inspired welfare services program over the last fifty years. My father was the bishop of our ward at the time of its announcement to the Church in April general conference of 1936. The world was struggling in the Great Depression. So many of the fathers of our ward were unemployed. In those days a dime for admission to a school activity would prevent many of my friends from attending because their parents could not afford even that small amount for their children's enjoyment.

Because of my father's calling as a bishop, I was able to gain an apprecia-

tion of the welfare program from its very beginning as I watched him administer to the needs of the poor in his ward with great love and tenderness. How often I raced home from school anticipating a planned activity. As I would round the corner of our home, there I would see sacks of flour, sugar, and other commodities. My heart would fall, as I knew it would be another evening out with Father as he delivered these commodities to those in need. The planned activity would have to be cancelled for that evening.

When he arrived home, I was always enlisted to help him put the commodities in the car and travel with him to make the deliveries. Sometimes I would grumble under my breath for having been so put upon, but then I would have the remarkable experience of watching the light come back into the eyes of a depressed family as food was brought into their home. I always returned home from those experiences with an exhilarated feeling of watching the Church in action as it was caring for its poor and its needy through fast offerings and good, kind priesthood leaders.

May the Lord continue to bless us with the faith to follow the inspired leadership He has provided for us here on earth that we may fulfill our obligations and responsibilities and be blessed by His hand, both spiritually and temporally, as we follow His plan, is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has been our concluding speaker. As you may have guessed, all of the speakers this afternoon are members of the Welfare Executive Committee of the Church. As the chairman of that committee I am very proud of them.

We remind the brethren of the general priesthood meeting which will convene here at the Tabernacle this evening at 6:00 P.M.

The nationwide CBS Radio Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those desiring to attend this broadcast must be in their seats no later than 9:15 A.M.

The singing for this session has been furnished by the combined institute choir from Utah Technical College, LDS Business College, University of Utah, Weber State College, and Utah State University. We are grateful for the presence of these young people and for the inspiration their music has added to this meeting.

The choir will now sing in closing "I Know That My Redeemer Lives." Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder Devere Harris, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "I Know That My Redeemer Lives."

Elder Devere Harris offered the benediction.

GENERAL PRIESTHOOD MEETING

THIRD SESSION

The general priesthood meeting convened in the Tabernacle at 6:00 P.M. on Saturday, April 5, 1986.

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for this session was provided by a returned missionary choir from Brigham Young University

directed by Stephen Bardsley with John Longhurst at the organ.

President Monson opened this session with the following remarks:

President Thomas S. Monson

Brethren, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked me to conduct this session. The Tabernacle is filled to overflowing—a beautiful sight. The congregations throughout the world would comprise also a beautiful sight.

We extend our love and best wishes to all of the brethren participating in this session.

These services are being relayed by closed-circuit and satellite transmission to members of the priesthood gathered in the Assembly Hall and in locations in many countries around the world.

We note that Elders Adney Y. Komatsu and Ronald E. Poelman are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall, and Elders Wm. Grant Bangerter and John H. Groberg are seated on the stand in the BYU Marriott Center.

The singing during this session will be furnished by a returned mission-

ary choir from Brigham Young University under the direction of Stephen Bardsley with John Longhurst at the organ.

We shall begin this service by the choir singing “God of Our Fathers, We Come unto Thee.” Following the singing, Elder Carlos E. Asay, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The choir sang “God of Our Fathers, We Come unto Thee.”

Elder Carlos E. Asay offered the invocation.

President Monson

Thank you, Brother Asay.

The choir will now favor us with “Lord, I Would Follow Thee.” Following the choir number, Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will speak to us.

The choir sang “Lord, I Would Follow Thee.”

Elder Neal A. Maxwell spoke without further announcement

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

“Called and prepared from the foundation of the world”

What if in tomorrow’s newspapers and on television scholars excitedly announced that dozens of pages of startling and significant writings, including those of Enoch, Abraham, and Moses, had been found? These startling writings inform us, among many important things, how the Lord tutored Moses, told him of other worlds, and then in regal response told Moses why God created and peopled this planet. (See Moses 1:4–6, 8, 10, 30, 37–39; Isaiah 45:18.) These writings indicate that Abraham and others were chosen in premortal councils, just like Jeremiah,

long before they were born. (See Abraham 3:23; Jeremiah 1:5.) Among this distinguished group was the thirteenth President-to-be of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, President Ezra Taft Benson. In fact, we learn that all faithful men of the priesthood were “called and prepared from the foundation of the world” (Alma 13:3), even though, by secular criteria, such are “the weak things of the earth” (D&C 133:59).

This new information about Enoch is eighteen times that which is in the Bible. Further, we learn from it that a human utopia was once actually achieved, as we receive a portrait of a

special people, the City of Enoch. (See Moses 7:17–19.)

These tremendous discoveries likewise show us that the gospel of Jesus Christ was taught and its ordinances administered in Adam's time, in the dawn of human history. (See Moses 5:58–59.) Furthermore, Adam gathered his righteous posterity together three years before his death. He instructed them, blessed them, and prophesied concerning the future. The Lord even appeared at this very special family gathering. (See D&C 107:53–57.)

Scriptural “finds”

Given such sobering and liberating discoveries, would not we and many others be deeply impressed and very attentive? Would there not be a stir much, much larger than that which has accompanied the finding of the Dead Sea Scrolls and other ancient writings? The secular world, of course, would pay only passing heed and would quickly return to the pressing cares of the world.

As you already know, these “finds” are but a portion of the abundant Restoration, reflecting the remarkable ministry of the Prophet Joseph Smith, through whom there was such an outpouring. Traversing these truths requires more than a casual stroll up sloping foothills; they take us instead up the breathtaking ridges of reality to an Everest of understanding. On a clear day, we can see forever!

The Bible, in our present format, totals just under sixteen hundred printed pages from multiple authors. To these have been added nearly nine hundred other printed pages of scripture through the Prophet Joseph Smith—more than from all the writings of Moses, Paul, Luke, and Mormon combined, as these are available today—illustrating the quantitative significance of what has come to us through the Restoration.

Confirmation of premortal existence

Cited in these brief remarks are only a few verses, the equivalent of only three or four printed pages in our current scriptures. But what enormous, qualitative significance is represented!

Before the Restoration, the void was very real. Prior to meeting Joseph Smith, Brigham Young said he would have crawled around the earth on his hands and knees to meet someone like Moses who could tell him anything “about God and heaven” (JD, 8:228). Through Joseph Smith we have additional pages from Moses about God and heaven. We have only to reach to the bookshelf or go to priesthood meeting. Perhaps the way is almost too easy and too simple; we might be more appreciative if on hands and knees. (See 1 Nephi 17:41.) Only by searching the scriptures, not using them occasionally as quote books, can we begin to understand the implications as well as the declarations of the gospel.

For instance, three verses from Alma, advising of premortal preparations and calls, officially broke centuries of silence about mankind's premortal existence. (See Alma 13:3–5.) In 1833, further confirmation came. Not only was Jesus “in the beginning with God,” but “man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be” (D&C 93:29).

We can thus sing “O My Father” (*Hymns*, 1985, no. 292) with real intent and assurances of real belonging.

The grand goal

In 1832, Jesus, who was seen on this rapturous occasion, was accompanied by a voice bearing record that Jesus had created this and other worlds, whose inhabitants are begotten sons and daughters unto God. (See D&C 76:23–24; John 1:3; Hebrews 1:2.)

Brethren, how can we truly understand who we are unless we know who we were and what we have the power to become? How can there be real identity without real history? How can one understand his tiny, individual plot without knowing, even a little, about Father's grand, galactic plans?

In 1833, information also came indicating that Jesus grew from "grace to grace" until He received a fulness. (See D&C 93:13.) This is so helpful, especially in view of how the Father and the Son have encouraged us, afresh, to become more like them by developing the requisite qualities in our lives. (See Matthew 5:48; 3 Nephi 12:48; 27:27.) What Jesus taught in His Sermon on the Mount about striving for this grand goal was said in earnest. Moreover, having been advised that we are to become childlike, we are firmly told of the specific attributes needed. (See Matthew 18:3; Mosiah 3:19; Alma 7:23; 13:28.)

In so striving, each man of the priesthood will love his wife and bless his children. He will be a true patriarch, having the authority of example as well as the authority of the holy priesthood.

Search, ponder, and live by these precious truths

We learn from terse verses that we are not helpless and hapless victims of "original sin." We are responsible for our own actual and individual sins, not Adam's, whom the Lord forgave long, long ago. (See Moses 6:53-54; D&C 93:38; Articles of Faith 1:2.) In fact, "because that Adam fell, we are" (Moses 6:48), and "men are, that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25).

Commanded to write of these truths, Moses was also told that many of the things he would write would later be taken away. Nevertheless, these would be "had again" among the children of men in the last days. (See Moses 1:40-41.)

My brethren, these truths are "had again." We possess these precious truths! Now they must come to possess

us! We are to search them, to ponder them, to feel them, and to live by them!

They are not just theological niceties and philosophical footnotes. We need to ponder their implications as well as believe in their declarations regarding daily and eternal life.

Chastening, patience, and divine purpose

One cannot have adequate faith in a Christ whom he does not adequately know, "who is a stranger . . . far from the thoughts and intents of his heart" (Mosiah 5:13). Instead, by laying aside "every weight" of the world and the sins which so "easily beset us," by looking unto Jesus and by feasting upon His words, we will be able to move forward with intellectual and spiritual vigor. Otherwise, as Paul said, we can become wearied and faint in our minds. (See Hebrews 12:1-3; see also 2 Nephi 31:20.) When we understand what was revealed to Adam—"[my] plan of salvation unto all men" (Moses 6:62)—then these doctrines are keenly relevant for tomorrow's trial, Tuesday's temptation, or next month's surge of self-pity. After all, chastening, the trial of our faith, and patience are part of the plan. (See Mosiah 23:21.)

It is all so wondrously Christ-centered. Whether in the structure of the atom or of the galaxies, or in the truths about temples and families, for those who have eyes to see, all things "from the beginning of the world" (2 Nephi 11:4) "bear record of [God]" (Moses 6:63). They are designed to point us to Christ, typifying Him, so that we might follow Him, have faith in Him, and keep His commandments.

If sought by faith (see Romans 9:30-32), these doctrines of the radiant restoration enclose us in divine purpose during our sojourn in this "far country." Like the prodigal son who "came to himself," we thus receive needed perspective and direction as we also begin to "arise and go to [our] Father." (See Luke 15:11-32.)

Glimpses of the City of God

The initial labor we have to perform with regard to these doctrines is only to look (see 1 Nephi 17:41), firmly averting our gaze from the comparative slums of the secular world, with its grabbiness and grubbiness.

The gospel, in fact, gives us glimpses of the far horizon, revealing a glow from the lights of the City of God. It is a place of happy countenances, where justice and mercy as well as righteousness and truth are constant companions. Herein gentleness and generosity prevail, "without compulsory means" (D&C 121:46). Coarseness and selfishness are unknown, belonging to a previous and primitive place. Here envy would be a sure embarrassment. Neighbors are esteemed as self. This city, where all the residents keep the first and second great commandments, is a community of striking individuals of one heart and of one mind.

We will not be strangers in the City of God. We were there before, when the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy at the prospects of this stern but necessary mortal existence. (See Job 38:4-7.) What we sang then was doubtless an anthem of praise far greater than the "Hallelujah Chorus," more glorious than Moses' and Israel's song after crossing the Red Sea. (See Exodus 15:1-2.)

Be added upon

Wonder is added to wonder as temples and scriptures tell us of still other worlds—of a universe drenched in divine design, with, as it were, spiritual "cousins" in the cosmos.

When we see things as they really were, really are, and really will be (see Jacob 4:13; D&C 93:24), dispensations are merely seasons, new friendships are but relationships resumed, and prophets sent forth on their errands from the Lord reflect associations

which arc across the ages as they later rendezvous on mountaintops and hills, in woods, fields, groves, and even jails. (See Moses 1:1-2; Matthew 17:1-7; Joseph Smith—History 1:14, 48-50; Acts 23:11.)

We are not now ready for all things the Lord has prepared in the City of God for them that love Him. (See 1 Corinthians 2:9.) Our present eyes are unready for things which they have not yet seen, and our ears are not prepared for the transcending sounds and music of that city.

The trek will be proving and trying. Faith, patience, and obedience are essential (see Mosiah 23:21; Abraham 3:25), but he who completes the journey successfully will be immeasurably added upon (see Abraham 3:26). And he who does not will have subtracted from the sum of his possibilities.

When we arrive home, we shall be weary and bruised. But at last our aching homesicknesses will cease. Meanwhile, our mortal homecomings are but faint foreshadowings of that Homecoming!

Called in the "there and then" for duties "here and now"

Brethren, these plain and precious doctrines restored in our time through the Prophet Joseph Smith are pulsating with perspective and are so light-intensive, like radioactive materials, that they must be handled with great care.

To life's great questions about identity and meaning come the Restoration's resounding answers. Accompanying these affirming "Yes, yeses!" are the guiding rules or necessary "No, noes!" These restored truths are not mysterious, but wondrous. These truths do not represent the gossip of the galaxies, but, instead, the universe's simple, stunning secrets—such as those God shared with Enoch, Abraham, Moses, and Joseph Smith—a few of which I have noted. Nothing could be more relevant, more resplendent, more true!

"Praise to the man who communed with Jehovah!" (see *Hymns*, 1985, no. 27). We are Joseph's spiritual heirs, called ages and ages ago—in the "there and then"—for the duties which await us "here and now!"

Duties as doers and messengers

Men and young men of the priesthood, let us be about those duties as doers and messengers. The gospel message is worthy of work like that performed by Ether, "from the morning, even until the going down of the sun" (Ether 12:3).

This work is worthy of sacrifice and courage like that of Abinadi. He suffered death by fire, saying that after "I finish my message," then "it matters not" (Mosiah 13:9).

Doctrinal illiteracy

Doers, said Jesus, will know that these doctrines are of God. (See John 7:17.) Therefore, do not be surprised when nondoers scoff. Do not be surprised, either, if these doctrines un-

settle some. Such was the case when the ancient Apostles filled Jerusalem with their doctrines. (See Acts 5:28.) And when Jesus focused His hearers on doctrines, "they were astonished at his doctrine" (Matthew 22:33). The only cure for the doctrinal illiteracy of those who murmur will be to learn doctrine. (See Isaiah 29:24.)

Given the grandness of the Restoration, "My heart is brim with joy" (Alma 26:11). I apologize for my inability to speak of Jesus as He deserves, being able to speak only "the smallest part which I feel" (Alma 26:16). Yet, even so, "There is music in my soul today, a carol to my King, and Jesus listening can hear, the songs I cannot sing" (*Hymns*, 1985, no. 227).

In the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us. President Benson has indicated that I should be your next speaker.

President Thomas S. Monson

"Be one"

Whenever I have the privilege to attend this, the general priesthood meeting of the Church, I reflect on the teachings of some of the most noble of God's leaders who have stood at this pulpit and who, from the brilliance of their minds, from the depths of their souls, and from the warmth of their hearts, have given us direction. President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., was such a man. Time and again, his fervent plea was for the priesthood of God to be united. Citing the teachings of Jesus, he inevitably admonished us, "Be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine" (D&C 38:27).

A treasured truth! A profound philosophy!

It was my great privilege to know President Clark rather well. I was his printer. On occasion, he would share with me some of his most intimate thoughts, even those scriptures around which he tailored his teachings and lived his life. Late one evening I delivered some press proofs to his office situated in his home at 80 D Street here in Salt Lake City. President Clark was reading from Ecclesiastes. He was in a quiet and reflective mood. He sat back from his large desk, which was stacked with books and papers. He held the scriptures in his hand, lifted his eyes

from the printed page, and read aloud to me: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). He exclaimed, "A treasured truth! A profound philosophy!" Through the years that conversation has remained bright in my memory. I love, I cherish the noble word *duty*.

The legendary General Robert E. Lee of American Civil War fame declared, "Duty is the sublimest word in our language. . . . You cannot do more. You should never wish to do less."

From that same hour of history, as Abraham Lincoln left the people of Springfield to take over the nation's presidency, he said, "Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it" (address, Cooper Union, New York, 27 Feb. 1860).

The call of duty

Time marches on. Duty keeps cadence with that march. Duty does not dim nor diminish. Catastrophic conflicts come and go, but the war waged for the souls of men continues without abatement. Like a clarion call comes the word of the Lord to you, to me, and to priesthood holders everywhere: "Wherefore, now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence" (D&C 107:99).

The call of duty came to Adam, to Noah, to Abraham, to Moses, to Samuel, to David. It came to the Prophet Joseph Smith and to each of his successors, even to President Ezra Taft Benson. The call of duty came to the boy Nephi. Listen to his words:

"And it came to pass that I, Nephi, returned from speaking with the Lord, to the tent of my father.

"And it came to pass that he spake unto me, saying: Behold I have dreamed a dream, in the which the Lord hath commanded me that thou and thy brethren shall return to Jerusalem.

"For behold, Laban hath the record of the Jews and also a genealogy of thy forefathers, and they are engraven upon plates of brass.

"Wherefore, the Lord hath commanded me that thou and thy brothers should go unto the house of Laban, and seek the records, and bring them down hither into the wilderness.

"And now, behold thy brothers murmur, saying it is a hard thing which I have required of them; but behold I have not required it of them, but it is a commandment of the Lord.

"Therefore go, my son, and thou shalt be favored of the Lord, because thou has not murmured.

"And it came to pass that I, Nephi, said unto my father: I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them" (1 Nephi 3:1-7).

Magnify your calling

When that same call comes to you and to me, what will be our response? Will we murmur, as did Laman and Lemuel, and say, "This is a hard thing required of us"? Or will we, with Nephi, individually declare, "I will go. I will do"?

Oftimes the wisdom of God appears as foolishness to men, but the greatest single lesson we can learn in mortality is that, when God speaks and a man obeys, man will always be right.

President John Taylor cautioned us, "If you do not magnify your calling, God will hold you responsible for those you might have saved, had you done your duty."

The call of duty came to John E. Page when the Prophet Joseph Smith extended to him a call to serve as a missionary. John E. Page "murmured" and responded, "Brother Joseph, I can't go on a mission to Canada. I don't even have a coat to wear."

The Prophet Joseph removed his own coat, handed it to Brother Page, and said, "Here, take this and the Lord will bless you." John E. Page went on that mission to Canada and, during a two-year period, walked five thousand miles and baptized six hundred people. (See Andrew Jensen, "John E. Page," *The Historical Record*, 5:57.)

A famed minister observed, "Men will work hard for money. Men will work harder for other men. But men will work hardest of all when they are dedicated to a cause. Until willingness overflows obligation, men fight as conscripts rather than following the flag as patriots. Duty is never worthily performed until it is performed by one who would gladly do more, if only he could."

I slept and dreamt
That life was joy.
I awoke and saw
That life was duty.
I acted, and behold—
Duty was joy.
(Rabindranath Tagore)

Robert Louis Stevenson reminded us: "I know what pleasure is, for I have done good work."

The call of duty can come quietly as we who hold the priesthood respond to the assignments we receive. President George Albert Smith, that modest yet effective leader, declared, "It is your duty first of all to learn what the Lord wants and then by the power and strength of your holy priesthood to so magnify your calling in the presence of your fellows that the people will be glad to follow you" (*Church News*, 7 Sept. 1968, p. 15).

What does it mean to magnify a calling? It means to build it up in dignity and importance, to make it honorable and commendable in the eyes of all men, to enlarge and strengthen it, to let the light of heaven shine through it to the view of other men. And how does one magnify a calling? Simply by performing the service that pertains to it. An elder magnifies the ordained calling

of an elder by learning what his duties as an elder are and then by doing them. As with an elder, so with a deacon, a teacher, a priest, a bishop, and each who holds office in the priesthood.

Duty as a bishop

In 1950 the call of duty came to me as a bishop. The responsibilities were many and varied. The Doctrine and Covenants provided a sure guide. The words of the Apostle Paul to Timothy pertaining to the office of a bishop were sobering. The *General Handbook* was helpful. The principal areas of administration were spelled out by leaders, both stake and general: The bishop (1) is the father of the ward; (2) is the president of the Aaronic Priesthood; (3) provides for the poor, the needy; (4) is responsible for keeping proper records; and (5) is the common judge in Israel.

Then came an unusual assignment from Church headquarters. Bishops were to provide each serviceman a subscription to the *Church News* and the *Improvement Era* and were to write a personal letter to every serviceman each month. The Korean War was raging. Our ward had twenty-three members in uniform. The priesthood quorums, with effort, supplied the funds for the subscriptions to the publications. Since I had served in the Navy in World War II, I knew the importance of a letter from home. I began the task, even the duty, to write twenty-three personal letters each month. After all these years, I still have copies of many of my letters and the responses received. Tears come easily when these letters are reread. It is a joy to learn again of a soldier's pledge to live the gospel, a sailor's decision to keep faith with his family.

"Leave unto the Lord the rest"

One evening I handed to a lady in the ward the stack of twenty-three letters for the current month. Her assignment was to handle the mailing and to

maintain the constantly changing address file. She glanced at one envelope and, with a smile, asked, "Bishop, don't you ever get discouraged? Here is another letter to Brother Bryson. This is the seventeenth letter you have sent to him without a reply."

I responded, "Well, maybe this will be the month." And it was. His reply is a keepsake, a literal treasure. It was postmarked "APO San Francisco." He was serving far away on a distant shore, isolated, homesick, alone. He wrote: "Dear Bishop, I ain't much at writin' letters. [I could have told him that seventeen months earlier.] Thank you for the *Church News* and magazines, but most of all thank you for the personal letters. I have turned over a new leaf. I have been ordained a priest in the Aaronic Priesthood. My heart is full. I am a happy man."

My brethren, Brother Bryson was no happier than was his bishop. I had learned the practical application of the adage, "Do your duty; that is best. Leave unto the Lord the rest."

Years later, while attending the Salt Lake Cottonwood Stake when Elder James E. Faust served as president, I related that account in an effort to encourage attention to our servicemen. After the meeting, a fine-looking young man came forward. He took my hand in his and asked, "Bishop Monson, do you remember me?"

I replied, "Brother Bryson! How are you? What are you doing in the Church?"

With warmth and obvious pride, he responded, "I'm fine. I serve in the presidency of my elders quorum. Thank you again for your concern for me and the personal letters which you sent and which I treasure."

Father, where shall I work today?
And my love flowed warm and free.

Then He pointed out a tiny spot
And said, "Tend that for me."

I answered quickly, "Oh no; not that!

Why, no one would ever see,
No matter how well my work was done;

Not that little place for me."

And the word He spoke, it was not stern;

He answered me tenderly:

"Ah, little one, search that heart of thine.

Art thou working for them or for me?

Nazareth was a little place,
And so was Galilee."

(Meade McGuire.)

To those who obey Him

Brethren, let us learn our duty. Let us, in the performance of our duty, follow in the footsteps of the Master. As you and I walk the pathway Jesus walked, let us listen for the sound of sandaled feet. Let us reach out for the Carpenter's hand. Then we shall come to know Him. He may come to us as one unknown, without a name, as by the lakeside He came to those men who knew Him not. He speaks to us the same words, "Follow thou me" (John 21:22), and sets us to the task which He has to fulfill for our time. He commands, and to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal Himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings that they shall pass through in His fellowship; and they shall learn by their own experience who He is.

We will discover He is more than the Babe in Bethlehem, more than the carpenter's son, more than the greatest teacher ever to live. We will come to know Him as the Son of God, our Savior and our Redeemer. When to Him came the call of duty, He answered, "Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever" (Moses 4:2). May we do likewise I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

The choir and congregaton will now join in singing "Redeemer of Israel," following which President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, will speak to us.

The choir and congregation sang "Redeemer of Israel."

President Gordon B. Hinckley spoke without further announcement.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

I have a duty to speak to you. Beyond that, it is a great privilege and a tremendous opportunity, and I seek the direction of the Holy Spirit.

The question of a mission

I have been so appreciative of this returned missionary chorus who has sung to us this night. I have heard them and their kind sing all across this world. I wish that there were time for them to sing to us "Ye elders of Israel, come join now with me" (*Hymns*, 1985, no. 319). They could do it in English English, American English, Australian English, New Zealand English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Cantonese, and other languages. Thank you, brethren, for the music with which you have blessed us.

What Brother Monson said and the presence of this chorus have set a theme for me.

I spoke with a young man the other evening who is deeply troubled over the question of whether he should go on a mission. He outlined a program of education which would be tremendously challenging. He spoke of his love for a beautiful girl and of the feeling that he could not leave her. He spoke of financial problems which would entail sacrifice.

Personal missionary experience

I told him that I could understand his feelings. I told him his concerns were similar to those of many others, including some I had experienced in my

own life. At his age, I was in the university. It was the time of the worst economic depression in the history of the world. Unemployment in this area was about 35 percent, and most of the unemployed were husbands and fathers, since relatively few women worked in the labor force. Very few missionaries were going into the field at that time. We send out as many in a week now as then went during the entire year. I received my bachelor's degree and planned on somehow attending graduate school. Then the bishop came with what seemed to me a shocking suggestion. He spoke of a mission. I was called to go to England which, at that time, was the most expensive mission in the world. The cost per month was the equivalent of what would be about \$500 now.

We discovered that my mother, who had passed away, had established a small savings account to be available for this purpose. I had a savings account in a different place, but the bank in which I had mine had failed. There was then no government insurance program to cover its failure as there is now. My father, a man of great faith and love, supplied the necessary means, with all of the family cooperating at a sacrifice. As I look back upon it, I see all of it as a miracle. Somehow the money was there every month.

The work in the field was not easy. It was difficult and discouraging. But what a wonderful experience it was. In retrospect, I recognize that I was probably a selfish young man when I arrived in Britain. What a blessing it became to set aside my own selfish interests to the

greater interests of the work of the Lord. I had the association of tremendous young men and women. They have become treasured friends whom I have known and loved now for more than half a century.

The girl I left came to mean more to me while I was away. Next spring, we shall commemorate our fiftieth wedding anniversary.

An instrument in the Lord's hands

How profoundly grateful I am for the experience of that mission. I touched the lives of a few who have, over the years, expressed appreciation. That has been important. But I have never been greatly concerned over the number of baptisms that I had or that other missionaries had. My satisfaction has come from the assurance that I did what the Lord wanted me to do and that I was an instrument in His hands for the accomplishment of His purposes. In the course of that experience, there became riveted into my very being a conviction and knowledge that this is in very deed the true and living work of God, restored through a prophet for the blessing of all who will accept it and live its principles.

Count your blessings

There may be a few young men in this vast audience tonight who may be wondering, ever so seriously, whether they should go on missions. There may be a scarcity of money. There may be compelling plans for education. There may be that wonderful girl you love and feel you cannot leave. You say to yourself, "The choice is mine."

That is true. But before you make a decision against a mission, count your blessings, my dear friend. Think of all the great and marvelous things you have—your very life, your health, your parents, your home, the girl you love. Are they not all gifts from a generous Heavenly Father? Did you really earn them alone, independent of His blessing? No, the lives of all of us are in His

hands. All of the precious things that are ours come from Him who is the giver of every good gift.

The greatest investment

I am not suggesting that He will withdraw His blessings and leave you bereft if you do not go on a mission. But I am saying that out of a spirit of appreciation and gratitude, and a sense of duty, you ought to make whatever adjustment is necessary to give a little of your time—as little as two years—consecrating your strength, your means, your talents to the work of sharing with others the gospel, which is the source of so much of the good that you have.

I promise that if you will do so, you will come to know that what appears today to be a sacrifice will prove instead to be the greatest investment that you will ever make.

Let there be no hesitancy in your decision. Live worthy of a call, and respond without hesitation when that call comes. Go forth with a spirit of dedication, placing yourself in the hands of the Lord to do His great work.

The Church, the Lord, and the world need you

To you younger boys, may I encourage you to save money now for a future mission. Put it in a place where it is safe, not in a speculative account where it may be endangered. Consecrate it for this great purpose, and let it not be used for any other. Prepare yourselves. Attend seminary and institute. Prayerfully read the Book of Mormon.

I hear much these days of costly youth excursions to exotic places during spring breaks and at other times. Why not stay near home and put the money in your future missionary accounts? Someday you will be grateful you did.

The Church needs you. The Lord needs you. The world needs you—yes, ten thousand more of you. There are many out there who need exactly what

you have to offer. They are not easy to find, but they will not be found unless there are those who are prepared and willing to seek them out. God bless you each one, every one of you, that a mission may be a planned and essential part of the program of your lives.

Now, I wish to say a word to all who are here. It is simply a reminder of the obligation, the duty, each has to share with others the precious gospel of Jesus Christ.

I was going to tell you the story of a friend who recently joined the Church. Rather than do that, I am going to ask him to tell it himself.

May I introduce Brother William Sheffield, who was baptized last November. Brother Sheffield, come and tell us of your experience.

William R. Sheffield

My dear brothers, following law school at Berkeley, I developed a successful private practice, particularly with international clients, including Indira Gandhi, former prime minister of India.

For years as a lawyer I had sought a judicial appointment. The day the governor of California called to say I had been appointed to the Superior Court was exhilarating and filled with visions of perhaps, someday, even the Supreme Court. But then, after less than two years as a judge and after just purchasing a new home, we decided to leave this nearly idyllic life. I had heard the Lord call me to the seminary. In response, my wife and I agreed that from then on we would always trust in the Lord, agreeing to be as leaves in a stream—two leaves in His stream, obeying His call, wanting more than anything else to follow Him.

From judgeship to divinity school

But I had not always followed Christ. For many years, I was uncertain who He was or how I could get close to

Him. Almost daily I silently asked myself: Is there a purpose to life? Why am I here? Where am I going? Is the meaning of life found in chasing after the most pleasurable way to get through it—or is there something more? My Christian friends told me all I had to do was “knock and the door will be opened unto you, seek and ye shall find.” (See Matthew 7:7.)

I began knocking. And as I knocked, the Lord answered. Like a seed growing within me, the gospel began taking over my life. I felt the Spirit calling me. I applied at the Yale Divinity School and was accepted. I resigned my judgeship, we rented out our home in southern California, and headed to New Haven, Connecticut. I was in the divinity school though not yet a member of any church.

A very special ward

Arriving in New Haven, we began searching for a home near the campus. However, the Lord had other ideas. Try as we did, we could not find the house we wanted near Yale. Looking back, I now know why. The Lord wanted us in a very special ward about forty miles south of Yale, the New Canaan First Ward.

Many miracles later we found ourselves attending our first Sunday sacrament meeting in this ward. We were received as though we were expected. We had not been inside the building longer than about five minutes when we were introduced to the bishop and his counselors and invited to a dinner party that week. But my attention was first captured by the radiant spirituality of particularly the male members. I wondered: How could they live their professional lives in the fastest fast lane of them all, New York City, yet continue to radiate such a deep spirituality? What was it that caused the tears to well up in their eyes as they testified that Christ lives and the Church is true? I needed to find out.

Joseph Smith story

But I didn't particularly want to be a Mormon, I told my friends. Since I was in the divinity school, I presumed the Lord wanted me in the ministry. What would I do after graduating with an advanced degree in religion if I became a Mormon? Yet I wanted to be the leaf in a stream that I had promised the Lord I would be when we left California.

During the entire time that I was working through, struggling with, and fighting the Joseph Smith story, my friends in the ward were patient, loving, and gentle. Every time I would tell the bishop that Joseph Smith's story was more Disney than Disney, he would tell me, "Maybe so—but it's all true." Every time I would tell the bishop's counselor, "Joseph's story can't be true," he would say to me, "Yes, it is." They genuinely loved me, and I them.

For months I examined, cross-examined, reflected, pondered, and prayed about the Joseph Smith story and the Book of Mormon. I found the book complex, sophisticated, doctrinally profound, and beautiful. The more I studied the text, the more profound and beautiful it became.

Testimony, I know

Much happened over the months. I told my friends and my wife, who was an inactive Mormon and who was beginning to feel some interest in the faith of her forebears, that I would not join the Church to please them, as much as I loved them. I would join only when I had a testimony—when I could say, as a direct witness, that I *know* Joseph Smith was a prophet, that the Book of Mormon is gospel, and the Latter-day Saint church is His church.

In September of last year, the Lord blessed me with that testimony. I now know, without any doubt or uncertainty, without even the ability to conjure up an imaginary doubt, that in the

premortal life the Lord selected Joseph Smith as His prophet in the latter days, that the Book of Mormon was preserved by Christ Himself and delivered to Joseph Smith for translation, and that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is His church.

I owe a great debt to the New Canaan First Ward and to my dear wife. Their patience, their steadfast loyalty to the restored gospel, and their love for me all combined together to affect me eternally.

I still am uncertain as to what the Lord has in mind for me when I graduate from the Yale Divinity School, but I know this: my wife and I will always continue to serve God, in His church, as leaves in a stream.

I say this in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley: Become examples and teach the word of God

Thank you, Brother Sheffield. I am convinced that there are many, many thousands of men such as this good man who, with warmth and welcome, can be led to the eternal truths of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. They are looking for something better than they have. They must be friendship. They must be fellowshipped. They must be made to feel comfortable and at home, so they can observe in the lives of the members of the Church those virtues they wish for themselves. God bless us, my beloved brethren, to become examples such as influenced Brother Sheffield.

The world is our responsibility. We cannot evade it. I think of the words of Jacob in the Book of Mormon, who with his brother Joseph had been consecrated a priest and teacher unto the people:

"And we did magnify our office unto the Lord, taking upon us the responsibility, answering the sins of the people upon our own heads if we did not teach them the word of God with all diligence" (Jacob 1:19).

God bless you, my beloved brethren, young and old, to be faithful to the great responsibility placed upon us to share with others this most precious of all things, I humbly ask, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have just listened to President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, and Brother William R. Sheffield.

President Ezra Taft Benson, our beloved prophet leader, will be our concluding speaker.

Before President Benson speaks, we note that the nationwide CBS Radio Tabernacle Choir broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 Sunday morning.

Those desiring to attend must be in their seats before 9:15 A.M.

As you leave this priesthood meeting tonight, we remind you to obey traffic rules, to use caution, and to be courteous in driving.

The beautiful music for this priesthood session has been furnished by a returned missionary choir from Brigham Young University.

We are grateful to you brethren for your inspiring music and express sincere thanks for the service you have given here tonight.

Following President Benson's closing remarks, the choir will sing "Carry On." The benediction will be pronounced by Elder Loren C. Dunn, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

President Ezra Taft Benson

My beloved brethren, this has been a glorious meeting.

I have been especially pleased to see the number of young men in attendance this evening. With all my heart I love the youth of the Church. I have spent much of my life in their service, and their well-being and happiness are among my greatest concerns.

Tonight I would like to speak directly to you young men of the Aaronic Priesthood. I am grateful that many of your fathers and priesthood leaders are with you, for I would like them to hear my message also.

Youth of the noble birthright

Young men of the Aaronic Priesthood, you have been born at this time for a sacred and glorious purpose. It is not by chance that you have been reserved to come to earth in this last dispensation of the fulness of times. Your birth at this particular time was fore-ordained in the eternities.

You are to be the royal army of the Lord in the last days. You are "youth of

the noble birthright" (*Hymns*, 1985, no. 255).

In the spiritual battles you are waging, I see you as today's sons of Helaman. Remember well the Book of Mormon account of Helaman's two thousand stripling warriors and how the teachings of their mothers gave them strength and faith. These marvelous mothers taught them to put on the whole armor of God, to place their trust in the Lord, and to doubt not. By so doing, not one of these young men was lost. (See Alma 53:10-23; 56:41-56.)

Honor the family unit

My young brethren, I counsel each of you to draw close to your own mother. Respect her. Honor her. Receive your mother's counsel as she loves and instructs you in righteousness. And honor and obey your father as he stands as the head of the home, emulating his manly qualities.

Young men, the family unit is forever, and you should do everything in your power to strengthen that unit. In

your own family, encourage family home evenings and be an active participant. Encourage family prayer and be on your knees with your family in that sacred circle. Do your part to develop real family unity and solidarity. In such homes, there is no generation gap.

Your most important friendships should be with your own brothers and sisters and with your father and mother. Love your family. Be loyal to them. Have a genuine concern for your brothers and sisters. Help carry their load so you can say, like the lyrics of that song, "He ain't heavy; he's my brother."

Remember, the family is one of God's greatest fortresses against the evils of our day. Help keep your family strong and close and worthy of our Father in Heaven's blessings. As you do, you will receive faith and strength which will bless your lives forever.

Program of daily reading and pondering scriptures

Next, young men, may I admonish you to participate in a program of daily reading and pondering of the scriptures. We remember the experience of our beloved prophet President Spencer W. Kimball. As a fourteen-year-old boy he accepted the challenge of reading the Bible from cover to cover. Most of his reading was done by coal oil light in his attic bedroom. He read every night until he completed the 1,519 pages, which took him approximately a year; but he attained his goal.

Of the four great standard works of the Church—the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price—I would particularly urge you to read again and again the Book of Mormon and ponder and apply its teachings. The Book of Mormon was referred to by the Prophet Joseph Smith as "the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion" (*History of the Church*, 4:461).

Young men, the Book of Mormon will change your life. It will fortify you

against the evils of our day. It will bring a spirituality into your life that no other book will. It will be the most important book you will read in preparation for a mission and for life. A young man who knows and loves the Book of Mormon, who has read it several times, who has an abiding testimony of its truthfulness, and who applies its teachings will be able to stand against the wiles of the devil and will be a mighty tool in the hands of the Lord.

Patriarchal blessing

Further, I would encourage you brethren of the Aaronic Priesthood to receive a patriarchal blessing. Study it carefully and regard it as personal scripture to you—for that is what it is. A patriarchal blessing is the inspired and prophetic statement of your life's mission together with blessings, cautions, and admonitions as the patriarch may be prompted to give. Young men, receive your patriarchal blessing under the influence of fasting and prayer, and then read it regularly that you may know God's will for you.

Attendance at Church meetings

May I now direct your attention to the importance of attending all of your Church meetings. Faithful attendance at Church meetings brings blessings you can receive in no other way.

Attend your sacrament meeting every Sunday. Listen carefully to the messages. Pray for the spirit of understanding and testimony. Be worthy to prepare and bless and pass the sacrament. Come to the sacrament table with clean hands and a pure heart.

Attend your Sunday School classes every Sunday. Listen carefully to the lesson and participate in class discussions. Gospel scholarship and an increase in testimony will result.

Attend your priesthood quorum meetings every Sunday, and your quorum activities held on weeknights. Learn well your priesthood responsi-

bilities, and then perform them with diligence and reverence.

Set your goals to attain excellence

Young men, take full advantage of the Church programs. Set your goals to attain excellence in the achievement programs of the Church. Earn the Duty to God Award—one of our most significant priesthood awards. Become an Eagle Scout. Do not settle for mediocrity in the great Scouting program of the Church.

Regularly attend seminary and be a seminary graduate. Seminary instruction is one of the most significant spiritual experiences a young man can have.

Our duty is to preach the gospel

May I now speak with you about missionary service in the kingdom. I feel very deeply about this. I pray that you will understand the yearnings of my heart. The Prophet Joseph Smith declared, "After all that has been said, [our] greatest and most important duty is to preach the Gospel" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 113).

The Lord wants every young man to serve a full-time mission. Currently, only a fifth of the eligible young men in the Church are serving full-time missions. This is not pleasing to the Lord. We can do better. We *must* do better.

Respond to His call

Not only should a mission be regarded as a priesthood duty, but every young man should look forward to this experience with great joy and anticipation. What a privilege—what a sacred privilege—to serve the Lord full time for two years with all your heart, might, mind, and strength.

You can do nothing more important. School can wait. Scholarships can be deferred. Occupational goals can be postponed. Yes, even temple marriage should wait until after a young man has

served an honorable full-time mission for the Lord. And I would admonish you to date only faithful young women who also believe this and give you that encouragement.

Young men, look forward to full-time missionary service. Show your love and commitment to the Lord by responding to His call to serve. Know that the real purpose in going into the mission field is to bring souls unto Christ, to teach and baptize our Heavenly Father's children so that you may rejoice with them in the kingdom of our Father. (See D&C 18:15.)

Prepare now for your mission by doing these things we have discussed this evening.

Live clean life

Another vital ingredient in preparation for your mission is to always live a clean life. We want morally clean young men in the mission field. We want you to live the clean life all of your life. We want the morally clean life to be your way of life.

Yes, one can repent of moral transgression. The miracle of forgiveness is real, and true repentance is accepted of the Lord. But it is not pleasing to the Lord prior to a mission, or at any time, to sow one's wild oats, to engage in sexual transgression of any nature, and then to expect that planned confession and quick repentance will satisfy the Lord.

President Kimball was emphatic on this point. In his marvelous book *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, he stated: "That man who resists temptation and lives without sin is far better off than the man who has fallen, no matter how repentant the latter may be. . . . How much better it is never to have committed sin!" (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969, p. 357).

Repentance and miracle of forgiveness

One of our fine stake presidents shared with us the following experience:

"I remember a girl that I had gone to high school with. She was from a good LDS family, but when she was a junior in high school, she began to compromise her standards and principles.

"I remember how stunned I was one afternoon as a group of us were in the back of the bus riding home from school. We were talking about the consequences of sin or transgression, and she flatly announced that she wasn't worried about committing any sin because her bishop had told her she could easily repent and could be quickly forgiven.

"Well, I was shocked with this flippant attitude that didn't reflect any understanding of repentance or appreciation of the miracle of forgiveness. I was also sure that she had grossly misunderstood the instruction and counsel of her bishop."

Pernicious evils

Adultery, or anything like unto it, is abominable in the sight of the Lord. Elder Kimball also wisely observed:

"Among the most common sexual sins our young people commit are necking and petting. Not only do these improper relations often lead to fornication, pregnancy, and abortions—all ugly sins—but in and of themselves they are pernicious evils, and it is often difficult for youth to distinguish where one ends and another begins. . . .

"Too often, young people dismiss their petting with a shrug of their shoulders as a *little* indiscretion, while admitting that fornication is a base transgression. Too many of them are shocked, or feign to be, when told that what they have done in the name of petting was in reality [a form of] fornication" (*Miracle of Forgiveness*, pp. 65–66).

"Be ye clean"

Young men of the Aaronic Priesthood, remember the scriptural injunction "Be ye clean who bear the

vessels of the Lord" (3 Nephi 20:41; D&C 38:42; see also Isaiah 52:11). Remember the story of Joseph in Egypt, who hearkened not to the wife of Potiphar and maintained his purity and virtue. (See Genesis 39:6–20.)

Consider carefully the words of the prophet Alma to his errant son, Corianton, "Forsake your sins, and go no more after the lusts of your eyes" (Alma 39:9).

"The lusts of your eyes." In our day, what does that expression mean?

Movies, television programs, and video recordings that are both suggestive and lewd.

Magazines and books that are obscene and pornographic.

We counsel you, young men, not to pollute your minds with such degrading matter, for the mind through which this filth passes is never the same afterward. Don't see R-rated movies or vulgar videos or participate in any entertainment that is immoral, suggestive, or pornographic. Don't listen to music that is degrading.

Remember Elder Boyd K. Packer's statement: "Music, once . . . innocent, now is often used for wicked purposes. . . .

"In our day music itself has been corrupted. Music can, by its tempo, by its beat, by its intensity [and I would add by its lyrics], dull the spiritual sensitivity of men. . . .

"Young people," Elder Packer goes on to say, "you cannot afford to fill your mind with the unworthy hard music of our day" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1973, pp. 21, 25; or *Ensign*, Jan. 1974, pp. 25, 28).

Instead, we encourage you to listen to uplifting music, both popular and classical, that builds the spirit. Learn some favorite hymns from our new hymnbook that build faith and spirituality. Attend dances where the music and the lighting and the dance movements are conducive to the Spirit. Watch those shows and entertainment that lift the spirit and promote clean thoughts and actions. Read books and magazines that do the same.

Proper dating

And remember, young men, the importance of proper dating. President Kimball gave some wise counsel on this subject:

"Clearly, right marriage begins with right dating. . . . Therefore, this warning comes with great emphasis. Do not take the chance of dating non-members, or members who are untrained and faithless. [You] may say, 'Oh I do not intend to marry this person. It is just a "fun" date.' But one cannot afford to take a chance on falling in love with someone who may never accept the gospel" (*Miracle of Forgiveness*, pp. 241-42).

Our Heavenly Father wants you to date young women who are faithful members of the Church, who encourage you to serve a full-time mission and to magnify your priesthood.

Prepare to enter mission "on the run"

Yes, prepare well for a mission all your life, not just six months or a year before you go.

We love all of our missionaries who are serving the Lord full time in the mission field. But there is a difference in missionaries. Some are better prepared to serve the Lord the first month in the mission field than some who are returning home after twenty-four months.

We want young men entering the mission field who can enter the mission field "on the run," who have the faith born of personal righteousness and clean living that they can have a great and productive mission.

We want missionaries who have the kind of faith that Wilford Woodruff and Heber C. Kimball had, each bringing hundreds and thousands of souls into the waters of baptism.

Give me a young man who has kept himself morally clean and has faithfully attended his Church meetings. Give me a young man who has magnified his priesthood and has

earned the Duty to God Award and is an Eagle Scout. Give me a young man who is a seminary graduate and has a burning testimony of the Book of Mormon. Give me such a young man, and I will give you a young man who can perform miracles for the Lord in the mission field and throughout his life.

Fathers, be an example

Now I would like to say a final word to the fathers and priesthood leaders in attendance this evening. Fathers, stay close to your sons. Earn and deserve their love and respect. Be united with their mother in the rearing of your children. Do nothing in your life to cause your sons to stumble because of your example. Guide your sons. Teach them.

As I indicated last October as we met in general priesthood session, you have the major responsibility for teaching your sons the gospel. I would encourage you to reread that address. As important as the organizations of the Church are for teaching our youth, fathers have a sacred calling to continually teach and instruct members of their families in the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Priesthood leaders, stay close to your young men

Priesthood leaders, remember that the bishop is the president of the Aaronic Priesthood. Bishops, your first and foremost responsibility is the Aaronic Priesthood and the young women of your wards.

Stay close to your young men. Get inside their lives. A personal interview once a year with them is not sufficient to fulfill your sacred duty. Visit with them often. Attend their quorum and Scout meetings. Go on their campouts. Participate in their youth conferences. Promote father-and-son activities. Talk with them often about a mission, and regularly visit with them about their personal worthiness.

Strengthen the Aaronic Priesthood quorums. Effectively use the videotape entitled "Vitalizing the Aaronic Priesthood Quorums" and the accompanying training guide. These are some of the finest training tools we have in the Aaronic Priesthood. Bishoprics, quorum advisers, and quorum presidencies should regularly use this training program.

What the Lord would have you hear

Now, in closing, my young men of the Aaronic Priesthood, how I love you, how I respect you, how I pray for

you. Remember the counsel I have given you tonight. It is what the Lord would have you hear now—today.

Live up to your godly potential. Remember who you are and the priesthood that you bear. Be modern-day sons of Helaman. Put on the whole armor of God.

"O youth of the noble birthright," with all my heart I say, "Carry on, carry on, carry on!" In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Carry On."

Elder Loren C. Dunn offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY MORNING MEETING

FOURTH SESSION

The fourth session of the general conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 6, 1986. President Ezra Taft Benson conducted.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music with Jerold Ottley directing and John Longhurst at the organ.

Prior to the opening of the session, the choir sang "Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken" without announcement.

President Benson made the following remarks:

President Ezra Taft Benson

Thank God for this Tabernacle Choir.

We are assembled in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City for this, the fourth general session of the 156th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We welcome all who are in attendance whether in the Tabernacle, in the

Assembly Hall where Elders Paul H. Dunn and Philip T. Sonntag are seated on the stand, or who are participating by radio, television, or cable—with time offered by the owners and operators, to whom we are indebted—or by satellite transmission.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders, and officers and members of the Church from many lands who have assembled to worship and to counsel together in this conference.

The Tabernacle Choir under the direction of Jerold Ottley with John Longhurst at the organ is providing the music for this session of the conference.

The choir opened these services by singing "Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken" and will now sing "Our Father, by Whose Name," following which Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "Our Father, by Whose Name."

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin offered the invocation.

The choir sang "An Angel from on High" without announcement.

President Benson

The Tabernacle Choir has just sung "An Angel from on High."

We shall now be pleased to listen to President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

An unfolding miracle

My brethren and sisters, I greet you with love and sincere appreciation. I seek the direction of the Holy Spirit. Today is the birthday of the Church. It was organized 156 years ago, which was "eighteen hundred and thirty years since the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the flesh" (D&C 20:1). Six men participated as the official incorporating body.

Those original six have now become approximately six million. The growth of this work has been a constantly unfolding miracle, and what an exciting and wonderful experience it is to be a part of it. Although storms of adversity have raged against it, it continues to move steadily forward along the course which the Almighty has outlined for it. It does so quietly, without great noise and fanfare, touching for good the lives of men and women across the earth. Its mission is not empire building. Its mission is to teach faith and repentance, and to bring truth and gladness to all who will listen and hearken to its message.

Personal testimony of President Spencer W. Kimball

Five months ago a solemn gathering was held in this great Tabernacle to mourn the passing of a beloved leader. I speak a few words of personal testimony of President Spencer W. Kimball. For forty-two years he served as Apostle and prophet. His moving example of sincere humility, his out-

reaching love for people, his quiet and earnest declarations of faith have touched all of us. The majesty of his life was found in its simplicity. There was never any of the ostentatious, the boastful, the proud evident in his character. Yet there was an excellence that shone like gold. He was a man from whose life the husk of mediocrity had been winnowed by the hand of God. I loved him with that love which men in the service of the Lord come to feel and know.

Transition of authority

Now there is another, and during this conference we shall be constituted as a solemn assembly to sustain as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the man who, under the plan of the Lord, has been chosen, ordained, and set apart to this most high and sacred office.

This transition of authority, in which I have participated a number of times, is beautiful in its simplicity. It is indicative of the way the Lord does things. Under His procedure a man is selected by the prophet to become a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. He does not choose this as a career. He is called, as were the Apostles in Jesus' time, to whom the Lord said, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you" (John 15:16). The years pass. He is schooled and disciplined in the duties of his office. He travels over the earth

in fulfilling his apostolic calling. It is a long course of preparation, in which he comes to know the Latter-day Saints wherever they may be, and they come to know him. The Lord tests his heart and his substance. In the natural course of events, vacancies occur in that council and new appointments are made. Under this process a particular man becomes the senior Apostle. Residing latent in him, and in his associate Brethren, given to each at the time of ordination, are all of the keys of the priesthood. But authority to exercise those keys is restricted to the President of the Church. At his passing, that authority becomes operative in the senior Apostle, who is then named, set apart, and ordained a prophet and President by his associates of the Council of the Twelve.

There is no electioneering. There is no campaigning. There is only the quiet and simple operation of a divine plan which provides inspired and tested leadership.

Personal testimony of President Ezra Taft Benson

I have been a witness, a personal witness, to this wondrous process. I give you my testimony that it is the Lord who selected Ezra Taft Benson to become a member of the Council of the Twelve almost forty-three years ago. It is the Lord who over these years has tested and disciplined him, schooled and prepared him. At the death of the prophet he was ready, not of his own choice nor of his own design. He was called, set apart, and ordained November 10 last.

As one who knows him and who stands at his side, I bear witness that he is a man of faith, of tested leadership, of profound love for the Lord and His work, of love for the sons and daughters of God everywhere. He is a man of proven capacity, who has been tempered in the Refiner's fire.

I am grateful for the privilege of association with President Benson in the sacred relationship of counselor

to prophet. I am grateful for the association of President Monson. I am grateful that the First Presidency is fully organized and functioning unitedly together.

Gospel meets the needs spiritually, intellectually, morally, physically

Under President Benson's leadership, the work of the Lord will continue to move forward. No power under the heavens can deflect it from its course. We may expect that there will be some who will try. Their efforts will be like chipping away at a granite block with a chisel of wood. The stone will not be damaged, but the chisel will be broken.

As Daniel declared in prophecy: "The God of heaven set up [this] kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, . . . and it shall stand for ever" (Daniel 2:44).

It grows because it satisfies the needs and desires of the human heart, regardless of age, sex, race, or language.

Speaking at this pulpit one hundred years ago, in 1886, Lorenzo Snow, then an Apostle and later the President of the Church, said: "A religious system is of but little account when it possesses no virtue nor power to better the condition of people spiritually, intellectually, morally and physically" (JD, 26:371).

This gospel, when accepted and obeyed, meets the needs of men and women everywhere. It has the power to improve the individual in each of these categories—the spiritual, the intellectual, the moral, the physical.

Opportunity of eternal life

In His great intercessory prayer, Jesus declared: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

Such knowledge is the very foundation of spiritual strength. This is the great basic purpose of the restoration of

the gospel in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times—to declare the living reality of God the Eternal Father and of His Beloved Son, the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ. To know them, to love them, to obey them is to have life eternal. It is our mission to declare with words of soberness and truth that God is our Eternal Father, the God of the universe, the Almighty One; and that Jesus Christ is his firstborn, the Only Begotten in the flesh, who condescended to come to earth; who was born in a stable in Bethlehem of Judea, lived the perfect life, and taught the way of salvation; who offered Himself a sacrifice for all, enduring pain and death on the cross; and who then came forth in a glorious resurrection, the firstfruits of them that slept. (See 1 Corinthians 15:20.) Through Him, and by Him, and of Him, all are assured salvation from death and are offered the opportunity of eternal life.

Spiritual strength

This is the great undergirding truth of our faith. It is the overarching canopy under which we find our spiritual strength. With this knowledge we grow spiritually, our spirits in kinship with the Spirit of God. It is the way out of darkness. It affords the strength needed to rise above sin.

I recently received a letter from a man, a business executive. He told of the waste of his life in corrupt living, of the pain he had caused his loved ones. Then the influence of the gospel came into his life. I quote from his letter:

"I have come to know that I have offended greatly my Father in Heaven and His Son. As I begin to better understand His great, yet wonderful expression of love to me in Gethsemane I have learned to be grateful for His atoning sacrifice and for the process of repentance. . . . I have walked that bitter road of darkness and despair for so many years that I desire now only to come into the light. As I continue to read and ponder the scriptures and plead with the Lord for an understand-

ing and forgiveness of my past, I have come to love Him and never will I offend Him again. I will always try to the best of my ability to pattern my life after His."

Example of intellectual and spiritual learning

This restored gospel brings not only spiritual strength, but also intellectual curiosity and growth. Truth is truth. There is no clearly defined line of demarcation between the spiritual and the intellectual when the intellectual is cultivated and pursued in balance with the pursuit of spiritual knowledge and strength.

The Lord Almighty, through revelation, has laid a mandate upon this people in these words: "Seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith" (D&C 88:118).

The other evening I picked up a new publication of the writings of Dr. Hugh Nibley, a man my age whom I have known and admired for many years. On the dust jacket of the book I read these words:

"As a young man he memorized vast portions of Shakespeare and studied Old English, Latin, Greek, and other languages. As a student at Berkeley, he began reading at the southwest corner of the ninth level of the library and worked his way down to the northeast corner of the first level, studying every significant book that caught his eye" (*Old Testament and Related Studies* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co.], 1986).

His encyclopedic knowledge has given him tremendous and well-deserved status among his academic peers. It also has made him a powerful advocate of the work of the Lord. His appetite for learning has been whetted by the gospel he loves.

Thirteenth article of faith

This Church spends a very substantial part of its resources to train the

minds and hands of its young people, whatever their choice of discipline, be it science, commerce, various of the professions, or the arts.

A declaration of our faith reads: "If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things" (Articles of Faith 1:13). This embraces the truth of science, the truth of philosophy, the truth of history, the truth of art. I emphasize the word *truth*. It is a principle set forth in our scripture that "the glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth" (D&C 93:36).

The mind of man is the crowning creation of God, in whose express image man was made. The development of the mind is a companion responsibility to the cultivation of the spirit, as set forth in the revealed principles of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

Moral strength

Accompanying these and growing out of them is the development of moral strength. How sorely this is needed in the world in which we live. Were the standards of Sodom and Gomorrah worse than those of many of this generation?

President Benson, in his opening address yesterday, called on us to repent. Fortunately, there are among those who walk in sin at least a few who have come to know that there is something better, and who now long for forgiveness and an opportunity. I extract a few lines from the letter of one who was excommunicated from the Church because of aggravated immoral behavior. He now writes:

"After I was cut off from the Church, the pain and torment were hell. I did not believe anyone could suffer such pain and still live."

He then pleads for help to come back, and expresses appreciation for those who now are putting their arms around him to give him strength.

Fortify against moral sin

The Church is the guardian and teacher of moral values. Regrettably, there are some who disregard those teachings. Some are enticed by the reading of pornographic writings and the viewing of pornographic materials to set aside self-discipline and become involved in the quagmire of immorality.

In too many cases wives and children become their victims. I have previously spoken from this pulpit concerning child and spouse abuse. I repeat for emphasis an earlier statement:

"Abuse of children on the part of fathers or anyone else has long been a cause for excommunication from the Church. No man who has been ordained to the priesthood of God can with impunity indulge in either spouse or child abuse. Such activity becomes an immediate repudiation of his right to hold and exercise the priesthood and to retain membership in the Church" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1985, p. 66; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, p. 51).

If there be any within the sound of my voice who may be guilty of such practices, let him or her repent, and as a part of that process go to his bishop or her bishop and confess, seeking help to do the right thing to remedy the evil.

I repeat, one of the great purposes of this work, as revealed by the Lord, is to fortify against moral sin. To the degree that we accept and follow these teachings we shall be a happy and blessed people.

Promises of the Word of Wisdom

Finally, there are inherent in the doctrine, the teaching, and the practices of this Church, those elements which will improve the individual physically. The body is the temple of the spirit. It is God's creation as a part of His eternal plan.

As I read and hear of the findings of modern medical science, I give

thanks to our Creator for revealing unto His prophet what we call the Word of Wisdom. It sets forth in language spoken 153 years ago principles now confirmed and taught by modern dietary science. With all of this is given a divinely spoken promise, the like of which is found nowhere else:

"And all saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones;

"And shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures;

"And shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint.

"And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them" (D&C 89:18-21).

What a marvelous, remarkable, and unique statement of religious principle that is. It is a part of our doctrine given by an all-wise Father, our Creator, for our physical and temporal good.

I am not saying that disease will not come, that death will not strike. Death is a part of the divine plan, a necessary step in the eternal life of the sons and daughters of God. But I do not hesitate to say that in this brief but inclusive statement of the Lord is found counsel, given with a promise, which,

if more widely observed, would save untold pain and suffering and lead not only to increased physical well-being but also to great and satisfying "treasures of knowledge" of the things of God.

God be thanked

All of this of which I have spoken comes of the revealed word of the Almighty to bless His children. We invite you, wherever you may be or whatever your circumstances, to come and partake.

God be thanked for this glorious work, for this day of restored truth and light, for the gospel of Jesus Christ. I bear witness of its divinity as I express unto you, my brethren and sisters, my love for each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Our Savior's Love" without announcement.

President Benson

President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has just spoken to us, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "Our Savior's Love."

Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks

"Great pollutions upon the face of the earth"

Recently our family was viewing what was supposed to be a wholesome movie on videotape. Suddenly, one of the actors used a vulgar expression. Embarrassed, we began to smooth this over for our ten-year-old daughter. She quickly assured us that we needn't worry because she heard worse than

that every day from the boys and girls at her school.

I am sure most LDS parents have had similar experiences. The nature and extent of profanity and vulgarity in our society is a measure of its deterioration.

I cannot remember when I first heard profane and vulgar expressions in common use around me. I suppose it was from adults in the barnyard or the

barracks. Today, our young people hear such expressions from boys and girls in their grade schools, from actors on stage and in the movies, from popular novels, and even from public officials and sports heroes. Television and videotapes bring profanity and vulgarity into our homes.

For many in our day, the profane has become commonplace and the vulgar has become acceptable. Surely this is one fulfillment of the Book of Mormon prophecy that in the last days "there shall be great pollutions upon the face of the earth" (Mormon 8:31).

Commandments against profanity

The people of God have always been commanded to abstain from language that is profane or vulgar. Latter-day Saints should understand why.

The names of God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, are sacred. The prophet Isaiah taught that the Lord will not suffer these names to be dishonored—"polluted" as the scriptures say. (See 1 Nephi 20:11; Isaiah 48:11.)

In the third of the Ten Commandments, the Lord commanded ancient Israel: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (Exodus 20:7). This same commandment was repeated to the Book of Mormon people by the prophet Abinadi (see Mosiah 13:15) and to each of us through modern prophets (see D&C 136:21).

Using names of Father and Son without authority

The Doctrine and Covenants gives this example:

"Let all men beware how they take my name in their lips—

"For behold, verily I say, that many there be who are under this condemnation, who use the name of the Lord, and use it in vain, having not authority" (D&C 63:61-62).

This scripture shows that we take the name of the Lord in vain when we use his name without authority. This obviously occurs when the sacred names of God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, are used in what is called profanity: in hateful cursings, in angry denunciations, or as marks of punctuation in common discourse.

Take upon us the name of Christ

The names of the Father and the Son are used with authority when we reverently teach and testify of them, when we pray, and when we perform the sacred ordinances of the priesthood.

There are no more sacred or significant words in all of our language than the names of God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ.

As we read in the Book of Mormon, after the Savior appeared to the people on this continent he taught them that they must take upon them the name of Christ:

"For by this name shall ye be called at the last day;

"And whoso taketh upon him my name, and endureth to the end, the same shall be saved at the last day" (3 Nephi 27:5-6).

Pray unto the Father

He has instructed his followers to call the Church in his name. (See 3 Nephi 27:7-8; D&C 115:4.) In our time this is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Savior taught that we should begin our prayers by saying, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name" (3 Nephi 13:9; see also Luke 11:2). In the Book of Mormon, the risen Lord gave these further instructions:

"Therefore ye must always pray unto the Father in my name;

"And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you.

"Pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name, that your wives and your children may be blessed" (3 Nephi 18:19–21; see also 3 Nephi 27:7; John 14:13; 15:16).

The scriptures are replete with declarations that the name of Jesus Christ is "the only name which shall be given under heaven, whereby salvation shall come unto the children of men" (Moses 6:52; see also Acts 4:12; 2 Nephi 25:20; 31:21; Mosiah 3:17).

Sacred names of Elohim and Jehovah

The Bible has hundreds of references to the name of God, a sacred word which usually refers to God the Father, or Elohim. (See Genesis; John 3:16.) The ancient prophets also knew and revered the name of Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, Jesus Christ, whom the Bible usually refers to as the Lord (see JST Exodus 6:3; Abraham 1:16, 2:8; Ether 3:1–28; Isaiah 43:3.)

These names were so sacred that the children of Israel were repeatedly commanded not to profane the holy name of their God. (See Leviticus 18:21; 19:12; 20:3; 21:6.) One who blasphemed the name of the Lord was commanded to be put to death by stoning. (See Leviticus 24:16.)

Cataloging the sins of his countrymen, the prophet Ezekiel said, "Her priests have . . . profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and the profane . . . and I am profaned among them" (Ezekiel 22:26; see also 36:20–23).

Throughout the ages, the Lord has directed that "whatsoever ye shall do, ye shall do it in my name" (3 Nephi 27:7). God the Father commanded that Adam and Eve and all of their descendants should be baptized "in the name of mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth, which is Jesus Christ" (Moses 6:52).

Signs that follow the believer

At the conclusion of his ministry, the risen Lord identified signs that would follow those who believed (see Mark 16:17–18):

"In my name they shall do many wonderful works;

"In my name they shall cast out devils;

"In my name they shall heal the sick;

"In my name they shall open the eyes of the blind, and unstop the ears of the deaf" (D&C 84:66–69).

When Peter healed the lame beggar, he spoke these words: "Such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6).

When the names of God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, are used with reverence and authority, they invoke a power beyond what mortal man can comprehend.

It should be obvious to every believer that these mighty names—by which miracles are wrought, by which the world was formed, through which man was created, and by which we can be saved—are holy and must be treated with the utmost reverence. As we read in modern revelation, "Remember that that which cometh from above is sacred, and must be spoken with care, and by constraint of the Spirit" (D&C 63:64).

Melchizedek Priesthood

So it is that the Holy Priesthood after the Order of the Son of God is called the Melchizedek Priesthood "out of respect or reverence to the name of the Supreme Being, to avoid the too frequent repetition of his name" (D&C 107:3–4).

The desire and work of Satan is to mislead and corrupt. He seeks to frustrate the gospel plan by which God has provided the opportunity of eternal life for His children.

Satan seeks to discredit the sacred names of God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, the names through which their work is done. He succeeds in a measure whenever he is able to influence any man or woman, boy or girl, to make holy names common and to associate them with coarse thoughts and evil acts. Those who use sacred names in vain are, by that act, promoters of Satan's purposes.

Profanity profoundly offensive

Profanity is profoundly offensive to those who worship the God whose name is desecrated. We all remember how a prophet reacted from a hospital bed when an operating room attendant stumbled and cursed in his presence. Even half-conscious, Elder [Spencer W.] Kimball "recoiled and implored: 'Please! Please! That is my Lord whose names you revile' " (*Improvement Era*, May 1953, p. 320).

The words we speak are important. The Savior taught that men will be held to account for "every idle word" in the day of judgment. "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matthew 12:36-37). He also said, "That which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man" (Matthew 15:11).

Truly, as the Apostle James taught, "The tongue is a fire, . . . an unruly evil" that can defile the whole body (James 3:6, 8).

Relinquish companionship of Spirit

Profanity also takes its toll on the one who uses it. As we read in Proverbs, "A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit" (Proverbs 15:4.) The Spirit of the Lord, the Holy Ghost, testifies of God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. (See 2 Nephi 31:18.) When those names are dishonored, that Spirit, which "doth not dwell in unholy temples" (Helaman 4:24), is offended

and withdraws. For this reason, those who profane the name of God inevitably relinquish the companionship of his Spirit.

As the Apostle Paul taught Timothy, in order to be "approved unto God," we must "shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness" (2 Timothy 2:15-16). Profanity leads to more ungodliness because the Spirit of the Lord withdraws and the profane are left without guidance.

Vulgarity pollutes

Vulgar and crude expressions are also offensive to the Spirit of the Lord.

The Apostle James taught that followers of Christ should be "slow to speak, slow to wrath," and should "lay apart all filthiness" (James 1:19, 21). In the Bible, filthiness is a term associated with sexual sin and with lewd language. (See Ezekiel 16:36; 24:13; Ephesians 5:3-4.) Thus, Paul was surely condemning vulgarity when he wrote the Colossians, "Also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth" (Colossians 3:8).

These biblical condemnations of vulgarity are needed in our day.

Indecent and vulgar expressions pollute the air around us. Relations that are sacred between husband and wife are branded with coarse expressions that degrade what is intimate in marriage and make commonplace what is forbidden outside it. Moral sins that should be unspeakable are in the common vernacular. Human conduct plunging downward from the merely immodest to the utterly revolting is written on the walls and shouted in the streets. Twentieth-century men and women of sensitivity can easily understand how Lot, a fugitive from the actions and speech of Sodom and Gomorrah, could have been "vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked" (2 Peter 2:7).

No artificial boosters

How soberly we must regard the Book of Mormon teachings that "there cannot any unclean thing enter into the kingdom of God; wherefore there must needs be a place of filthiness prepared for that which is filthy" (1 Nephi 15:34; see also Alma 7:21).

Profane and vulgar expressions are public evidence of a speaker's ignorance, inadequacy, or immaturity.

A speaker who profanes must be ignorant or indifferent to God's stern command that his name must be treated with reverence and not used in vain.

A speaker who mouths profanity or vulgarity to punctuate or emphasize speech confesses inadequacy in his or her own language skills. Properly used, modern languages require no such artificial boosters.

A speaker who employs profanity or vulgarity to catch someone's attention with shock effect engages in a babyish device that is inexcusable as juvenile or adult behavior. Such language is morally bankrupt. It is also progressively self-defeating, since shock diminishes with familiarity and the user can only maintain its effect by escalating its excess.

"Our words will condemn us"

Members of the Church, young or old, should never allow profane or vulgar words to pass their lips. The language we use projects the images of our hearts, and our hearts should be pure. As the Savior taught:

"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

"A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things" (Matthew 12:34-35).

The Book of Mormon teaches us that when we are brought before the judgment bar of God "our words will condemn us . . . and our thoughts will also condemn us" (Alma 12:14). Let us

recognize profanity and vulgarity for what they are. They are sins that separate us from God and cripple our spiritual defenses by causing the Holy Ghost to withdraw from us.

We should abstain and we should teach our children to abstain from all such expressions.

Encourage others to abstain from profanity

We can also encourage our associates to do likewise. Where we have the courage to make a friendly request, like Elder Kimball, we will often receive a respectful and cooperative reply. Our married daughter who lives in Illinois had such an experience. As she took her turn car pooling the twelve-year-olds home from the soccer game, her noisy passengers filled the air with profanity. Firmly, but with good humor, she told the boys, "In our family we only use that name when we worship, so we ask you, please don't say that name disrespectfully in our car." The boys immediately complied, and, what is even more surprising, most of them still remembered the next time it was her turn to drive.

We obviously cannot control all that goes on in our presence. Modern revelation suggests one alternative for those who would be clean: "Go ye out from among the wicked. Save yourselves" (D&C 38:42). Sometimes we can remove ourselves from language that is profane or vulgar. If this is not possible, we can at least register an objection so that others cannot conclude that our silence means approval or acquiescence.

Our thirteenth article of faith commits us to seek after things that are "virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy." The language of Latter-day Saints should be reverent and clean. We understand the eternal requirement of cleanliness, and we understand the sacred significance of the names of the Father and the Son.

I testify of God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, and pray that we may be more faithful in honoring their holy names. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

We have just heard from Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Praise to the Man," following which we shall hear from Elder Jack H. Goaslind, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation sang "Praise to the Man."

Elder Jack H. Goaslind

Happiness—source is within

Last summer I saw an interesting picture as I followed a car on the freeway. It was a large station wagon that had obviously endured many road skirmishes. The top rack was loaded with luggage; the seats were loaded with people. Four bare feet hung out the rear window, and elbows and arms hung out the side windows. In the front seat, the mother was wrestling with a feisty child while simultaneously trying to calm an upset infant. The father was desperately trying to negotiate the heavy traffic. It was obviously vacation time for this family. As I surveyed the situation with some degree of empathy, I noticed a bumper sticker which read, "Are we having fun yet?"

I laugh about this scene whenever I recall it. I believe it is amusing because it exhibits a wry insight into human nature. It reveals a very real aspect of the human condition: the largely unfulfilled pursuit of happiness. The implications of the question "Are we having fun yet?" are profound. How many people in this world pursue happiness but find that it eludes them? They contrive pleasures, invent amusements, and invest heavily in recreation. They go abroad in search of this rare gift but fail to see that evidence of it is all around them; the source is within them.

"Men are, that they might have joy"

As I have occasion to be with wonderful people throughout the world, I am often moved by the many individuals I meet who are looking for happiness, but not quite finding it. They yearn and strive and endure, but seem to be asking, "Am I happy yet?" I desire to assure you that happiness is real. It can be experienced here, and we can know a fulness of joy in the hereafter. May I share with you some insights about the kind of happiness promised by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Lehi's words to his son Jacob include a profound truth: "All things have been done in the wisdom of him who knoweth all things.

"Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:24-25).

The "plan of happiness"

Our wise and loving Father in Heaven is concerned for the welfare of his children. He desires to see us happy. The very purpose of our lives can be defined in terms of happiness. The Prophet Joseph Smith said, "Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it" (*History of the Church*, 5:134).

Our yearnings for happiness were implanted in our hearts by Deity. They represent a kind of homesickness, for we have a residual memory of our pre-mortal existence. They are also a foretaste of the fulness of joy that is promised to the faithful. We can expect with perfect faith that our Father will fulfill our innermost longings for joy. In fact, the plan he has given to guide us is called "the plan of happiness" (Alma 42:16). In the meridian of time, it was heralded by angelic messengers as "good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people" (Luke 2:10).

The Book of Mormon makes it clear that happiness is our destiny. It speaks of dwelling "with God in a state of never-ending happiness" (Mosiah 2:41). It is also made clear that "all things shall be restored to their proper order, every thing to its natural frame, . . . raised to endless happiness to inherit the kingdom of God, or to endless misery to inherit the kingdom of the devil." We also learn that we are "raised to happiness according to [our] desires of happiness" (Alma 41:4-5).

Words such as *reap*, *restored*, and *desire* imply that happiness is a consequence, not a reward. We are *restored* to a state of happiness when we have chosen to live according to the plan of happiness. Our joy in God's kingdom will be a natural extension of the happiness we cultivate in this life.

Sin—contrary to nature of God

Our happiness is diminished by at least two things: sin and adversity. Of the two, sin is the most tragic. Sin is the most persistent cause of human suffering and of the two brings the deepest remorse. Sin and the temptation to do evil are part of our mortal test. We are being tried to see if we will choose good or evil. It is a hard test, and only those who have resisted temptation can know and gain the strength thereof. Sin is sin because it destroys instead of saves; it tears down instead of builds; it causes despair instead of hope.

The Book of Mormon speaks of men that are in a "carnal state . . . and in the bonds of iniquity; they are without God in the world, and they have gone contrary to the nature of God; therefore, they are in a state contrary to the nature of happiness" (Alma 41:11). It also records Samuel the Lamanite's warning to the Nephites: "Ye have sought all the days of your lives for that which ye could not obtain; and ye have sought for happiness in doing iniquity, which thing is contrary to the nature of that righteousness which is in our great and Eternal Head" (Helaman 13:38).

The doctrine is concisely summarized by Alma: "Behold, I say unto you, *wickedness never was happiness*" (Alma 41:10; italics added). If we are not pure, we would be miserable in the presence of God and Christ, who are by their very nature happy and joyful and cannot look upon sin with any allowance.

Deliberate decision to do good brings happiness

The suffering that results from sin is most tragic because through our own choices we can choose to avoid it. We have that power. We also have the capacity to repent of our sins and to experience the sweet joy of forgiveness. If we are unhappy, let us examine ourselves to see where we need to repent. If we have questions about what we need to do, or not do, we need only listen to our conscience and follow the promptings of the Spirit.

I am acquainted with a man who rebelled from the Church when he was a youth. He made some mistakes during this time and developed some habits. Eventually, however, he came to himself; he served a mission and returned home to hold many responsible positions in the Church. But he was never quite happy. He could have said as did Nephi:

"I am encompassed about, because of the temptations and the sins which do so easily beset me.

"And when I desire to rejoice, my heart groaneth because of my sins" (2 Nephi 4:18-19).

Finally, in a night of spiritual turmoil, the man confessed to himself that he had never fully forsaken his sins. Although he had not committed sins worthy of Church court action, he still harbored attitudes and thoughts that robbed him of spirituality, and he went through cycles of guilt and despair that dampened his happiness. He made up his mind to change, and he kept his resolve. He broke the chain of sin and despair and, for the first time in memory, began to experience a real, true happiness. If someone had asked him, "Are we having fun, experiencing happiness, yet?" he could have answered, "Yes, more happiness, or joy, than I could have imagined."

Striving for happiness is a long, hard journey with many challenges. It requires eternal vigilance to win the victory. You cannot succeed with sporadic little flashes of effort. Constant and valiant living is necessary. That is why patience and faith are so often associated in the scriptures. You must "withstand every temptation of the devil, with [your] faith on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Alma 37:33). But remember, faith is not a magical formula. It requires that you make a deliberate decision to do good and then carry out your decision. Do it. Simply do it, and do it long enough that you experience success, no matter how hard it may seem. Your victory over self brings communion with God and results in happiness—lasting and eternal happiness.

Preserve happiness in midst of trouble and trial

The other thing that may diminish our happiness is adversity. Adversity is also part of our mortal probation, experienced by everyone. It is different, however, from sin. While we can choose to avoid sin, we usually cannot choose whether we experience adver-

sity. I am convinced if we are to have happiness in our hearts, we must learn how to preserve it, in our hearts, in the midst of trouble and trial. We can control our attitude toward adversity. Some people are defeated and embittered by it, while others triumph over it and cultivate godlike attributes in the midst of it.

I recall a true story from our pioneer heritage that illustrates how we can choose our response to adversity. Over one hundred years ago a Swedish family who had joined the Church faced a long ocean voyage to America, a train trip from New York to Omaha, and then a trek by wagon train to Salt Lake City. During their train trip they rode in stock cars used to haul hogs. The cars were filthy and filled with hog lice. On their wagon trip across the plains, a healthy baby was born, but their three-year-old contracted cholera. During the night, the father went to a neighboring wagon to borrow a candle, but was told they couldn't spare one. This angered him, and he fumed as he sat in the dark with his son's limp, feverish body in his arms. The boy died that night.

The next morning the wagon master said they would hold a short funeral and bury the boy in a shallow grave. They were in Indian country and didn't have time to do more. The father insisted on staying behind and digging a grave deep enough so the animals would not disturb the body. They experienced other hardships before they reached Salt Lake City.

Now, both the mother and the father experienced the same trials, but the father became withdrawn, cantankerous, and bitter. He stopped going to church, found fault with Church leaders. He became caught up in his own miseries, and the light of Christ grew dimmer and dimmer in his life.

On the other hand, the mother's faith increased. Each new problem seemed to make her stronger. She became an angel of mercy—filled with empathy, compassion, and charity. She

was a light to those around her. Her family gravitated toward her and looked to her as their leader. She was happy; he was miserable. (See Steve Dunn Hanson, *Ensign*, Feb. 1981, pp. 54-55).

Service gives capacity to endure own trials

I would offer one key to maintaining your happiness in spite of adversity. Christ said, "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it" (Luke 9:24). If you would find happiness and joy, lose your life in some noble cause. A worthy purpose must be at the center of every worthy life. President Stephen L. Richards noted that life is a mission, not a career. (See *Where Is Wisdom* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1955], p. 74.) As Church members, our mission should be the greatest, noblest mission in the universe—the salvation of souls. President David O. McKay was fond of quoting the poet Robert Browning, who said, "There is an answer to the passionate longings of the heart for fullness, and I knew it, and the answer is this: Live in all things outside yourself by love, and you will have joy. That is the life of God; it ought to be our life. In him it is accomplished and perfect; but in all created things it is a lesson learned slowly and through difficulty" (quoted in *Stepping Stones to an Abundant Life*, comp. Llewelyn R. McKay [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1971], p. 119).

Service helps us forget our own travails; it enlarges our souls and gives

us greater capacity to endure our own trials.

"Are we having fun yet, experiencing true happiness?"

Now, I have spoken of our Father's plan of happiness by which he guides us into eternal joy. I have talked about overcoming sin through repentance and self-mastery, and I have spoken of taking the edge off adversity through selfless service. Self-mastery and service are keys to our Father's plan. Christ told his disciples:

"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love. . . .

"These things I have spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (John 15:10-11).

The commandments are guides to happiness. I implore you to follow them.

"Are we having fun yet, experiencing true happiness?" I certainly am. I find great joy in life in obeying and serving. I pray that you may also discover the elusive treasure of true happiness through the means that were ordained by our Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Jack H. Goaslind, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of Seventy, has just spoken to us.

Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us.

Elder Boyd K. Packer

I speak to those who have never read the Book of Mormon. This includes many members who have started to read it several times, but, for one reason or another, have never finished it.

My message may help those as well who have read the Book of Mormon once but have not returned to it.

I have chosen as a title "The Things of My Soul."

The Book of Mormon

Perhaps no other book has been denounced so vigorously by those who have never read it as has the Book of Mormon.

Because of that, I hope to introduce the book in such a way that, in case you decide to read it, you will know beforehand what awaits you.

Except for the Bible, the Book of Mormon is different from any book you have read. It is not a novel. It is not fiction. For the most part, it is not difficult to read. However, like all books of profound value, it is not casual reading. But if you persist, I assure you that it will be the most rewarding book you have ever set your mind to read.

The Book of Mormon is not biographical, for not one character is fully drawn. Nor, in a strict sense, is it a history.

Writers of the Book of Mormon

While it chronicles a people for 1,021 years and has the record of an earlier people, it is in fact not a history of those people. It is the saga of a message, a testament. As the influence of that message is traced from generation to generation, more than twenty writers record the fate of individuals and of civilizations who accepted or rejected that testament.

The saga began in Jerusalem six hundred years before Christ. King Zedekiah ruled the doomed kingdom of Judah.

The prophet Lehi was warned in a dream to take his family and leave Jerusalem before that destruction which soon was to be recorded by the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah. (See Jeremiah 44:1-8.)

Lehi was commanded of the Lord to obtain and take with them a record of their people. It is with that record, the brass plates of Laban, that the saga of the Book of Mormon began.

Lehi's son Nephi obtained the record for his father and said, "It is wisdom in God that we should obtain

these records, that we may preserve unto our children the *language* of our fathers" (1 Nephi 3:19; italics added).

They found that the record contained—

- "The five books of Moses, which gave an account of the creation of the world, and also of Adam and Eve, who were our first parents" (1 Nephi 5:11).
- And "the *words . . .* of all the holy prophets, which have been delivered unto them by the Spirit and power of God" (1 Nephi 3:20; italics added).
- "And also a record of the Jews from the beginning, even down to the commencement of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah";
- And "a genealogy of [Lehi's] fathers" (1 Nephi 5:12, 14).

Lehi's little band left Jerusalem with the record. In time, they were separated from their homeland by an ocean. But they had that precious spiritual record.

A later prophet, Benjamin, said of this record:

"Were it not for these things, which have been kept and preserved by the hand of God, that we might read and understand of *his mysteries*, and have his *commandments*, . . . [we] would have dwindled in unbelief" (Mosiah 1:5; italics added).

Large plates of Nephi

A second record joined this saga when Lehi began the chronicles of his little band of sojourners. He kept something of a secular account of their journeys, interspersed with his revelations and teachings and spiritual experiences.

Nephi succeeded his father, Lehi, as keeper of that record, which became known as the large plates of Nephi.

Nephi wrote that "upon [these] *plates* should be engraven an account of the reign of the kings, and the wars and contentions of my people" (1 Nephi 9:4; italics added).

Later, when they grew to be a numerous people, this account was kept by the kings.

No doubt this record contained a great resource of historical information. Generations later, as Mormon abridged this record, he repeated six times that he could not include "a hundredth part" of what was in that record. (See Jacob 3:13; Words of Mormon 1:5; Helaman 3:14; 3 Nephi 5:8; 26:6; Ether 15:33.)

Small plates of Nephi

But it was not the most valuable record, for Nephi was commanded to keep yet another account—not a secular account this time, but a record of the ministry. This record, the small plates of Nephi, was kept by the prophets rather than by the kings.

This account of their ministry became the foundation for what is now the Book of Mormon.

Perhaps the best insight into the purpose for keeping this record is from Jacob, who received the plates from his brother Nephi.

"And he gave me, Jacob, a commandment that I should write upon these [small] plates a few of the things which I considered to be *most precious*; that I should *not touch*, save it were *lightly*, concerning the *history* of this people. . . .

"For he said that the history of his people should be engraven upon his other [large] plates, and that I should preserve these [small] plates and hand them down unto my seed, from generation to generation.

"And if there were *preaching which was sacred*, or *revelation which was great*, or *prophesying*, that I should engraven . . . them upon these [small] plates, and touch upon *them as much* as it were possible, for *Christ's sake*, and for the sake of our people" (Jacob 1:2–4; italics added).

Did you notice that he was "*not* to touch (save it were *lightly*)" on *the history* of the people but he *was* to touch upon the *sacred things* "as much as it were possible"!

"The things of my soul"

Nephi explained:

"It mattereth not to me that I am particular to give a full account of all the things of my father, . . . for I desire the room that I may write of *the things of God*.

"For the fulness of mine intent is that I may persuade men to come unto the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, and be saved. . . .

"Wherefore, I shall give commandment unto my seed, that they shall *not* occupy these plates with things which *are not of worth* unto the children of men" (1 Nephi 6:3–4, 6; italics added).

"This I do that the *more sacred* things may be kept for the knowledge of my people. . . . I do not write anything upon plates save it be that I think it be *sacred*" (1 Nephi 19:5–6; italics added).

Notice why he did as he did:

"I have received *a commandment of the Lord* that I should make these plates, for the special purpose that there should be an account engraven of the *ministry* of my people" (1 Nephi 9:3; italics added).

And then this verse from which I take my title:

"And upon these [small plates] I write *the things of my soul*, and many of the *scriptures* which are engraven upon the plates of brass. *For my soul delighteth in the scriptures*, and my heart pondereth them, and writeth them for the learning and the profit of my children" (2 Nephi 4:15; italics added).

Vision of the tree of life

Those preachings which were sacred, the revelations which were great, and the prophesying, all testified of the coming of the Messiah.

Prophecies concerning the Messiah appear in the Old Testament. But the Book of Mormon records a vi-

sion of that event which has no equal in the Old Testament.

After the people of Lehi left Jerusalem, Lehi had a vision of the tree of life. His son Nephi prayed to know its meaning. In answer, he was given a remarkable vision of Christ.

In that vision he saw—

- A virgin bearing a child in her arms,
- One who should prepare the way—
John the Baptist,
- The ministry of the Son of God,
- Twelve others following the Messiah,
- The heavens open and angels ministering to them,
- The multitudes blessed and healed,
- The crucifixion of the Christ,
- The wisdom and pride of the world opposing his work. (See 1 Nephi 11:14–36.)

Another testament of Jesus Christ

That vision is the central message of the Book of Mormon.

The Book of Mormon is in truth another testament of Jesus Christ.

It is sometimes introduced as “a history of the ancient inhabitants of the American continent, the ancestors of the American Indians.”

That does not reveal the contents of this sacred book any better than an introduction of the Bible as “a history of the ancient inhabitants of the Near East, the ancestors of the modern Israelites” would reveal the contents of the Bible.

The history in the Book of Mormon is incidental. There are prophets and dissenters, and genealogies to move them from one generation to another, but the central purpose is not historical.

As the saga of the message is traced, one writer (Alma) requires 160 pages to cover thirty-eight years, while seven others (Enos, Jarom, Omni, Amaron, Chemish, Abinadom, Amaleki) together use only 6 pages to cover over three hundred years. In either case, the testament survives.

The Book of Mormon is a book of scripture. It is another testament of Jesus Christ. It is written in biblical language, the language of the prophets.

For the most part, it is in easy-flowing New Testament language, with such words as *spake* for *spoke*, *unto* for *to*, with *and it came to pass*, with *thus* and *thou* and *thine*.

You will not read many pages into it until you catch the cadence of that language and the narrative will be easy to understand. As a matter of fact, most teenagers readily understand the narrative of the Book of Mormon.

Prophecies of Isaiah

Then, just as you settle in to move comfortably along, you will meet a barrier. The style of the language changes to Old Testament prophecy style. For, interspersed in the narrative, are chapters reciting the prophecies of the Old Testament prophet Isaiah. They loom as a barrier, like a roadblock or a check-point beyond which the casual reader, one with idle curiosity, generally will not go.

You, too, may be tempted to stop there, but do not do it! Do not stop reading! Move forward through those difficult-to-understand chapters of Old Testament prophecy, even if you understand very little of it. Move on, if all you do is skim and merely glean an impression here and there. Move on, if all you do is look at the words.

Soon you will emerge from those difficult chapters to the easier New Testament style which is characteristic of the rest of the Book of Mormon.

Book of Mormon verifies Bible

Because you are forewarned about that barrier, you will be able to surmount it and finish reading the book.

You will follow the prophecies of the coming of the Messiah through the generations of Nephite people to that day when those prophecies are fulfilled and the Lord appears to them.

You will be present, through eye-witness accounts, at the ministry of the Lord among the "other sheep" of whom he spoke in the New Testament. (See John 10:16.)

Thereafter, you will be able to understand the Bible as never before. You will come to understand much in the Old Testament and to know why we, as a people, hold it in such esteem. You will come to revere the New Testament, to know that it is true. The account of the birth and the life and the death of the man Jesus as recorded in the New Testament is true. He is the Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, the Messiah, the Redeemer of mankind.

The Book of Mormon, another testament of Jesus Christ, will verify the Old and the New Testaments.

Isaiah quoted in New Testament

Perhaps only after you read the Book of Mormon and return to the Bible will you notice that the Lord quotes Isaiah seven times in the New Testament; in addition, the Apostles quote Isaiah forty more times. One day you may revere these prophetic words of Isaiah in both books. The Lord had a purpose in preserving the prophecies of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon, notwithstanding they become a barrier to the casual reader.

Those who never move beyond the Isaiah chapters miss the personal treasures to be gathered along the way. They miss the knowledge of—

- The purpose of mortal life and death,
- The certainty of life after death,
- What happens when the spirit leaves the body,
- The description of the Resurrection,
- How to receive and retain a remission of your sins,
- What hold justice or mercy may have on you,
- What to pray for,
- Covenants and ordinances,
- And many other jewels that make up the gospel of Jesus Christ.

"Ye may know the truth of all things"

It is beyond that barrier, near the end of the book, that you will find a promise addressed to you and to everyone who will read the book with intent and sincerity.

Let me read that promise to you, from the last chapter in the Book of Mormon:

"And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

"And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things" (Moroni 10:4-5).

Direct revelation to you

No missionary, no member can fulfill that promise—neither Apostle nor President can fulfill that promise. It is a promise of direct revelation to you on the conditions described in the book. After you have read the Book of Mormon, you become qualified to inquire of the Lord, in the way that He prescribes in the book, as to whether the book is true. You will be eligible, on the conditions He has established, to receive that personal revelation.

I bear witness that the Book of Mormon is true—that it is another testament of Jesus Christ. I have read the Book of Mormon with a sincere heart, with intent, as a humble serviceman, and thereafter pled with the Lord. I received that revelation. Accompanying that revelation is the revelation that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, our Redeemer, and of him I bear witness, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Press Forward, Saints" without announcement.

President Benson

Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just addressed us, followed by the

Tabernacle Choir singing "Press Forward, Saints."

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will now address us. He will be our concluding speaker.

President Thomas S. Monson

Anniversary of organization of the Church

Today, April 6, 1986, is a day of history. One hundred fifty-six years ago The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized. Numbers were few. Circumstances were modest. But the future beckoned. In solemn assembly this afternoon, President Ezra Taft Benson will be sustained by our hearts and souls, as well as by our uplifted hands, as the thirteenth President of the Church. Prayers of thanksgiving will be offered, words of wisdom provided, and songs of praise sung. Strains of "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet" and "How Firm a Foundation" will emanate from this Tabernacle and reverberate throughout the lands of the earth.

Anniversary of Church welfare program

It was fifty years ago this very day that the prophets of God outlined the general principles which became the "firm foundation" of the Church welfare plan. In a specially called and momentous meeting presided over by President Heber J. Grant and his Counselors—J. Reuben Clark, Jr., and David O. McKay—watershed statements were presented and heaven-inspired counsel provided which have endured the passage of time, which have been rendered valid by the verdict of history, and which bear the seal of God's approval.

On that occasion, President David O. McKay declared, "This organization is established by divine revelation,

and there is nothing else in all the world that can so effectively take care of its members" (in Henry D. Taylor, "The Church Welfare Plan," 1984, p. 26).

President J. Reuben Clark set the tone for the launching of this inspired effort by counseling: "[The Lord] has given us the spirituality. He has given us the actual command. . . . The eyes of the world are upon us. . . . May the Lord bless you, give us courage, give us wisdom, give us vision to carry out this great work" (Taylor, p. 27).

Fifty years have come and gone. Economic cycles have run their course. Societal changes have been numerous. The Church has expanded beyond the valleys of the mountains to the uttermost reaches of the earth. Membership is measured in millions. The word of God, provided on that historic day, is as an island of constancy in a sea of change.

Care for the poor, needy, downtrodden

Let us, for a moment, review the moorings, the underpinnings, even the foundation of the welfare program. Said the First Presidency in that year of announcement: "Our primary purpose was to set up, insofar as it might be possible, a system under which the curse of idleness would be done away with, the evils of a dole abolished, and independence, industry, thrift and self respect be once more established amongst our people. The aim of the Church is to help the people to help themselves" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1936, p. 3).

The holy scriptures leave no doubt concerning the responsibility to care for the poor, the needy, the downtrodden. The organization has been perfected, the duties defined, and the guidelines given.

Counseled by President J. Reuben Clark

I am profoundly grateful to my Heavenly Father for the privilege which has been mine to be tenderly taught and constantly counseled by the prophets of the program.

As a publisher and printer, I had the opportunity to assist President J. Reuben Clark in the preparation of his manuscript which became the monumental book *Our Lord of the Gospels*. What a blessing was mine to learn daily at the feet of such a master teacher and principal architect of the welfare program. Knowing that I was a newly appointed bishop presiding over a difficult ward, he emphasized the need for me to know my people, to understand their circumstances, and to minister to their needs. One day he recounted the example of the Savior as recorded in the Gospel of Luke:

"And it came to pass . . . that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him. . . .

"When he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. . . .

"And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

"And he came and touched the bier. . . . And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.

"And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother" (Luke 7:11-15).

When President Clark closed the Bible, I noticed that he was weeping. In a quiet voice, he said, "Tom, be kind to the widow and look after the poor."

President Harold B. Lee teaches role of Aaronic Priesthood

On one occasion, President Harold B. Lee, who was a stake president in the area where I was born and reared and later presided as a bishop, spoke movingly to the Aaronic Priesthood concerning how the priesthood might prepare for its role in caring for the poor. He stood at the pulpit, took the Book of Mormon in hand, and opened it to the seventeenth chapter of Alma. He then read to us concerning the sons of Mosiah:

"Now these sons of Mosiah were with Alma at the time the angel first appeared unto him; therefore Alma did rejoice exceedingly to see his brethren; and what added more to his joy, they were still his brethren in the Lord; yea, and they had waxed strong in the knowledge of the truth; for they were men of a sound understanding and they had searched the scriptures diligently, that they might know the word of God.

"But this is not all; they had given themselves to much prayer, and fasting; therefore they had the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation, and when they taught, they taught with power and authority of God" (Alma 17:2-3).

We had been given our pattern, provided by an inspired teacher. Reverently, he closed the covers of this sacred scripture. Like President Clark, he too had tears in his eyes.

President Romney teaches from scriptures

Just a few days ago I visited with President Marion G. Romney, known throughout the Church for his ardent advocacy and knowledge of the welfare program. We spoke of the beautiful passage from Isaiah concerning the true fast:

"Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover

him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?" (Isaiah 58:7).

As did President Clark, as did President Lee, President Romney wept as he spoke.

The spirit of welfare work

Appearing as a golden thread woven through the tapestry of the welfare program is the truth taught by the Apostle Paul: "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (2 Corinthians 3:6).

President Ezra Taft Benson frequently counsels us: "Remember, Brethren, in this work it is the Spirit that counts."

What has the Lord said about the spirit of this work? In a revelation given to the Prophet Joseph at Kirtland, Ohio, in June of 1831, He declared: "Remember in all things the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted, for he that doeth not these things, the same is not my disciple" (D&C 52:40).

In that marvelous message delivered by King Benjamin, as recorded in the Book of Mormon, we read: "For the sake of retaining a remission of your sins from day to day, that ye may walk guiltless before God—I would that ye should impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally" (Mosiah 4:26).

When we depart from the Lord's way in caring for the poor, chaos comes. Said John Goodman, president of the National Center for Political Analysis, as reported this year in a Dallas, Texas, newspaper:

"The USA's welfare system is a disaster. It is creating poverty, not destroying it. It subsidizes divorce, unwed teenage pregnancy, the abandonment of elderly parents by their children, and the wholesale dissolution of the family. The reason? We pay people to be poor. Private charities

have always been better at providing relief where it is truly needed."

Presidential task force

In 1982 it was my privilege to serve as a member of President Ronald Reagan's Task Force on Private Sector Initiatives. Meeting in the White House with prominent leaders assembled from throughout the nation, President Reagan paid tribute to the welfare program of the Church. He observed: "Elder Monson is here representing The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. If, during the period of the Great Depression, every church had come forth with a welfare program founded on correct principles as his church did, we would not be in the difficulty in which we find ourselves today." President Reagan praised self-sufficiency; lauded our storehouse, production, and distribution system; and emphasized family members assisting one another. He urged that in our need we turn not to government but rather to ourselves.

On another occasion in the White House, I was asked to present to a gathering of America's religious leaders an example of our welfare program in action. I could have chosen many illustrations, but selected as typical our response to the Teton Dam disaster in Idaho. The result was dramatic. As the First Presidency stated fifty years ago, "The eyes of the world are upon us." While this is a most important consideration, let us particularly remember that the eyes of God are similarly focused. What might He observe?

Prepared for emergencies?

Are we generous in the payment of our fast offerings? That we should be so was taught by President Spencer W. Kimball, who urged that "instead of the amount saved by our two or more meals of fasting, perhaps much, much more—ten times more [be given] when we are in a position to do it" (*Ensign*, Nov. 1977, p. 79).

Are we prepared for the emergencies of our lives? Are our skills perfected? Do we live providently? Do we have on hand our reserve supply? Are we obedient to the commandments of God? Are we responsive to the teachings of prophets? Are we prepared to give of our substance to the poor, the needy? Are we square with the Lord?

As we look back through fifty years and reflect on the development of the welfare program, as we look forward to the years ahead, let us remember the place of the priesthood, the role of the Relief Society, and the involvement of the individual. Help from heaven will be ours.

Ward welfare work—"Mein Bruder"

On a cold winter's night in 1951, there was a knock at my door. A German brother from Ogden, Utah, announced himself and said, "Are you Bishop Monson?" I answered in the affirmative. He began to weep and said, "My brother, his wife, and family are coming here from Germany. They are going to live in your ward. Will you come with us to see the apartment we have rented for them?"

On the way to the apartment, he told me he had not seen his brother for many years. Through the holocaust of World War II, his brother had been faithful to the Church, once serving as a branch president before the war took him to the Russian front.

I observed the apartment. It was cold and dreary. The paint was peeling, the wallpaper soiled, the cupboards empty. A forty-watt bulb, suspended from the living room ceiling, revealed a linoleum floor covering with a large hole in the center. I was heartsick. I thought, "What a dismal welcome for a family which has endured so much."

My thoughts were interrupted by the brother's statement, "It isn't much, but it's better than they have in Germany." With that, the key to the apartment was left with me, along with the information that the family would ar-

rive in Salt Lake City in three weeks—just two days before Christmas.

Sleep was slow in coming to me that night. The next morning was Sunday. In our ward welfare committee meeting, one of my counselors said, "Bishop, you look worried. Is something wrong?"

I recounted to those present my experience of the night before, revealing the details of the uninviting apartment. There were a few moments of silence. Then Brother Eardley, the group leader of the high priests, said, "Bishop, did you say that apartment was inadequately lighted and that the kitchen appliances were in need of replacement?" I answered in the affirmative. He continued, "I am an electrical contractor. Would you permit the high priests of this ward to rewire that apartment? I would also like to invite my suppliers to contribute a new stove and a new refrigerator. Do I have your permission?"

I answered with a glad "Certainly."

Then Brother Balmforth, the seventies president, responded, "Bishop, as you know, I'm in the carpet business. I would like to invite my suppliers to contribute some carpet, and the seventies can easily lay it and eliminate that worn linoleum."

Then Brother Bowden, the president of the elders quorum, spoke up. He was a painting contractor. He said, "I'll furnish the paint. May the elders paint and wallpaper that apartment?"

Sister Miller, the Relief Society president, was next to speak. "We in the Relief Society cannot stand the thought of empty cupboards. May we fill them?"

The three weeks which followed are ever to be remembered. It seemed that the entire ward joined in the project. The days passed, and at the appointed time, the family arrived from Germany. Again at my door stood the brother from Ogden. With an emotion-filled voice, he introduced to me his brother, his brother's wife, and their family. Then he asked, "Could we go

visit the apartment?" As we walked up the staircase leading to the apartment, he repeated, "It isn't much, but it's more than they have had in Germany." Little did he know what a transformation had taken place and that many who had participated were inside waiting for our arrival.

The door opened to reveal a literal newness of life. We were greeted by the aroma of freshly painted woodwork and newly papered walls. Gone was the forty-watt bulb, along with the worn linoleum it had illuminated. We stepped on carpet deep and beautiful. A walk to the kitchen presented to our view a new stove and new refrigerator. The cupboard doors were still open; however, they now revealed every shelf filled with food. As usual, the Relief Society had done its work.

In the living room, we began to sing Christmas hymns. We sang "Silent night! Holy night! All is calm, all is bright" (*Hymns*, 1985, no. 204). We sang in English; they sang in German. At the conclusion, the father, realizing that all of this was his, took me by the hand to express his thanks. His emotion was too great. He buried his head in my shoulder and repeated the words, "Mein Bruder, mein Bruder, mein Bruder."

Provident plan, precious promise

It was time to leave. As we walked down the stairs and out into the night air, snow was falling. Not a word was spoken. Finally, a young girl asked, "Bishop, I feel better than I have ever felt before. Can you tell me why?"

I responded with the words of the Master: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my

brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40). Suddenly there came to mind the words from "O Little Town of Bethlehem":

How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of his heav'n.

No ear may hear his coming;
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive
him, still
The dear Christ enters in.
(*Hymns*, 1985, no. 208.)

Silently, wondrously, His gift had been given. Lives were blessed, needs were met, hearts were touched, and souls were saved. A provident plan had been followed. A precious promise had been fulfilled.

I testify that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that we are led by a prophet, that sacrifice does indeed bring forth the blessings of heaven. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has been our concluding speaker.

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing one verse of "Truth Eternal." The benediction will be offered by Elder Robert B. Harbertson, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

This conference will be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The choir sang "Truth Eternal."
Elder Robert B. Harbertson offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY AFTERNOON MEETING SOLEMN ASSEMBLY

FIFTH SESSION

The fifth and final general session of the 156th Annual General Conference commenced at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, April 6, 1986.

President Ezra Taft Benson presided and President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session. This session was a solemn assembly, at which the First Presidency of the Church was reorganized.

Music was provided by the Tabernacle Choir directed by Jerold Ottley with Robert Cundick at the organ.

President Hinckley made the following remarks at the outset of the meeting:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked me to conduct this solemn assembly session.

We extend a sincere welcome to all assembled this afternoon in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah in the fifth and concluding session of the 156th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We welcome those seated in the Assembly Hall where Elders Royden G. Derrick and Ted E. Brewerton are seated on the stand. The Tabernacle is filled to capacity, with many thousands on the grounds who are unable to find seating either in the Tabernacle or the

Assembly Hall. We greatly appreciate their desire to be here and wish that we might have facilities to accommodate all of them.

We send our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere who are participating in these proceedings by radio, television, cable, and satellite transmission.

The Tabernacle Choir with Jerold Ottley directing and Robert Cundick at the organ is providing the music for this session.

The choir will begin this service by singing "Rejoice! A Glorious Sound Is Heard." The invocation will then be offered by Elder J. Richard Clarke, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, who presently is presiding over the South Africa Capetown Mission.

The choir sang "Rejoice! A Glorious Sound Is Heard."

Elder J. Richard Clarke offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

The choir will now sing "Oh Say, What Is Truth?" following which we shall hear from Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The choir sang "Oh Say, What Is Truth?"

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

"Be of good cheer"

Over the last number of weeks as I have contemplated this occasion, I

have been strongly impressed to share some thoughts about the Lord's invitation to "be of good cheer"—yes, to be of good cheer without fear. With world

conditions of riots, protests, arms buildups, wars and rumors of war, mistrust, poverty, disappointments, terrorism, tragedies, etc., there has never been a period in history when there is a greater need to accept another of the Lord's eternal promises.

"Behold, this is the promise of the Lord unto you, O ye my servants.

"Wherefore, be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you; and ye shall bear record of me, even Jesus Christ, that I am the Son of the living God, that I was, that I am, and that I am to come" (D&C 68:5-6).

"For I the Lord am with you"

Good cheer is a state of mind or mood that promotes happiness or joy. Some like to think good cheer is found in a bottle, a six-pack, an injection, a pinch under the lip, rationalization, or self-deceit. Incidentally, it has been my observation over the years that those who try to drown their sorrows with drink only sicken their tomorrows. With God's help, good cheer permits us to rise above the depressing present or difficult circumstances. It is a process of positive reassurance and reinforcement. It is sunshine when clouds block the light.

Recently, while visiting with a wife who had suddenly lost a husband through a tragic death, I was touched by this lovely lady from Washington, Utah, when she said, "My heart is heavy and sad, but my soul is of good cheer." There was a powerful inward cheer dominating the sorrowful situation. The promise, "for I the Lord am with you," was triumphing over heartache and despair. People of good cheer soften the sorrow of others as well as those that weigh mightily upon themselves.

None of us will escape tragedy and suffering. Each of us will probably react differently. However, if we can recall the Lord's promise, "for I the Lord am with you," we will be able to face our problems with dignity and courage.

We will find the strength to be of good cheer instead of becoming resentful, critical, or defeated. We will be able to meet life's unpleasant happenings with clear vision, strength, and power.

Fruits of cheerfulness

All over the world we have many members who are taking the blessings of the gospel to those who will listen. Those who accept and live the teachings of our Savior find the strength to be of good cheer, for he declared, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 16:25). When we apply this principle in our lives and share it with our associates, it is possible to supplant discouragement, tragedy, and gloom with hope and cheer. The fruits of cheerfulness lie within each of us, side by side with our resolution, priorities, and desires. They will never come from without. They cannot be purchased or stolen. They are above price.

Beautiful "good cheer" lady

When I think of those about us who are well-disciplined and anxiously engaged in being of good cheer, many great examples come to mind. They lift us with their state of mind of gladness, joy, and hope. They seem to move forward happily with an extra dimension of power and love. Let me share an example or two.

One beautiful "good cheer" lady I have loved deeply over the years is very special. For more than thirty-five years her husband has been afflicted with Parkinson's disease.

They have raised six outstanding children. She has cheerfully cooperated in making it possible for him to function well as a father, husband, bishop, high councilor, and successful building contractor. When his mobility has reached discouraging stages of near zero, she has lifted him. Her neighbors, and they are everyone she knows, find her to be the first visitor when there is

an unusual need. Her good cheer is endless. She brings peace of mind and comfort to all with whom she associates. The more I watch her, the more I realize good cheer builds contagious enthusiasm.

What a joy it is to see someone of good cheer, who, when others because of an unpleasant happening or development live in angry silence or vocal disgust, meets the situation with cheerful endurance and good spirits.

Changed a family from despair

Our missionaries worldwide frequently have contacts who would be willing to accept baptism and the gospel of Jesus Christ, but who fear the process. Many are afraid to change. Other less active members of the Church resist the invitation to come back because they fear being incompatible in his paths and with new associates.

We remind all to not fear and to be of good cheer because the Son of the living God, even Jesus Christ, shall stand by you.

Just a few weeks ago, while in Bangkok, Thailand, our hearts were touched by a young lady now living in a state of good cheer she never realized possible. Meaningful change has brought great joy and happiness to her and her family. Let me share this message of good cheer as told in her own words.

"In 1975 there was a family who lived near the main road in a small village. My parents were rather poor. My father worked at the local post office, while my mother stayed home caring for the children.

"As time passed by, my mother became bored with her life as a housewife and set out to find a more exciting way of life. She turned to drink, tobacco, and gambling. Many times she would play cards all day and all night and not return to care for her children.

"Meanwhile, my father was working hard to support his family. Things

at home were not going well, and many times my father and my mother would argue violently.

"One day my father came home and told my mother that if she continued on with her gambling and didn't care for the children, he would have to divorce her. The family faced a crisis. At that time I was helping care for my three younger brothers. My parents asked each child who he or she wanted to live with, Mom or Dad. It was a very difficult decision to have to choose between my mother and my father. It was a time of much suffering and sorrow.

"It was during this time that my oldest sister first met some missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She studied about the Church and came to accept the teachings and adopt them into her life. She asked me to go to church with her. I was very sad and angry at first to think she had changed religions. I had only known the teachings of Buddha and had come to love the customs.

"But I noticed a change in my sister. She was more loving and kind and did many things to help our family. I decided to study with the missionaries. My mother listened also. Before very long, we both realized that we had done things wrong and needed to change our lives. We repented of our sins and were baptized. When my father and two older brothers saw the change in us, they decided to study also. My father had been an important officer and teacher in the Buddhist church. He spent much time studying and reading the standard works. He prayed often and sincerely to know the truth. At last his humble prayers were answered. He knew, as we did, that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was true.

"The true gospel changed our lives and restored happiness to a nearly devastated home and family. We are all very grateful and happy to now be a part of the Lord's church and become familiar with and obey his commandments."

Today this young lady is a missionary for the Church. She and her family are living witnesses that when people come to realize that "I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you," a whole family can change their despair to good cheer.

Avoid self-deceit

In contrast to this family in Bangkok, some of us who have the happiness and good cheer of the gospel can lose it by becoming involved in iniquity and deceit. One of the most destructive forms of deceit is self-deceit.

Modern-day prophets have pled in plainness for us to avoid "get-rich-quick" schemes if we would avoid the heartaches of financial bondage. Perhaps we have not said enough about the fact that too many of us, in our moments of dreaming of grandeur, plant the seeds of economic disaster. Then at a later date when much is lost, we blame those who participated with us. It is difficult to be of good cheer when self-deceit is our companion. When we willingly expose ourselves to the winds and storms of fraud and scam, we should not be surprised when we come down with deficit disease. Over the years of listening to those who have suffered heavy money losses, I have heard many in desperation declare, "I was taken." Often my heart, mind, and the Spirit have prompted me to share, "Yes, you were taken by yourself." We all need to be encouraged to lift up our heads and see where our thoughts and undeclared priorities are taking us. Self-deceit permits us to blame others for our failures.

Self-mastery must triumph

For many years President Ezra Taft Benson has reinforced his talks of love and guidance to our youth with the truth that wickedness never can be happiness. (See Alma 41:10.) In dating and courting, decisions of conduct, to

be effective, must be made before the moment of enticement and temptation surfaces. Too often immoral conduct results from self-deceit. We have allowed ourselves to blame others for the incident of misconduct when our failure to make decisions ahead of time was not thought to be of importance. The thought that wickedness brings good cheer makes reason stare.

A constant effort must be made to lift our daily conduct so that it squares with our knowledge of truth and our standards. Self-mastery must always triumph over self-deceit for us to taste the fruits of good cheer.

Commit to principles

One form of self-deceit is rationalization. We prevent the Lord from being with us because we stray from his paths and explain our actions by consciously or unconsciously making excuses. We say to ourselves: "I did it just to see what it was like." "Everyone else was doing it." "I didn't want to be different." "There was no other way to be accepted graciously." Or "He made me do it."

The companionship of good cheer is possible through keeping the commandments of God, not through rationalization. We must commit ourselves to principles and not live by comparison or excuses. Horace Mann wisely said, "In vain do they talk of happiness who never subdued an impulse in obedience to a principle" (from *Common School Journal*, quoted in *Horace Mann: His Ideas and Ideals*, comp. Joy Elmer Morgan [Washington, D.C.: National Home Library Foundation, 1936], p. 149).

Self-deceit is at best only temporarily successful. Then when the gap between truth and our knowledge of the right and our behavior becomes too large, we are forced to close it with rationalization. The true test is, how do we measure up when Christlike conduct standards are applied.

Use what comes wisely

Cheerfulness will never be a blending of self-deceit and rationalization. Being of good cheer permits us to rise above the moment and situation. Generally, rationalization is unconscious. We slip into it unaware and gradually. It becomes a crutch for those who choose to walk in crooked paths.

The major responsibility for good cheer lies with the individual.

Good cheer is best shared by those who will discard fear, cheerfully accept what comes and use it wisely, become converted, obey the commandments of God, avoid self-deceit and rationalization.

Being of good cheer makes it possible for us to turn all of our sunsets into sunrises.

With good cheer, carrying our cross can be our ladder to happiness. When Jesus comes into our lives, cheer lights the way. How powerful and comforting is the Savior's declaration, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

Be of good cheer, and not fear

He promises to stand by us. He invites us to bear record and witness of him. What a joy and honor it is for me to declare in good cheer and without fear that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God, that he was the Only Begotten of the Father, that he is, and that he will yet come again in God's name. I thank God for the Savior's life, his cheerful love, and his example. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John 4:18).

To all mankind everywhere I cheerfully testify that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is our Redeemer. He will sustain us now and forever if we will walk in his paths, be of good cheer, and not fear. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Elder Marvin J. Ashton, a member of the Council of the Twelve.

We shall now hear from Elder James M. Paramore, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and he will be followed by Elder Jacob de Jager, also a member of that quorum.

Elder James M. Paramore

My beloved brothers and sisters, I want to sustain with all my heart and soul this day President Benson and his Counselors. My sixteen years of experiences with them has taught me that they are true prophets, true ministers, and servants of the Lord, Jesus Christ. I know that they love me, and I know that they love you.

"My gratitude knows no bounds"

A few years ago while I was serving as stake president, I had some special, spiritual experiences, one of which I'd like to share with you today.

One time in a stake conference, one of my great friends and reactivated brothers stood and bore his testimony of the power that had come into his life because of the teachings of Jesus Christ and of those who had ministered unto him. His heart was full, his eyes overflowed, as he stood before the audience with his arms around his two sons. He said, "My gratitude knows no bounds. My life has been totally changed by the gospel and by the people who have truly loved me. I will need to spend the rest of my life ministering and teaching others as partial repayment for all that I have received."

And minister and serve he did, with love, unending effort, and great personal concern. As a home teacher, he was assigned to some special, great families who, as he had once been, were away from the Church and had challenges—some almost overwhelming.

“When you lose the Spirit”

He began his work in earnest, going to them as a friend and servant—a true minister. He visited and visited and served them in every way that he could. At first (just as he had been), they didn’t want to talk to him or hear his message, and often they would leave the room when he came. But he understood, for he had done it himself a hundred times to others, leaving his wife alone to hear them. He understood how they felt, expressed as follows by a reactivated man who is currently a bishop in the Church:

“Because I wasn’t living a righteous life, I looked down my nose at others. When you lose the Spirit of the Lord, you don’t judge things properly. You look to judge negatively and to find fault. You wrap yourself in your own cocoon, so to speak, and you rationalize. But when I started working with these men, I found some of these fellows like to do the things that I like to do. I found out that they put their shoes on the same way I did. It was the influence of those men; they accepted me. They put their arms around me, and they accepted me for what I was and who I was. And we went to work, and I ate in their homes. And I just started catching the Spirit.”

Servant, minister, friend

My friend prayed harder and harder for guidance and direction, went to the homes more often, and began to teach and encourage his families to pray for help to overcome problems. He became their servant, their minister, their friend, and now he was able to teach them.

One of the fathers he was teaching had what was thought to be an incurable alcohol problem. Every day after work for twenty years, he bought alcohol and consumed it until he could hardly find his way home. He received friendship and encouragement to pray to heaven for help. One day after his work, while he was driving into the countryside with his bottle, a voice came into his heart to stop his car, walk out into the field, and pray to Father in Heaven for help. His simple prayer was heard by his Father in Heaven, and as he stood up and walked back to his car, all desire to drink liquor left his life. The powers of heaven had descended upon him, and he knew that God lived and loved him.

I heard him later stand before the members and testify of the love of God and of my friend and others who had ministered unto him and taught him. My heart has been touched as I think of how powerful and important the words are: “They taught and did minister one to another” (3 Nephi 26:19).

A holy gift

President Spencer W. Kimball gave these insights about the ministry of the Savior: “Never did the Savior give in expectation. I know of no case in his life in which there was an exchange. He was always the giver, seldom the recipient. Never did he give shoes, hose, or a vehicle; never did he give perfume, a shirt, or a fur wrap. His gifts were of such a nature that the recipient could hardly exchange or return the value. His gifts were rare ones: eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, and legs to the lame; cleanliness to the unclean, wholeness to the infirm, and breath to the lifeless. His gifts were opportunity to the downtrodden, freedom to the oppressed, light in the darkness, forgiveness to the repentant, hope to the despairing. His friends gave him shelter, food, and love. He gave them of himself, his love, his service, his life. The wise men brought him gold and frankincense. He gave them and all

their fellow mortals resurrection, salvation, and eternal life. We should strive to give as he gave. To give of oneself is a holy gift" (*The Wondrous Gift* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1978], p. 2).

Ammon ministering among Lamanites

One of the great stories on ministering to others comes from Alma in the Book of Mormon. (See Alma 17–19.) Ammon, one of the sons of Mosiah, truly gave himself to teaching and ministering unto the people for over fourteen years. He had waxed strong in the knowledge of truth by searching the scriptures diligently, by much prayer and fasting, and he received the spirit of prophecy and revelation and taught with power and authority from God. He prayed that he might be an instrument in the hands of God to bring the knowledge of the truth unto the Lamanites, a wild and hardened and ferocious people. As he came to the land of Ishmael, the Lamanites bound him and carried him before the king, Lamoni, to slay him or to make a slave of him. *And now the ministry and teaching began.*

The king asked him if he desired to stay among the Lamanites.

"Yes," he responded, "for a time—perhaps even until the day I die."

And the king was pleased with Ammon and untied him and offered him one of his daughters to wife.

But Ammon offered instead himself to be a servant to the king. He tended the flocks with others until a certain day came, and a number of the Lamanites scattered their flocks, causing grave concern, for the king usually killed those who lost their flocks. But this scattering filled Ammon's heart with joy, for he said, "Now I will show the power that is within me." He overpowered the enemy and gathered the flocks, and all were astonished at his power, for none of the enemy could touch him.

As the servants returned and testified of the miraculous things that had happened, the king sought to talk to Ammon, who was even at that moment feeding the king's horses and preparing his chariots. The king was even more astonished and said, "He doth even remember all of my commandments to execute them."

And now, after this type of ministry, of concern for others, even greater opportunities would be offered him to teach and minister unto the king and others. His words as he came unto the king were, "I am a man and thy servant; therefore, whatever thou desirest which is right, that will I do."

And the king, seeing and feeling the great power and spirit of Ammon, asked, "Art thou the great spirit who knows all things?" For Ammon had perceived his very thoughts.

The king, feeling this power, told Ammon that he would grant unto him anything he desired. Ammon now had that great opportunity to really influence the king and all of the people, to now teach them of God, and His truths and to extend His blessings. Miracles had already occurred and would follow as the king himself was raised from his bed by Ammon. Many did believe, were baptized, and became a righteous people. The Church was established among them.

Promise to those who minister, serve, love, and teach the gospel

Ponder these points as you feel the influence of Ammon's teachings, his ministry and great example:

1. The desire of his heart was to bring people to God.
2. He was always a servant, a minister. He was out among the people.
3. He prepared himself by fasting, studying the scriptures, and prayer.
4. He went forth believing he could make a difference with the help of God.
5. He anxiously looked for every possible opportunity to serve.

6. He kept all of the commandments.

7. As a result of doing all of these things, he taught with power and authority and established the Church of God.

The great promise to all of God's children who truly minister, serve, love, and teach the gospel is that one day they may sit at the right hand of the Savior and be received into His presence. May the Lord make us "able ministers" (2 Corinthians 3:6), as were Ammon and my friend. This should be the end result of every principle and truth we learn in the gospel. This is truly the gospel in action.

May we truly minister and teach *all* of our people, but especially reach

out to those who plead in their hearts and through the long, lonely nights for help—our widows, our divorced, our nonmembers, our aged, our less active—to let them know of our concern, our love, and the love of God, until a happier people cannot be found upon the whole land, for "they taught and did minister one to another." In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Elder James M. Paramore.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Jacob de Jager of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Jacob de Jager

My dear brothers and sisters, it is a great pressure to stand before you. Nevertheless I want Elder [Marvin J.] Ashton to know that I follow his teachings and that I am of good cheer.

"Word deafness"

My assignment this afternoon, as I understand it, is to speak; and your assignment this afternoon, as I understand it, is to *listen*. If you finish *your* assignment before I do, please raise your hand!

Furthermore, I want you to know that this is an assignment in which I "rejoice exceedingly," as Alma the Younger in the Book of Mormon would say. And having journeyed from the land of Japan eastward, away to the state of Utah, to attend this general conference, what adds more to my joy, as Alma continues, is to see that you are still my brothers and sisters in the Lord; yea, and that you have waxed strong in the knowledge of the truth. (See Alma 17:2.)

May I also, by way of introduction, add that when foreigners like my-

self are taught the English language, they are usually advised by their teachers to shy away from difficult and complicated words because they may not sound right when spoken with a foreign accent; that is, trying to impress rather than express! Language teachers do, however, allow an exception to this general rule in the case of medical terms, when properly used. I would like, therefore, to share with you a few thoughts on the medical term *logokophosis*, which literally means "word deafness" or, in an extended gospel meaning, "the inability to hear or understand spoken directions."

Some suffer badly from *logokophosis*

The scriptures are replete with directions spoken by holy prophets in all dispensations because "the voice of the Lord is unto the ends of the earth, that all that will hear may hear" (D&C 1:11). Yet time and again we have to be asked to be better listeners. President Marion G. Romney sometimes wonders out loud, "How many

tellings does it take—how many repetitions of counsel? How many individual corrections must be given?”

As parents may pose these questions to their children, Heavenly Father may also wonder the same about *his* sons and daughters. How many of us turn a deaf ear to the admonitions from our modern-day prophets and stay passive, uninvolved, as when we half-listen to the radio?

We all know the hymn “Come, Listen to a Prophet’s Voice” (*Hymns*, 1985, no. 21). Why then do some suffer so badly from *logokophosis*, the inability to hear or understand? And I am of course not referring to those among us who have physically impaired hearing. We often find among *them* the most faithful members of the Church.

Faith relationship with God and Jesus Christ

The Apostle Paul was an inspired teacher, and he gave many spoken directions to the people during his apostolic travels. But often he later had to remind them in writing because many who heard him had apparently neither fully understood nor acted in accordance with the divine principles he taught.

Therefore, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul reminds the Greek people, who composed the Church of God at Corinth, of the gospel truths which he preached to them. He again informed them in writing that Christ died for our sins, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day, and that he appeared to Simon Peter and then to the Apostles. (See 1 Corinthians 15:3–4.)

Since that day, these written words have reminded not just a few hundred Greeks in an outlying area, but hundreds of millions of people in all kinds of places and situations, down through sixty generations, of these important events in the history of mankind.

Paul, being a convert himself, knew what it was like to be dead in sin. Through conversion, he had come to know what it was like to become alive, knowing and accepting the truth that Christ had risen.

Today, as in Paul’s day, every person’s deepest need is for a vital faith relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ, his Son and our Redeemer.

Greatest news that Jesus lives

I testify that through obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we can work out our salvation, and we can even have a partnership with the Lord in saving others. Having a partnership with the Lord in saving others is for me another definition of missionary work. And I want every young man who is preparing himself for a mission to read the Book of Mormon in order to realize that he is indeed preparing himself to have a very personal partnership with the Lord in saving others, for the duration of his mission and beyond. The same is true for every young woman preparing for her mission.

The greatest news of all times is that Jesus lives and that his atoning sacrifice took place for all people; and when they put their trust in him and indeed walk in obedience to his commandments, there is a way for them to gain salvation and exaltation.

How blessed we are to live in this last dispensation when, through the restored priesthood and the Book of Mormon, the globalization of the gospel of Jesus Christ is underway. Latter-day Saints everywhere, as the covenant people of the Lord, play an important part in this process.

Restored gospel a single tune for all

And of course Satan, or that miserable, incurable insomniac, as Elder Neal Maxwell sometimes refers to him,

causes opposition to our missionary effort. I can testify to you that while I labor in the countries of Asia and see the enormous progress there in the work of the Lord, the Spirit repeatedly bears witness to my soul of the truthfulness of the prophetic words of President Brigham Young concerning opposition to the Church. He said:

"The Kingdom will continue to increase, to grow, to spread and prosper more and more. Every time its enemies undertake to overthrow it, it will become more extensive and powerful; instead of its decreasing, it will spread the more, become more wonderful and conspicuous to the nations until it fills the whole earth."

I have come to the realization that the restored gospel plays a single tune for all the world to hear, and I know that the time *will* come when all the world will eagerly respond to that tune. Then, and only then, differences between nations and peoples will disappear, and the world will be one, when the Savior returns to rule and reign for a thousand years.

Prior to that great moment, the spreading and accepting of the glorious gospel message will be universal. It is a dire need for all of Heavenly Father's children everywhere.

Candle of understanding

President [Spencer W.] Kimball, in his *Ensign* article of February 1983, entitled "Are We Doing All We Can?" phrased it so clearly and beautifully: "Our great need, and our great calling, is to bring to the people of this world the candle of understanding to light their way out of obscurity and darkness and into the joy, peace, and truths of the gospel" (p. 5). These were the words of a prophet who spoke to all of us.

And yet in the case of being admonished by a prophet to do missionary work, we sometimes become *complacent*, which according to my English-Dutch dictionary means "self-satisfied or calmly content."

Brothers and sisters, let us therefore prayerfully reevaluate our accountability unto the Lord in this respect.

Good works for future generations

While living in the Orient, I learned two ancient proverbs which apply well in this context. The first one is, "The full evaluation of one's life is not complete until the moment of passing." And the other one is, "We must look for true friends after one hundred years." On the basis of my acquired knowledge of the plan of salvation and the just-quoted sayings, I firmly believe that our good works should be performed *now*, but always with life beyond the veil and future generations in mind.

As Latter-day Saints we are committed to do things that will accomplish much good in this world and in the world to come. It is exactly for this reason that President Kimball had that often-mentioned sign on his desk: "Do It."

May, therefore, those who presently suffer from *logokophosis*, the inability to hear or understand spoken directions, through their own prayerful efforts and under divine inspiration, find the cure for it and be healed and enjoy greater happiness in this life and in the life to come.

And when the Lord calls, with Samuel we can truly say, "Speak Lord; for thy servant heareth" (1 Samuel 3:9). And then, most important of all, that we will be able and willing to be *doers* of the word also, and not hearers only.

For these great blessings I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

He who has just spoken of *logokophosis* is Elder Jacob de Jager of the First Quorum of the Seventy, one whom we all love and appreciate.

Solemn Assembly

President Gordon B. Hinckley

President Benson has requested that I now handle the business of the solemn assembly for which we are met. This is a tremendously significant and sacred occasion for members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints throughout the world.

An invitation to participate

Dating from October 10, 1880, when John Taylor was sustained to succeed Brigham Young as prophet, seer, revelator, and President of the Church, each such occasion has been designated a formal solemn assembly of the body of the Church to express the voice of the Church. There have been ten such in the past. In each case, holders of the various offices of the priesthood were assembled in this Tabernacle and seated by quorums or groups in various areas of the building, each voting as a quorum or group on the officers of the Church as they were presented.

We have now reached a point where many times the number seated in the Tabernacle are assembled in other church halls across the United States and Canada, as well as in other parts of the world. Furthermore, many are seated in their homes, listening to the conference. All of you, wherever you may be, are invited to participate in this solemn and sacred undertaking when we sustain a new President of the Church together with other officers. In these present circumstances, it is considered unfeasible to seat by quorums those assembled in the Tabernacle and the many other halls. We shall, however, vote by quorums and groups. Wherever you are, you are invited to stand when requested and express by your uplifted hands whether you choose to sustain those whose names will be put before you.

General Authorities assigned to the Assembly Hall on Temple Square

will observe the voting in that gathering. In stake centers, a member of the stake presidency will observe the voting and advise us of any negative votes.

We shall now proceed with the business of this great constituent gathering, this solemn assembly, which is convened here in Salt Lake City and, by extension, in many areas of the world.

The First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles

The First Presidency will please arise. It is proposed that we sustain Ezra Taft Benson as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Those in favor, please manifest it. Those opposed may manifest it.

It is proposed that we sustain Gordon B. Hinckley as First Counselor in the First Presidency of the Church and Thomas Spencer Monson as Second Counselor. Those in favor may manifest it. Those opposed may manifest it.

It is proposed that we sustain Marion G. Romney as President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles and Howard W. Hunter as Acting President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. Those in favor. Any opposed.

It is proposed that we sustain as members of the Council of the Twelve Apostles Marion G. Romney, Howard W. Hunter, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, and M. Russell Ballard. Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed.

It is proposed that we sustain the Counselors in the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators. Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed. The First Presidency will please be seated.

The members of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will please arise.

It is proposed that we sustain Ezra Taft Benson as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, together with his Counselors and members of the Council of the Twelve, as they have been presented and voted upon by the First Presidency. All in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed. You may be seated.

The following will please arise wherever they are: all ordained patriarchs; all ordained high priests, including members of the First Quorum of the Seventy and the Presiding Bishopric; all other seventies and all ordained elders, wherever you may be participating. It is proposed that we sustain Ezra Taft Benson as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, together with his Counselors and members of the Council of the Twelve Apostles as they have been presented and voted upon. All in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed may manifest it. Please be seated.

Will all of the Aaronic Priesthood please arise—that is, all ordained priests, teachers, and deacons. It is proposed that we sustain Ezra Taft Benson as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, together with his Counselors and members of the Council of the Twelve Apostles as previously presented and voted upon. All in favor, please indicate by the uplifted hand. Any opposed may so indicate it. You may be seated.

Will the entire congregation, including all of those who have stood previously, now arise. It is proposed that we sustain Ezra Taft Benson as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, together with his Counselors and members of the Council of the Twelve Apostles as they have been presented and voted upon. All in favor, please indicate by the uplifted hand. Any opposed, may so indicate it. Thank you; you may be seated.

Sustaining of other General Authorities

We shall now remain seated as we sustain other General Authorities and general officers of the Church. It is proposed that we sustain as the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy Carlos E. Asay, Dean L. Larsen, Richard G. Scott, Marion D. Hanks, William Grant Bangerter, Jack H. Goaslind, and Robert L. Backman. As further members of the First Quorum of the Seventy: A. Theodore Tuttle, Franklin D. Richards, Theodore M. Burton, Paul H. Dunn, Hartman Rector, Jr., Loren C. Dunn, Robert L. Simpson, Rex D. Pinegar, J. Thomas Fyans, Adney Y. Komatsu, Joseph B. Wirthlin, Gene R. Cook, Charles A. Didier, William R. Bradford, George P. Lee, John H. Groberg, Jacob de Jager, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Royden G. Derrick, Robert E. Wells, James M. Paramore, Hugh W. Pinnock, F. Enzo Busche, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Ronald E. Poelman, Derek A. Cuthbert, Rex C. Reeve, F. Burton Howard, Ted E. Brewerton, Angel Abrea, John K. Carmack, Russell C. Taylor, Robert B. Harbertson, Devere Harris, Spencer H. Osborn, Philip T. Sonntag, John Sonnenberg, F. Arthur Kay, Keith W. Wilcox, Victor L. Brown, H. Burke Peterson, J. Richard Clarke, Hans B. Ringger, Waldo P. Call, Helio R. Camargo.

Additionally, the following Brethren have been called as members of the First Quorum of the Seventy to serve for periods of approximately three years under the practice instituted in the April 1984 general conference: Hans Verlan Andersen, George I. Cannon, Francis M. Gibbons, Gardner H. Russell.

As the Presiding Bishopric: Robert D. Hales, Presiding Bishop; Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor; Glenn L. Pace, Second Counselor.

As Emeritus Brethren: Eldred G. Smith, Patriarch Emeritus, and the following Seventies with emeritus status:

Sterling W. Sill, Henry D. Taylor, Bernard P. Brockbank, James A. Cullimore, Joseph Anderson, John H. Vandenberg, O. Leslie Stone. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

Sustaining of general officers of the Church

Sister Patricia T. Holland, who has served as first counselor in the general presidency of the Young Women, is the wife of President Jeffrey R. Holland of Brigham Young University. The many demands upon her time incident to her husband's responsibilities, as well as her family responsibilities and the burden of traveling to and from Provo, have made it advisable to extend to her an honorable release. We likewise release Sister Maureen J. Turley, second counselor in the Young Women presidency. All who wish to join in an expression of gratitude for the devoted service of these sisters in these respective callings may indicate by the uplifted hand.

Sister Ardeth G. Kapp, president of the Young Women, has asked Sister Maureen J. Turley to serve as her first counselor and Sister Jayne Broadbent Malan to serve as her second counselor. Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed by the same sign.

It is proposed that we sustain all other general officers and board members as presently constituted, together with all Regional Representatives who at present are serving. All in favor, please indicate it. Any opposed.

With hearts, faith, and prayers

President Benson, insofar as I have been able to observe, the voting in the Tabernacle has been unanimous in favor of the proposals made. Any negative votes in any other assemblies will be noted and brought to our attention.

Thank you, brothers and sisters, for your sustaining vote. We feel that you have sustained us not only with your hands but also with your hearts and your faith and prayers, which we so urgently need, and pray that you will continue to do so.

We shall ask now that Elders Andersen, Cannon, Gibbons, and Russell come forward and take their places with the First Quorum of the Seventy, and we invite Sister Malan also to come forward and sit with Sister Kapp.

President Hinckley

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet." Following the singing of that number, we have just a few minutes, perhaps about seven minutes before we go forward with the rest of the scheduled program, and we shall ask Brother Gibbons, who has served as secretary to the First Presidency over a long period of time, to come and make a brief expression in behalf of all of these Brethren whom we have sustained in these responsibilities this day.

The choir and congregation sang "We Thank Thee, O God, for Prophet."

Elder Francis M. Gibbons

Essence of life is change

My beloved brethren and sisters, the essence of life is change. It was just sixteen years ago this day that I sat in the audience as a bishop and sustained

President Joseph Fielding Smith as the President of the Church along with his Counselors, President Harold B. Lee and President N. Eldon Tanner. Sustained at that conference also was Elder Boyd K. Packer, sustained as a member

of the Twelve; from the position he now occupies on the stand, you can see the enormous change that has taken place in that short period of sixteen years.

Also sustained at that conference were Elders William Bennett, Joseph Anderson, and David B. Haight as Assistants to the Twelve. Elder Bennett, of course, has passed away. Elder Haight, now a member of the Twelve, and Elder Anderson are still with us. Elder Anderson is in his ninety-seventh year.

Meeting with prophets of God

Elder Anderson, who had been the secretary to the First Presidency for almost fifty years, was a member of the ward of which I was bishop at the time, and through an extraordinary series of circumstances that I will not mention here, three days after his call I found myself in the first meeting of the First Presidency that I was privileged to attend. Since that day sixteen years ago, it has been my blessing to have met on almost a daily basis during the work week with the prophets of God. Each of them has shown special qualities. Each of them has filled a special role. Each of them we have loved and sustained and appreciated. I can today without any qualification raise my hand in full support and love for President Ezra Taft Benson, President Gordon B. Hinckley, and President Thomas S. Monson. These are truly prophets, seers, and revelators of the living God. And what a blessing it is for us to be members of a church that is directed through direct revelation from God on high.

I suppose at a time like this one naturally reflects about his roots. My great-great-grandfather, Vinson Knight, was a member of the bishopric of the Kirtland Ward, the first ward in the Church. He served under Bishop Newel K. Whitney. He later served as the bishop pro tem, as it was called at the time, of the ward at Adam-Ondi-Ahman. His daughter, Rizpah, my great-grandmother, tells of having

picked berries on the banks of the Grand River, as it flows by Adam-Ondi-Ahman.

Vinson Knight later became the bishop of the lower ward in Nauvoo, the ward in which both President Joseph Smith and President Brigham Young resided. His wife, Martha McBride Knight, was one of the charter members of the Relief Society.

I think of these stalwart people, their dedication, and their faith. The daughter of Vinson and Martha married a young man named Andrew Smith Gibbons. They were teenagers in Kirtland. After they married, Rizpah gave birth to her first child, my grandfather Andrew Vinson Gibbons, in Council Bluffs, Iowa, near Winter Quarters. Andrew was assigned as one of the members of Brigham Young's pioneer company that arrived in the Salt Lake Valley July 24, 1847, and ended up across the river in Arizona, where I was born in the little town of St. Johns. I have told my friends over the years that if you can't spot it on the map, St. Johns is fifteen miles east of Concho. To many, it's the end of the earth; but to those of us who were born there, it's the center of the earth. I pay honor and respect to these ancestors, as well as to my dear wife and children and grandchildren, to all of our friends and relatives, and to the many associates with whom we have been privileged to labor over the years.

Witness of the Spirit

As you can appreciate, I accept this assignment with trepidation. I accept it with humility. I accept it without qualification. I desire to serve faithfully and with diligence. I pledge to President Benson and his Counselors that they will never make a call upon me but that I will strive to fill it to the very best of my ability.

As a young man in the mission field over forty years ago, I received a witness of the Spirit. From that experience I learned by spiritual means that God lives, that Jesus Christ is his son,

that he is the head of the Church, that the Church is lead by prophets, seers, and revelators. I therefore sustain all of those who have preceded this incumbent First Presidency, and I certainly sustain and support them as prophets, seers, and revelators.

As one final word I would say that I came to the position of secretary to the First Presidency sixteen years ago with a full knowledge of the significance of the Church and of the status of its leaders. I have seen nothing in those intervening years that would cause me to question in any respect either the doctrines of the Church, the practices of the Church, and most assuredly the integrity of those who head it. I am their witness. I testify that they are honorable, upright, dedicated men of integrity committed to teaching the principles of the gospel, who strive with all of their might to prepare a people ready for the return of the head of the Church, Jesus Christ, at his second coming. Of this I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

I should say that Brother Gibbons has served as a bishop, a stake president, he is a patriarch, he was an attorney by profession, and for sixteen years was secretary to the First Presidency.

Brother Cannon could bear similar testimony, as could Brother Andersen, and Brother Russell. Brother Cannon has served as bishop, a mission president, a patriarch, and is now serving as a stake president; he is a grandson of President Heber J. Grant. Brother Andersen served in a stake presidency, is now serving as a patriarch, has served three missions, is an accounting instructor (a CPA), and an attorney with degrees in law from two great law schools of Stanford and Harvard. Brother Gardner has served as a distinguished business leader, as a mission

president, as a Regional Representative. All well-qualified men.

Beverly Benson Walker, daughter of President Benson, accompanied by Robert Cundick at the organ, will sing "O Divine Redeemer."

Before hearing her, we should like to express appreciation and our sincere gratitude to all who have provided the music for this great conference—to the Tabernacle Choir, the combined institute choir from Northern Utah, the returned missionary choir from Brigham Young University, their conductors, and organists.

We thank our city officials for the cooperation given this conference, the Relief Society and Church Health Unit nurses who have been on hand to render service, and the ushers and interpreters.

We express appreciation to the local and national press representatives for the coverage given to the conference and to the owners and managers of the many radio and television stations and cable systems who have given public service time to carry sessions of this conference in many countries.

Sister Walker will now sing for us, following which we shall be pleased and honored to listen to President Ezra Taft Benson, who will be the concluding speaker of the conference.

The Tabernacle Choir will then sing "How Firm a Foundation, Ye Saints of the Lord." The benediction will be offered by Elder Spencer H. Osborn of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

This conference will then stand adjourned for six months. Thank you, brethren and sisters, for all that you have done to make of this a truly glorious occasion.

Sister Beverly Benson Walker sang "O Divine Redeemer."

President Ezra Taft Benson

My beloved brethren and sisters, I wish to testify to you that the Lord Jesus Christ stands at the head of His church—even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We are His earthly stewards—we hold His priesthood, administer His ordinances, preach His gospel, and build up His kingdom.

Dependence upon the Lord

I have not words to express my gratitude to God, the Father of our spirits, to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Ghost, the Testator.

I wish to convey my appreciation to all those who raised their hands in a covenant to the Lord to sustain me. I have felt the expression of your hearts and your commitment to the Lord as your hands pointed heavenward.

I am reminded how Moses up on the hill raised his arms for the victory of the armies of Israel. As long as his arms were raised, Israel prevailed, but when they dropped from weariness, then the enemy prevailed. And so Aaron and Hur “stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side,” and Israel was victorious (Exodus 17:12). So will we be victorious as we hold up the arms of the Lord’s anointed servants.

I have been aware of those who preceded me in this office as President of the Church. I have felt very keenly my dependence upon the Lord and the absolute necessity of relying upon Him for His direction in the conduct of the affairs of the Church as those in the past have done.

Blessings of mortality

I have been blessed in mortality with noble parents and supportive brothers and sisters. God raised up for me a choice companion. In her

stewardship from the Lord, she has lived outside herself in love by being a great helpmate and noble mother. Our children have been loyal to the Lord and to us.

I am grateful for the strong counselors whom the Lord has provided me—President Gordon B. Hinckley and President Thomas S. Monson. Both have been prepared by the Lord for the labor they are performing. Each has been and is now a great blessing to the kingdom of God, and I thank Him for them.

I love the members of the Council of the Twelve, with whom I have been privileged to labor most closely over the years. It has also been a joy to serve with members of the First Quorum of the Seventy and the Presiding Bishopric.

Unity and support in Church

There is a great spirit of unity among the General Authorities of the Church. That unity is very real and most important, for the Lord has said, “If ye are not one ye are not mine” (D&C 38:27).

We shall continue to work together as Brethren, united in one purpose—to move forward the work of the Lord.

We are so appreciative of the great and loyal support of the leaders and members of the Church throughout the world. Many have written and given assurances of their love and prayers. We stand in need of that prayerful support every day.

What a privilege it is to serve in the kingdom of God. In this work it is the Spirit that counts—wherever we serve. I know I must rely on the Spirit. Let us obtain that Spirit and be faithful members of the Church, devoted children and parents, effective home teachers, edifying instructors, inspired ward and stake leaders. God bless you

all for your noble labors in building the kingdom.

If there be any division among us, let us set aside anything of this kind and join ranks in the great responsibility to move forward the work of the Lord. If there be those who have become disaffected, we reach out to you in the pure love of Christ and stand ready to assist and welcome you back in full fellowship in the Church.

A sacred responsibility—

We have a sacred responsibility to fulfill the threefold mission of the Church—first, to teach the gospel to the world; second, to strengthen the membership of the Church wherever they may be; third, to move forward the work of salvation for the dead.

Let us consider each of these in turn.

To teach the gospel to the world

The world needs the gospel, and we are charged by command of the Lord and through our Abrahamic lineage to spread it. Every young man in this Church should be qualified for a mission and then should go. Many sisters may also serve missions. I am grateful my wife went on a mission and that we have granddaughters and grandsons in the mission field.

There is no greater joy than bringing souls to Christ. Participation in this great work blesses the convert, blesses the missionary, and blesses those who support the missionary.

Many older couples could serve missions. In so doing, they will find that a mission blesses their children, their grandchildren, and their great-grandchildren in a way that could not otherwise be done. It will set a great example for their posterity.

I am so glad my father accepted a mission call, leaving mother at home with seven children and with the eighth being born while Father was in the mission field. His letters, which my faithful mother read to us children,

brought a spirit of missionary work into that home that never left it. All the sons went on at least one mission, and eventually all the daughters served missions.

To strengthen the membership of the Church

The second mission of the Church is to strengthen the membership of the Church.

We need to learn the will of the Lord for us and then do it, as President Kimball emphasized. His will is made manifest through the standard works, His anointed servants, and personal revelation.

There is a book we need to study daily, both as individuals and as families, namely the Book of Mormon. I love that book. It is the book that will get a person nearer to God by abiding by its precepts than any other book. (See Book of Mormon, Introduction.) President Romney recommended studying it half an hour each day. I commend that practice to you. I've always enjoyed reading the scriptures and do so on a daily basis individually and with my beloved wife.

Children, support your parents in their efforts to have daily family scripture study. Pray for them as they pray for you. The adversary does not want scripture study to take place in our homes, and so he will create problems if he can. But we must persist.

Perhaps each family member can take a turn reading a verse at a time. Comments could follow. Maybe you can study by subject. Perhaps assignments might be made.

To move forward the work of salvation for the dead

The third mission of the Church is to move forward the work of salvation for the dead.

As a child, I appreciated the reverent discussions I had with my mother as she ironed her temple clothes. I am

grateful for the weekly temple sessions that Sister Benson and I enjoy together.

The temple is the house of the Lord. Our attendance there blesses the dead and also blesses us, for it is a house of revelation.

Now we must work together to accomplish these three great, all-encompassing responsibilities.

Reemphasize the Book of Mormon

In the opening session of this conference we talked about cleansing the inner vessel. And so we must.

The Lord inspired His servant Lorenzo Snow to reemphasize the principle of tithing to redeem the Church from financial bondage. In those days the General Authorities took that message to the members of the Church.

Now, in our day, the Lord has revealed the need to reemphasize the Book of Mormon to get the Church and all the children of Zion out from under condemnation—the scourge and judgment. (See D&C 84:54–58.) This message must be carried to the members of the Church throughout the world.

Christ is at the helm

Now, as we come to the close of this great conference, I want you to know that I know that Christ is at the helm. This is His world. This is His Church. His purposes will be accomplished.

Christ is our ideal. He is our exemplar. What manner of men and women should we be? Even as He is. (See 3 Nephi 27:27.) The best measure of true greatness is how Christlike we are.

The Book of Mormon declares that “every thing which inviteth and enticeth to do good, and to love God, and to serve him, is inspired of God.”

And “whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do evil, and believe not in Christ, and deny him, and serve not God, then ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of the devil” (Moroni 7:13, 17).

Let us use that standard to judge what we read, the music we hear, the entertainment we watch, the thoughts we think. Let us be more Christlike.

I assure you of my love and God’s love for all of His children in every part of the world.

Blessing of increased discernment and understanding

Now, in the authority of the sacred priesthood in me vested, I invoke my blessing upon the Latter-day Saints and upon good people everywhere.

I bless you with increased discernment to judge between Christ and anti-Christ. I bless you with increased power to do good and to resist evil. I bless you with increased *understanding* of the Book of Mormon. I promise you that from this moment forward, if we will daily sup from its pages and abide by its precepts, God will pour out upon each child of Zion and the Church a blessing hitherto unknown—and we will plead to the Lord that He will begin to lift the condemnation—the scourge and judgment. Of this I bear solemn witness.

I testify that the Book of Mormon is the word of God. Jesus is the Christ. Joseph Smith is His prophet. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is true. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang “How Firm a Foundation.”

Elder Spencer H. Osborn offered the benediction.

SALT LAKE TABERNACLE CHOIR AND ORGAN BROADCAST

The following broadcast, announced by J. Spencer Kinard and originating with KSL Radio and Television, Salt Lake City, Utah, was presented from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 6, 1986, through the courtesy of the Columbia Broadcasting System's network throughout the United States, parts of Canada, and through other facilities to several points overseas:

Announcer: Once more we welcome you within these walls with Music and the Spoken Word from the crossroads of the West.

CBS and its affiliated stations bring you at this hour the Mormon Tabernacle Choir from Temple Square in Salt Lake City, with Jerold Ottley conducting the choir, John Longhurst, Tabernacle organist, and the Spoken Word given by Spencer Kinard.

(Choir without announcement: "Halleluia Sing!"—Wilkinson)

Announcer: "Christ the Lord is risen, Halleluia Sing!" The Tabernacle Choir has sung an anthem of the season by Scott Wilkinson.

As word spread among his disciples that Jesus was indeed risen from the dead, he appeared to the Apostles gathered at Jerusalem, saying, "Peace be unto you." But they were terrified and supposed they had seen a spirit. With tenderness and sympathy, Jesus said to them, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: Handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have."

Recalling the events of the Savior's crucifixion and resurrection, the choir sings a hymn tune by John H. Gower with text by Cecil Francis Alexander: "There Is a Green Hill Far Away." The choral setting is by Robert Manookin.

(Choir: "There Is a Green Hill Far Away"—Gower/Manookin)

Announcer: Tabernacle organist, John Longhurst, plays "Andantino" from the second suite by Leon Boellmann.

(Organ: "Andantino" — Boellmann)

Announcer: When separated from the complex theologies, the religious jargon, and sectarian interpretations, Christianity is the most sublime and yet simplistic morality to ever befall man.

The doctrines, as taught by Jesus, are within the comprehension of anyone. The central creed of Christianity is simply to do good—to do good whenever, wherever, and to whomever we can. This is to be a Christian.

It is to believe that feeding the hungry is more important than religious ritual and repetition. It is to match deeds to thoughts, placing human service above lip service, making our home, our office, our neighborhood the production lab for Christian ideals.

To be a Christian is to live with gratitude, with empathy, with gentleness and faith; to seek refinement rather than extravagance; to be worthy before popular; to prefer intrinsic beauty over faddish style.

We will find the Christian wherever there is human need: mowing the lawn of an injured neighbor, standing watch over the sickbed of children, offering a loan to lighten the load of a worthy friend. We will discover his outstretched arms about the huddled shoulders of the mother who has lost an infant to crib death, of the new divorcee who is afraid of the world and the future, of the boy who sat out the whole game on the bench.

The Christian is made up of the charity which gives without looking back, the humility which kneels when

no one is looking, and the faith which believes when the evidence casts doubt.

The commandments, the parables, and the Beatitudes are not only written in the Christian's Bible and hymnbook but also upon the fleshy tablets of his heart, where they are used for daily reference. For the true Christian is not only a person of theory but also of application. The first rule of negotiation in business dealings is the Golden Rule. Law is used to gain justice, not money. Peace is made at home as well as at sporting events. And marriage is based on the Christian ideals of equality and mutual respect.

The true Christian is a follower in word and deed of Him who became the servant of all: she is majesty in homespun clothing, manhood tempered by tears, royalty beneath a crown of thorns.

Like the silent candle which glows on through the night—quietly, graciously, freely shedding its light—the Christian lives on, grateful for the life that now is and for the promise of that which is to come.

(Choir without announcement: "O My Father"—McGranaham/Lyon)

Announcer: The choir has sung Laurence Lyon's choral arrangement of "O My Father," a nineteenth century hymn by James McGranaham with text by Eliza R. Snow.

"He is risen! Let the whole wide earth rejoice." Such thoughts and words must have spread like wildfire through Jerusalem to the joy of every follower of Christ. So important was

the event that still today we speak and sing of it. "Death is conquered, man is free. Christ has won the victory." The words, again, are by Cecil Francis Alexander; the music is that of Joachim Neander.

(Choir: "He Is Risen!"—Neander)

Announcer: In closing, the Tabernacle Choir sings "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," Gilbert Martin's moving setting of a hymn by Lowell Mason and Isaac Watts that sings of the sacrifice of Christ, of His "love so amazing, so divine."

(Choir: "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"—Martin)

Announcer: Again we leave you from within the shadows of the everlasting hills. May peace be with you this day . . . and always.

Announcer (on radio): This concludes the two-thousand, nine-hundred, fifty-fifth performance continuing the fifty-seventh year of this traditional broadcast from the Mormon Tabernacle on Temple Square, brought to you by CBS and its affiliated stations, originating with Station KSL in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Jerold Ottley conducted the choir, John Longhurst was at the organ, the Spoken Word was given by Spencer Kinard.

In another seven days at this same hour, Music and the Spoken Word will be heard again from the crossroads of the West.

This is the CBS Radio Network.

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE MUSIC

The Tabernacle Choir furnished the choral numbers for the Saturday morning, Sunday morning, and Sunday afternoon sessions of the conference with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducting.

The music for the Saturday afternoon session was provided by a combined institute choir from Utah Technical College, LDS Business College, University of Utah, Weber State College, and Utah State University directed by Don B. Castleton.

At the general priesthood meeting a returned missionary choir from Brigham Young University under the direction of Stephen Bardsley furnished the music.

Prelude, postlude, and interlude music and accompaniments on the Tab-

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F. Michael Watson
Clerk of the Conference

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THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY
SAINTS

Official Report of the
One Hundred Fifty-sixth
Semiannual General

CONFERENCE

of The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints

held in the Tabernacle
Salt Lake City, Utah

October 4 and 5, 1986

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THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-SIXTH SEMIANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The 156th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, October 4, 1986, at 10:00 A.M.

The general sessions of the conference were held at 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday, October 4 and 5, 1986. The general priesthood meeting was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, October 4, 1986, at 6:00 P.M.

President Ezra Taft Benson presided at all sessions of the conference and conducted the Sunday morning session. President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday morning and Sunday afternoon sessions. President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday afternoon and general priesthood sessions.

Television and radio stations carried portions or all of some of the conference sessions to large audiences throughout the world. In addition, the general sessions and the general priesthood session were carried via satellite transmission to more than one thousand stake centers. The general priesthood session was also carried by closed-circuit transmission to approximately nine hundred locations in many countries.

General Authorities present

The following General Authorities of the Church attended one or more of the general sessions:

The First Presidency: Ezra Taft Benson, Gordon B. Hinckley, and Thomas S. Monson.

The Council of the Twelve:
¹Howard W. Hunter, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson,

Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, and Joseph B. Wirthlin.

The First Quorum of the Seventy:
Presidents: Dean L. Larsen, Richard G. Scott, Marion D. Hanks, Wm. Grant Bangerter, Jack H. Goasland, Robert L. Backman, and Hugh W. Pinnock. *Additional Members of the Seventy:* A. Theodore Tuttle, Franklin D. Richards, Theodore M. Burton, Paul H. Dunn, Hartman Rector, Jr., Loren C. Dunn, Robert L. Simpson, Rex D. Pinegar, J. Thomas Fyans, Adney Y. Komatsu, Gene R. Cook, Charles Didier, William R. Bradford, George P. Lee, Carlos E. Asay, John H. Groberg, Jacob de Jager, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Royden G. Derrick, Robert E. Wells, James M. Paramore, F. Enzio Busche, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Ronald E. Poelman, Derek A. Cuthbert, Rex C. Reeve, Sr., F. Burton Howard, Ted E. Brewerton, Angel Abrea, John K. Carmack, Russell C. Taylor, Robert B. Harbertson, Devere Harris, Spencer H. Osborn, Philip T. Sonntag, John Sonnenberg, F. Arthur Kay, Keith W. Wilcox, Victor L. Brown, H. Burke Peterson, J. Richard Clarke, Hans B. Ringger, Waldo P. Call, Helio da Rocha Camargo, H. Verlan Andersen, George I. Cannon, Francis M. Gibbons, and Gardner H. Russell.

The Presiding Bishopric: Robert D. Hales, Henry B. Eyring, and Glenn L. Pace.

Emeritus General Authorities:
Eldred G. Smith, Sterling W. Sill, Henry D. Taylor, Bernard P. Brockbank, Joseph Anderson, and John H. Vandenberg.

Other authorities present

Other Church authorities in attendance included Regional Representatives, presidents of stakes and their

¹President Marion G. Romney was excused due to ill health.

counselors, presidents of temples, bishops of wards, and presidencies and members of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood quorums.

Many general, stake, and ward auxiliary officers also attended.

FIRST DAY MORNING MEETING

FIRST SESSION

The first general session of the 156th Semiannual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, October 4, 1986, at 10:00 A.M. President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The music for the opening session was provided by the Mormon Youth Chorus with Robert C. Bowden conducting and Clay Christiansen at the organ.

Prior to the meeting, the Mormon Youth Chorus sang "Hark, All Ye Nations!" without announcement.

President Hinckley made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

With that stirring music we welcome you this morning where is convened the first general session of the 156th Semiannual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We are met in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah. Our beloved prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked me to conduct this session.

We welcome all who are participating in the large audience assembled in the Tabernacle and the overflow gatherings in the nearby Assembly Hall, where Elders Theodore M. Burton and Hugh W. Pinnock are

seated on the stand. We also welcome the many others who are receiving these conference proceedings by satellite transmission, radio, cable, and television.

We acknowledge the General Authorities of the Church, all of whom are in attendance except President Marion G. Romney (who recently celebrated his eighty-ninth birthday). We also acknowledge the Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary general presidencies who are seated on the stand. We extend a special welcome to government, education, and civic leaders who are present.

The Mormon Youth Chorus, under the direction of Brother Robert C. Bowden, with Brother Clay Christiansen at the organ, opened this session by singing "Hark, All Ye Nations!" The chorus will now sing "The Lord Is My Shepherd." Following the singing, the invocation will be offered by Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The chorus sang "The Lord Is My Shepherd."

Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

It will now be our privilege to listen to President Ezra Taft Benson, President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

President Ezra Taft Benson

The Book of Mormon: A gift from the Lord

My beloved brethren and sisters, today I would like to speak about one of the most significant gifts given to the world in modern times. The gift I am thinking of is more important than any of the inventions that have come out of the industrial and technological revolutions. This is a gift of greater value to mankind than even the many wonderful advances we have seen in modern medicine. It is of greater worth to mankind than the development of flight or space travel. I speak of the gift of the Book of Mormon, given to mankind 156 years ago.

This gift was prepared by the hand of the Lord over a period of more than a thousand years, then hidden up by Him so that it would be preserved in its purity for our generation. Perhaps there is nothing that testifies more clearly of the importance of this modern book of scripture than what the Lord Himself has said about it.

The Lord's witness of the Book of Mormon

By His own mouth He has borne witness (1) that it is true (D&C 17:6), (2) that it contains the truth and His words (D&C 19:26), (3) that it was translated by power from on high (D&C 20:8), (4) that it contains the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ (D&C 20:9, 42:12), (5) that it was given by inspiration and confirmed by the ministering of angels (D&C 20:10), (6) that it gives evidence that the holy scriptures are true (D&C 20:11), and (7) that those who receive it in faith shall receive eternal life (D&C 20:14).

A second powerful testimony to the importance of the Book of Mormon is to note where the Lord placed its coming forth in the timetable of the unfolding Restoration. The only thing that preceded it was the First Vision. In that marvelous manifestation, the

Prophet Joseph Smith learned the true nature of God and that God had a work for him to do. The coming forth of the Book of Mormon was the next thing to follow.

Think of that in terms of what it implies. The coming forth of the Book of Mormon preceded the restoration of the priesthood. It was published just a few days before the Church was organized. The Saints were given the Book of Mormon to read before they were given the revelations outlining such great doctrines as the three degrees of glory, celestial marriage, or work for the dead. It came before priesthood quorums and Church organization. Doesn't this tell us something about how the Lord views this sacred work?

The Lord's warnings

Once we realize how the Lord feels about this book, it should not surprise us that He also gives us solemn warnings about how we receive it. After indicating that those who receive the Book of Mormon with faith, working righteousness, will receive a crown of eternal glory (see D&C 20:14), the Lord follows with this warning: "But those who harden their hearts in unbelief, and reject it, it shall turn to their own condemnation" (D&C 20:15).

In 1829, the Lord warned the Saints that they are not to trifle with sacred things (see D&C 6:12). Surely the Book of Mormon is a sacred thing, and yet many trifle with it, or in other words, take it lightly, treat it as though it is of little importance.

In 1832, as some early missionaries returned from their fields of labor, the Lord reproved them for treating the Book of Mormon lightly. As a result of that attitude, he said, their minds had been darkened. Not only had treating this sacred book lightly brought a loss of light to themselves, it had also brought the whole Church under condemnation, even all the children of

Zion. And then the Lord said, "And they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon" (D&C 84:54-57).

Has the fact that we have had the Book of Mormon with us for over a century and a half made it seem less significant to us today? Do we remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon? In the Bible we have the Old Testament and the New Testament. The word *testament* is the English rendering of a Greek word that can also be translated as *covenant*. Is this what the Lord meant when He called the Book of Mormon the "new covenant"? It is indeed another testament or witness of Jesus. This is one of the reasons why we have recently added the words "Another Testament of Jesus Christ" to the title of the Book of Mormon.

If the early Saints were rebuked for treating the Book of Mormon lightly, are we under any less condemnation if we do the same? The Lord Himself bears testimony that it is of eternal significance. Can a small number of us bring the whole Church under condemnation because we trifle with sacred things? What will we say at the Judgment when we stand before Him and meet His probing gaze if we are among those described as forgetting the new covenant?

There are three great reasons why Latter-day Saints should make the study of the Book of Mormon a lifetime pursuit.

Book of Mormon is the keystone

The *first* is that the Book of Mormon is the keystone of our religion. This was the Prophet Joseph Smith's statement. He testified that "the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion" (*History of the Church*, 4:461). A keystone is the central stone in an arch. It holds all the other stones in place, and if removed, the arch crumbles.

There are three ways in which the Book of Mormon is the keystone of our religion. It is the keystone in our witness of Christ. It is the keystone of our doctrine. It is the keystone of testimony.

The Book of Mormon is the keystone in our witness of Jesus Christ, who is Himself the cornerstone of everything we do. It bears witness of His reality with power and clarity. Unlike the Bible, which passed through generations of copyists, translators, and corrupt religionists who tampered with the text, the Book of Mormon came from writer to reader in just one inspired step of translation. Therefore, its testimony of the Master is clear, undiluted, and full of power. But it does even more. Much of the Christian world today rejects the divinity of the Savior. They question His miraculous birth, His perfect life, and the reality of His glorious resurrection. The Book of Mormon teaches in plain and unmistakable terms about the truth of all of those. It also provides the most complete explanation of the doctrine of the Atonement. Truly, this divinely inspired book is a keystone in bearing witness to the world that Jesus is the Christ (see title page of the Book of Mormon).

The Book of Mormon is also the keystone of the doctrine of the Resurrection. As mentioned before, the Lord Himself has stated that the Book of Mormon contains the "fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ" (D&C 20:9). That does not mean it contains every teaching, every doctrine ever revealed. Rather, it means that in the Book of Mormon we will find the fulness of those doctrines required for our salvation. And they are taught plainly and simply so that even children can learn the ways of salvation and exaltation. The Book of Mormon offers so much that broadens our understandings of the doctrines of salvation. Without it, much of what is taught in other scriptures would not be nearly so plain and precious.

Finally, the Book of Mormon is the keystone of testimony. Just as the arch crumbles if the keystone is removed, so does all the Church stand or fall with the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. The enemies of the Church understand this clearly. This is why they go to such great lengths to try to disprove the Book of Mormon, for if it can be discredited, the Prophet Joseph Smith goes with it. So does our claim to priesthood keys, and revelation, and the restored Church. But in like manner, if the Book of Mormon be true — and millions have now testified that they have the witness of the Spirit that it is indeed true — then one must accept the claims of the Restoration and all that accompanies it.

Yes, my beloved brothers and sisters, the Book of Mormon is the keystone of our religion — the keystone of our testimony, the keystone of our doctrine, and the keystone in the witness of our Lord and Savior.

Book of Mormon written for people of today

The *second* great reason why we must make the Book of Mormon a center focus of study is that it was written for our day. The Nephites never had the book; neither did the Lamanites of ancient times. It was meant for us. Mormon wrote near the end of the Nephite civilization. Under the inspiration of God, who sees all things from the beginning, he abridged centuries of records, choosing the stories, speeches, and events that would be most helpful to us.

Each of the major writers of the Book of Mormon testified that he wrote for future generations. Nephi said: "The Lord God promised unto me that these things which I write shall be kept and preserved, and handed down unto my seed, from generation to generation" (2 Nephi 25:21). His brother Jacob, who succeeded him, wrote similar words: "For [Nephi] said that the history of his people should be engraven upon his other plates, and that I

should preserve these plates and hand them down unto my seed, from generation to generation" (Jacob 1:3). Enos and Jarom both indicated that they too were writing not for their own peoples but for future generations (see Enos 1:15–16, Jarom 1:2).

Mormon himself said, "Yea, I speak unto you, ye remnant of the house of Israel" (Mormon 7:1). And Moroni, the last of the inspired writers, actually saw our day and time. "Behold," he said, "the Lord hath shown unto me great and marvelous things concerning that which must shortly come, at that day when these things shall come forth among you.

"Behold, I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not. But behold, Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing" (Mormon 8:34–35).

If they saw our day and chose those things which would be of greatest worth to us, is not that how we should study the Book of Mormon? We should constantly ask ourselves, "Why did the Lord inspire Mormon (or Moroni or Alma) to include that in his record? What lesson can I learn from that to help me live in this day and age?"

And there is example after example of how that question will be answered. For example, in the Book of Mormon we find a pattern for preparing for the Second Coming. A major portion of the book centers on the few decades just prior to Christ's coming to America. By careful study of that time period, we can determine why some were destroyed in the terrible judgments that preceded His coming and what brought others to stand at the temple in the land of Bountiful and thrust their hands into the wounds of His hands and feet.

From the Book of Mormon we learn how disciples of Christ live in times of war. From the Book of Mormon we see the evils of secret combinations portrayed in graphic and chilling reality. In the Book of Mormon we find lessons for dealing with persecution and apostasy. We learn much about

how to do missionary work. And more than anywhere else, we see in the Book of Mormon the dangers of materialism and setting our hearts on the things of the world. Can anyone doubt that this book was meant for us and that in it we find great power, great comfort, and great protection?

Book of Mormon draws people nearer to God

The *third* reason why the Book of Mormon is of such value to Latter-day Saints is given in the same statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith cited previously. He said, "I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book" (*History of the Church*, 4:461). That is the third reason for studying the book. It helps us draw nearer to God. Is there not something deep in our hearts that longs to draw nearer to God, to be more like Him in our daily walk, to feel His presence with us constantly? If so, then the Book of Mormon will help us do so more than any other book.

It is not just that the Book of Mormon teaches us truth, though it indeed does that. It is not just that the Book of Mormon bears testimony of Christ, though it indeed does that, too. But there is something more. There is a power in the book which will begin to flow into your lives the moment you begin a serious study of the book. You will find greater power to resist temptation. You will find the power to avoid deception. You will find the power to stay on the strait and narrow path. The scriptures are called "the words of life" (D&C 84:85), and nowhere is that more true than it is of the Book of Mormon. When you begin to hunger and thirst after those words, you will find life in greater and greater abundance.

Blessings of reading the Book of Mormon

Our beloved brother, President Marion G. Romney, who celebrated his eighty-ninth birthday last month and who knows of himself of the power that resides in this book, testified of the blessings that can come into the lives of those who will read and study the Book of Mormon. He said:

"I feel certain that if, in our homes, parents will read from the Book of Mormon prayerfully and regularly, both by themselves and with their children, the spirit of that great book will come to permeate our homes and all who dwell therein. The spirit of reverence will increase; mutual respect and consideration for each other will grow. The spirit of contention will depart. Parents will counsel their children in greater love and wisdom. Children will be more responsive and submissive to the counsel of their parents. Righteousness will increase. Faith, hope, and charity — the pure love of Christ — will abound in our homes and lives, bringing in their wake peace, joy, and happiness" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1980, p. 90; or *Ensign*, May 1980, p. 67).

These promises — increased love and harmony in the home, greater respect between parent and child, increased spirituality and righteousness — are not idle promises, but exactly what the Prophet Joseph Smith meant when he said the Book of Mormon will help us draw nearer to God.

Response to the Book of Mormon brings eternal consequences

Brethren and sisters, I implore you with all my heart that you consider with great solemnity the importance of the Book of Mormon to you personally and to the Church collectively.

Over ten years ago I made the following statement regarding the Book of Mormon:

"Do eternal consequences rest upon our response to this book? Yes,

either to our blessing or our condemnation.

"Every Latter-day Saint should make the study of this book a lifetime pursuit. Otherwise he is placing his soul in jeopardy and neglecting that which could give spiritual and intellectual unity to his whole life. There is a difference between a convert who is built on the rock of Christ through the Book of Mormon and stays hold of that iron rod, and one who is not" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1975, p. 97; or *Ensign*, May 1975, p. 65).

I reaffirm those words to you this day. Let us not remain under condemnation, with its scourge and judgment, by treating lightly this great and marvelous gift the Lord has given to us. Rather, let us win the promises associated with treasuring it up in our hearts.

In the Doctrine and Covenants, section 84, verses 54 to 58, we read:

"And your minds in times past have been darkened because of unbelief, and because you have treated lightly the things you have received —

"Which vanity and unbelief have brought the whole church under condemnation.

"And this condemnation resteth upon the children of Zion, even all.

"And they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given them, not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written —

"That they may bring forth fruit meet for their Father's kingdom; otherwise there remaineth a scourge and

judgment to be poured out upon the children of Zion."

Testimonies of Saints who accepted the challenge

Since last general conference, I have received many letters from Saints, both young and old, from all over the world who accepted the challenge to read and study the Book of Mormon.

I have been thrilled by their accounts of how their lives have been changed and how they have drawn closer to the Lord as a result of their commitment. These glorious testimonies have reaffirmed to my soul the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith that the Book of Mormon is truly "the keystone of our religion" and that a man and woman will "get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book."

This is my prayer, that the Book of Mormon may become the keystone of our lives, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The chorus sang "The Spirit of God" without announcement.

President Hinckley

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Church, has just addressed us, followed by the Mormon Youth Chorus singing "The Spirit of God."

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder James E. Faust

Follow the prophet's counsel

I humbly and prayerfully hope that what I have to say will be received in the spirit that I would like to convey. We have just heard the prophet of God. He is a watchman on the tower. He has raised a warning voice. I would urge all

to listen and follow his counsel. It is tremendously important always to be in harmony with those who, according to Paul, have "watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief" (Hebrews 13:17).

Isaiah spoke of a people who did not care to listen to their prophets and seers, who were urged, "Say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits" (Isaiah 30:10). Nephi explained, "The guilty taketh the truth to be hard, for it cutteth them to the very center" (1 Nephi 16:2).

President Spencer W. Kimball spoke of the duty of prophets. He said:

"I am sure that Peter and James and Paul found it unpleasant business to constantly be calling people to repentance and warning them of dangers, but they continued unflinchingly. So we, your leaders, must be everlastingly at it; if young people do not understand, then the fault may be partly ours. But, if we make the true way clear to you, then we are blameless" (*Love Versus Lust*, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year, [Provo, 5 Jan. 1965], p. 6).

I wish to speak today of unwanted messages. My purpose in doing so is to attempt to give strength against mistakes, suffering, heartache, and anguish.

Blessing of heeding an unwelcome message

May I begin by sharing with you a personal experience from a time many years ago when I received an unwelcome but valuable message from my devoted father. After World War II was over, I was married and wanted to get on with my life. My memorable mission was finished before my military service. I was not anxious to become a student again and go back to the university where I had started some eight years before. My intended course would require another three years of intensive study, discipline, and poverty. With all of this in mind I said to my father, "I don't think I will go back to school. I'll just get a job or start a business and go forward in my life." Now, my father had completed law school after World War I as an older student with a wife and three children.

His response was typically direct. He said bluntly, "What can you do?" His answer was so brutally honest that it hurt, but I could not ignore it. I went back to the university and completed the course. This frank but well-intentioned message changed my life.

Rich man disregards an unwanted message from Jesus

In the time of Jesus, a certain ruler asked the Savior a very significant question and received a hard answer which he did not want to hear. With the hard answer came a great promise. The meaningful question the rich man asked was, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

Jesus answered, "Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother."

And the ruler answered, "All these have I kept from my youth up."

The unwelcome answer then came from the Master: "Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me."

When the ruler heard this, "he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich."

"And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" (Luke 18:18, 20-24).

How people handle their earthly riches is among the great tests they have in life.

"New doctrines" taught by Jesus are often unpopular

This same Jesus of Nazareth spoke much novel doctrine which seemed hard to accept. Some said, "What new doctrine is this?" (Mark 1:27). Jesus did not speak of revenge nor of getting even. He spoke of loving our enemies and doing good to them that hate us, of blessing those that curse us, and of

praying for those which despitefully use us (see Luke 6:27-28). He counseled his followers, when smitten on one cheek, to "offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid [him] not to take thy coat also" (Luke 6:28).

Another interesting new doctrine was to go beyond loving only our own and being good just to our friends. Another strange idea Jesus taught was to lend goods and money, hoping for nothing in return. The Master counseled us to be merciful, to judge not and condemn not, and to be kind to the unthankful and to the evil (see Luke 6:34-37). He also spoke of being careful "when all men shall speak well of you" because all men spoke well of the false prophets (Luke 6:26).

The promise for those who can do this is great: "Ye shall be the children of the Highest" (Luke 6:35).

Respect the Sabbath day

May I mention two or three other messages which seem no longer popular? One is to respect the Sabbath day. While the Savior himself cautioned against extreme forms of Sabbath day observance, it is well to remember whose day the Sabbath is. There seems to be an ever-increasing popularity in disregarding the centuries-old commandment to observe and respect the Sabbath day. For many it has become a holiday rather than a holy day of rest and sanctification. For some it is a day to shop and buy groceries. The decision of those who engage in shopping, sports, work, and recreation on the Sabbath day is their own, for which they alone bear responsibility.

The Lord's commandment about the Sabbath day has not been altered, nor has the Church's affirmation of the commandment to observe the Sabbath day. Those who violate this commandment in the exercise of their agency are answerable for losing the blessings which observance of this commandment would bring. The Lord has spoken in our day concerning the Sabbath

day. We are to keep ourselves "unspotted from the world" and "go to the house of prayer." We are to rest from our labors and pay our "devotions unto the Most High" (D&C 59:9-10). The Doctrine and Covenants reminds us: "And on this day thou shalt do none other thing, only let thy food be prepared with singleness of heart that thy fasting may be perfect, or, in other words, that thy joy may be full" (D&C 59:13). The blessings for those who do righteousness are supernal. They shall enjoy "peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come" (D&C 59:23).

Honor parents

Another transcendent but often unheeded message which peals down from Sinai is "Honour thy father and thy mother" (Exodus 20:12). I have frequently walked by a rest home that provides excellent care. But it is heart-rending to see so many parents and grandparents in that good care facility so forgotten, so bereft of dignity, so starved for love. To honor parents certainly means to take care of physical needs. But it means much, much more. It means to show love, kindness, thoughtfulness, and concern for them all of the days of their lives. It means to help them preserve their dignity and self-respect in their declining years. It means to honor their wishes and desires and their teachings both before and after they are dead.

Some years ago I created a stake on one of the islands in Japan. As usual, we held many interviews with the leaders to become acquainted with them. One of the men had moved to that area from Tokyo to take care of his aged and ailing father and his father's business, which was in difficulty because of the father's ill health. After the father died, the son went to his father's creditors and acknowledged his father's debts. He requested time from those creditors so that he could assume and pay all of his father's outstanding obligations. In our interview I asked him how he was

managing to meet this responsibility. He answered that he was getting along quite well and that he would be able to handle his father's debts. The Lord saw fit to call him to be one of the leaders of that stake.

Besides being one of God's commandments, the kind, thoughtful consideration of parents is a matter of common decency and self-respect. On their part, parents need to live so as to be worthy of the respect of their children.

I cannot help wondering about parents who adopt the attitude with their children, "do as I say, not as I do" with respect to using harmful substances, going to inappropriate movies, and other questionable activities. Children often take license from their parents' behavior and go beyond the values the parents wish to establish. There is one safe parental rule: do not just avoid evil, avoid the very appearance of evil (see 1 Thessalonians 5:22).

Deal honestly with others

I should like to speak of one more strong message. It is frequently astounding to see the dereliction of people in keeping the standards of ordinary fairness and justice. This delinquency manifests itself in so many ways. It is sometimes evident in commercial transactions, as well as in private contacts. Injustice to others is manifest even in the way automobiles are sometimes driven. This unfairness and injustice results principally from one person seeking an advantage or an edge over another. Those who follow such a practice demean themselves greatly. How can those of us who do not practice ordinary fairness and justice have serious claim on the blessings of a just and a fair God?

Do some of us seek to justify our taking of shortcuts and advantage of others by indulging in the twin sophistries, "There isn't any justice" and "Everybody does it"? There are many others who seemingly prosper by violating the rules of God and the stan-

dards of decency and fair play. They appear to escape the imminent law of the harvest, which states, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7). Worrying about the punishment we think ought to come to others is self-defeating to us. Brigham Young counseled that unless we ourselves are prepared for the day of the Lord's vengeance when the wicked will be consumed, we should not be too anxious for the Lord to hasten his work. Said he rather, "Let our anxiety be centred upon this one thing, the sanctification of our own hearts, the purifying of our own affections" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 9:3).

Avoid rationalization

Many modern professors of human behavior advocate as a cure to an afflicted conscience that we simply ignore the unwanted messages. They suggest that we change the standard to fit the circumstances so that there is no longer a conflict, thus easing the conscience. The followers of the divine Christ cannot subscribe to this evil and perverse philosophy with impunity. For the troubled conscience in conflict with right and wrong, the only permanent help is to change the behavior and follow a repentant path.

The prophet Isaiah taught, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isaiah 5:20).

During all of my ministry, I have been fascinated by the manner in which Jesus hardened the bone and spirit of his chief Apostle, Peter. When Jesus told Peter that he had prayed that Peter's faith would strengthen, Peter affirmed that he would go with the Savior to prison or to death. Peter was then told that the "cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me" (Luke 22:34). After the predicted three denials, the powerful, unwelcome, but steel-hardening message came: Peter

heard the cock crow. "And he went out, and wept bitterly" (Matthew 26:75), but this strengthened Peter to fulfill his calling and to die for the cause.

Listen to the still, small voice for life-changing messages

There is one unerring voice that is ever true. It can always be relied upon. It should be listened to, although at times this voice too may speak unwelcome warning messages. I speak of the still, small, inner voice which comes from the divine source. As the prophet Elijah learned, "the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake:

"And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice" (1 Kings 19:11-12).

One single unwanted message may be a call to change our lives; it may lead to the specially tailored opportunity we need. I am grateful that it is

never too late to change, to make things right, to leave old activities and habits behind.

I wish to testify that the prophetic messages of this conference will lead any who will listen — and follow the counsel given — to the promise of the Savior, which is peace in this life and eternal life in the world hereafter. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

The chorus and congregation will now join in singing "Put Your Shoulder to the Wheel," following which Elder Marion D. Hanks, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will speak to us.

The chorus and congregation sang "Put Your Shoulder to the Wheel."

Elder Marion D. Hanks

Importance of daily decisions

In the early days of the Restoration, the Lord commanded one of his servants to "declare glad tidings" and to do this "with all humility, trusting in me, reviling not against revilers" (D&C 19:29-30). In the constructive spirit of that directive, I desire to bear my testimony this morning about the vital effect in our lives and the lives of others of the day-by-day decisions all of us are making — and where we can find help in making them.

A teacher once wrote of the unanticipated consequences of some of our decisions. We didn't really ever intend those consequences, but we followed the paths that led to them. "He who chooses the beginning of a road chooses the place it leads to," he said. "He who picks up one end of a stick,

picks up the other." And it is not only our own course we are affecting when we choose the beginning of a road; we inevitably travel with others, and sometimes we bring anguish and distress to those we love and to other innocent persons.

Agency a peril and a privilege

Over this pulpit President David O. McKay taught us:

"Next to the bestowal of life itself, the right to direct that life is God's greatest gift to man. . . . Freedom of choice is more to be treasured than any possession earth can give" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1950, p. 32).

The oppressing presence of problems all about us — personal, family, and in our society — accentuates the

peril as well as the privilege of free agency. The ancient Psalmist surely seems to be singing to our time: "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble" (Psalm 31:9).

Why is there so much trouble? "With all that fairway, why do we spend so much time in the rough?" someone said.

Part of the answer is that without opposition and testing, free agency loses its meaning. Opposition, tribulation, afflictions, the refining fire are part of the eternal plan.

Choose sound sources of guidance

Much that happens to us in this life we cannot control; we only respond. But much of the pain we suffer and inevitably impose upon others is self-induced through our own bad judgment, through poor choices. Where can we look for help?

The ancient prophet Micah perhaps surprisingly seemed to rule out the nearest and most normal sources of assistance — family, friends, and leaders. Some of us have perhaps experienced a measure of the deep disappointment he felt because of Israel's rebelliousness when he declared that "the good man is perished out of the earth" (Micah 7:2). He spoke of princes and judges asking for rewards, and of great men uttering "mischievous desire" (v. 3). For Micah, the source of help was clear and sure: "Therefore I will look unto the Lord," he said. "I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me" (v. 7).

Jeremiah warned "the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord" (Jeremiah 17:5). Other prophets have similarly spoken.

Does this mean that we may never have confidence in the integrity of others? Must we never trust parents or friends or caring counselors or humble servants of God? This is obviously not the meaning of the scriptures, which

themselves are the record of revelation and inspired instruction; what they are emphasizing is the *care* we must exercise in *choosing* counsel or example.

Beware of unwholesome sources of guidance

There is accessible, for those who will accommodate it, much that is *not* uplifting or wholesome, which sometimes seems so perverse in its portrayal of marriage, and of the family, and of personal integrity that the undiscerning might be led to believe that this is the normal way for people or families or neighborhoods to behave.

Only last week a comment was made by an assistant United States attorney general after she had witnessed a popular play in which drug use was made to appear acceptable and even desirable: "We perpetuate the falsehood that drugs make you cute, bold, insightful, philosophical or chic," she said (Lois Haight Herrington, quoted by Godfrey Sperling, Jr., "Tolerance for Drugs Is Undermining U.S. 'War' Commitment," *Deseret News*, 24 Sept. 1986, sec. A, p. 9). And a columnist, in quoting her, added an interesting line: "Our society still sanctions the use of alcohol. There is really no more dangerous drug — and certainly none that has done more damage or wrecked more lives over the years — than alcohol" (Sperling, sec. A, p. 9).

Seek help from the Lord

But most of us also have available sound sources of wise guidance if we will look for them. There is great power in trust and love, and, of course, we must learn to trust because our confidence in the integrity of man supports our confidence in God. Yet, in matters of lasting importance, one must not rely only on "the arm of flesh" at the expense of looking to the Lord in scripture and in prayer.

Perils of immature, thoughtless choices

In World War II, I had an experience aboard a United States naval vessel in the South Pacific that was a powerful example of the virtue of wise choices and the peril of making decisions that are immature or impetuous, or are made in the heat of emotion, or that go thoughtlessly along with the crowd.

The young man aboard my ship was obviously special. He was modest and able and promising, and it was a blessing to be with him on the few occasions when our particular duties during wartime made it possible to be together.

But circumstance dictated that much more of the time and attention of my young associate was spent with others with whom he worked intimately in the compressed life of a crew aboard a ship at sea. These associates had lifestyles and a view of values that were far removed from those to which this choice lad was accustomed. Gradually, the circumstances and the daily pressures began to take their toll on a not yet fully stable young man.

One day in a far-off port, I observed him almost furtively preparing to go ashore in the company of some of those experienced individuals who were taking him into town for one of their "good times," as they supposed. In the navy, these periods off duty were ironically called "liberty."

I had a brief moment with him as he went over the gangway and tried to warn him that this adventure was perilous and that these men meant him no good. His furtiveness turned to defiance, and he plainly told me that he was a big boy now, able to make up his own mind, and that he would do as he chose.

The consequences of the decisions he made that day — and those that were made for him when, through their iniquitous "help," he had lost the power to think for himself or govern his own behavior — were different than he ever intended or could imagine. In his im-

maturity, he rebelliously chose the beginning of a road without thinking where that road would lead him. The place at which he arrived in the next few hours was one which he would never in his right mind have chosen.

When he returned to the ship, overleave overseas in wartime, out of control, and in custody of the shore patrol, he became subject to severe discipline. I cannot forget his tearful anguish as he awaited his ordeal. He could not even remember anything of the most serious of the tragedies that had occurred to him. All he could recall was lifting a glass they pressed on him, not knowing that they had drugged the drink, and then all was blank. They had proceeded to take him on their rounds with them.

The charges against him, indelibly imprinted on his previously perfect service record, were heartbreaking. I won't forget his tearful anguish as he said over and over, "What will I tell my mom? What will I tell my girl?"

He had time now — and the disposition to listen and to think. We read together the sweet counsel of the Lord concerning Christ's atoning sacrifice and his mission of redemption and of forgiveness and mercy (see Alma 42).

Beware of those who wield evil influence

About two thousand years ago, the Apostle Peter wrote in remarkable detail of our times and what is transpiring in them as individuals, young and old, are sometimes led into tragedy by others who have no wholesome interest in their happiness or their future. These "others," and the results of their evil influence, are clearly described. I pray that some who sorely need it, or some who can help those who sorely need it, will hear these remarkable words. They come from the book of 2 Peter, chapter 2:

"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the *unjust* unto the day of judgment. . . .

"But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities, . . .

" . . . of the things that they understand not; . . .

"Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: . . .

"These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; . . .

"For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.

"While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage" (vs. 9-10, 12, 14, 17-19; italics added).

I have never been able to refer to these powerful words without thinking about a clean young man of strong promise who followed bad counsel and bad example into tragedy, with compromise to conscience and with heartbreak to himself and to those who loved him. We cannot with impunity follow the example or heed the counsels of unwisdom or unrighteousness, or of ignorance or immaturity or ego or greed or bravado.

Consequences of evil

There is no bravery in evil, no true courage in behavior that can only result in deep disappointment. There is no lasting joy in the euphoria resulting from substances taken into our bodies which ultimately sabotage our self-control, and overcome our capacity to think for ourselves, and move us to act in ways incompatible with our best understanding.

Reasons to seek the Lord's counsel

We see much that is glorious and reassuring in good human beings, but mortal men have limitations. None of us has ever met a mortal in whom we could comfortably rest our salvation. Only one qualifies for that trust, and he is the Holy One of Israel. His love for us was and is so great that he volunteered for the unspeakable burden of carrying the weight of our sins. He is our Mediator and our Advocate with the Father. The prophet Micah spoke truthfully and faithfully long ago when, in a time of great trouble, he testified: "I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me" (Micah 7:7).

All of us have much to learn and need good counsel. And beyond sound human help, beyond the "arm of flesh," it is written, "Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good" (Alma 37:37). "He will console you in your afflictions, and he will plead your cause" (Jacob 3:1).

Mormon's last words to his son are my prayer for my children and grandchildren also, and for the children of men everywhere:

"My son, be faithful in Christ; and may not the things which I have written grieve thee, to weigh thee down unto death; but may Christ lift thee up, and may his sufferings and death, and [resurrection], . . . and his mercy and long-suffering, and the hope of his glory and of eternal life, rest in your mind forever" (Moroni 9:25).

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The chorus sang "Sweet Hour of Prayer" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Elder Marion D. Hanks, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has addressed us,

followed by the Mormon Youth Chorus singing "Sweet Hour of Prayer."

Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our next speaker.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

Bad habits bind like chains

Some years ago I had an acquaintance who had allowed himself to become a compulsive user of alcohol. He drank before he had dinner, and he would have what he called a "bracer" before involving himself in major business decisions. During a routine physical examination one day, a doctor told him that, for the good of his health, he should break the drinking habit. When I asked him what he intended to do, he said, "That's easy. I'll just change doctors."

Another acquaintance is a lovely, well-educated woman who has been a very heavy smoker. She now tells us of a few times she even woke her husband up in the middle of the night and insisted that he go to an all-night store to get her a pack of cigarettes. This couple came in contact with the missionaries, believed their message, and joined the Church. When she knew she had to quit smoking, the woman almost immediately threw off the chains of this habit and became free of tobacco addiction.

As I have been rereading the Book of Mormon, following the counsel of President Ezra Taft Benson, our beloved prophet, I have been even more impressed with the counsel father Lehi gave his family shortly before his death. He pleads with his sons with these words:

"Awake, my sons; put on the armor of righteousness. Shake off the chains with which ye are bound, and come forth out of obscurity, and arise from the dust" (2 Nephi 1:23).

Bad habits impede happiness and growth

Those words apply to us today. Who among us hasn't felt the chains

of bad habits? These habits may have impeded our progress, may have made us forget who we are, may have destroyed our self-image, may have put our family life in jeopardy, and may have hindered our ability to serve our fellowmen and our God. So many of us tend to say, "This is the way I am. I can't change. I can't throw off the chains of habit."

Lehi warned his sons to "shake off the chains" because he knew that chains restrict our mobility, growth, and happiness. They cause us to become confused and less able to be guided by God's Spirit. Lehi also reminded his sons that their new land should "be a land of liberty unto them; wherefore, they shall never be brought down into captivity; if so, it shall be because of iniquity" (2 Nephi 1:7). He could have said, "If so, it shall be because ye have been bound into captivity by the chains of unrighteous living." Samuel Johnson wisely shared, "The chains of habit are . . . too small to be felt until they are too strong to be broken" (*International Dictionary of Thoughts*, comp. John P. Bradley [Chicago: J. G. Ferguson Publishing Co., 1969], p. 348).

The lady of whom I spoke was able to break the chains of a bad habit because she became committed to change. Some of the Lamanites under King Lamoni were able to break the chains of their iniquities of murder, indolence, and hatred when they were taught by Ammon. They became even more valiant than the Nephites because they became committed to righteousness.

Righteous living is a shield, a protector, an insulation, a strength, a power, a joy, a Christlike trait. Yes,

living a life of righteousness is a chain-breaker.

Many of us today are shackled by the restrictive chains of poor habits. We are bound by inferior self-images created by misconduct and indifference. We are chained by an unwillingness to change for the better. Is it any wonder, in our day as it was in Nephi's, that God's pleas are "awake," "listen," "procrastinate no longer," "believe me," "come back," and "seek the straight course"?

This catchy couplet fits so many of us. "Procrastination is a silly thing, it only brings me sorrow, but I can change at any time! I think I will — tomorrow!"

Shaking off restrictive chains requires action. They cannot be wished away. A declaration will never break chains. It requires commitment, self-discipline, and work.

Chains weigh heavily on troubled hearts and souls. They relegate us to lives of no purpose or light. They cause us to become confused and lose the spirit. We need to arise from the dust and enjoy the fresh air of righteousness. We need to move forward in patience, understanding, love, and never-ending commitment.

Chains of unrighteous dominion

Sometimes the chains of arrogance and domination cause priesthood bearers to lose their way and stumble. No man in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is worthy of his priesthood powers and blessings if he makes unrighteous demands upon his wife or family. God forbid that any man would find satisfaction or comfort in exercising this type of domination.

"No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned" (D&C 121:41).

Let me share some chains I have recently observed in the lives of some friends, chains that are causing mis-

direction, family destruction, loss of self-respect, and sadness.

Chains of drug abuse

I am thinking of a young husband and father who is participating in drug abuse. He stands to lose family, employment, personal pride, and his own life. His cries of "I'm hooked" tug at the soul. The use of cocaine and other drugs causes those involved to become totally chained to their addiction. Those who peddle drugs not only provide chains for others, but shackle themselves with the weights of unrighteousness as well. To those not involved, avoid drugs in any form with all of your might. To those involved, seek help to remove the chains that will drag you down and smother you. Drugs are not a "quick fix." They are a quick exit through a door which too often swings only one way — toward heartache and self-destruction.

Believe me when I tell you that some of the saddest sights I have ever witnessed in my life are people living with drug addiction. They are prisoners within their own bodies. Many feel totally helpless, dependent, and desperate. But none should feel hopeless. Lift those chains and fight back for personal dignity, peace, and purpose. Anyone who tells you drug use is the "fun" way is a liar.

Any judge who allows convicted drug peddlers to go their ways with only light penalties isn't worthy of his office.

Chains of murmuring and gossip

I am acquainted with a wife and mother who is chained securely at the present time to a life-style of murmuring and criticism. She is the first to point out faults in her husband or to repeat neighborhood gossip. How damaging is a habit that permits fault-finding, character assassination, and the sharing of malicious rumors! Gossip and caustic comments often create chains of contention. These chains may

appear to be very small, but what misery and woe they can cause!

"O that ye would awake; awake from a deep sleep, yea, even from the sleep of hell, and shake off the awful chains by which ye are bound, which are the chains which bind the children of men, that they are carried away captive down to the eternal gulf of misery and woe" (2 Nephi 1:13).

Chains of indifference

Listen to the words of a friend who understands well the meaning of this scripture, a man who was bound by the chains of indifference. But when he sought God's help and turned to righteous principles, those chains were not only broken, but smashed. This letter was received a few weeks ago.

"I was baptized into the Church in March of 1974. At the time, I was employed in a job that required my having to work on Sundays. This, combined with my lack of strength in the gospel, prevented me from becoming an active and faithful member of the Church. Over the years I neglected my daily study and prayers. Throughout this time in my life I drifted farther and farther from the Church and the teachings of the gospel. This neglect brought disappointment after disappointment to myself and my family. I was discouraged, disillusioned, and I lacked self-respect and confidence.

"On the afternoon of April 6, 1986, my wife was scanning through the TV channels in search of something to pass away another lazy Sunday afternoon when she came across the Sunday afternoon session of general conference about to begin. We decided to watch and see what was going on as we had lost complete contact with the Church, and I, frankly, could not have told you who the prophet was at the time.

"The message I listened to was a gift from my Heavenly Father, one that would turn my life around. The message stayed with me for the next couple of days. I commented to my wife how much better I felt about myself and my

relationship with others as a result of simply applying some recommended principles. We have since returned to a faithful and active involvement in our ward."

What a blessing it is to rise from the dust and the chains of indifference.

Change requires commitment and courage

One may ask, "What must I do to break the chains that bind me and lead me away from the path our Savior would have us follow?" These chains cannot be broken by those who live in lust and self-deceit. They can only be broken by people who are willing to change. We must face up to the hard reality of life that damaging chains are broken only by people of courage and commitment who are willing to struggle and weather the pain.

It is true some people do not want to change, even though they may say they do. Only you can supply the motivation, and only you can decide to change. The Church, the home, the family, friends, and those professionally trained can aid, support, encourage, empathize, and guide, but the work of change belongs to the person. Most often, it is plain hard work.

To change or break some of our chains even in a small way means to give up some behavior or habits that have been very important to us in the past. Generally this is frightening. Change involves risks. "How will people react and respond to me if I change and am different?" Even if our present way of life is painful and self-destructive, some of us think it serves a purpose, and so we become comfortable with it.

Every worthy change means risk—the risk of losing an old and damaging habit for a new and improved way of life.

If fear and an unwillingness to take the risk and challenge of the better way of life gain the upper hand, we will not be able to change. Shakespeare in *Measure for Measure* says it this way:

"Our doubts are traitors, and make us lose the good we oft might win, by fearing to attempt" (act 1, scene 4, lines 77-79).

Seek God's help to gain courage to change

Even the chains of fear can be broken by those who will humbly seek God's help and strength. It can be done with this strengthening promise in Doctrine and Covenants 122:4: "Because of thy righteousness . . . thy God shall stand by thee forever and ever."

A truly wise person will constantly move forward, striving for self-improvement, knowing that daily repentance is needed for progress. He will realize the good life is simply conforming to a standard of right and justice. The joys of happiness can only be realized by living lofty principles.

Those who are committed to improvement break chains by having the courage to try. Those who live without commitment mistakenly think it is eas-

ier to adapt their life-styles to the weight and restrictions of chains rather than to put forth the effort to change.

God help us to shake off and break the chains with which we are bound. With God's help they can be shaken off by faith, works, prayer, constant commitment, and self-discipline. May we have the will and strength to shake off the chains that would control and destroy our progress, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The chorus sang "Oh, What Songs of the Heart" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Elder Marvin J. Ashton has spoken to us, and the chorus has sung "Oh, What Songs of the Heart."

Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our concluding speaker for this session.

Elder Boyd K. Packer

A child's innocence

Some years ago, Dr. Faun Hunsaker, then president of the Southern States Mission, was invited to stay at the home of a member. He arrived after the children were in bed.

He occupied the parents' bedroom, and during the night heard the door open and the sound of little feet. A little boy frightened by a bad dream had come to his parents' bed for comfort.

Sensing that something was different, the little boy felt Brother Hunsaker's face. So he spoke quietly to the child. The startled youngster said, "You're not my daddy!"

"No, I'm not your daddy."

"Did my daddy say you could sleep here?"

"Yes, your daddy said I could sleep here."

With that the little youngster crawled into bed with Brother Hunsaker and was soon asleep.

I might well conclude with that lesson on the trust of a little child. Nevertheless, without apology, I intend to moralize about innocence and our obligation to little children.

Scriptural teachings about children

There is much in the scriptures about little children.

The Psalmist wrote, "Children are an heritage of the Lord" (Psalm 127:3).

The Savior gave the ever-familiar plea, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Mark 10:14).

When His disciples asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? . . . Jesus called a little child

unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, . . . Whosoever . . . shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me" (Matthew 18:1-5).

Then came this warning: "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (v. 6).

To me, the most impressive lesson is in the Book of Mormon.

Jesus "commanded that their little children should be brought.

"So they brought their little children and set them down upon the ground round about him, and Jesus stood in the midst; . . .

" . . . He commanded the multitude that they should kneel down upon the ground.

"And it came to pass that when they had knelt upon the ground, Jesus groaned within himself, and said: Father, I am troubled because of the wickedness of the people of the house of Israel. . . .

" . . . He himself also knelt upon the earth; and behold he prayed unto the Father, and the things which he prayed cannot be written, . . .

"And no tongue can speak, neither can there be written by any man, neither can the hearts of men conceive so great and marvelous things as [they] both saw and heard Jesus speak; . . .

"And they arose from the earth, and he said unto them: Blessed are ye because of your faith. And now behold, my joy is full.

"And when he had said these words, he wept, and the multitude bare record of it, and he took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them.

"And when he had done this he wept again;

"And he . . . said unto them: Behold your little ones. . . .

" . . . And they saw the heavens open, and they saw angels descending

out of heaven as it were in the midst of fire; and they came down and encircled those little ones about, and they were encircled about with fire; and the angels did minister unto them" (3 Nephi 17:11-15, 17, 20-24).

There is more, much more, in the scriptures about little children.

Transgressions against children

There is a sorry side to this subject as well. I wish not to dwell on that beyond listing four transgressions which plague mankind, all of which inflict suffering upon little children.

First, that consummate physical union of man and woman belonging to the marriage covenant is now falsely proclaimed an acceptable indulgence for any two adults.

Second, the misuse of that procreative power in degraded acts of perversion is widely promoted as the right of consenting adults. This selfish behavior carries neither the responsibility nor the rewards of parenthood.

Third, the deliberate destruction of the innocent and helpless by abortion is now widely fostered—even publicly funded.

Fourth, the bodies and minds and morals of increasing numbers of little children are brutalized and abused by those who should protect them.

In it all, mankind has sown a bitter wind and reaps heartbreak, guilt, abandonment, divorce, addiction, disease, and death; and little children suffer.

If these sins remain unchecked, civilization will be led unflinchingly to destruction.

Beliefs affect behavior toward children

Our behavior is not totally controlled by natural impulses. Behavior begins with belief as well.

Beliefs are born of philosophies, of doctrines. Doctrines can be spiritual or secular, wholesome or destructive, true or false.

Two doctrines misrepresent the status of little children. Each is widely accepted. Both are false!

False belief of infant baptism

The first holds that little children are conceived in sin and enter mortality in a state of natural corruption. That doctrine is false!

Each time a child is born, the world is renewed in innocence.

The revelations teach us that "the glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth.

"Light and truth forsake that evil one.

"Every spirit of man was *innocent* in the beginning; and God having redeemed man from the fall, men became again, in their infant state, *innocent* before God.

"And that wicked one cometh and taketh away light and truth, through disobedience, from the children of men, and because of the tradition of their fathers.

"But I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth" (D&C 93:36-40; italics added).

Mormon taught this doctrine to his son Moroni and hence to us. I can present only a few sentences from his letter.

"If I have learned the truth," Mormon wrote, "there have been disputations among you concerning the baptism of your little children" (Moroni 8:5).

He called their disputation "gross error" and wrote: "Immediately after I had learned these things of you I inquired of the Lord concerning the matter. And the word of the Lord came to me by the power of the Holy Ghost, saying:

"Listen to the words of Christ, your Redeemer, your Lord and your God. Behold, I came into the world not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance; the whole need no physician, but they that are sick; wherefore, little children are whole, for they are not capable of committing sin; wherefore

the curse of Adam is taken from them in me, that it hath no power over them; . . .

"And after this manner did the Holy Ghost manifest the word of God unto me; wherefore, my beloved son, I know that it is solemn mockery before God, that ye should baptize little children" (Moroni 8:7-9).

Mormon told Moroni to teach repentance and baptism to "those who are accountable and capable of committing sin" (Moroni 8:10).

Eight is established by revelation as the age of accountability (see D&C 68:27).

Then, in sternness unsurpassed in scripture, Mormon warned:

"He that supposeth that little children need baptism is in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity; for he hath neither faith, hope, nor charity; wherefore, should he be cut off while in the thought, he must go down to hell.

"For awful is the wickedness to suppose that God saveth one child because of baptism, and the other must perish because he hath no baptism.

"Wo be unto them that shall pervert the ways of the Lord after this manner, for they shall perish except they repent. Behold, I speak with boldness, having authority from God" (Moroni 8:14-16).

Read his entire epistle. It is true doctrine. It will inspire a reverence for little children. Thereafter, who could even think to neglect, much less to abuse one of them?

Study and obey God's laws

True doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behavior.

The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve behavior. Preoccupation with unworthy behavior can lead to unworthy behavior. That is why we stress so forcefully the study of the doctrines of the gospel.

The laws of God on marriage, birth, and nurturing of little children

may seem rigid, but they are very practical.

His law decrees that the only legitimate union of man and woman is between husband and wife. For, should that expression of love result in conception, marriage provides shelter for the child who enters mortality innocent and helpless. Marriage ensures security and happiness for parents as well.

Whatever the laws of man may come to tolerate, the misuse of the power of procreation, the destroying of innocent life through abortion, and the abuse of little children are transgressions of enormous proportion. For cradled therein rests the destiny of innocent, helpless children.

False belief that man is not a child of God

Another doctrine, equally false and widely accepted, also misrepresents the status of little children. Let me illustrate.

Years ago, two of our sons, then little fellows, were wrestling on the rug. They reached that line which separates laughter from tears, so I worked my foot carefully between them and lifted the older one back to a sitting position on the rug. As I did so, I said, "Hey there, you little monkeys. You'd better settle down."

To my surprise, he folded his little arms, his eyes swimming with deep hurt, and protested, "I not a monkey, Daddy; I a *person*!"

The years have not erased the overwhelming feeling of love I felt for my little boys. Many times over the years his words have slipped back into my mind, "I not a monkey, Daddy; I a *person*!" I was taught a profound lesson by my little son.

He is not just a person, nor just my little boy. He is a child of God.

The cycle of life has moved swiftly on. Now both of those sons have little children of their own who teach their fathers lessons. They now watch their children grow as we watched them. They are coming to

know, as fathers, something they could not be taught as sons.

All too soon their children will be grown with little "persons" of their own, repeating the endless cycle of life.

Perhaps now they understand what it means to begin our prayers, as the Lord instructed, "Our Father who art in heaven." He is our father; we are His children.

This secular doctrine holds that man is not a child of God, but basically an animal, his behavior inescapably controlled by natural impulse, exempt from moral judgments and unaccountable for moral conduct.

While many claim that this philosophy could not, in the end, lead mankind to relaxed moral behavior, *something* causes it! Is it accidental that the more widely such secular doctrines are believed, the more prevalent immoral behavior becomes?

Secular philosophy versus sacred doctrine

They defend their philosophy with collected data and say, "It is now proven to be true. Look at all the evidence on our side."

We in turn point to the sorry way in which mankind degrades procreation and the attendant suffering of both children and adults and say, "Look at all the evidence on our side."

Secular doctrines have the advantage of convincing, tangible evidence. We seem to do better in gathering data on things that can be counted and measured.

Doctrines which originate in the light, on the other hand, are more often supported by intangible impressions upon the spirit. We are left for the most part to rely on *faith*.

But, in time, the consequences of following either will become visible enough.

Adults should repent

To you adults who repeat the pattern of neglect and abuse you endured

as little children, believing that you are entrapped in a cycle of behavior from which there is no escape, I say:

It is contrary to the order of heaven for any soul to be locked into compulsive, immoral behavior with no way out!

It is consistent with the workings of the adversary to deceive you into believing that you *are*.

I gratefully acknowledge that transgressions, even those which affect little children, yield to sincere repentance. I testify with all my soul that the doctrine of repentance is true and has a miraculous, liberating effect upon behavior.

Children should forgive

To you *innocent* ones who have not transgressed, but were abused as little children and still carry an undeserved burden of guilt, I say:

Learn true doctrine — repentance and forgiveness; lay that burden of guilt down!

For we are all children of the same Heavenly Father. May not each of his children, of any age, claim the redeeming sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and in so doing, through complete repentance, be cleansed and renewed to childlike innocence?

I said at the beginning that I might well conclude with the account of that trusting little child. I think I will do just that:

"You're not my daddy."

"No, I'm not your daddy."

"Did my daddy say you could sleep here?"

"Yes, your daddy said I could sleep here."

With that, the little boy was soon safely asleep in his arms.

God grant that all little children will be safe with every one of us because their Father and their God and our Father and our God said we could be here. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Boyd K. Packer has just spoken to us.

We express appreciation to the managers and operators of the many television and radio stations and cable systems for offering their facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this conference to a large and appreciative audience in many areas of the world.

The Mormon Youth Chorus will now sing "On This Day of Joy and Gladness," following which the benediction will be given by Elder Keith W. Wilcox of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and this conference will be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The chorus sang "On This Day of Joy and Gladness."

Elder Keith W. Wilcox offered the benediction.

FIRST DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

SECOND SESSION

The second general session of the 156th Semiannual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, October 4, 1986, at 2:00 P.M.

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

Music for this session was provided by the Murray Region Family Choir, under the direction of Owen Clark with John Longhurst at the organ.

At the beginning of the meeting, President Thomas S. Monson made the following remarks:

President Thomas S. Monson

My beloved brethren and sisters, President Ezra Taft Benson has asked that I conduct this, the second general session of the 156th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We note that Elders J. Thomas Fyans and Derek A. Cuthbert are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall.

We welcome all who are in attendance or who are participating by means of television, cable, or radio, and many who are watching in stake centers throughout the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico, to which the conference is being carried by satellite transmission.

We are pleased to acknowledge especially our guests who are present this afternoon, along with general and local Church leaders and members from many parts of the world.

We express our appreciation to the owners and operators of many radio and television stations and to the owners and operators of cable systems for their cooperation in making these pro-

ceedings available to members and friends of the Church in many countries.

The music for this session will be provided by the Murray Region Family Choir, under the direction of Brother Owen Clark with Brother John Longhurst at the organ.

The choir will begin this service by singing "The Happy Day at Last Has Come." The invocation will be offered by Elder Gene R. Cook of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "The Happy Day at Last Has Come."

Elder Gene R. Cook offered the invocation.

President Monson

This splendid choir will now sing "Dearest Children, God Is Near You," following which President Gordon B. Hinckley will present the General Authorities and general officers for the sustaining vote of the conference.

The choir sang "Dearest Children, God Is Near You."

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Sustaining of General Authorities and general officers

My brothers and sisters, as requested by President Benson, I shall now present to you the General Authorities and general officers of the Church for your sustaining vote.

It is proposed that we sustain President Ezra Taft Benson as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Gordon B. Hinckley as First Counselor in the First Presidency; and Thomas S. Monson as Second Coun-

selor in the First Presidency. Those in favor may manifest it. Any opposed may manifest it.

It is proposed that we sustain Marion G. Romney as President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, Howard W. Hunter as Acting President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, and the following as members of that council: Marion G. Romney, Howard W. Hunter, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, and

Joseph B. Wirthlin. Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed may manifest it.

As announced a few months ago, Carlos E. Asay has been released as a President of the First Quorum of the Seventy in order to serve as President of the Europe Area. In view of the action just taken, we also release Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, who has been serving as a President of the First Quorum of the Seventy since August. Those who wish to extend a vote of appreciation to these Brethren for their faithful service may do so by the uplifted hand.

We sustain as the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy: Dean L. Larsen, Richard G. Scott, Marion D. Hanks, Wm. Grant Bangerter, Jack H. Goaslind, Robert L. Backman, and Hugh W. Pinnock. All in favor, please signify. Any opposed may so signify.

We note with sadness the passing of Elders James A. Cullimore and O. Leslie Stone of the First Quorum of the Seventy. Parenthetically, I would like to say that we note with sadness the passing only yesterday of President Franklin McKean of the Brazil Recife Mission.

With the exceptions which I have noted, there have been no changes in

the General Authorities or the general officers of the Church since the last conference. It is proposed, therefore, that we sustain all of the General Authorities and general officers of the Church as at present constituted. All in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed by the same sign.

It appears that the voting has been unanimous in favor of the General Authorities and general officers of the Church. Thank you, brothers and sisters, for your generous and prayerful support.

President Thomas S. Monson

It would now be appropriate for Brother Wirthlin and Brother Pinnock to take their places, please. Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our first speaker, and he will be followed by Elders H. Verlan Andersen, George I. Cannon, and Gardner H. Russell of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks spoke without further announcement.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks

Duty to live the Golden Rule

One of the consequences of mortality is the necessity of earning our daily bread (see Genesis 3:19, Moses 4:25). We do so as employees, as business people, and as investors. In all of our earning activities, we have the challenge of dealing fairly and considerately with others.

Our duty is clear. The Savior gave us the Golden Rule: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" (Matthew 7:12).

Satan's position is the opposite. He sponsors self-interest, raw and unrefined by any other consideration. One

of his most effective tools is the temptation to take unfair advantage in order to get gain. It has been so from the beginning.

Cain set the pattern of the world. Cain coveted the flocks of his brother Abel, and Satan showed him how to obtain them (see JST, Genesis 5:14, 23; Moses 5:29, 38). Satan taught Cain that a man could get worldly wealth by committing some evil against its owner (see JST, Genesis 5:16; Moses 5:31).

Cain killed Abel. The scriptures say that he did so "for the sake of getting gain" (Moses 5:50), the flocks of his brother (JST, Genesis 5:18; Moses 5:33). Seeing this, the Lord

asked Cain, "Where is Abel thy brother?" Cain first attempted to cover his sin with a lie: "I know not." Then he added a rationalization: "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4:9; see also Moses 5:34).

Responsibility to be brothers' keepers

Are we our brothers' keepers? In other words, are we responsible to look after the well-being of our neighbors as we seek to earn our daily bread? The Savior's Golden Rule says we are. Satan says we are not.

Tempted of Satan, some have followed the example of Cain. They covet property and then sin to obtain it. The sin may be murder, robbery, or theft. It may be fraud or deception. It may even be some clever but legal manipulation of facts or influence to take unfair advantage of another. Always the excuse is the same: "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Those who follow the example of Cain fulfill a Book of Mormon prophecy. Seeing our day, Nephi prophesied that many would say, "Lie a little, take the advantage of one because of his words, dig a pit for thy neighbor; there is no harm in this" (2 Nephi 28:8).

Be guided by high moral standards in the marketplace

We live in a world where many look on the marketplace as a ruthless arena where the buyer must beware, where no one is obligated to do more than the law requires, and where fraud isn't fraud unless you can prove it in court.

Members of the Church of Jesus Christ have a higher standard. President Harold B. Lee said, "The standard . . . in the Church must be visibly higher than the standard . . . in the world" (*Ye Are the Light of the World* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1974], p. 13). We are commanded to live the Golden Rule.

Despite that high standard, some who profess to be Christians seek to

earn their living by systematically victimizing their neighbors.

Some seize wealth by trafficking in illegal drugs or pornography. Traders in these products enrich themselves by transactions that ruin the bodies, minds, or morals of their customers.

Other criminals live by stealing. And not all stealing is at gunpoint or by dark of night. Some theft is by deception, where the thief manipulates the confidence of his victim.

The white-collar cousin of stealing is fraud, which gets its gain by lying about an essential fact in a transaction.

Scheming promoters with glib tongues and ingratiating manners deceive their neighbors into investments the promoters know to be more speculative than they dare reveal.

God will judge secret acts

Difficulties of proof make fraud a hard crime to enforce. But the inadequacies of the laws of man provide no license for transgression under the laws of God. Though their method of thievery may be immune from correction in this life, sophisticated thieves in white shirts and ties will ultimately be seen and punished for what they are. He who presides over that Eternal Tribunal knows our secret acts, and he is "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12, D&C 33:1).

Follow Christian standards in financial activities

Most of us can be relatively comfortable when a message on the Golden Rule in the workplace uses examples like illegal drugs and theft by deception. What follows is more challenging. And it should be. We cannot expect to be comfortable if we measure our conduct against the Savior's command, "I would that ye should be perfect even as I" (3 Nephi 12:48). To follow in the footsteps of the only perfect person who ever lived, we must expect to stretch our souls.

Followers of Christ have the moral responsibility of earning their livings and conducting their financial transactions in ways that are consistent with the principles of the gospel and the teachings of the Savior. Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints should not be involved in employment or other activities upon which they cannot conscientiously ask the blessings of the Lord.

Persons who prosecute frivolous lawsuits do not measure up to this high standard. Groundless litigation rewards some plaintiffs handsomely, but it injures everyone else by raising the price of products and services.

An employee who receives the compensation agreed upon but does not perform the service agreed upon earns part of his living by injuring others.

So does an employer who is unfair to his employees. An idealistic young professional wrote Church headquarters about the plight of migrant farm workers. He had observed treatment that was probably illegal and certainly unchristian. When I read his letter, I thought of the positive example of Jesse Knight, the great benefactor of Brigham Young Academy. At a time when most mine owners exploited their workers, this Christian employer paid his miners something extra so they could earn their living in six days' labor and rest on the Sabbath. He did not require them to patronize a company store. He built his workers a building for recreation, worship, and schooling. And Brother Knight would not permit the superintendent to question his workers about their religion or politics (see Jesse William Knight, *The Jesse Knight Family* [Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1940], pp. 43-44; and Gary Fuller Reese, "Uncle Jesse" [Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1961], pp. 26-28).

Of course, we understand that what an employer can pay his employees is limited by what his business can obtain for its products or services in a competitive marketplace. Contracts

also impose limits on legitimate economic expectations.

Follow Christian standards in selling and advertising

Christian standards should also apply to those who earn a living by selling or advertising products in the marketplace.

The marketplace for products and services has many potential buyers who are vulnerable because they are poorly informed or excessively trusting. For example, a friend told me of a young student couple who didn't have enough money for rent, groceries, and tuition but were persuaded to sign up for an expensive self-improvement course. Can a seller ever justify obtaining personal profit by persuading someone to assume a financial burden he cannot wisely bear in order to acquire something he does not really need? The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that Latter-day Saints should deal justly with their neighbors and mercifully with the poor (see *History of the Church*, 5:401).

To cite another kind of example, an owner who keeps his business open on Sunday prevents his employees from attending worship services and being with their families on the Sabbath. Modern-day prophets have encouraged us not to shop on Sunday (see, for example, Spencer W. Kimball, in Conference Report, Oct. 1974, p. 6; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1974, p. 6). Those of us who shop on the Sabbath cannot escape responsibility for encouraging businesses to remain open on that day. Essential services must be provided, but most Sabbath transactions could be avoided if merchants and customers were determined to avoid doing business on the Lord's day.

Last year the *Deseret News* carried an article about a Salt Lake City pharmacist who stopped selling cigarettes in his drugstore. He explained, "It's just incompatible for a profession dedicated to saving people's lives to sell a product that does nothing but kill" ("S.L. Pharmacist Using Backhoe to Snuff out Cigarette Stock," 20 Dec. 1985, sec.

B, p. 1). That merchant was more concerned about his customers' welfare than his personal profits.

Sister Oaks called my attention to a similar example in the world of advertising. The magazine *Women's Sports and Fitness* does not accept cigarette ads, thus foregoing much-needed revenue. A woman columnist and physician, Dr. Joan Ulliyot, praised this policy and contrasted it to the practice of another organization:

"I am dismayed that a prominent women's sport, tennis, continues to take support from a cigarette company. Surely the top women in this sport, none of whom smoke, have the [courage] to say no to this hypocrisy and stop lending their names and prestige to sanction and glamorize a lethal product. Any role model in sport who accepts support or sponsorship from a company whose products destroy health and fitness should take a hard look at what she is, by association, endorsing" (*Women's Sports and Fitness*, Sept. 1986, p. 12).

Wouldn't it be wonderful if this same attitude of looking after the interests of others governed Latter-day Saints who are making a profit from the sale or promotion of alcoholic beverages? Consider the terrible effects of alcohol. Alcohol-related accidents are the leading cause of death of those under twenty-five. The physical, social, and financial effects of alcohol ruin marriages and family life. By dulling inhibitions, alcohol leads to untold numbers of crimes and moral transgressions. Alcohol is the number one addictive drug in our day.

The consumption of alcohol is increasing among youth. Targeting young audiences, advertisers portray beer and wine as joyful, socially desirable, and harmless. Producers are promoting new types of alcoholic beverages as competitors in the huge soft-drink market. Grocery and convenience stores and gas stations stock alcoholic beverages side by side with soda pop. Can Christians who are involved in this commerce be indifferent

to the physical and moral effects of the alcohol from which they are making their profits?

Other examples could be given, but these few are sufficient to illustrate the principle that the Golden Rule applies to our earning activities. We are our brother's keeper, even in the marketplace.

Strive to live the full implications of the Golden Rule

I am aware that this is a high standard which cannot be met overnight. But it is important to recognize our responsibility and begin to work toward it. And we should do so joyfully. The gospel is the good news. Commandments lead to blessings. The Prophet Joseph Smith told our first missionaries that when preaching we should "warn in compassion." We "have no right . . . to scare mankind to repentance," he said. We should preach the gospel as "glad tidings of great joy unto all people" (*History of the Church*, 1:280).

We should also remember that the principle that the Golden Rule governs our earning activities is difficult to apply in practice. We should not consider employees responsible for policies they regret but cannot control. A decision that is made by the owner of a market should not inflict feelings of guilt on a conscientious but powerless Christian who runs the checkout stand. Similarly, a part-owner does not have freedom to impose his standards on business policies if he has partners who do not share his moral concerns. An incorporated business may be controlled by stockholders who have no concern for the destructive human effects of a profitable product or policy.

We live in a complex society, where even the simplest principle can be exquisitely difficult to apply. I admire investors who are determined not to obtain income or investment profits from transactions that add to the sum total of sin and misery in the world. But they will have difficulty finding investments that meet this high standard.

Good things are often packaged with bad, so decisions usually involve balancing. In a world of corporate diversification, we are likely to find that a business dealing in beverages sells milk in one division and alcohol in another. Just when we think that our investments are entirely unspotted from the world, we may find that our life insurance is partially funded by investments we wish to avoid. Or our savings may be deposited in a bank that is lending to ventures we could not approve. Such complexities make it difficult to prescribe firm rules.

Apply the Golden Rule prayerfully and thoughtfully

We must rely on teaching correct principles, which each member should personally apply to govern his or her own circumstances. To that end, each of us should give thoughtful and prayerful consideration to whether we are looking after the well-being of our neighbors in the way we earn our daily bread.

The motive of Cain is at the headwaters of wickedness. Cain's sin was murder, but his motive was personal gain. That motive has produced all manner of wickedness, including murder, thievery, and fraud. That motive is also at work in the legal but immoral practices of those who get gain by preying on the weaknesses or ignorance of their neighbors. Always such activities involve Cain's ancient rationalization: "Am I my brother's keeper?"

In contrast, the Savior taught us to "love [our] enemies, bless them that curse [us], do good to them that hate [us], and pray for them who despitefully use [us] and persecute [us]" (3 Nephi 12:44). When we have that duty toward our enemies, we cannot allow ourselves to do less for our partners, our customers, our employees, and others with whom we deal in the marketplace.

Living the Golden Rule brings happiness

What a beautiful and happy world this would be if all of us would strive to live these principles to the fullest. Our efforts and influence would affect millions. Examples improve society more than sermons. Most people would rather see a sermon than hear one.

In those brilliant generations that followed the appearance of the resurrected Christ in the New World, "there were no contentions and disputations among [the people], and every man did deal justly one with another" (4 Nephi 1:2). Fourth Nephi records: "Surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God" (1:16). We should be striving to regain that condition. As modern revelation declares, "Zion must increase in beauty, and in holiness" (D&C 82:14). One of the ways prescribed to achieve that increase is "every man seeking the interest of his neighbor, and doing all things with an eye single to the glory of God" (D&C 82:19).

May God bless us to live the Golden Rule in our earning activities. As we seek to be our brother's keeper, we will be attempting to follow in the footsteps of the Master. I testify of Jesus Christ, our Savior, whose blood has atoned for repented sins and whose resurrection has broken the bands of death for all. The fulness of the gospel was restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith. His successor, President Ezra Taft Benson, holds the keys of the everlasting gospel in our day. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elders H. Verlan Andersen, George I. Cannon, and Gardner H. Russell, sustained last conference as new members of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder H. Verlan Andersen

My dear brothers and sisters, knowing as I do that this is the Lord's church, and sensing somewhat the magnitude of the responsibility which comes with my calling and assignment as a General Authority, I have prayed most earnestly for that divine help which I feel so much in need of.

Missionary work in Latin America: fulfillment of prophecy

During the past few years, my wife and I have served as missionaries in Latin American countries. This has been one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences of our lives. It has been deeply satisfying to work with those lovable and believing people and to see the prophecies of the Book of Mormon being fulfilled as hundreds of thousands of the descendants of Lehi join the Church. The day of the Lamanites has truly arrived.

The history of the Lamanites just prior to the Lord's first appearance on this continent reveals an interesting parallel between what occurred then and what is happening today. Commencing about the year 92 B.C., the Lamanites began coming into the Lord's church by the tens of thousands. That conversion miracle, which took place just shortly before the Lord's first advent, is being repeated now just prior to his second coming.

Devotion to missionary work brings joy

There is an aspect of missionary work upon which I would like to comment briefly, and that is the joy which comes to those who engage in it.

The Book of Mormon sums up the whole purpose of existence in this short sentence: "Men are, that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25).

If joy is the supreme goal of life, then everyone should be intensely interested in how it may be obtained. We should be equally concerned about how

we may avoid its opposite, misery. These vital topics are discussed and illustrated in the Book of Mormon, and the information concerning them is directly related to missionary work. The book tells us that those who completely devote their lives to the task of spreading the gospel experience exquisite joy, while those who oppose it and seek to promulgate falsehood suffer a misery equally intense.

The gospel, and the opportunity to share its message, have not always been on the earth. But when the gospel is here, we should value it highly. The Lord has given us his promise that if we labor all of our days and bring save it be one soul to him, how great shall be our joy with him in the kingdom of our Father (see D&C 18:15).

Lifeblood of the Church

A number of years ago, the late President Spencer W. Kimball, who was then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, visited the stake in which I was living and made the statement that missionary work is the lifeblood of the Church. He also said that were it not for missionary work, the Church would wither and die on the vine. That statement doubtless applies as much to us as individuals and families as it does to the Church as a whole. A failure to utilize our endowments and fulfill our callings as the salt of the earth may indeed cause us to wither and die on the vine.

Blessings of sacrificing for missionary work

I should like to discuss for a moment the enormous influence which missionary work has had on my own life. My parents, who grew up in Mexico, had not served missions prior to their marriage. But when a call came to the seventies quorum to which my father belonged for a volunteer to serve a short-term mission, he went, even though it meant leaving a farm and a

large family of small children for his wife to care for. She welcomed that opportunity to sacrifice for Church and family, and I well remember how heroically she bore her burdens during those difficult winter months.

Later, during the long, cruel years of the Great Depression, even though my parents suffered severe financial hardship, they always kept one of their children in the mission field.

My father passed away at a relatively young age, and after he was gone and we children had married, my mother asked for, and was given, permission to serve a mission in Mexico.

If there is honor attached to my call to the First Quorum of the Seventy, and indeed there is, it goes not to me, but to those whose examples of sacrifice and dedication have influenced my life so greatly. I pay tribute to them for their tireless and unceasing devotion to the Church and to their family. They have wielded an immense influence upon their ten children and their other numerous posterity.

I must not close without expressing my love and appreciation for my dear companion, who is herself a notable example of hard work and sacrifice. I think she deserves to be heard from, and so I am going to pass on to you the following thoughts that she suggested I include in my address, not expecting I would attribute them to her:

Message to grandparents

"And now a word to grandparents on missionary work. The blessings you receive therefrom reach down into your families. The grandchildren will never forget the special joy they feel at your farewell. Then, when you get into the mission field, letters start arriving containing statements like these: 'Grandma and Grandpa, I keep praying for you to be good missionaries,' or, 'Sometime I'll go on a mission just like you.'

"Grandmothers, you say you cannot leave the grandchildren? I want to bear you my testimony that you can be a lasting influence for good in the lives of those little ones by giving a year or so of your time to the service of the Lord in the mission field. The bonds of love will be strengthened, and true miracles will occur. Don't deny your grandchildren those blessings. I challenge you to put missionary work to the test."

Such is the message of my dear wife, with whom I am in total agreement. And now in closing, I bear you my own witness that missionary work truly is the lifeblood of the Church and that we have a divine commission to share the gospel with others both at home and abroad. I know, nothing doubting, that this is the work of the Lord and that President Benson is his prophet on earth today. This testimony I bear in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder George I. Cannon

My brothers and sisters, the Lord's work is moving forward in Asia through the faith, prayers, and good works of the Saints and missionaries in many countries in that part of the world. A spiritual awakening is taking place, and doors are being opened. It is a humbling and uplifting experience for Sister Cannon and me to be called to serve in that choice area of the world.

I would like to share some thoughts with you as a father and grandfather.

Importance of children

First, I would like to talk to you young children. I want you to know that you are loved by your Father in Heaven and your Elder Brother, Jesus Christ. When Jesus was living upon the earth, a very important event took place:

"Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them [or tried to stop them from coming].

"But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

"And [then] he laid his hands on them" (Matthew 19:13-15).

How important each one of you is to your Father in Heaven and to his Son, Jesus Christ! They want you to be happy. They have told of some things which, if you do, will make you feel good inside. Jesus told us to "honour [our] father and mother" (Matthew 15:4). That means we need to listen to our parents, ask for their help and advice, and, as they do what is right, follow their example.

Jesus also said, "Pray always, and I will pour out my Spirit upon you, and great shall be your blessing" (D&C 19:38). I hope that each morning and evening you kneel beside your bed and pray to your Father in Heaven. As you start the day, ask him to help you think good thoughts and do good deeds. As each day ends, thank him for your blessings, and ask that his spirit will always be with you. I know from my own experience that prayer can make you a happier and better person.

I hope that you are going every week to Primary, where you can learn how to be happy and serve the Lord, and that once a week your family is holding family home evening. If your family is not holding family home evening, ask your parents if you can start having one, and then you help them with it.

Challenges and opportunities of youth

Now I would like to speak to those of you in your youth. This is a great time to be young. You are living in the most exciting period of this world's history. You are also living in the most challenging. We know there are many temptations, but we have confidence in

you. The Lord has confidence and faith in you. There is unlimited growth ahead for you if you are willing to work hard and earn it. Be happy! Be glad you are you.

Follow the wise counsel of Alma to his son Helaman given centuries ago: "O, remember, my son, and learn wisdom in thy youth; yea, learn in thy youth to keep the commandments of God" (Alma 37:35).

In one of his last conference addresses, President David O. McKay gave this counsel to the youth of the Church:

"Our body will not fulfill its purpose — it cannot — without that life-giving something within which is the offspring of Deity as eternal as [your] Father [in Heaven]. . . . That spirit within, young man, young woman, is the *real* you. What you make of yourself depends upon you as an individual. You are in this world to choose the right or the wrong, to accept the right or yield to temptation. Upon that choice will depend the development of the spiritual part of you" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1967, pp. 134-35; or *Improvement Era*, June 1967, p. 110).

O wonderful youth of Zion, pray, study the scriptures, and serve in the Church so that you can have that inner peace that Christ is your Savior and the gospel is the right way to live.

As Elder Richard L. Evans wrote: "*Oh, beloved young friends: remember life is forever — but youth doesn't last very long. Live to make memories that will bless the whole length of your life*" (*Richard Evans' Quote Book* [Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1971], p. 40).

Important roles of single adults

Now I speak to you stalwart single adults. You are making great contributions wherever you go. You are helping to build the individual, the home, the Church, and the community as you serve as missionaries, teachers, neighbors, and friends to those in need. Your enthusiasm, spirit, and faith are a blessing to all of us. My fatherly counsel is

to remind you of the importance of today. This is the time in which the work of this life is to be done. Be a participant. See that things happen. Make commitments to yourself and the Lord. Live outside yourself with love. A Hindu proverb says, "Help thy brother's boat across, and lo, thine own has reached the shore."

Sacred responsibilities of parents

Now I speak to you who are parents. I was reminded of a cartoon LaRue Longden, former counselor in the YWMA, would often share in her talks. It shows the early morning hours with a couple out camping. The husband is fishing with a big smile on his face. The wife puts her sleepy head out of the tent — her hair going in all directions, the mosquitoes buzzing around her face, her eyes barely open — and comments to her husband, "Tell me again, dear, how much fun I am having." As a parent, do you need to remind yourself occasionally of how much fun you are having? Be sure and enjoy being a parent. It is a wonderful and sacred responsibility.

Three thoughts I would share:

First, take time for your children. As Elder Evans counseled: "Children are shaped and molded at a very early age. . . . Life goes quickly. Don't brush them off and turn them over to others. Take time for your children — before they're grown, before they're gone" (*Thoughts for One Hundred*

Days: Volume Four [Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1970], pp. 34–35).

Second, live within your income. Be frugal and wise. Pay your obligations to the Lord, your country, and yourself, and then live on what is left. It takes willpower to say no when you can't afford it, but you will sleep better at night.

Third, remember constant courtship. The most important relationship upon this earth for you is between you and your sweetheart. Work at it, sacrifice for it, enjoy it. You can make your home a bit of heaven as you build for an eternity together.

The need for older members to serve

Now to those in your mature years. "Press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men" (2 Nephi 31:20). Continue to be living testimonies of the gospel as you share your faith, love, and wisdom. You are sorely needed in the mission field. What lives you will bless as you accept the call to serve! There is so much for you to do in the holy temples. Don't retire from active service in the Lord's kingdom. You are needed!

I bear my testimony that God lives, that Jesus is the Savior, and that the gospel is for every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Gardner H. Russell

I think it's wonderful to have a calm exterior; I didn't know my heart could beat quite this hard. I am thrilled to be a member of the Mexico and Central America Area Presidency. You've heard from all three of us today: Elder Gene R. Cook in the prayer, Elder H. Verlan Andersen, and myself.

Now, it is with humility that I stand before you as one of the Lord's

servants with a prayer in my heart that someone, somewhere, will be touched by the Spirit of the Lord which, hopefully, will speak through me, and his or her heart and life will be changed.

Father's blessings

What a wonderful experience of love came to me just a few weeks ago

when, at my request, my ninety-one-year-old father, Dr. Harry James Russell, gave me a father's blessing as I prepared to leave for my assignment as Second Counselor in the Mexico and Central America Area.

Fathers everywhere, consider the gift of love you can give your children when you are worthy and you lay your hands upon their heads to pronounce inspired father's blessings as the family patriarch. They will feel a continuing outpouring of your love, which will keep them close to you and to the Lord. You will not have to "seek them out" later.

Invitation to less-active members

How impressed we were by the caring and outpouring of love evident in last December's message from the First Presidency. This inspired invitation to return has reached tens of thousands of the Lord's people. It is far more than a Christmas message; it is a clarion call for all to return to the Lord's church (see *Ensign*, Mar. 1986, p. 88).

Then, in last April general conference, that wonderful message in a spirit of deep love, "Please come back!" rings in our ears and has reached many hearts (see Conference Report, Apr. 1986, p. 13; or *Ensign*, May 1986, p. 10).

Responsibilities to less-active members

The Lord requires us — yes, you and me — to locate the less-active members and help them to return to the fold.

"For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out" (Ezekiel 34:11).

Yes, we are to both "search my sheep" (locate them) and then "seek out" (bring back) less-active members and families, with unending and unqualified love.

And in the process, we and they shall learn the true meaning of "ye

shall . . . find me, when ye shall search for me" (Jeremiah 29:13).

Servants of the Lord prepare in humility, through study of the Book of Mormon, prayer, and calling on the Lord, to actually depend on the Lord so that the Spirit of the Lord is in them.

The servants of the Lord then visit the less-active families and assure them of the redeeming love of the Lord and their love for them. They speak not only by inspiration, but by a higher law, in which the Spirit of the Lord speaks through them. Through constant prayer in the heart, what is said is by the Spirit of the Lord.

The family remembers that the Lord truly loves them and finds that the servants of the Lord love them as well. Then the Lord returns the family to the fold.

Experiences with less-active members in Central America

In my training as a new General Authority, I found myself in Costa Rica with Elder F. Arthur Kay and others. In prayer and fasting, we visited families who were less active. The stake president and bishops had fasted and prayed that the Lord would indicate to them the choice families to be visited, and the families were then notified of the planned visits.

We first entered the home of a young, successful businessman with a lovely wife and children. A former leader, he had transgressed the laws of the Church. As the Spirit of the Lord spoke through his servants, tears came to all our eyes as the couple committed to prepare to go to the Lord's house, the beautiful new temple in Guatemala, to be sealed for eternity.

Just two weeks ago, in Guadalupe, Mexico, at a stake conference, I visited three families who will be among my lifelong friends. Miracles occurred in all their lives. In one visit, a nonmember father, who has been donating an amount equal to a full tithe and who supports his wife and seven sons in the Church, was asked as patri-

arch to select someone to lead us in kneeling prayer. He looked past the General Authority, past the stake president and the bishop, and with love in his eyes asked his wife to give the prayer. What a golden moment! What a tribute to her love and patience.

This same man was unable to sleep that night, and the following morning, in a meeting with recent converts and newly returned members, gave a loving, beautiful testimony of the gospel and pledged to be baptized in another eight days.

Blessings of searching out and helping less-active members

It is exciting to see the servants of the Lord, the leaders and members, prepare as vessels of the Spirit of God to identify the families who have been distracted or have transgressed and are now less active and then to touch the hearts of these wonderful families. Yes, thousands of families are returning to the Lord. They have received in love the invitation to return, have understood the humble, loving plea, "Please come back!" They have been searched out by servants of the Lord, then have been sought out by the Spirit of the Lord and brought back as they have remembered once again the word spoken through the Lord's servants.

In these inspired visits, I do not know of a single instance where hearts of families have not been touched by the miracle of our Lord's unconditional love and his servants' caring and love.

May we assure our sometimes missing friends in the Church of our Lord's love for them and ask the Spirit of the Lord to testify through us to them of the Lord's love for them, and our love as well, and bring them back to the fold in joy.

I bear my humble witness that our leaders are inspired and receive revelation for us, that the Book of Mormon nurtures the true fountain of Christ's Spirit, and that this is the true, restored church of Jesus Christ on the earth. And I do this in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Joseph Smith's First Prayer," following which Elder Ted E. Brewerton of the First Quorum of the Seventy will address us.

The choir and congregation sang "Joseph Smith's First Prayer."

Elder Ted E. Brewerton spoke without further announcement.

Elder Ted E. Brewerton

My thoughts at this time will be in the form of a dialogue between me and my fourteen-year-old son, Michael, who resides with us in Argentina. I will talk about how important he is and how much the Lord and I love him. At the same time I address these critical thoughts to him, they would be the same as I would express to my son David, the eldest of my six children, or to their four beautiful sisters, my daughters, Michelle, Andrea, Leanne, and Lycia.

Importance of each person

Fathers, would you like to join me and share the same thoughts as if directed to your sons and daughters, describing their singular importance in the eyes of our Heavenly Father?

Hi, Michael, you know how much I trust and love you, don't you? Let me try to show you who you are and how very important you are as a literal son of our Father in Heaven.

President Harold B. Lee said that this understanding of who we are is "of

first importance," and without it we lack "the basis of a solid foundation upon which to build [our] lives" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1973, p. 5; or *Ensign*, Jan. 1974, p. 4).

Evidences of God

First, Mike, we know by reasoning, seeing, and the impressions of the Spirit that the Lord is a living perfect man. Many have seen him: for example, Adam, Enoch, the brother of Jared, Abraham, Moses, Joseph Smith, Isaac, Jacob, Seth, Nephi, Isaiah, Emer, Joshua, Manoh and his wife, Solomon, Sidney Rigdon, Alma, Moroni, Stephen, and John. Alma states, "Many, exceedingly great many" have seen him (Alma 13:12).

Now another evidence of God: speaking of the planets and orbs, the Lord says, "Any man who hath seen any or the least of these hath seen God moving in his majesty and power" (D&C 88:47). "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork" (Psalm 19:1).

God's massive, orderly creation

Mike, let's visualize three scenes together.

Scene 1. First of all, we see before us, Michael, our solar system: our sun, together with the earth and the eight other heavenly bodies that revolve around it. We see law, beauty, order, and perfection.

Scene 2. Now, Michael, in this next scene, we see this same solar system in its place in our galaxy, the Milky Way. We marvel at the order and arrangement. Our planets are so small they can't be detected here, but our sun and its nine planets appear as one of these shining orbs and are situated about two-thirds of the way from the center, about thirty thousand light years from the middle of the Milky Way. Our planets move about the sun; the sun itself moves in a circular path at a speed of 130 miles per second, yet even at that speed, Mike, a complete turn around the Milky Way takes two hundred bil-

lion years. *This, our star system, has about two hundred billion blazing suns and is one hundred thousand light years wide.*

Scene 3. Now in this next scene, Michael, we see our galaxy, the Milky Way, in space along with other galaxies. You know, Mike, it is conservatively estimated that *there are ten billion star systems like these galaxies.* Incomprehensible? I should say! We have soared out far beyond our imagination.

What is a billion, Michael? One thousand million — that's right.

What's a definition of a million, Michael? That's good; you say a million is like your mother telling you to clean up your room 274 times every day for ten years.

How fast does light travel, Mike? That's right: 186,000 miles per second. Hold up your left fist as if it represented the earth. Now whirl your right index finger around it. If your index finger spun around it about seven times in one second, you have shown how fast light would travel around the earth.

It takes about eight minutes for light to reach the earth, and just over one second for light to reach the moon from the earth. Imagine how far light could travel in one day of 86,400 seconds. Wow! Then in one year . . . it is beyond our ability to understand.

The Lord said: "And worlds without number have I created; and I also created them for mine own purpose; and by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten. . . .

"And the Lord God spake unto Moses, saying: The heavens, they are many, and they cannot be numbered unto man; but they are numbered unto me, for they are mine" (Moses 1:33, 37).

He further said:

"And were it possible that man could number the particles of the earth, yea, millions of earths like this, it would not be a beginning to the number of thy creations" (Moses 7:30).

Isn't that exciting, Mike?

From *The Amazing Universe* we read: "As the sum of knowledge grows,

the astronomer continues to seek answers to man's most profound questions: What is the grand design of the universe? How was it created? How did we get here? . . . Are we alone?" (Herbert Friedman, *The Amazing Universe* [Washington, D.C., National Geographic Society, 1975], p. 10).

We again read, "It is impossible to any sensitive person to look at a star-filled sky without being stirred by thoughts of creation and eternity" (Friedman, p. 166). "A super-giant elliptical [galaxy] may contain more than ten trillion stars, and measure 300,000 light-years across.

"*The sheer immensity of such systems suggests eternal qualities of stability and predictability*" (Friedman, p. 134; italics added). See, Mike, the scientific world sees the evidence of a supreme being.

The heavens were created for man

With all this massive, orderly creation, are you, Michael, a single human being, important? The scriptures state:

"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

"For thou has made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

"Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet" (Psalm 8:3-6).

Yes, you, Michael, are *everything*; you are *why* the heavens were created.

Heirs to all that God has

Mike, you must realize a truth: that God knows who you are and what you may become. He knows where you are and what he expects of you.

You, Michael, are God's son, hence heir to all he has. His purpose and goal is to bring to pass *your* immortality and eternal life. You are the most

important thing that exists — his most important creation. So we must be master of our beings and control ourselves, and not be controlled by some habit or by someone else. We must be lifters and not leaners. Reach for the stars.

"Be a remarkable one"

You, Mike, with the Lord's help, have an unlimited potential. Let's follow the perfect example of the Master, our Savior. How easy it is to have hope: "Hope is the strongest weapon in the spiritual arsenal of youth" (*Royal Bank Newsletter*, vol. 66, no. 6).

The sun is *our* star, the only source of all light and energy for us. It makes life possible.

One star — a remarkable one. There are about two hundred billion blazing *ones*, or suns, in our star system alone, and over ten billion star systems; yet one sun is a remarkable one. *You*, Michael, are like a sun — a remarkable *one*.

Jesus, the Redeemer, had no office or public function, yet he shaped the world's history. He wishes you to understand that you should be a remarkable *one*, for the power is in *you* to make things happen.

Philemon Merrill — a remarkable one

Here is a true story that relates a simple experience of a nineteen-year-old who became a remarkable *one*. He was magnified and had great powers beyond his natural abilities as the Lord acted through him. There was a young nineteen-year-old admirer of Joseph Smith, Philemon Merrill, who had come with other loyal followers to rescue their prophet from the hands of sheriffs Reynolds and Wilson. While returning to Nauvoo, the company rested "in a little grove of timber." One of the lawyers for the sheriff and the kidnappers boasted of his wrestling powers. He offered a wager that he could throw any man in Illinois. Stephen Markham, a bodyguard of Joseph's and a huge man, also an

experienced wrestler, took up the challenge. The boaster threw Stephen, and a taunting shout went up from the Prophet's enemies.

As the taunts continued, Joseph Smith turned to young Philemon Merrill and said, "Get up and throw that man."

The boy was about to refuse, to excuse himself by saying he was not a wrestler, but the look in the Prophet's eye silenced his tongue. "He arose to his feet filled with the strength of a Samson." Philemon "lifted his arms" and told the lawyer to take his choice of sides.

"The man took the left side with his right hand under," which gave him a decided advantage. Philemon Merrill's friends protested, but young Philemon felt such confidence in the words of the Prophet that it made little difference to him what advantage his antagonist took. As they began to grapple, Joseph instructed him, "'Philemon, when I count three, throw him!'"

"On the instant after the word dropped from Joseph's lips," Philemon Merrill, "with the strength of a giant, threw the lawyer over his left shoulder, and he fell striking his head upon the earth."

Little wonder it is reported that "awe fell upon the opponents of the Prophet when they saw this, and there were no more challenges to wrestle during the journey" (George Q. Cannon, *Life of Joseph Smith the Prophet*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1964], pp. 450-51).

Joseph Smith — a remarkable one

Here's another example of a remarkable one, Michael.

John Taylor, in his book *The Gospel Kingdom*, relates how the one is magnified by the Spirit and makes extraordinary things happen:

"Some . . . years ago, in Far West, a mob — one of those semi-occasional occurrences — had come against us with evil intent, placing

themselves in position to give us battle. . . . We had one fellow who . . . ordered our people to retreat. As soon as Joseph heard this sound, he exclaimed, 'Retreat! where in the name of God shall we retreat to?' He then led us out to the prairie, facing the mob, and placed us in position. And the first thing we knew a flag of truce was seen coming towards us. . . .

" . . . Joseph Smith, our leader, then sent word back by this messenger. Said he, 'Tell your general to withdraw his troops or I will send them to hell.' *I thought that was a pretty bold stand to take, as we only numbered about two hundred to their thirty-five hundred.* But they thought we were more numerous than we really were. It may be that our numbers were magnified in their eyes. But they took the hint and left. . . . The Lord, through simple means, is able to take care of and deliver his people, but they must put implicit faith and confidence in him" (*The Gospel Kingdom*, sel. G. Homer Durham [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1964], pp. 354-55).

Another example of a remarkable one.

Each person is grander than all the planets and suns

Let me quote Elder James E. Talmage, a former member of the Quorum of the Twelve: "What is man [or if I may add, what is Michael Brewerton] in this boundless setting of sublime splendor? I answer you: Potentially now, actually to be, he [or Michael] is greater and grander, more precious according to the arithmetic of God, than all the planets and suns of space. For him were they created; they are the handiwork of God; man is his son. In this world man is given dominion over a few things; it is his privilege to achieve supremacy over many things" (Aug. 9, 1931).

With the exception of the few years when the Savior graced the earth, this, Mike, is the most exciting time to live. We have the gospel in its fulness,

so many scriptures are being fulfilled, and so much history is being made. You are an important part of it.

Let me express my true feelings to you about the Church. I know, Michael, in a decisive, indelible manner — due to the Spirit — that Jesus is our Redeemer. He lives, as does his Father. He is the living Son of a living God. President Benson and the First Presidency are his living servants through whom His will is given to all the world. Watch them, Mike, listen to them, follow them. This is the only church of Jesus Christ on the earth, Michael, and you are just as important

as any human being in all history. You are of infinite worth. I love you, pal. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Ted E. Brewerton of the First Quorum of the Seventy has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, and he will be followed by President Howard W. Hunter, Acting President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder M. Russell Ballard

Proclaim the gospel to all people

The Prophet Joseph Smith was often asked to inquire of the Lord to learn what people should do. In the case of John Whitmer, the Lord said, "And now, behold, I say unto you, that the thing which will be of the most worth unto you will be to declare repentance unto this people, that you may bring souls unto me, that you may rest with them in the kingdom of my Father" (D&C 15:6).

Jesus repeatedly called upon his disciples to preach the gospel to every living soul. Those who would believe were to be baptized in his name and enter into his church. After the Savior's forty-day fast and the temptation by Satan, "Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

"And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

"And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

"And they straightway left their nets, and followed him. . . .

"And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and

preaching the gospel of the kingdom" (Matthew 4:17-20, 23).

With loving patience, Jesus taught his disciples, and especially his twelve Apostles, to "preach the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:2). After the three years of his ministry, crowned by the Atonement, which included his glorious resurrection, Jesus gathered his eleven disciples in Galilee.

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:18-20).

These instructions were clear. When Peter, the chief Apostle, finally understood them, he became a powerful leader. For example, on the day of Pentecost, he stood "with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, . . .

"This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. . . .

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath

made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. . . .

"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:14, 32, 36-38, 41).

When Jesus visited this continent, Nephi went forth and bowed himself before the Lord.

"And the Lord commanded him that he should arise. And he arose and stood before him.

"And the Lord said unto him: I give unto you power that ye shall baptize this people when I am again ascended into heaven.

"And again the Lord called others, and said unto them likewise; and he gave unto them power to baptize" (3 Nephi 11:20-22).

To every people through all ages his message remains the same: "Preach the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:2).

Share the message of the Restoration

The First Presidency has said that one of the threefold missions of the Church is to proclaim the gospel. If we accept this mission, we should be willing to center our efforts on bringing souls unto the Lord on condition of repentance.

Two years ago I spoke on this subject, and I continue to feel an urgent need that we must constantly remind and help each other in our responsibilities to share the message of the Restoration with others.

Stories of helping others receive the gospel

We often hear members say, "I know I should share the gospel, but I don't know how to do it." Perhaps the following success stories that have come to me may help you. These experiences resulted when members of the Church exercised their faith and followed some simple steps, such as setting a date to have someone prepared to be taught by the missionaries.

From England:

"In my calling as branch president, I decided one day to invite our whole community to join us in fasting [and giving a fast offering] for the people of Ethiopia. I had four thousand leaflets produced, which we distributed to homes in our area.

"One of the leaflets was delivered to a nonmember, and his wife felt impressed to take part. It was the name of the Church on the leaflet which first impressed them.

"The husband came to the chapel with the fast offering as invited, and I met him there. I gave him a tour of our small building, shared my testimony with him, and invited him to come to church Sunday. He came, and I introduced him to our missionaries, who arranged to call on the home.

"I was privileged to join with the missionaries on several joint teaching visits, and I developed a close relationship with the family.

"On the evening of March 2, the night before the date I had set, I baptized the wife. Her husband will follow soon, and their daughter.

"We have now met other families through this one, who are being taught. As for my wife and me, we have set another date!"

From Oregon:

"I set a date of just under two months and proceeded to ask for divine guidance in all of my daily prayers, and to fast for strength not to lose sight of my goal.

"My date came and went, with a few pangs of guilt. However, I received

a message one week later that an old friend of mine that I had gone to school with wanted me to call. I gave him a call and invited him over that night. My friend went with me to pick up some pizza. As we drove into town, I told him that I was a member of the LDS church. He was interested, so I related some of the many blessings I had received. I then asked him to attend church with me that next Sunday, which he did.

"From the beginning, he accepted it all. We invited him to be baptized. He said he didn't want to be rushed into anything. At this time, I was impressed to read to him from the Book of Mormon, using the words that Alma used at the waters of Mormon. As I read those verses from Mosiah 18 to him, I paused at each question that Alma asked and asked him if he were willing to do it also. He said yes to all of it. Then I read him verse 10 and asked him, 'What have you against being baptized?'"

"He looked at me and said, 'You're right, I have nothing to wait for.' So the date was set, and I baptized and confirmed him a member of the Church."

From Florida:

"As I knelt in prayer, I expressed a sincere desire to share the gospel with someone and asked my Heavenly Father to please send someone to me.

"The very next morning there was a knock on my door, and it was a neighbor wanting to borrow a pan. Although she had lived by us for some time, we had not had much contact. Two days later both she and her husband came over to visit with us. During our conversation she mentioned that they had been looking for a church. I told her how my husband and I were once in that very same position and how our church filled that very special need we had. We invited them to church that Sunday, and they eagerly accepted. Afterward, we asked them if they would be interested in learning more by having the missionary lessons in our home. They told us that, indeed, they would be interested.

"On Christmas Day, my husband baptized and confirmed them members of the Church. They have grown so strong, and they set a shining example to all. They are looking forward to the day when they and their new baby girl can be sealed in the temple for time and eternity."

Then, from far-off Buenos Aires:

"In our family prayers we began to include the names of nonmembers who had not yet joined the Church. My children prayed for them. Our prayers were different. We were changing our attitude toward missionary work from waiting for opportunities to share the gospel to asking the Lord to prepare specific people, by name, to receive the lessons.

"We have seen one person come into the Church who is now fully active. Three other families, chosen with the Lord's help, have received the third discussion. All have been to church at least twice. All have been in our home for friendship and encouragement. They are receiving the opportunity to accept or reject the gospel message."

Seek the Lord's help in sharing the gospel

My brothers and sisters, from the experiences of these people and many more like them, we learn that we can give the saving ordinances of the gospel to others when we allow the Lord to help us with someone we know and love. Sharing our feelings about God and religion should be easy since most Latter-day Saints are loving, sharing, and trusting people. With a relationship of trust established and with help from the Lord, we generally can feel comfortable moving beyond the realm of friendship and can invite our friends to learn more about the Church.

Four steps of helping others receive the gospel

There are many ways to share the gospel. I know that the following four

simple steps will help you in your effort to find and to share the gospel with others because many members have used them and have had successful missionary experiences.

Step one: Prayerfully set a date by which you will have someone prepared to hear the gospel. We must start somewhere, and this simple act of faith on our part will serve to motivate us. Do not worry if you do not have someone already in mind. Let the Lord help you.

Step two: Prayerfully choose a friend or someone you already know, someone with whom you may have already discussed the gospel, or given a Book of Mormon or other Church literature, or taken to church.

Step three: Share your date and your plans with your bishopric, ward mission leader, and the full-time missionaries. They will help you.

The most important step is *step four*: With the help of the Spirit, invite your nonmember friend to hear the missionary discussions. This step, extending an invitation to hear the gospel, requires the most faith — faith to do as you are prompted by the Holy Ghost.

In talking of faith and saving souls, you should understand that when the Spirit is present, people are not offended when you share your feelings about the gospel. By prayerfully following these steps, you are putting a plan into effect that translates your faith into action.

Preparing people to feel the Spirit

There are many good ways that you can use to prepare someone to feel the Spirit. A few examples are: bear your testimony, pray together, read the scriptures, give a Book of Mormon, share a spiritual experience, take your friend to church, present a gospel film or tape, and discuss the gospel. Please note that all of these same steps and principles will also work when we use them to invite the inactive member of the Church to come back into full activity.

In the fiftieth section of the Doctrine and Covenants, we are assured that “he that receiveth the word by the Spirit of truth receiveth it as it is preached by the Spirit of truth.

“Wherefore, he that preacheth and he that receiveth, understand one another, and both are edified and rejoice together” (D&C 50:21–22).

“Bring many souls unto the Lord”

The key to success in bringing souls unto Christ is to act at a time when you feel the Spirit and you sense that your friend does also.

Remember, brothers and sisters, through our faith, our trust in the Lord, and our good works, we can bring many souls unto the Lord. We can enjoy the blessings of living with them in the kingdom of our Father.

“Who will be there to greet us?”

Shortly after the death of Sister LeGrand Richards, I was assigned to be Elder Richards’ junior companion to assist him in creating the Atlanta Georgia Stake. As we were flying toward his beloved Southern States Mission, he said to me, “Brother Ballard, I am not afraid to die; the only thing I worry about is, will I be able to find Mommy over there.”

I was impressed to say to Elder Richards that in his case that could be a real problem. Immediately, I had his full attention. He looked me directly in the eye and said, “What do you mean by that?”

With my emotions near the surface, I answered this great missionary, “Elder Richards, when you die, so many people there will be anxious to greet you because you introduced the gospel to them that you might have difficulty finding Mommy in the crowd.” His response was, “Oh, you don’t mean that.”

We all might ask ourselves the question, Who will be there to greet us?

We can succeed in sharing the gospel

Oh, that I could have the power to touch your hearts that you would have the faith to take the simple steps that will bring the light of the gospel to many more of our Father's children. The more I am involved in this work, the more I realize that Satan would have you and me believe that we cannot succeed in sharing the gospel. He lies to us. In fact, he is the father of all lies. Do not listen to him. Listen to the prompting of the Holy Ghost, and then act in faith in sharing the gospel.

I testify to you, my brothers and sisters, that I know the Lord lives. I know that when we are willing to seek his help and guidance, when we trust in him completely, he will bless us to understand what to do and how to proceed in the wonderful work of sharing this glorious message with others.

We do appreciate all you have done in the past. The leaders of the

Church have great faith that, united together, the members and the missionaries of this church can do much more in the future to build the kingdom of God.

May the Lord bless us all with increased faith to move his work forward, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have just heard from Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. Brother Ballard, when Elder LeGrand Richards asked me that same question, "Will I be able to find Mommy there?" I gave him a different answer. I said, "Brother Richards, don't worry about it. Mommy will find you!"

It will now be our opportunity to hear from President Howard W. Hunter, Acting President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, who will be our concluding speaker.

President Howard W. Hunter

In ancient times, one test of the purity of gold was performed with a smooth, black, siliceous stone called a touchstone. When rubbed across the touchstone, the gold produced a streak or mark on its surface. The goldsmith matched this mark to a color on his chart of graded colors. The mark was redder as the amount of copper or alloy increased or yellower as the percentage of gold increased. This process showed quite accurately the purity of the gold.

The touchstone method of testing the purity of gold was quick and was satisfactory for most practical purposes. But the goldsmith who still questioned the purity completed a more accurate test by using a process that involved fire.

The Lord's touchstone: the two great commandments

I suggest to you that the Lord has prepared a touchstone for you and me, an outward measurement of inward discipleship that marks our faithfulness and will survive the fires yet to come.

On one occasion while Jesus was teaching the people, a certain lawyer approached him and posed this question: "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

Jesus, the master teacher, replied to the man, who obviously was well-versed in the law, with a counter-question, "What is written in the law? how readest thou?"

The man replied with resolute summary the two great commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and

with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself."

With approval Christ responded, "This do, and thou shalt live" (Luke 10:25-28).

Eternal life, God's life, the life we are seeking, is rooted in two commandments. The scriptures say that "on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:40). Love God and love your neighbor. The two work together; they are inseparable. In the highest sense they may be considered as synonymous. And they are commandments that each of us can live.

The answer of Jesus to the lawyer might be considered as the Lord's touchstone. He said on another occasion, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40). He will measure our devotion to him by how we love and serve our fellowmen. What kind of mark are we leaving on the Lord's touchstone? Are we truly good neighbors? Does the test show us to be twenty-four-karat gold, or can the trace of fool's gold be detected?

"Who is my neighbour?"

As if excusing himself for asking such a simple question of the Master, the lawyer sought to justify himself by further inquiring, "And who is my neighbour?" (Luke 10:29).

We all ought to be eternally grateful for that question, for in the Savior's reply came one of his richest and most appreciated parables, one that each of us has read and heard over and over again:

"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

"And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

"And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

"But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

"And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

"And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee" (Luke 10:30-35).

Then Jesus asked the lawyer, "Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?" (Luke 10:36). There the Master holds out the touchstone of Christianity. He asks that our mark be measured on it.

Both the priest and the Levite in Christ's parable should have remembered the requirements of the law: "Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again" (Deuteronomy 22:4). And if an ox, how much more should one be willing to help a brother in need. But as Elder James E. Talmage wrote, "Excuses [not to do so] are easy to find; they spring up as readily and plentifully as weeds by the wayside" (*Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1916], p. 431).

The Samaritan gave us an example of pure Christian love. He had compassion; he went to the man who had been injured by the thieves and bound up his wounds. He took him to an inn, cared for him, paid his expenses, and offered more if needed for his care. This is a story of the love of a neighbor for his neighbor.

Love every neighbor

An old axiom states that a man "all wrapped up in himself makes a small

bundle." Love has a certain way of making a small bundle large. The key is to love our neighbor, including the neighbor that is difficult to love. We need to remember that though we make our friends, God has made our neighbors—everywhere. Love should have no boundary; we should have no narrow loyalties. Christ said, "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?" (Matthew 5:46).

Love and serve neighbors to be justified before God

Joseph Smith wrote a letter to the Saints, published in the *Messenger and Advocate*, on the subject of loving one another to be justified before God. He wrote:

"Dear Brethren:—It is a duty which every Saint ought to render to his brethren freely—to always love them, and ever succor them. To be justified before God we must love one another: we must overcome evil; we must visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction, and we must keep ourselves unspotted from the world: for such virtues flow from the great fountain of pure religion. Strengthening our faith by adding every good quality that adorns the children of the blessed Jesus, we can pray in the season of prayer; we can love our neighbor as ourselves, and be faithful in tribulation, knowing that the reward of such is greater in the kingdom of heaven. What a consolation! What a joy! Let me live the life of the righteous, and let my reward be like this!" (*History of the Church*, 2:229).

Willard Richards's test

These two virtues, love and service, are required of us if we are to be good neighbors and find peace in our lives. Surely they were in the heart of Elder Willard Richards. While in Carthage Jail on the afternoon of the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum, the jailer suggested that they would be safer in

the cells. Joseph turned to Elder Richards and asked, "If we go into the cell will you go with us?"

Elder Richards's reply was one of love: "Brother Joseph, you did not ask me to cross the river with you—you did not ask me to come to Carthage—you did not ask me to come to jail with you—and do you think I would forsake you now? But I will tell you what I will do; if you are condemned to be hung for 'treason,' I will be hung in your stead, and you shall go free."

It must have been with considerable emotion and feeling that Joseph replied, "But you cannot."

To which Elder Richards firmly answered, "I will" (B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church*, 2:283).

Elder Richards' test was perhaps greater than most of us will face: the test of fire rather than of the touchstone. But if we were asked to do so, could we lay down our lives for our families? our friends? our neighbors?

The touchstone of compassion is a measure of our discipleship; it is a measure of our love for God and for one another. Will we leave a mark of pure gold or, like the priest and the Levite, pass by on the other side?

May the Lord bless us in our quest to be true disciples and good neighbors. I pray that each of us may be good Samaritans, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

President Howard W. Hunter, Acting President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has been our concluding speaker. He meets every test of the "touchstone."

We remind the brethren of the general priesthood meeting which will convene in the Tabernacle this evening at 6:00 P.M.

The nationwide CBS Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those desiring to attend this broadcast must be in their seats no later than 9:15 A.M.

We are grateful for the presence of the Murray Region Family Choir and for the inspiration the music has added to this meeting.

The choir will now sing in closing, "Let Earth's Inhabitants Rejoice."

Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder Hans B.

Ringger of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Let Earth's Inhabitants Rejoice."

Elder Hans B. Ringger offered the benediction.

GENERAL PRIESTHOOD MEETING

THIRD SESSION

The general priesthood meeting convened in the Tabernacle at 6:00 P.M. on Saturday, October 4, 1986.

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for this session was provided by the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth Combined Men's Choruses, directed by Brothers Jerold Ottley and Robert Bowden with Brother Robert Cundick at the organ.

President Monson opened this session with the following remarks:

President Thomas S. Monson

Brethren, it's wonderful to meet with you this evening. President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked me to conduct this general priesthood session.

We extend our love and best wishes to all of the brethren participating in this session.

These services are being relayed by closed-circuit and satellite transmission to members of the priesthood gathered in the Assembly Hall and in locations in many countries around the world. For those of you brethren listening in who did not have access to the afternoon session today, may I report that Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin was sustained as a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles and Elder Hugh W. Pinnock was sustained as a President of the First Quorum of the Seventy. We welcome these brethren.

We note that Elders Charles Didier and Robert E. Wells are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall, and Jacob de Jager and William R. Bradford are seated on the stand in the BYU Marriott Center.

The singing during this session will be furnished by the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth Combined Men's Choruses, under the direction of Brothers Jerold Ottley and Robert Bowden with Brother Robert Cundick at the organ.

We shall begin by the choir singing that wonderful favorite, "Come, All Ye Sons of God." Following the singing, Elder John Sonnenberg of the First Quorum of the Seventy will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "Come, All Ye Sons of God."

Elder John Sonnenberg offered the invocation.

President Monson

The choir will now favor us with that beautiful number, "Oh Say, What Is Truth?" Following the choir number, Elder David B. Haight of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will speak to us.

The choir sang "Oh Say, What Is Truth?"

Elder David B. Haight spoke without further announcement.

Elder David B. Haight

What a stirring sight to look upon this vast audience of men and boys! I can visualize grandfathers, fathers, bishops, deacons, teachers, and priests seated together, some as families or quorums; also full-time missionaries, students, and new converts — all bearers of the Holy Priesthood of God. And beyond this historical Salt Lake Tabernacle are hundreds more such assemblies of priesthood bearers anxiously awaiting encouragement and instruction from our prophet and his noble counselors.

Miraculous rescue from a crevasse

This past summer, Clarence Neslen, Jr., took his family to Jasper National Park in Alberta, Canada. They enjoyed exploring the Columbia Icefields, jumping over crevasses in the famous Athabasca Glacier. It was an exciting experience until eleven-year-old Cannon, attempting to jump across a crevasse, missed and fell into the deep chasm. He became wedged between the walls of ice. As his father looked down some thirty feet to where his son was trapped, he was further alarmed as he saw a river of icy water flowing beneath the crevasse.

Several young men were also exploring the glacier. They heard the cries for help and came running. They had a small rope but soon realized that it was not strong enough to pull Cannon to safety. If it broke, Cannon would most assuredly fall into the rushing river of freezing water.

Sister Neslen and others ran to a nearby lodge for help. The nearest park ranger camp was seventy-five miles away. They learned by telephone that two park rangers were near the icefields. Located by radio, they rushed to the rescue. Time was short, decisions urgent, and silent prayers were sent heavenward.

Brother Neslen tried to calm his son and soothe his fears. Hypothermia was setting in. Young Cannon's shirt

had been pushed up as he fell. His bare skin was now pressed against the cold walls of the glacier. To keep his son from unconsciousness, the father called down to him to keep praying, to wiggle his fingers and toes, and to sing his favorite songs. Over and over Cannon sang, "I am a child of God, and he has sent me here, has given me an earthly home with parents kind and dear" (*Hymns*, 1985, no. 301). All were strengthened by Cannon's faith and determination. But he was beginning to weaken. His father kept assuring him that help would soon arrive and that his Heavenly Father would hear his prayers.

The two rangers arrived. Spikes were driven into the ice, and ropes were attached to a ranger, who was lowered to rescue Cannon. But the walls were too narrow for him. Their only chance was to lower a looped rope and pray he was alert enough to grasp it and then have the strength to hold on as they tried to pull him out.

Brother Neslen offered the most fervent prayer of his life, he said. He pleaded with the Lord to save his son's life. "A feeling of assurance and calm came over me," he said, "and I knew that he would be saved."

Cannon had lapsed into unconsciousness. His father called down encouragement, rousing his son sufficiently that Cannon's icy fingers now were able to catch hold of the rope. "Hold on with all of your might!" his father called down to him. Cannon was carefully pulled up — inch by inch, foot by foot — all thirty feet. When he was finally pulled to safety, he was unconscious. His fingers had miraculously frozen around the rope and had to be pried loose.

He was immediately wrapped in blankets and rushed to a waiting ambulance, but there was not enough warmth to raise his body temperature sufficiently. A paramedic undressed Cannon, then took off his own coat and shirt and held Cannon against his bare

chest so that his body heat would radiate to the boy. Cannon slowly responded to the loving care of his rescuers. The prayers of all had been answered.

Young Cannon Neslen, a newly ordained deacon, is here in this audience tonight. We thank our Father in Heaven that his life was spared. He was spared for a purpose. He told his father that, while wedged in the ice, he felt a comforting assurance that he would be saved. He knows God loves him and that He has a special mission for him to perform in this life.

Rescue from spiritual crevasses

Not unlike Cannon Neslen, who accidentally fell into a crevasse, some of your friends — and perhaps even some of you — have slipped into spiritual crevasses.

Spiritual crevasses symbolize the temptations and pitfalls that too many of our youth are tragically encountering: alcohol, with its wine coolers and keg parties, drug tampering and dependency, R- and X-rated films and videos, which often culminate in sexual immorality. On the edge of those ominous crevasses are parents and others who, with fervent prayers, cry for help and assistance. Like Cannon's father, they, too, pray that their sons or daughters will hold onto the extended lifeline. Their love, and the teachings of the scriptures and the assurance of the eternal blessings of the Savior's atonement, are sure lifelines to safety.

Youth are not the only ones who slip into crevasses.

A stake president recently told me that a respected member who had held Church leadership positions was enticed by some business friends to try the cocaine drug "crack." The men were depressed. Their company was failing, and they succumbed to the evil enticement of illegal drugs.

He wasted \$18,000 buying "crack," lost his job, underwent a personality change, and finally was hospitalized. Through it all, his wife stayed

by him. She found a job, and they began the struggle of putting his life back together. His Church friends helped him get another job.

His mind is seriously affected. He is still somewhat dependent on some drugs. The hope and prayer of his family is that he will be able to hold onto the lifeline.

Satan tries to take our eyes off dangerous crevasses

When Satan was cast down to earth with his innumerable hosts, he became "the father of all lies, to deceive and to blind men, and to lead them captive, . . . even as many as would not hearken unto my voice" (Moses 4:4).

One of Satan's methods is to distract and entice us so that we will take our eyes off the dangerous crevasses. He has succeeded to such an extent that many no longer recognize sin as sin. Movies, television, and magazines have glorified sin into what they think is an acceptable life-style: "[fornication], adultery, incest, . . . serial marriages, drug abuse, violence and double-dealing of every imaginable variety, [that is] often portrayed as [normal] behavior; where people who do good are not . . . rewarded and those who do evil are not punished." So stated a *Los Angeles Times* writer (Mark I. Pinsky, "Why Don't Moral Crusaders Get into a Lather about Sleazy Soaps?" *Salt Lake Tribune*, 9 Aug. 1986, sec. C, p. 7).

Assuredly we live in a time spoken of by Isaiah when men "call evil good, and good evil" (Isaiah 5:20).

Don't trifle with evil

If any of you are walking in ice fields near open crevasses, do you see the warning signs? "Danger — don't go near the edge"? Don't trifle with evil. You will lose. We pray that you will not display the somewhat arrogant attitude of some who say, "I can handle it!" or "Everyone else does it!"

A friend, visiting relatives in another state for a high school graduation, noticed a few students chewing tobacco. When he asked his nephew about it, the young man replied, "Everybody does it!"

My friend's nephew did not chew tobacco, but he did believe most boys did. Even in schools where in reality only a few students are using drugs, drinking alcohol, or smoking, nonusers commonly believe that most of their fellow students are doing it.

Everyone is *not* doing it. You don't! And you influence your friends. And others watch you. You help set the standard.

Young men, "put on the armor of righteousness"

Young men, you are a royal brotherhood — not because you're better than anyone else — but because the Lord has blessed you with special privileges and responsibilities.

You were foreordained to come to earth at a time when the fulness of the gospel was on the earth. You were foreordained to receive his priesthood. The Prophet Joseph Smith said, "Every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of heaven before this world was" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 365).

You are the Lord's special resource for teaching the gospel to all his other children. You are different from other teenagers who have neither your understanding nor your responsibilities.

You are one of his spirit sons, singled out with a special calling. And we know that he loves you. You have the gift of the Holy Ghost. You can discern good from evil. And with the power of the priesthood, you have the authority to represent your Heavenly Father.

Now, my brethren, let us who have been given this most precious

responsibility of the holy priesthood "arise," as father Lehi declared, and "put on the armor of righteousness" (2 Nephi 1:23).

Scriptures can help us avoid dangers

To help each of us avoid the pitfalls and crevasses in life, the Lord has provided the lifeline of the precious truths in the scriptures, which, if held onto, will allow us to escape both physical and spiritual danger.

The Word of Wisdom was given so that we might have clear minds and healthy bodies; the Sermon on the Mount, to make us sensitive to one another's needs; and the Ten Commandments — cut in stone by the finger of God — forbidding us to sin. He declared, "Thou shalt not."

I urge each of you to develop a personal companionship with the scriptures.

President Kimball's scripture reading as a youth

President Spencer W. Kimball read the Bible when he was fourteen years old — all sixty-six books and 1,519 pages. "If I could do it by coal-oil light," he said, "you can do it by electric light" (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982], p. 131).

President Kimball was a very special teacher for all of us. He didn't have a car or a bicycle, but he did have nine cows to milk every morning and night.

He said, "I thought, 'What a waste of time, to sit on a three-legged stool. Maybe there is something else I could do while I am milking.'"¹⁸ He placed a copy of the Articles of Faith on the ground beside him and went through them, over and over, until he had memorized them. Then he repeated the Ten Commandments over and over until he learned them. He memorized important scriptures that would help him on his mission — all while he milked the cows. He didn't have time to waste; he had things to do with his life (see *The*

Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, p. 131).

It would be a wonderful thing for you young men to use your time wisely by learning of God's ways.

Many are accepting President Benson's charge

President Ezra Taft Benson has challenged each of us to read the Book of Mormon — the most correct of any book on earth and the keystone of our religion. We understand that thousands of young men have accepted the challenge and are now reading the Book of Mormon.

As the angel Moroni sealed up the gold plates, he was inspired to promise future generations — that is, us — that on certain conditions God will manifest the truth of those records by the power of the Holy Ghost, and that — listen carefully — “by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things” (see Moroni 10:4–5).

Imagine such a promise. If you desire with a sincere heart, with faith in Christ, you can understand all things.

Book of Mormon delivered by an angel

Jeffrey Holland, president of Brigham Young University, while working on his Ph.D. at a prominent eastern American university, got to know well one of the reference librarians who had helped him with some research.

One day he said, “Ilene, I need to know how many books we have in the university library which claim to have been delivered by an angel.”

As you can imagine, the librarian gave him a peculiar look and said, “I don't know of any books that have been delivered by angels. Swords maybe, or chariots, but I don't know of any books.”

“Well, just run a check for me,

would you? It may take a little doing, but I really would like to know.”

The librarian dutifully did some checking of the nine million books in the library. For several days she had nothing to report, but then one day she smilingly said, “Mr. Holland, I have a book for you. I found one book which, it is claimed, was delivered by an angel,” and she held up a paperback copy of the Book of Mormon. “I'm told you can get them for a dollar. My goodness,” she continued, “an angel's book for a dollar! You would think angels would charge more, but then again,” she said, “where would they spend it?” (see Pat Holland, President's Welcome Assembly, Brigham Young University, 9 Sept. 1986).

Think of it — one book has been delivered by an angel, and it teaches of your eternal salvation. And each of you owns a true copy!

“Hold onto the lifeline of the gospel”

May the Lord bless each of you with your life's opportunities. Put your trust in Him to avoid the crevasses of sin and evil. Hold onto the lifeline of the gospel. You can make correct choices — the ones you know in your heart will be for your best good. We love you and testify of the truthfulness of the gospel of Christ. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder David B. Haight of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to listen to Elder Joseph Anderson, who will celebrate his ninety-seventh birthday next month and who during his lifetime served as secretary to four Presidents of the Church, as an Assistant to the Twelve, and then as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Joseph Anderson

Associations with prophets of God

I feel greatly honored in being invited to bear testimony regarding my acquaintance and relationship with the leadership of the Church during the past nearly sixty-five years.

The major part of my life has been devoted to association with prophets of the living God. It was in February 1922 that I became the secretary to the President of the Church, President Heber J. Grant, and I continued in that position until he passed away in 1945.

During the administrations of his successors, George Albert Smith, David O. McKay, Joseph Fielding Smith, and Harold B. Lee, I was secretary to the First Presidency; and I have served as a General Authority since 1970 with Presidents Joseph Fielding Smith, Harold B. Lee, Spencer W. Kimball, and Ezra Taft Benson. Over the years, these men have been sustained by the Church as prophets, seers, and revelators. Whenever the gospel has been on earth, there have been prophets of God, men holding the priesthood of God, through whom the Lord has made known His will.

What a glorious blessing it has been to serve with prophets and their associates! I think of the General Authorities today. I can testify to you that they are truly men of God. When we meet in the quorum and other meetings with these Brethren, the Spirit of the Lord is there in rich measure; particularly is this the case when we meet in the temple.

Keys of former dispensations restored through Joseph Smith

What about the Prophet Joseph Smith? Do you believe that he was a prophet? I want to testify that he was perhaps the greatest prophet who ever lived, except, of course, the Savior of the world. He gave the world a knowledge of the true and living God. Through Joseph, the Lord introduced

this, the greatest of all dispensations, the dispensation of the fulness of times. John the Baptist restored the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood, and Peter, James, and John restored the keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood. Joseph saw the Father and the Son, and at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, Moses, Elias, and Elijah appeared to him and restored to him the keys of former dispensations. This is the last dispensation, a time of preparation for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory, His second coming. There were given to Joseph Smith the keys for carrying the message of life and salvation to the living and the dead.

The following is an excerpt from Joseph Smith's letter written in 1842 to Mr. John Wentworth of Chicago:

"No unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done" (*History of the Church*, 4:540).

Living prophets given the keys to guide Israel

Those who have succeeded the Prophet Joseph Smith have been given these same keys that I have mentioned. Each of these Brethren of the General Authorities has been called of God, by prophecy and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority to preach the gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof. They are set apart from all other men upon this earth. They are authorized by ordination to do things that no other men upon this earth can do.

President Lee said upon one occasion that just as the waters are purest at

the mountain source, the purest word of God, and the least apt to be polluted, is that which comes from the lips of the living prophets who are set up to guide Israel in our own day and time.

What a great prophet is our present President, Ezra Taft Benson, who, with his counselors, the Council of the Twelve, other General Authorities, and other inspired leadership, is directing the work of God under inspiration and revelation from the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our Savior and Redeemer.

President Grant's testimonies of early Church leaders

It has been my good fortune and blessing to have become somewhat acquainted with all the Presidents of the Church.

During my association with President Grant, we did much traveling together—on occasion going by train to New York and other places which required our being together in a drawing room on the train, normally for several days at a time.

President Grant became an Apostle in the days of John Taylor, who was with the Prophet Joseph in Carthage Jail at the time of the Prophet Joseph's martyrdom. President Grant knew Brigham Young, Orson Pratt, Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow, and others who served as Apostles during the leadership of the Prophet Joseph. President Grant retold to me on various occasions the testimonies and experi-

ences of those great men regarding the Prophet Joseph and the manifestations they personally enjoyed.

It was also my privilege to have in my custody the records of the General Authority council meetings held in the temple, which later council meetings I recorded during my many years as secretary. Yes, I have known all these Brethren in a very real sense.

Prophets of this dispensation know God and Christ

The Savior, in praying to our Heavenly Father just before his crucifixion, said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

These Brethren to whom I have referred know God and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent.

I know that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that these Brethren whom I have mentioned were and are true prophets of the living God and have served and do serve under the direction of the Lord, who is the true head of the Church. I say this in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have just listened to Elder Joseph Anderson, an emeritus member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. President Benson has invited me to say a few words on this occasion at this time on the program.

President Thomas S. Monson

Tonight, those who hold the priesthood fill the Tabernacle on Temple Square, have overflowed to the adjacent Assembly Hall, and are assembled in chapels and halls ranging in size from the mammoth Marriott Center at Brigham Young University to the smallest building located many miles away. All of you have come to be uplifted, to be instructed, to be inspired.

A favorite word of my nine-year-old granddaughter describes the responsibility to speak to such a vast throng: *awesome*.

Courage counts!

I seek your prayers; I need your faith; I petition our Heavenly Father for

that noble attribute of courage, for I know *courage counts!*

This truth came to me in a most vivid and dramatic manner some thirty-one years ago. I was serving as a bishop. The general session of our stake conference was being held in the Assembly Hall. Our stake presidency was to be reorganized. The Aaronic Priesthood, including members of bishoprics, were providing the music for the conference. As we concluded singing our first selection, President Joseph Fielding Smith, our conference visitor, stepped to the pulpit and read for sustaining approval the names of the new stake presidency. I am confident that the other members of the stake presidency had been made aware of their callings, but I had not. After reading my name, President Smith announced: "If Brother Monson is willing to respond to this call, we shall be pleased to hear from him now."

As I stood at the pulpit and gazed out on that sea of faces, I remembered the song we had just sung. Its title was "Have Courage, My Boy, to Say No." That day I selected as my acceptance theme, "Have Courage, My Boy, to Say Yes."

Life's journey is not traveled on a freeway devoid of obstacles, pitfalls, and snares. Rather, it is a pathway marked by forks and turnings. Decisions are constantly before us. To make them wisely, courage is needed: the courage to say *no*, the courage to say *yes*. Decisions do determine destiny.

The call for courage

The call for courage comes constantly to each of us. It has ever been so, and so shall it ever be. The battlefields of war witness acts of courage. Some are printed on pages of books or contained on rolls of film, while others are indelibly impressed on the human heart.

The courage of a military leader was recorded by a young infantryman wearing the gray uniform of the Confederacy during America's Civil War.

He describes the influence of General J.E.B. Stuart in these words: "At a critical point in the battle, he leaped his horse over the breastworks near my company, and when he had reached a point about the center of the brigade, while the men were loudly cheering him, he waved his hand toward the enemy and shouted, 'Forward men. Forward! Just follow me!'"

"The men were wild with enthusiasm. With courage and resolution, they poured over the breastworks after him like a raging torrent, and the objective was seized and held" (Emory M. Thomas, *Bold Dragoon: The Life of J.E.B. Stuart* [New York: Harper and Row, 1986]).

At an earlier time, and in a land far distant, another leader issued the same plea: "Follow me" (Matthew 4:19). He was not a general of war. Rather, He was the Prince of Peace, the Son of God. Those who followed Him then, and those who follow Him now, win a far more significant victory, with consequences that are everlasting. But the need for courage is constant. Courage is ever required.

Scriptural examples of courage

The holy scriptures portray the evidence of this truth. Joseph, son of Jacob, the same who was sold into Egypt, demonstrated the firm resolve of courage when to Potiphar's wife, who attempted to seduce him, he declared: "How . . . can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? And . . . he hearkened not unto her" and got out (Genesis 39:9-10).

In our day, a father applied this example of courage to the lives of his children by declaring, "If you ever find yourself where you shouldn't ought to be, get out!"

The prophet Daniel demonstrated supreme courage by standing up for what he knew to be right and by demonstrating the courage to pray, though threatened by death were he to do so (see Daniel 6).

Courage characterized the life of Abinadi, as shown in the Book of Mor-

mon by his willingness to offer his life rather than to deny the truth. (See Mosiah 11:20, 17:20.)

Who can help but be inspired by the lives of the two thousand stripling sons of Helaman who taught and demonstrated the need of courage to follow the teachings of parents, the courage to be chaste and pure? (See Alma 56.)

Perhaps each of these accounts is crowned by the example of Moroni, who had the courage to persevere to the end in righteousness. (See Moroni 1-10.)

“He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee”

All were fortified by the words of Moses: “Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid: . . . for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee” (Deuteronomy 31:6). He did not fail them. He will not fail us. He did not forsake them. He will not forsake us.

It was this knowledge that prompted the courage of Columbus—the quiet resolve to record in his ship’s log again and again, “This day we sailed on.” It was this witness that motivated the Prophet Joseph to declare, “I am going like a lamb to the slaughter; but I am calm as a summer’s morning” (D&C 135:4).

Have courage to stand for principle

It is this sweet assurance that can guide you and me—in our time, in our day, in our lives. Of course we will face fear, experience ridicule, and meet opposition. Let us have the courage to defy the consensus, the courage to stand for principle. Courage, not compromise, brings the smile of God’s approval. Courage becomes a living and an attractive virtue when it is regarded not only as a willingness to die manfully, but as the determination to live decently. A moral coward is one who is afraid to do what he thinks is right because others will disapprove or laugh. Remember that all men have their

fears, but those who face their fears with dignity have courage as well.

From my personal chronology of courage, let me share with you two examples: one from military service, one from missionary experience.

Courage of a World War II seaman

Entering the United States Navy in the closing months of World War II was a challenging experience for me. I learned of brave deeds, acts of valor, and examples of courage. One best remembered was the quiet courage of an eighteen-year-old seaman—not of our faith—who was not too proud to pray. Of 250 men in the company, he was the only one who each night knelt down by the side of his bunk, at times amidst the jeers of the curious and the jests of unbelievers, and, with bowed head, prayed to God. He never wavered. He never faltered. He had courage.

Courage of Randall Ellsworth

Missionary service has ever called for courage. One who responded to this call was Randall Ellsworth. While serving in Guatemala as a missionary for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Randall Ellsworth survived a devastating earthquake that hurled a beam down on his back, paralyzing his legs and severely damaging his kidneys. He was the only American injured in the quake, which claimed the lives of some eighteen thousand persons.

After receiving emergency medical treatment, he was flown to a large hospital near his home in Rockville, Maryland. While Randall was confined there, a newscaster conducted with him an interview that I witnessed through the miracle of television. The reporter asked, “Can you walk?”

The answer: “Not yet, but I will.”

“Do you think you will be able to complete your mission?”

Came the reply: “Others think not, but I will. With the President of my church praying for me, and through the

prayers of my family, my friends, and my missionary companions, I will walk, and I will return again to Guatemala. The Lord wants me to preach the gospel there for two years, and that's what I intend to do."

There followed a lengthy period of therapy, punctuated by heroic yet silent courage. Little by little, feeling began to return to the almost lifeless limbs. More therapy, more courage, more prayer.

At last, Randall Ellsworth walked aboard the plane that carried him back to the mission to which he had been called—back to the people whom he loved. Behind he left a trail of skeptics and a host of doubters, but also hundreds amazed at the power of God, the miracle of faith, and the example of courage.

On his return to Guatemala, Randall Ellsworth supported himself with the help of two canes. His walk was slow and deliberate. Then one day, as he stood before his mission president, Elder Ellsworth heard these almost unbelievable words spoken to him. "You have been the recipient of a miracle," said the mission president. "Your faith has been rewarded. If you have the necessary confidence, if you have abiding faith, if you have supreme courage, place those two canes on my desk and walk."

After a long pause, first one cane and then the other was placed on the desk, and a missionary walked. It was

halting, it was painful—but he walked, never again to need the canes.

This spring I thought once more of the courage demonstrated by Randall Ellsworth. Years had passed since his ordeal. He was now a husband and a father. An engraved announcement arrived at my office. It read, "The President and Directors of Georgetown University announce commencement exercises of Georgetown University School of Medicine." Randall Ellsworth received his Doctor of Medicine degree. More effort, more study, more faith, more sacrifice, more courage had been required. The price was paid, the victory won.

My brethren, let us be active participants—not mere spectators—on the stage of priesthood power. May we muster courage at the crossroads, courage for the conflicts, courage to say *no*, courage to say *yes*, for *courage counts*. Of this truth I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "High on the Mountain Top," following which President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, will speak to us.

The choir and congregation sang "High on the Mountain Top."

President Gordon B. Hinckley spoke without further announcement.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

I noted in the public press the other day that the war between Iran and Iraq has gone on for seven years. No one can ever estimate the terrible suffering incident to that conflict. Lives numbered in the tens of thousands have been lost. The terrible wounds of war have left bodies maimed and minds destroyed. Families have been left without fathers. Young boys who have been recruited as soldiers have died in many instances,

while those yet alive have had woven into the very fabric of their natures elements of hatred which will never leave them. The treasure of the involved nations has been wasted and will never be recovered.

To us who look upon it from afar it seems so unnecessary and such a terrible waste of human life and national resources. Seven years is a long time. "Will it ever end?" we ask.

The unceasing war between truth and error

But there is another war that has gone on since before the world was created and which is likely to continue for a long time yet to come. John the Revelator speaks of that struggle:

"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

"And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Revelation 12:7-9).

That war, so bitter, so intense, has gone on, and it has never ceased. It is the war between truth and error, between agency and compulsion, between the followers of Christ and those who have denied Him. His enemies have used every stratagem in that conflict. They've indulged in lying and deceit. They've employed money and wealth. They've tricked the minds of men. They've murdered and destroyed and engaged in every other unholy and impure practice to thwart the work of Christ.

The war during biblical times

It began in the earth when Cain slew Abel. The Old Testament is replete with accounts of the same eternal struggle.

It found expression in the vile accusations against the Man of Galilee, the Christ, who healed the sick and lifted men's hearts and hopes, He who taught the gospel of peace. His enemies, motivated by that evil power, seized Him, tortured Him, nailed Him to the cross, and spoke in mockery against Him. But by the power of His godhood, He overcame the death His enemies had inflicted and through His sacrifice brought salvation from death to all men.

The war after Christ's earthly ministry

That eternal war went on in the decay of the work He established, in the corruption which later infected it, when darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the people (see Isaiah 60:2).

But the forces of God could not be vanquished. The light of Christ touched the heart of a man here and a man there, and vast good came to pass notwithstanding much of oppression and suffering.

There came a time of renaissance, with struggles for liberty — struggles for which much of blood and sacrifice was paid. The Spirit of God moved upon men to found a nation wherein freedom of worship and freedom of expression and freedom of agency were protected. There followed then the opening of the dispensation of the fullness of times with a visit to earth of God the Eternal Father and His Beloved Son, the Resurrected Lord Jesus Christ. This glorious event was followed by visits of angels restoring the ancient keys and priesthood.

The war after the Restoration

But the war was not over. It was renewed and redirected. There was contempt. There was persecution. There were drivings from one place to another. There was the murder of the young prophet of God and of his beloved brother.

Our people fled their homes, their comfortable homes, their farms, their fields, their shops, their beautiful temple built at such tremendous sacrifice. They came to these valleys, thousands of them dying along the way. They came, as President Brigham Young said, to establish a place where "the Devil can't come and dig us out."

But the adversary has never stopped trying. Ninety years ago, in the October conference of 1896, President Wilford Woodruff, then an aged man,

standing where I stand in this Tabernacle," said:

"There are two powers on the earth and in the midst of the inhabitants of the earth — the power of God and the power of the devil. In our history we have had some very peculiar experiences. When God has had a people on the earth, it matters not in what age, Lucifer, the son of the morning, and the millions of fallen spirits that were cast out of heaven, have warred against God, against Christ, against the work of God, and against the people of God. And they are not backward in doing it in our day and generation. Whenever the Lord set His hand to perform any work, those powers labored to overthrow it" (*Deseret Evening News*, 17 Oct. 1896, p. 9).

President Woodruff knew whereof he spoke. He had then only recently passed through those difficult and perilous days when the government of the nation had come against our people, determined to destroy them. The buildings on this Temple Square, this tabernacle in which we meet tonight and the temple then under construction, were escheated to the federal government. Many citizens were disfranchised. But in faith they moved forward. They kept going. They put their trust in the Almighty, and He revealed unto them the path they should follow. In faith they accepted that revelation and walked in obedience.

The war continues today

But the war did not end. It abated somewhat, and we're grateful for that. Nonetheless, the adversary of truth has continued his struggle.

Notwithstanding the present strength of the Church, it seems that we are constantly under attack from one quarter or another. But we go on. We must go on. We have gone forward, and we will continue to go forward. In some seasons the issues are major. At other times they are only local skir-

mishes. But they are all part of a pattern.

Opposition to the construction of temples

In a few days we will dedicate the beautiful Denver Temple.

When it was announced that we would build a temple in that city and had selected a site on which it should stand, opposition rose against us. We gave up that site and tried another. Again we were thwarted. But we were determined to go forward, putting our trust in the Lord that He would guide us in accomplishing His purposes. Two other possible sites were selected. At the time, President Kimball and President Romney were both ill, and mine was a serious responsibility. I asked President Benson, then President of the Council of the Twelve, if we might go to Denver together, and there with Elder Russell Taylor we looked over these sites. I give you my testimony that we were guided by the Spirit in choosing the ground on which that beautiful new structure now stands. It will be dedicated later this month as a house of God.

We might expect that the adversary of righteousness would seek to thwart its construction and the work to be done therein. He had done so in the days of Kirtland when enemies threatened to push over the walls which were then being laid. He did so in the days of Far West when enemies drove our people from the state of Missouri. It was so in Nauvoo, where the temple had barely been completed when we were driven out. It was so here on this Temple Square when, during the forty years of the temple construction, there was one threat after another. I could describe problems in other places where today stand or will stand beautiful houses of the Lord.

We must be united in battle

Opposition has not come only in the construction of temples. It has been

felt in the undying efforts of many, both within and without the Church, to destroy faith, to belittle, to demean, to bear false witness, to tempt and allure and induce our people to practices inconsistent with the teachings and standards of this work of God.

Brethren, the war goes on. It is as it was in the beginning. There may not be the intensity, and I am grateful for that. But the principles at issue are the same. The victims who fall are as precious as those who have fallen in the past. It is an ongoing battle. We of the priesthood are all part of the army of the Lord. We must be united. An army that is disorganized will not be victorious. It is imperative that we close ranks, that we march together as one. We cannot have division among us and expect victory. We cannot have disloyalty and expect unity. We cannot be unclean and expect the help of the Almighty.

Young men, keep your minds and bodies strong

You boys who are here, you deacons, teachers, and priests, are all a part of this. The Lord has laid upon you in your priesthood offices the duty to preach the gospel, to teach the truth, to encourage the weak to be strong, to "invite all to come unto Christ" (D&C 20:59).

You cannot afford to partake of things that will weaken your minds and your bodies. These include cocaine, "crack," alcohol, tobacco. You cannot be involved in immoral activity. You cannot do these things and be valiant as warriors in the cause of the Lord in the great, everlasting contest that goes on for the souls of our Father's children.

Melchizedek Priesthood holders, be valiant

You men of the Melchizedek Priesthood, you cannot be unfaithful or untrue to your wives, to your families, to your priesthood responsibilities if you are to be valiant in moving the

work of the Lord forward in this great battle for truth and salvation. You cannot be dishonest and unscrupulous in your business affairs without tarnishing your armor.

In our meetings, we occasionally sing an old hymn:

*Who's on the Lord's side? Who?
Now is the time to show.
We ask it fearlessly:
Who's on the Lord's side? Who?
We wage no common war,
Cope with no common foe.
The enemy's awake;
Who's on the Lord's side? Who?
(Hymns, 1985, no. 260.)*

Commitment and devotion needed to win the war

I had a letter from a friend in the East the other day. He spoke of a conversation he had had with another member of the Church. He had asked his associate whether he felt close to his Heavenly Father. He replied that he did not feel close. Why not? He said, "Candidly, because I don't want to." Then he went on to say, "If I were close to Heavenly Father, He would probably want some commitment from me, and I am not ready for that."

Think of it — a man who has taken upon himself the name of the Lord in baptism, a man who has renewed his covenants with the Lord in his sacrament meetings, a man who has accepted the priesthood of God and yet has said that if he were close to his Heavenly Father, some commitment might be expected of him, and he was not ready for that.

In this work there must be commitment. There must be devotion. We are engaged in a great eternal struggle that concerns the very souls of the sons and daughters of God. We are not losing. We are winning. We will continue to win if we will be faithful and true. *We can do it. We must do it. We will do it.* There is nothing the Lord has asked of us that in faith we cannot accomplish.

Move forward in faith

I think of the children of Israel when they fled Egypt. They camped beside the Red Sea. Looking back, they saw Pharaoh and his armies coming to destroy them. Fear gripped their hearts. With the armies behind them and the sea before them they cried out in terror.

"And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever.

"The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, . . . speak unto the children of Israel, *that they go forward*" (Exodus 14:13-15; italics added).

The sea parted, and the children of Israel moved to their salvation. The Egyptians followed to their own destruction.

Shall we not also in faith move forward? He who is our eternal leader, the Lord Jesus Christ, has challenged us in words of revelation. Said He:

"Wherefore, lift up your hearts and rejoice, and gird up your loins, and take upon you my whole armor, that ye may be able to withstand the evil day. . . .

"Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, which I have sent mine angels to commit unto you;

"Taking the shield of faith wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked;

"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of my Spirit, . . . and be faithful until I come, and ye shall be caught up, that where I am ye shall be also" (D&C 27:15-18).

Each of us is involved in the war, and we are winning

The war goes on. It is waged across the world over the issues of

agency and compulsion. It is waged by an army of missionaries over the issues of truth and error. It is waged in our own lives, day in and day out, in our homes, in our work, in our school associations; it is waged over questions of love and respect, of loyalty and fidelity, of obedience and integrity. We are all involved in it — men and boys, each of us. We are winning, and the future never looked brighter.

God bless us, my beloved brethren of the priesthood, in the work that is so clearly laid out before us. May we be faithful. May we be valiant. May we have the courage to be true to the trust God has placed in each of us. May we be unafraid. "For [to quote the words of Paul to Timothy] God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord" (2 Timothy 1:7-8).

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have just listened to President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency.

President Ezra Taft Benson, our beloved prophet leader, will be our concluding speaker.

Before President Benson speaks, we note that the nationwide CBS Tabernacle Choir broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 Sunday morning. Those desiring to attend must be in their seats before 9:15 A.M.

As you leave this priesthood meeting tonight, we remind you to obey traffic rules, to use caution, and to be courteous in driving.

We are grateful to you brethren of the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth Combined Men's Chorus for your inspiring music and express sincere thanks for the service you have given here tonight.

Following President Benson's closing remarks, the choir will sing

"The Priesthood of Our Lord." The benediction will be pronounced by

Elder Waldo P. Call of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

President Ezra Taft Benson

Privilege and responsibility of holding the priesthood

My beloved brethren: This night, as I look out over this great body of priesthood holders and think of the similar congregations throughout the world, I am stirred with a great sense of gratitude and joy for the blessings our Heavenly Father has given us.

The privilege of holding the priesthood, which is the power and authority to act in God's name, is a great blessing and privilege and one that carries with it equally great obligations and responsibilities. When I ponder what kind of men and boys we should be as priesthood holders, I cannot help but think of the Savior's questions to the Nephite twelve when He asked, "Therefore, what manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am" (3 Nephi 27:27).

Our charge to be like the Savior

To be like the Savior—what a challenge for any person! He is a member of the Godhead. He is the Savior and Redeemer. He was perfect in every aspect of His life. There was no flaw nor failing in Him. Is it possible for us as priesthood holders to be even as He is? The answer is yes. Not only *can* we, but that is our charge, our responsibility. He would not give us that commandment if He did not mean for us to do it.

The Apostle Peter spoke of the process by which a person can be made a partaker "of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). This is important, for if we truly become partakers of the divine nature, we shall become like Him. Let us examine closely what Peter teaches

us about this process. Here is what he said:

"And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

"And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

"And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity" (2 Peter 1:5–7).

The virtues outlined by Peter are part of the divine nature, or the Savior's character. These are the virtues we are to emulate if we would be more like Him. Let us discuss a few of these important traits.

Faith — the foundation for building a godlike character

The first characteristic, to which all the others are added, is *faith*. Faith is the foundation upon which a godlike character is built. It is a prerequisite for all other virtues.

When I think of how we show faith, I cannot help but think of the example of my own father. I recall vividly how the spirit of missionary work came into my life. I was about thirteen years of age when my father received a call to go on a mission. It was during an epidemic in our little community of Whitney, Idaho. Parents were encouraged to go to sacrament meeting, but the children were to remain home to avoid contracting the disease.

Father and Mother went to sacrament meeting in a one-horse buggy. At the close of the meeting, the storekeeper opened the store just long enough for the farmers to get their mail, since the post office was in the store. There were no purchases, but in this way the farmers saved a trip to the post

office on Monday. There was no rural postal delivery in those days.

As Father drove the horse homeward, Mother opened the mail, and, to their surprise, there was a letter from Box B in Salt Lake City — a call to go on a mission. No one asked if one were ready, willing, or able. The bishop was supposed to know, and the bishop was Grandfather George T. Benson, my father's father.

As Father and Mother drove into the yard, they were both crying — something we had never seen in our family. We gathered around the buggy — there were seven of us then — and asked them what was the matter.

They said, "Everything's fine."

"Why are you crying then?" we asked.

"Come into the living room and we'll explain."

We gathered around the old sofa in the living room, and Father told us about his mission call. Then Mother said: "We're proud to know that Father is considered worthy to go on a mission. We're crying a bit because it means two years of separation. You know, your father and I have never been separated more than two nights at a time since our marriage — and that's when Father was gone into the canyon to get logs, posts, and firewood."

And so Father went on his mission. Though at the time I did not fully comprehend the depths of my father's commitment, I understand better now that his willing acceptance of this call was evidence of his great faith. Every holder of the priesthood, whether young or old, should strive to develop that kind of faith.

Virtue — akin to holiness

Peter goes on to say that we must add to our faith *virtue*. A priesthood holder is *virtuous*. Virtuous behavior implies that he has pure thoughts and clean actions. He will not lust in his heart, for to do so is to "deny the faith" and to lose the Spirit (D&C 42:23) — and there is nothing more important in

this work than the Spirit. You've heard me say that many times.

He will not commit adultery "nor do anything like unto it" (D&C 59:6). This means fornication, homosexual behavior, self-abuse, child molestation, or any other sexual perversion. This means that a young man will honor young women and treat them with respect. He would never do anything that would deprive them of that which, in Mormon's words, is "most dear and precious above all things, which is chastity and virtue" (Moroni 9:9).

Virtue is akin to holiness, an attribute of godliness. A priesthood holder should actively seek for that which is virtuous and lovely and not that which is debasing or sordid. Virtue will garnish his thoughts unceasingly (see D&C 121:45). How can any man indulge himself in the evils of pornography, profanity, or vulgarity and consider himself totally virtuous?

Whenever a priesthood holder departs from the path of virtue in any form or expression, he loses the Spirit and comes under Satan's power. He then receives the wages of him whom he has chosen to serve. As a result, sometimes the Church must take disciplinary action, for we cannot condone or pardon unvirtuous and unrepentant actions. All priesthood holders must be morally clean to be worthy to bear the authority of Jesus Christ.

Knowledge — balance spiritual and secular learning

The next step Peter describes in the growth process is to add *knowledge* to our faith and virtue. The Lord has told us that "it is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance" (D&C 131:6). In another place God commanded, "Seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith" (D&C 88:118). Every priesthood holder should make learning a lifetime pursuit. While any study of truth is of value, the truths of salvation are the most important truths any person can learn. The Lord's question, "For what is a man profited, if

he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Matthew 16:26) can be applied to educational pursuits as well as the pursuit of worldly goods. The Lord might also have asked, "For what is a man profited, if he shall learn everything in the world and not learn how to be saved?"

We must balance our secular learning with spiritual learning. You young men should be as earnest in enrolling in seminary and learning the scriptures as you are in working toward high school graduation. Young adults enrolled in universities and colleges or other postsecondary training should avail themselves of the opportunity to take institute of religion courses or, if attending a Church school, should take at least one religion course every term. Joining our spiritual education to our secular learning will help us keep focused on the things that matter most in this life. Though I am speaking to you priesthood holders, the same admonition applies to the women of the Church as well as to the men.

Spiritual learning must take first place

President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., spoke of the desired balance in these words: "There is spiritual learning just as there is material learning, and the one without the other is not complete; yet, speaking for myself, if I could have only one sort of learning, that which I would take would be the learning of the spirit, because in the hereafter I shall have opportunity in the eternities which are to come to get the other, and without spiritual learning here my handicaps in the hereafter would be all but overwhelming" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1934, p. 94).

President Spencer W. Kimball said it this way: "Youth, beloved youth, can you see why we must let spiritual training take first place?—Why we must pray with faith, and perfect our own lives like the Savior's? Can you see that the spiritual knowledge may be complemented with the

secular in this life and on for eternities but that the secular without the foundation of the spiritual is but like the foam upon the milk, the fleeting shadow?

"Do not be deceived! One need not choose between the two but only as to the sequence, for there is opportunity for one to get both simultaneously; but can you see that the seminary courses should be given even preferential attention over the high school subjects; the institute over the college course; the study of the scriptures ahead of the study of man-written texts; the association with the Church more important than clubs, fraternities, and sororities; the payment of tithing more important than paying tuitions and fees?

"Can you see that the ordinances of the temple are more important than the PhD or any and all other academic degrees?" ("Beloved Youth, Study and Learn," in *Life's Directions: A Series of Fireside Addresses* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1962], p. 190).

When our formal education has been completed, we should make daily study of the scriptures a lifetime pursuit. What I said last April to priesthood leaders applies to every priesthood holder as well:

"I add my voice to these wise and inspired brethren and say to you that one of the most important things you can do as priesthood leaders is to immerse yourselves in the scriptures. Search them diligently. Feast upon the words of Christ. Learn the doctrine. Master the principles that are found therein. . . . Few other efforts . . . will bring greater dividends to your calling. . . . Few other ways [will result in] greater inspiration. . . .

"You must . . . see that studying and searching the scriptures is not a burden laid upon [us] by the Lord, but a marvelous blessing and opportunity" ("The Power of the Word," *Ensign*, May 1986, p. 81).

Temperance—have self-control

Another attribute described by Peter as being part of the divine nature

is *temperance*. A priesthood holder is *temperate*. This means he is restrained in his emotions and verbal expressions. He does things in moderation and is not given to overindulgence. In a word, he has self-control. He is the master of his emotions, not the other way around.

A priesthood holder who would curse his wife, abuse her with words or actions, or do the same to one of his own children is guilty of grievous sin. "Can ye be angry, and not sin?" asked the Apostle Paul (JST, Ephesians 4:26).

If a man does not control his temper, it is a sad admission that he is not in control of his thoughts. He then becomes a victim of his own passions and emotions, which lead him to actions that are totally unfit for civilized behavior, let alone behavior for a priesthood holder.

President David O. McKay once said, "A man who cannot control his temper is not very likely to control his passion, and no matter what his pretensions in religion, he moves in daily life very close to the animal plane" (*Improvement Era*, June 1958, p. 407).

Patience — be understanding and learn to wait on the Lord

To our temperance we are to add *patience*. A priesthood holder is to be *patient*. Patience is another form of self-control. It is the ability to postpone gratification and to bridle one's passions. In his relationships with loved ones, a patient man does not engage in impetuous behavior that he will later regret. Patience is composure under stress. A patient man is understanding of others' faults.

A patient man also waits on the Lord. We sometimes read or hear of people who seek a blessing from the Lord, then grow impatient when it does not come swiftly. Part of the divine nature is to trust in the Lord enough to "be still and know that [he is] God" (D&C 101:16).

A priesthood holder who is patient will be tolerant of the mistakes and failings of his loved ones. Because he

loves them, he will not find fault nor criticize nor blame.

Kindness — extend this to all

Another attribute mentioned by Peter is *kindness*. A priesthood holder is *kind*. One who is kind is sympathetic and gentle with others. He is considerate of others' feelings and courteous in his behavior. He has a helpful nature. Kindness pardons others' weaknesses and faults. Kindness is extended to all — to the aged and the young, to animals, to those low of station as well as the high.

These are the true attributes of the divine nature. Can you see how we become more Christlike as we are more virtuous, more kind, more patient, and more in control of our emotional feelings?

The Apostle Paul used some vivid expressions to illustrate that a member of the Church must be different from the world. He commended us to "put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27), "put off . . . the old man," and "put on the new man" (Ephesians 4:22, 24).

Charity — "the greatest of all"

The final and crowning virtue of the divine character is *charity*, or the pure love of Christ (see Moroni 7:47). If we would truly seek to be more like our Savior and Master, then learning to love as He loves should be our highest goal. Mormon called charity "the greatest of all" (Moroni 7:46).

The world today speaks a great deal about love, and it is sought for by many. But the pure love of Christ differs greatly from what the world thinks of love. Charity never seeks selfish gratification. The pure love of Christ seeks only the eternal growth and joy of others.

When I think of charity, I again think of my father and that day he was called on his mission. I suppose some in the world might say that his acceptance of that call was proof he did not really love his family. To leave seven

children and an expectant wife at home alone for two years, how could that be true love?

But my father knew a greater vision of love. He knew that "all things shall work together for good to them that love God" (Romans 8:28). He knew that the best thing he could do for his family was to obey God.

While we missed him greatly during those years, and while his absence brought many challenges to our family, his acceptance proved to be a gift of charity. Father went on his mission, leaving Mother at home with seven children. (The eighth was born four months after he arrived in the field.) But there came into that home a spirit of missionary work that never left it. It was not without some sacrifice. Father had to sell our old dry farm in order to finance his mission. He had to move a married couple into part of our home to take care of the row crops, and he left his sons and wife the responsibility for the hay land, the pasture land, and a small herd of dairy cows.

Father's letters were indeed a blessing to our family. To us children, they seemed to come from halfway around the world, but they were only from Springfield, Massachusetts; and Chicago, Illinois; and Cedar Rapids and Marshalltown, Iowa. Yes, there came into our home, as a result of Father's mission, a spirit of missionary work that never left it.

Later the family grew to eleven children, seven sons and four daughters. All seven sons filled missions, some of them two or three missions. Later, two daughters and their husbands filled full-time missions. The two other sisters, both widows — one the mother of eight and the other the mother of ten — served as missionary companions in Birmingham, England.

It is a legacy that still continues to bless the Benson family even into the third and fourth generations. Was not this truly a gift of love?

"Become partakers of the divine nature"

This is what the Savior means when He speaks of the kind of men we should be. Does not His own life reflect perfect diligence, perfect faith, perfect virtue? If we are to be like Him, we too must become partakers of the divine nature.

The Savior declared that life eternal is to know the only true God and His Son Jesus Christ (see John 17:3). If this is true, and I bear you my solemn witness that it is true, then we must ask how we come to know God. The process of adding one godly attribute to another, as described by Peter, becomes the key to gaining this knowledge that leads to eternal life. Note Peter's promise, which immediately follows the process described:

"For if these things be in you, *and abound*, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:8; italics added).

Oh, my beloved brethren, I pray that these qualities and attributes of the Savior may abound in us so that when we stand at the Judgment and He asks each one of us, "What manner of man are you?" we can raise our heads in gratitude and joy and answer, "Even as thou art." This is my humble prayer for each and every priesthood holder in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Statement: stake seventies quorums to be discontinued

Now, brethren, I would like to read to you a statement recently approved by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve:

"In harmony with the needs of the growth of the Church across the world, the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles have given prayerful consideration to the role of the stake seventies quorums in the Church and have determined to take the following action relative thereto:

"1. The seventies quorums in the stakes of the Church are to be discontinued, and the brethren now serving as seventies in these quorums will be asked to return to membership in the elders quorums of their wards. Stake presidents, in an orderly fashion, may then determine who among such brethren should be ordained to the office of high priest.

"This change does not affect the First Quorum of the Seventy, members of which are all General Authorities of the Church.

"2. Particular emphasis is to be given in stake missions to cooperating with the full-time proselyting missionaries by finding, friendshiping, fellowshipping, and fostering member participation in all missionary activities. A missionary-minded elder or

high priest will be called as the stake mission president with his counselors being selected from among the elders or high priests.

"Additional detailed instructions regarding this announcement will be provided local priesthood leaders by letter from the First Presidency.

"At this time, we commend all who have served both past and present as members of stake seventies quorums of the Church and who have so ably given of their time, talents, and resources in spreading forth the gospel of Jesus Christ."

The choir sang "Priesthood of Our Lord."

Elder Waldo P. Call offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY MORNING MEETING

FOURTH SESSION

The fourth session of the 156th Semiannual General Conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, October 5, 1986. President Ezra Taft Benson conducted.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music with Jerold Ottley directing and Robert Cundick at the organ.

Prior to the opening of the session, the choir sang "Arise, O God, and Shine" without announcement.

President Benson made the following remarks:

President Ezra Taft Benson

We welcome all who are in attendance for this, the fourth general session of the 156th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We also extend our greeting to all who are seated in the Assembly Hall, where Elders George P. Lee and Rex C.

Reeve are seated on the stand, and to the many others who are participating by radio, television, or cable—with time offered by owners and operators, to whom we are indebted—or by satellite transmission.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic affairs leaders, and officers and members of the Church from many lands who have assembled to worship and to counsel together in this conference.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Brother Jerold Ottley with Brother Robert Cundick at the organ, is providing the music for this session.

The choir opened these services by singing "Arise, O God, and Shine" and will now sing "More Holiness Give Me," following which Elder Robert L. Backman, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "More Holiness Give Me."

Elder Robert L. Backman offered the invocation.

President Benson

We shall now be pleased to listen to President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Know God and Jesus Christ

My brethren and sisters, I have chosen a text this morning that is familiar to all of you. It is the first article of our faith. It is the pivotal position of our religion. It is significant that in setting forth the primary elements of our doctrine, the Prophet Joseph put this number one.

"We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost."

The preeminence given that declaration is in accord with another statement the Prophet made. Said he:

"It is the first principle of the gospel to know for a certainty the character of God" (*History of the Church*, 6:305).

These tremendously significant and overarching declarations are in harmony with the words of the Lord in His great intercessory prayer:

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

I was handed a tract the other day. It was written by a critic, an enemy of the Church whose desire is to undermine the faith of the weak and the unknowing. It repeats fallacies that have been parroted for a century and more. It purports to set forth what you and I, as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, believe.

Without wishing to argue with any of our friends of other faiths, many of whom I know and for whom I have the highest regard, I take this occasion to set forth my position on this most important of all theological subjects.

Testimony of God

I believe without equivocation or reservation in God, the Eternal Father. He is my Father, the Father of my spirit, and the Father of the spirits of all men. He is the great Creator, the Ruler of the Universe. He directed the creation of this earth on which we live. In His image man was created. He is personal. He is real. He is individual. He has "a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's" (D&C 130:22).

In the account of the creation of the earth, "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Genesis 1:26).

Could any language be more explicit? Does it demean God, as some would have us believe, that man was created in His express image? Rather, it should stir within the heart of every man and woman a greater appreciation for himself or herself as a son or daughter of God. Paul's words to the Corinthian Saints are as applicable to us today as they were to those to whom he wrote. Said he:

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

"If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Corinthians 3:16-17).

God has a body

I remember the occasion of more than fifty years ago when, as a missionary, I was speaking in an open-air meeting in Hyde Park, London. As I was presenting my message, a heckler inter-

rupted to say, "Why don't you stay with the doctrine of the Bible which says in John [4:24], 'God is a Spirit'?"

I opened my Bible to the verse he had quoted and read to him the entire verse:

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

I said, "Of course God is a spirit, and so are you, in the combination of spirit and body that makes of you a living being, and so am I."

Each of us is a dual being of spiritual entity and physical entity. All know of the reality of death when the body dies, and each of us also knows that the spirit lives on as an individual entity and that at some time, under the divine plan made possible by the sacrifice of the Son of God, there will be a reunion of spirit and body. Jesus' declaration that God is a spirit no more denies that he has a body than does the statement that I am a spirit while also having a body.

God is all-powerful and all-loving

I do not equate my body with His in its refinement, in its capacity, in its beauty and radiance. His is eternal. Mine is mortal. But that only increases my reverence for Him. I worship Him "in spirit and in truth." I look to Him as my strength. I pray to Him for wisdom beyond my own. I seek to love Him with all my heart, might, mind, and strength. His wisdom is greater than the wisdom of all men. His power is greater than the power of nature, for He is the Creator Omnipotent. His love is greater than the love of any other, for His love encompasses all of His children, and it is His work and His glory to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of His sons and daughters of all generations (see Moses 1:39).

He "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

This is the Almighty of whom I stand in awe and reverence. It is He to

whom I look in fear and trembling. It is He whom I worship and unto whom I give honor and praise and glory. He is my Heavenly Father, who has invited me to come unto Him in prayer, to speak with Him, with the promised assurance that He will hear and respond.

Thanks be to God

I thank Him for the light and knowledge and understanding He has bestowed upon His children. I thank Him for His voice, which has spoken eternal truth with power and promise. I thank Him for His revelation of Himself as set forth in the Old Testament, for His declaration, as set forth in the New Testament, at the baptism of His Beloved Son in the waters of Jordan when His voice was heard saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17).

I thank Him for His similar declaration on the Mount of Transfiguration when He spoke again to Jesus and His Apostles, and angels also, when "after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,

"And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

"And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.

"Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

"While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matthew 17:1-5).

I thank Him for that voice again heard when the risen Lord was introduced to the people of this hemisphere with the voice of God declaring, "Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name" (3 Nephi 11:7).

I stand in awe and reverence and gratitude for His appearance in this dispensation when, as He introduced the risen Lord to one who had sought Him in prayer, the Father declared: "This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!" (Joseph Smith—History 1:17).

Testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ

I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the eternal, living God. I believe in Him as the Firstborn of the Father and the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh. I believe in Him as an individual, separate and distinct from His Father. I believe in the declaration of John, who opened his gospel with this majestic utterance:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

"The same was in the beginning with God. . . .

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:1–2, 14).

I believe that He was born of Mary of the lineage of David as the promised Messiah, that He was in very deed begotten of the Father, and that in His birth was the fulfillment of the great prophetic declaration of Isaiah:

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

I believe that in His mortal life He was the one perfect man to walk the earth. I believe that in His words are to be found that light and truth which, if observed, would save the world and bring exaltation to mankind. I believe that in His priesthood rests divine authority—the power to bless, the power to heal, the power to govern in the earthly affairs of God, the power to bind in the heavens that which is bound upon the earth.

Christ's atoning sacrifice

I believe that through His atoning sacrifice, the offering of His life on Calvary's Hill, He expiated the sins of mankind, relieving us from the burden of sin if we will forsake evil and follow Him. I believe in the reality and the power of His resurrection. I believe in the grace of God made manifest through His sacrifice and redemption, and I believe that through His atonement, without any price on our part, each of us is offered the gift of resurrection from the dead. I believe further that through that sacrifice there is extended to every man and woman, every son and daughter of God, the opportunity for eternal life and exaltation in our Father's kingdom, as we hearken and obey His commandments.

None so great has ever walked the earth. None other has made a comparable sacrifice or granted a comparable blessing. He is the Savior and the Redeemer of the world. I believe in Him. I declare His divinity without equivocation or compromise. I love Him. I speak His name in reverence and wonder. I worship Him as I worship His Father, in spirit and in truth. I thank Him and kneel before His wounded feet and hands and side, amazed at the love He offers me.

God be thanked for His Beloved Son who reached out long ago and said to each of us:

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

"For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28–30).

Christ is the living, resurrected Son of God

He lives, the firstfruits of the Resurrection. I know He lives today as really, as certainly, as individually, as He lived when, as the risen Lord, He

beckoned His discouraged disciples to "come and dine. . . . And [He] taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise" (John 21:12-13).

The scripture tells of others to whom He showed Himself and with whom He spoke, as the living, resurrected Son of God.

Likewise in this dispensation He has appeared, and those who saw Him declared:

"And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

"For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—

"That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God" (D&C 76:22-24).

This is the Christ in whom I believe and of whom I testify.

The Holy Ghost is the third member of the Godhead

That knowledge comes from the word of scripture, and that testimony comes by the power of the Holy Ghost. It is a gift, sacred and wonderful, borne by revelation from the third member of the Godhead. I believe in the Holy Ghost as a personage of spirit who occupies a place with the Father and the Son, these three comprising the divine Godhead.

The importance of that place is made clear from the words of the Lord who said:

"All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

"And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not

be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come" (Matthew 12:31-32).

That the Holy Ghost was recognized in ancient times as a member of the Godhead is evident from the conversation between Peter and Ananias when the latter held back a part of the price received from the sale of a piece of land.

"But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? . . . thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God" (Acts 5:3-4).

The Holy Ghost stands as the third member of the Godhead, the Comforter promised by the Savior who would teach His followers all things and bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever He had said unto them (see John 14:26).

The Holy Ghost is the Testifier of Truth, who can teach men things they cannot teach one another. In those great and challenging words of Moroni, a knowledge of the truth of the Book of Mormon is promised "by the power of the Holy Ghost." Moroni then declares, "And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things" (Moroni 10:4-5).

I believe this power, this gift, is available to us today.

Members of the Godhead are real and individual

And so, my beloved brethren and sisters, I believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.

I was baptized in the name of these three. I was married in the name of these three. I have no question concerning their reality and their individuality. That individuality was made apparent when Jesus was baptized by John in Jordan. There in the water stood the Son of God. His Father's voice was heard declaring His divine Sonship, and the Holy Ghost was manifest in the form of a dove (see Matthew 3:16-17).

I am aware that Jesus said that they who had seen Him had seen the Father. Could not the same be said by many a son who resembles his parent?

When Jesus prayed to the Father, certainly He was not praying to Himself!

Members of the Godhead are perfectly united

They are distinct beings, but they are one in purpose and effort. They are united as one in bringing to pass the grand, divine plan for the salvation and exaltation of the children of God.

In His great, moving prayer in the Garden before His betrayal, Christ pleaded with His Father concerning the Apostles, whom He loved, saying:

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us" (John 17:20-21).

It is that perfect unity between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost that binds these three into the oneness of the divine Godhead.

Miracle of miracles and wonder of wonders, they are interested in us, and we are the substance of their great concern. They are available to each of us. We approach the Father through the Son. He is our intercessor at the throne of God. How marvelous it is that we may so speak to the Father in the name of the Son.

I bear witness of these great, transcendent truths. I do so by the gift and power of the Holy Ghost, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Lord Accept into Thy Kingdom" and "We Ever Pray for Thee" without announcement.

President Benson

President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has just spoken to us, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "Lord Accept into Thy Kingdom" and "We Ever Pray for Thee."

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now address us.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

The holy scriptures represent mankind's spiritual memory. And when man's connection with scripture is severed, mortals are tragically deprived of an awareness of spiritual history, blinding the eyes of faith. Thereby shorn of true identity, mortals keep their legs intact, but each walks in his own way. Their arms are acquisitive, but do not reach out in an understanding embrace of life. Their ears function, but they no longer hear the word of the Lord. Though created in God's image, those thus severed soon forget their Maker. Yet it is not surprising, "For how knoweth a man the master whom he has not served, and who is a stranger unto him, and is far from the

thoughts and intents of his heart?" (Mosiah 5:13).

"God will yet reveal many great and important things"

By contrast, one of the unique features of the living Church of Jesus Christ is its ever-expanding body of fundamental spiritual knowledge about man's identity and purpose, which enlarges "the memory of this people" (Alma 37:8). In fact, our ninth article of faith declares that God "will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God." Thus nourished by a menu blending antiquity and futurity, Church mem-

bers need never "faint in [their] minds" (Hebrews 12:3). Instead, we can be intellectually vibrant.

Lost books are among the treasures yet to come forth. Over twenty of these are mentioned in the existing scriptures. Perhaps most startling and voluminous will be the records of the lost tribes of Israel (see 2 Nephi 29:13). We would not even know of the impending third witness for Christ except through the precious Book of Mormon, the second witness for Christ! This third set of sacred records will thus complete a triad of truth. Then, just as the Perfect Shepherd has said, "My word also shall be gathered in one" (v. 14). There will be "one fold and one shepherd" (1 Nephi 22:25) in a welding together of all the Christian dispensations of human history (see D&C 128:18).

Whereas previous prophets were sometimes left to surmise — as Moroni supposed the Jews also had a record of the Creation from Adam on down (see Ether 1:3) — ours, instead, is a time of fulness, including "things which never have been revealed from the foundation of the world" (D&C 128:18). Moreover, "and the day cometh that the words of the book which were sealed shall be read upon the house tops; and they shall be read by the power of Christ; and all things shall be revealed unto the children of men which ever have been among the children of men, and which ever will be even unto the end of the earth" (2 Nephi 27:11; see also 2 Nephi 30:16, 18; Ether 4:7; D&C 101:32, 121:28).

Thus, just as there will be many more Church members, families, wards, stakes, and temples — later on, there will also be many more nourishing and inspiring scriptures. However, we must first feast worthily upon that which we already have!

Scriptures essential to belief in God and his plan

Without this precious, spiritual perspective, the human family is sel-

dom more than one generation away from deep doubt and even disbelief. Laman and Lemuel doubted and murmured because, wrote Nephi, "they knew not the dealings of that God who had created them" (1 Nephi 2:12); they were provincial, just like forgetful Israel: "and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel" (Judges 2:10; see also Deuteronomy 32:6, Mosiah 10:14).

If people are without the truths of God's plan of salvation for very long, some may not even "believe [these truths] when they are taught" (Mosiah 1:5). An untaught "rising generation" comes not to "believe . . . concerning the resurrection, . . . neither . . . the coming of Christ" (Mosiah 26:1-2). Belief in Deity and in the resurrection are usually the first to go: "they had brought no records with them; and they denied the being of their Creator" (Omni 1:17).

Our loving Father is ever anxious to dispel such ignorance:

"And after God had appointed that these things should come unto man, behold, then he saw that it was expedient that man should know concerning the things whereof he had appointed unto them;

"Therefore he sent angels to converse with them. . . .

" . . . And made known unto them the plan of redemption, which had been prepared from the foundation of the world; and this he made known unto them according to their faith and repentance and their holy works" (Alma 12:28-30).

The message is ever constant and ever relevant:

"Is it not as necessary that the plan of redemption should be made known unto this people as well as unto their children?

"Is it not as easy at this time for the Lord to send his angel to declare these glad tidings unto us as unto our children, or as after the time of his coming?" (Alma 39:18-19).

Revelation necessary to understand God's plan

Today's mortals, born long "after the time of his [first] coming," surely need to know of the plan, which gives, said the Prophet Joseph Smith, "a comprehensive view of our condition and true relation to God." The Prophet said this subject should be studied "more than any other, . . . day and night" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 324).

God's plan, however, is not something to be deduced by logic alone, nor is human experience deep enough or long enough to inform us adequately. It requires revelation from God.

"Behold, great and marvelous are the works of the Lord. How unsearchable are the depths of the mysteries of him; and it is impossible that man should find out all his ways. And no man knoweth of his ways save it be revealed unto him; wherefore, brethren, despise not the revelations of God" (Jacob 4:8).

How else would we really know the truth of who we really were, "really are, and . . . really will be"? (Jacob 4:13; see also D&C 93:24). There can be no true felicity without true identity.

Therefore, the process of revelation typically involves angels and prophets (see Alma 12:28–29). Several times in the closing period of his life, Joseph Smith noted the fourteen years of particularly intensive revelation which he had experienced, including angelic visitations (see *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp. 349, 360; *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, comp. Dean C. Jessee [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1984], p. 407).

Importance of this dispensation's revelations

The Restoration's Messiah-centered scriptures expand mankind's spiritual memory significantly and further educate

us concerning the unfolding of God's plan ever since the world began. The Restoration has provided sweeping sermons about God's plan with its rescuing Redeemer, such as from Moses, Abinadi, Ether, Alma, Ammon, and Aaron (see Mosiah 13:33–35; Ether 13:2–14; Alma 12:30–33, 18:36–39, 22:12–14). These answer the rhetorical question of one prophet who said, "Why not speak of the atonement of Christ?" (Jacob 4:12). Brothers and sisters, given man's true self-interest, why should we really speak much of anything else?

Read scriptures with a believing attitude

He who truly searches the scriptures will surely see how they testify of Christ (see John 5:39). He will also see how interactive and cross-supportive the scriptures are. If some see not, it will be "because they sought it not by faith" (Romans 9:32), but instead stared uncomprehendingly with slit-eyed skepticism. Said Jesus to the unseeing:

"For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.

"But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (John 5:46–47).

Those who understood and believed not *that* which Moses wrote did not, in effect, believe *this* which Jesus spoke. This episode underscores the important words of Mormon about the relationship of the biblical record and the Book of Mormon:

"For behold, *this* is written for the intent that ye may believe *that*; and if ye believe *that* ye will believe *this* also."

Mutually supportive, the scriptures produce much-needed historical perspective "concerning your fathers, and also the marvelous works which were wrought by the power of God among them" (Mormon 7:9; italics added).

Scriptures reveal God's purposes

The various scriptures tell us vital things about God's "tender mercies" (1 Nephi 1:20, Ether 6:12; see also Luke 1:78) and His dealings with our predecessors. What is past is truly prologue; hence an unvarying, all-seeing God, desiring to save mercurial and myopic man, is not interested in our retroactive adulation, but in preventing our prospective ruin.

Thus, it is from the scriptures that we learn of God's plans for mankind on this planet. He told us, through Isaiah, that He formed this earth to be inhabited (see Isaiah 45:18). Through Moses, God described His purpose: "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). Furthermore, by viewing the heavens and the galaxies, those who have eyes to see will see "God moving in His majesty and power" (D&C 88:47).

We are thus enveloped in a planned universe, and we live on a purposeful planet; and these truths describe "things as they really are" (Jacob 4:13). No wonder the gospel is such glorious and good news!

Scriptures provide "precious perspective"

If ever a generation needed this precious perspective, our severed generation does. If ever a generation needed to be saved from itself, ours does. Surely these needs will intensify as the bewildered and beset nations of the earth, as foreseen by Jesus, wallow hopelessly in distress, "with perplexity" (Luke 21:25).

In fact, we misread and misuse life — except with this plain and precious perspective of the gospel, which puts the things of the world in their lesser places. Then, on that essentially unchanging mortal stage, we can see things for what they really are, such as the demanding cadence called for by the cares of the world. Like birds and animals performing some inborn ritual, amusing to everyone but the partici-

pants, these maneuverings of materialism would be comedy if they were not tragedy. So would the posturings as to power and the thirsty seeking of the praise of the world. The plays are so transparent when seen in the gospel's light.

Share in God's attributes to share in his power

Nevertheless, why are the ways of the world felt even by serious disciples so insistently and so incessantly? Could it be that in the far distant, premortal past, having admired the Father and having seen His glory, we now unconsciously envy His glory? Yet, if we really wish to share in His kingdom, why do we sternly resist what the revelations tell us of the required preparatory schooling and the risks of unrighteous power? God's ultimate power is safe, precisely because He possesses ultimate love, justice, mercy, and knowledge. We cannot share in His power without sharing in His attributes.

But, we may say, do we not have His spiritual genes? Yes, but we do not have His gentleness.

Yet we are of His spiritual lineage! Yes, but we do not have His capacity to love.

Surely, we belong to Him! Of course, but we cannot reenter His house until our behavior would let us feel at home.

Importance of prophetic utterances

No wonder the prophets are repetitious in their warnings. After all, if one were permitted only a few surviving lines to family, friends, and posterity, those might be headlines. Sometimes what comes is almost a warning shout, especially when hearers are unstirred by the still, small voice (see Jacob 6:8–13, Moroni 10:27–34).

Besides, the prophets, who are the major makers of our spiritual memory, saw not only their own times, but ours as well; they have communicated with us as

if we were present, for "behold, Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing" (Mormon 8:35).

Little wonder that Joseph Smith, in his last witnessing words from Carthage Jail the night before he was slain, bore "powerful testimony to the guards of the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon, the restoration of the Gospel, the administration of angels" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 383; see also Alma 9:21, 12:29, 19:34).

Without the prophets, the scriptures, how else would we really know about what "God had appointed . . . unto man . . . the plan of redemption"? (Alma 12:28, 30).

When searched, the scriptural truths of the unfolding plan of salvation are both electrifying and subduing. Gratefully pondered, they lead to lyrical expressions, such as in the 1842 litany by the Prophet Joseph Smith: "And again, what do we hear? Glad tidings from Cumorah! Moroni, an angel from heaven, declaring the fulfillment of the prophets — the book to be revealed. A voice of the Lord in the wilderness . . . declaring the three witnesses to bear record of the book! The voice of Michael on the banks of the Susquehanna! . . . The voice of Peter, James, and John in the wilderness . . . declaring themselves as possessing the keys of the kingdom, and of the dispensation of the fulness of times!" (D&C 128:20).

A crescendo of revelations to precede Christ's coming

Future revelations, brothers and sisters, will include astounding events as well as great and important truths. So much so, that Moses' and Israel's exulting song after safely crossing the

Red Sea (see Exodus 15) and the Prophet Joseph's 1842 litany will gladly give way to the crescendo of glorious events associated with Christ's coming in majesty and power.

The valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman will ring again — this time with the sounds of dispensational reunion, as it glows with gathering! (See Daniel 7:13–14; D&C 107:53–57, 116:1.) Those of Enoch's utterly unique city of "one heart" will greet those of the New Zion with holy embraces and holy kisses amid the sounds of sweet sobbing! (See Moses 7:62–63.) The "hills shall tremble" at the presence of the lost tribes, and hearts, as well as ice, will melt, as they come "filled with songs of everlasting joy" (see D&C 133:26–33).

And it will all occur at the direction of the "Redeemer of Israel, our only delight." Hence, "as children of Zion, good tidings for us, . . . the hour of redemption is near" (*Hymns*, 1985, no. 6).

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

We have just heard from Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Council of Twelve Apostles.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Redeemer of Israel," following which we shall hear from Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, who was sustained yesterday as a new member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The choir and congregation sang "Redeemer of Israel."

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin spoke without further announcement.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

Pledge of commitment

My beloved brethren and sisters, in all humility and gratitude I ask for

your prayers and your faith in this great and humbling and sacred assignment that has been given me. To our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and to Presi-

dent Ezra Taft Benson, our prophet, seer, and revelator, I pledge that I will do my best, that I will do all I can to build up the kingdom of God here upon the earth.

As I left President Benson's office Friday, I was in deep shock — and I still am. I suppose that will linger for many years, but I will put forth my best effort in whatever assignment is given me.

Tributes to family and associates

I pay tribute to my beloved earthly father, who taught me humility, diligence, honesty, trustworthiness, a love of the Constitution of our beloved country, and reverence and honor for God's chosen servants, especially our prophet.

To my mother, who saw a glimpse of eternity several nights prior to her passing, I pay tribute also — first for life itself, and then for the great lessons she taught me. She would never permit a shoddy performance, and she made sure that we children didn't take too long accomplishing our tasks.

I also pay tribute to my beloved wife, Elisa. She is similar, I'm sure, to Rebecca of old. If she had been one of our pioneers, perhaps even coming from New York with a handcart, she probably would have been one of the first to arrive. She has never put as much as a feather in the way of my Church service, and she has reared our children in truth and righteousness.

To our eight children, seven wonderful daughters and one noble son — and he got along very well with his sisters — I pay tribute to them. Each has had his or her marriage sealed in the temple.

To my associates through the years, I pay tribute. They have all lifted me up and made me a better servant. Their names are too numerous to mention, but I honor them and pray that the Lord will always bless them.

I've loved every assignment I've ever had in the kingdom. And in that service, every day seemed like Sunday,

because it was in the service of the Lord.

Progress of the Church in Europe

I would like to report briefly on our experience in Europe. I thank the First Presidency that Sister Wirthlin and I have had the opportunity to preside in the Europe Area of the Church. These past two years have been thrilling and have been filled with tremendous experiences that we will never forget. The following expression from a devoted Church member living in Eastern Europe vividly demonstrates what I mean:

"If you could only see the faith and enthusiasm of our members here. Believe me, our religion is the only thing left for us, and we dearly love it."

Whether we live in Eastern Europe or not, this truth, like a towering mountain, stands out. Our religion is really the only thing we will have left ultimately, and we must love it dearly.

This eternal truth was demonstrated many times during our two-year sojourn in the Europe Area. This area stretches from the far north of Finland, Sweden, and Norway to the southernmost tip of Africa and includes about 230,000 members of the Church. I would like to share a few of the experiences that have kept our faith burning brightly.

Conversion of Asencão Frango

In Portugal, in the city of Funchal, on the Madeira Island, lived a lady named Asencão Frango who had been a nun for twenty years. As a matter of fact, she was a Mother Superior at a home for poor children and orphans. Toward the end of a four-year teaching assignment early in her life as a nun, doctors discovered a cancer in her throat. Her mother had died of this same disease. Although she knew that her deteriorating health might lead to certain death, she had a strong feeling that she had not finished her work on earth. She prayed with great faith for the restoration of her health and was

healed, with no further problems or need for medical care.

When her church decided to close the children's home where she was assigned, she maintained it herself for four years, using an inheritance she had received from her deceased parents, until the children living there were raised and on their own or were adopted.

Hearing of a new religion, she attended her first meeting of our church with a friend, out of curiosity. It was held on the dirt floor of a member's garage, but the spirit of the meeting impressed her. The elders began teaching her the discussions and challenged her to be baptized. She declined, saying that she already had been baptized. The elders persisted by inviting her to read the Book of Mormon. The elders told her, "If this book is the true word of God, then Joseph Smith is a true prophet and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is true. If so, you need to be baptized into God's true church."

She read the Book of Mormon and gained a strong testimony of its divinity. Later, she stopped the missionaries after a discussion of the Godhead and requested baptism. Just one year afterward, she stood on the doorstep of President Reuben P. Ficklin's mission home in Lisbon. She obtained her temple recommend and could hardly wait to enter the Swiss Temple to pledge sacred covenants with her Heavenly Father.

Stockholm Temple inspires Lutheran bishop

In Sweden, Bishop Krister Stendahl of the Lutheran church visited the Stockholm Temple a few days prior to its dedication. He had this inspiring description of his experience, as published in a prominent Swedish newspaper:

"Imagine that a new, gleaming white temple with slender pinnacles and towers has been erected to the glory of God. Not a church, not a chapel, but

a temple for sacred ordinances, performed quietly and in solemn dignity.

"A temple where the innermost room is named 'the celestial.' A temple where the faithful perform vicarious work according to Paul's statement on baptism for the dead (1 Corinthians 15:29).

"All in consequence of the wisdom and calling of Joseph Smith. . . .

"What shall we think and say about this? To pretend that it does not concern us that the Mormons — The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints — have built a temple in our midst would be conceited or condescending.

"Therefore I will rejoice with them over this temple that they have erected with much sacrifice to the glory of God. To experience their joy and pride over the beauty of the temple warms one's heart in a special way" (*Svenska Kyrkans Tidning*, 11 July 1985, p. 1).

Freiberg DDR Temple is fulfillment of a prophetic prayer

President Thomas S. Monson has given me permission to share with you his impressions when he rededicated the German Democratic Republic for the advancement of the work of the Church:

"At 7:30 A.M. [April 27, 1975, we traveled to] the location which had been selected for the special prayer which I felt prompted to offer in this land. . . . We walked through the woods . . . into a clearing overlooking the Elbe River, with Meissen on the right and Dresden on the left, Meissen being the birthplace of Karl G. Maeser, the founder of Brigham Young University. . . . During the prayer, I said, 'Today marks the dawning of a new beginning for this beautiful land.' As I used these words, we heard the unmistakable sound of a rooster crowing, followed by the pealing of a cathedral bell in the distance. The day had been overcast, but during the prayer the sun shone brilliantly upon us, warming our bodies and giv-

ing us the assurance that our Heavenly Father was pleased with the prayer which was being offered. . . . As we returned to our automobiles, the sun disappeared from the sky and the overcast condition which previously existed once again prevailed" (personal journal of Thomas S. Monson).

In his prayer of rededication, President Monson said, "Heavenly Father, wilt Thou open up the way that the faithful may be accorded the privilege of going to Thy holy temple, there to receive their holy endowments and to be sealed as families for time and all eternity" (journal of Thomas S. Monson).

This prayer was offered on Sunday, April 27, 1975, at a time when any thought of a temple was beyond the realm of possibility. It was fulfilled on June 29, 1985, with the dedication of the beautiful temple in Freiberg, GDR.

Temple-building in Europe Area is a modern miracle

As you know, temples are now or soon will be within the reach of many members in the Europe Area, from the Stockholm Sweden Temple in the north to the Johannesburg South Africa Temple to the south, with the London and Swiss temples in between. Many lands in the Europe Area are becoming the lands of temples. The Frankfurt Temple, located in a suburb named Friedricksdorf, which was an early settlement of the Huguenots, is nearing completion. The building of these temples in the Europe Area is a modern-day miracle. Temple work is proceeding at an accelerating pace.

Church growing rapidly in Ghana

We traveled to Ghana in West Africa. There the Church is growing rapidly and is on very solid footing. We traveled along the beautiful coast to a chapel that recently had been completed. After holding a meeting there, we traveled through the village of Cape Coast with President and Sister Ernest J. Miller.

As the sun was setting, we saw a large crowd of villagers. Young, old, and middle-aged all were pulling on a huge net and drawing it out of the water. We stopped and inquired about what they were doing. They were pulling in the fish caught that day. In the net were large and small fish of many kinds. Each villager put his hands to the net to help bring in the catch. The thought ran through my mind of the gathering of Israel in the last days as referred to in Jeremiah. The Lord said, "I will send for many fishers, . . . and they shall fish them" (Jeremiah 16:16).

Pull in the gospel net

That, brethren and sisters, is the mission of all of us as members of the Church: to put our hands on the net and pull in thousands of fine men and women who are searching for the truth. With this kind of effort, the Europe Area has pulled in these nets of converts, with a thirty-three percent increase in the number of convert baptisms in two years.

Understand and live the gospel

As I reflected upon our experiences in Europe, these thoughts impressed me. The gospel of Jesus Christ is more enduring than fame, more precious than riches, more to be desired than happiness. Understanding and living the gospel leads to the possession of a Christlike character. The aim of each of us is to live a great and exemplary life. A noble character is needed especially in this age when evil is rampant. I should like to caution our youth to live the gospel, develop strong character, and not indulge in those things that deviate from righteousness.

Our Heavenly Father has endowed us with hearts of courage and faith, with strong wills, and with the ability to understand and to see clearly the difference between right and wrong. He has mercifully clothed us, each member, with the gift of the Holy Ghost, which gives us insight and personal power.

And so, even though the tasks of life become heavy, and although sorrow thrusts a drooping burden upon us, the light that emanates from our Savior beckons us on, undismayed. A righteous self-discipline can and will rule our lives.

In closing, brothers and sisters, I want to say that this is the way we tried to represent the Church in Europe. I testify that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that President Ezra Taft Benson is our prophet, seer, and revelator, and that he bears the keys of the kingdom. I love this church with all my heart and

will do my best to serve, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

I was so overcome by Brother Wirthlin's testimony that I forgot that I was conducting.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, a new member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now address us.

Elder L. Tom Perry

Elder Wirthlin, I too add my welcome to a most unique body of men. You'll find men with dark hair and grey hair, some even with wider parts than others. And their personalities are just as varied as their hairstyles. That's the great blessing of belonging to the Council of the Twelve. For out of these divergent personalities comes a sweet unity under the inspiration of the Lord. It's most unique. Welcome, welcome, Brother Joseph.

Teach children the joy of honest labor

In Proverbs we read, "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (22:6).

One of the great challenges of life for parents from the very beginning has been succeeding in the very important task of rearing children. This great responsibility seems destined to bring the greatest joys and some of the greatest sorrows life has in store for us here in mortality.

Every child, of course, is different, and what works for one may not elicit the correct response from another. However, I believe that second only to ensuring that every child receives an understanding of the gospel

of our Lord and Savior is teaching them the joy of honest labor.

I was taught this by goodly parents. How grateful I am for a father who had the patience to teach me how to work. I remember as a lad, when I was only seven years old, we were remodeling our house and tearing out some of the walls. In those days two-by-sixes were used as studding. To the studs was nailed the lath, and over the lath came the plaster. When tearing out walls, the slats and the plaster were easy to knock off, but, of course, that left the nails in the two-by-sixes.

Lessons learned while stacking wood and straightening nails

Each night after the workers had finished, I had the responsibility of gathering up the two-by-sixes and taking them out to the back lawn, where there stood two sawhorses. There I was to make a pile of the two-by-sixes and then, one at a time, put them on the sawhorses, and with a crowbar remove the nails. After the nails had been pulled out of the studs, I was told to straighten them. Finally, I threw the straightened nails into a large green bucket and stacked the two-by-sixes in a neat pile.

Be productive in all labors

There was so much in this project that was of value to me in my young life. First, I was taught to be productive, to work, to be busily engaged, and not to waste my time in idleness.

From the very beginning, the Lord commanded Adam to till the earth and have dominion over the beasts of the field, to eat his bread by the sweat of his brow. I have always been interested in how often the scriptures have admonished us to cease to be idle and to be productive in all of our labors. King Benjamin in his final address noted his example before the people by saying:

"I say unto you that as I have been suffered to spend my days in your service, even up to this time, and have not sought gold nor silver nor any manner of riches of you; . . .

"And even I, myself, have labored with mine own hands that I might serve you, and that ye should not be laden with taxes, and that there should nothing come upon you which was grievous to be borne — and of all these things which I have spoken, ye yourselves are witnesses this day" (Mosiah 2:12, 14).

Teaching children the joy of honest labor is one of the greatest of all gifts you can bestow upon them. I am convinced that one of the reasons for the breakup of so many couples today is the failure of parents to teach and train sons in their responsibility to provide and care for their families and to enjoy the challenge this responsibility brings. Many of us also have fallen short in instilling within our daughters the desire of bringing beauty and order into their homes through homemaking.

Oh, how essential it is that children be taught early in life the joy that comes from starting and fashioning a job that is the workmanship of their own hands. Teach children the joy of honest labor. Provide a foundation for life that builds confidence and fulfillment in each life. "Happy is the man who has work he loves to

do. . . . Happy is the man who loves the work he has to do" (Anonymous).

Conserve resources

Second, as a lad doing the job my father had assigned to me, I was taught not to waste, to conserve resources where possible. When the nails were pulled from them, the two-by-sixes could be used again — and we did use them.

I have always enjoyed reading some of the counsel Brigham Young used to give to the Saints. His counsel was so practical. Listen to what he said about waste:

"Pick up everything. . . .

"Never consider that you have bread enough around you to suffer your children to waste a crust or a crumb of it. . . . Remember it, do not waste anything, but take care of everything. . . .

"If you wish to get rich, save what you get. A fool can earn money; but it takes a wise man to save and dispose of it to his own advantage" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1941], p. 292).

I wonder what kind of signals we are sending to our children when we purchase homes that are status symbols. We waste space and resources when we buy a larger home than is needed, a larger home than is practical for us to afford. We encumber ourselves with mortgages so large that they require the income of both husband and wife to make payments. Then we build consumer debt to the point of absorbing completely all of our disposable income, leaving no margin of safety for the rainy days that come into everyone's life. Do not such signals from heads of households only feed the philosophy of "I want it now" in the lives of our children?

Some even have the mistaken belief that after turning their ears away from the counsel of the prophets to avoid unnecessary debt, they can then turn to their bishops to bail them out of

their foolishness. About all the poor bishops can do is weep with them and help them move to more affordable housing, and then counsel them on how they can cut their losses.

As I remember events in my life, I do not believe there was any degree of difference in the happiness that I enjoyed when my two brothers and I shared a single bedroom than when we had a home large enough that each of us enjoyed a bedroom. Let us teach our children the art of conservation and the elimination of waste.

Work builds discipline and character

Third, I will never forget my consternation as I watched the workmen using new nails as they built the walls back up and completed remodeling our home. The pile of nails that I had straightened and put in the green bucket grew and grew and was never used. I went to my father and said, "Wouldn't it be better to save the new nails and use the ones I have straightened?" I was proud of the work I had accomplished.

My father showed me something very important. He took a new nail and, using an odd angle, drove it into a board. He was able to drive it straight and true. Then he took one of the nails I had straightened so carefully, and, using the same odd angle, hit it again and again. It soon bent and was impossible to drive into the board. So I learned that a used or bent nail is never as strong as a new one. But then why had my father asked me to straighten those nails?

As a boy, I never remembered receiving a satisfactory answer. It was not until I had a son of my own that I started to understand. When my son was about three years old, I took him out to the garden to help me weed. I assumed that he, being low to the ground at the time, would have a real advantage at weeding. Unfortunately for my garden, he had a difficult time distinguishing between the weeds and the young plants.

I then tried Lee at milking a cow we owned together with a neighbor. He quickly developed the hand action of a fine milker, but, sadly, his aim was not very good. Whenever I checked on him, he was always surrounded by a white puddle, and the milk bucket was nearly empty. He would look up at me and smile proudly, and my initial inclination to be angry would quickly dissipate — but I was frustrated. I expected him to help me, but he only seemed to create more work.

It was in such moments of frustration that I remembered straightening the nails for my father, and I began to understand. Work is something more than the final end result. It is a *discipline*. We must learn to do, and do well, before we can expect to receive tangible rewards for our labors. My father must have known that if he focused on the outcome of my labors, he would only become frustrated with how inadequately I did things then. So he found tasks that were difficult and would challenge me, to teach me the discipline of hard work. He was using the straightened nails not to rebuild our home but to build my character.

Finish each task and take pride in accomplishments

Finally, I was instructed to stack the used two-by-sixes in a neat pile so the workmen could use them the next day. My work was never finished until this was done and the tools were put away.

Let us also teach our children to see that the work assigned is carried to its completion, to take pride in what they accomplish. There is a real satisfaction that comes from finishing a task, especially when it is the best work we know how to do.

Value of childhood lessons learned about work

These lessons instilled in me a joy and appreciation for honest labor and prepared me for that time in my life

when I would have the responsibility of providing for a family. The principles I was taught by my wise father of honest labor, of not wasting, of discipline, and of seeing a task to its completion were basic to my success in any profession I might choose to follow. These lessons placed me in a position to face with confidence the challenges of an ever-changing world.

Is this not the same lesson that Paul was preaching when he declared: "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:

"Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us" (2 Thessalonians 3:8-9).

A Primary teacher's influence

An event occurred in my life about a month ago which impressed upon me the blessings that accrue to one over the years from good, early childhood training. I was delivered a note as I arrived at the airport that one of my very best friends had passed away and her funeral was in just an hour and a half in a community fifty miles from the airport. I made a quick change from air to surface transportation and started the drive to the funeral.

This great soul who had just passed away had been my Primary teacher for three years during my days as a Trail Builder when I was eight, nine, and ten years old. As I drove to Sister Call's funeral that morning, my mind was flooded with pleasant memories of my early childhood.

I especially remembered the powerful example of early childhood training — goodly parents who were always there to teach, inspire, love, and

give strong encouragement to help me chart the right course in my life. I remembered a kind aunt who lived next door, who fortified and provided a second witness to the teachings of my parents.

Then I remembered dear Sister Call, a Primary teacher who extended herself much beyond her classroom call. Her lessons included many field trips to teach us of life, labor, and the joy of association. Her special way of weaving her lessons into our lives gave us an understanding of our personal worth.

As I drove along the highway, my heart was filled with overwhelming gratitude for parents, extended family, and Church leaders who had the patience, love, and concern to build a foundation in the life of a child during those very critical years.

Should not *all* children receive such a blessing early in their lives? This is the Lord's work in which we are engaged. He has charted the course and revealed the fundamental principles that will lead us back to His presence. May we have the strength and the courage to follow Him is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "How Wondrous and Great" without announcement.

President Benson

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just addressed us, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "How Wondrous and Great."

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will now address us. He will be our concluding speaker.

President Thomas S. Monson

Have you ever cleaned an attic or rummaged through an old storeroom? One discovers a bit of history and a whole lot of sentiment. A few weeks ago we emptied the attic of our mountain cabin. Seventy years of treasures, each with its own special memory, passed in review. Leading the parade was an old high chair with metal wheels. This was followed by glass milk bottles that once had pasteboard caps and by a copy of *Life* magazine with a story from World War II.

A story from the past

Featured in the magazine was an account of a once proud airplane, a mighty bomber, found rather well preserved in an isolated corner of the vast Sahara Desert. The bomber and crew had participated in the famous raid over Rumania's Ploiesti oil fields. The craft had been struck by antiaircraft fire, which completely destroyed its communication and navigational equipment. As the stricken plane turned toward its desert landing field, a sudden sandstorm obliterated familiar points of reference. The field's landing lights were shrouded by sand. The plane droned on, even far beyond the landing field, into the desert wastes until, with fuel exhausted, it settled on the Sahara, never to fly again. All crew members perished. Home and the safety and shelter there to be found had been denied. Victory, hopes, dreams — all had been swallowed by the silence of the desert's dust.

The Liahona provided Lehi heavenly guidance

Centuries earlier, a righteous and loving father by the name of Lehi took his beloved family into this same desert wasteland. He journeyed in response to the voice of the Lord. But the Lord did not decree that such a "flight" be undertaken without heavenly help. The

words of Nephi describe the gift provided on the morning of the historic trek:

"And it came to pass that as my father arose in the morning, and went forth to the tent door, to his great astonishment he beheld upon the ground a round ball of curious workmanship; and it was of fine brass. And within the ball were two spindles; and the one pointed the way whither we should go into the wilderness" (1 Nephi 16:10).

War and man-made means of destruction could not confuse or destroy this curious compass. Neither could the sudden desert sandstorms render useless its guiding powers. The prophet Alma explained that this "Liahona," as it was called, was a compass prepared by the Lord. It worked for them according to their faith and pointed the way they should go (see Alma 37:38–40).

Patriarchal blessings provide heavenly guidance

The same Lord who provided a Liahona to Lehi provides for you and for me today a rare and valuable gift to give direction to our lives, to mark the hazards to our safety, and to chart the way, even safe passage — not to a promised land, but to our heavenly home. The gift to which I refer is known as your patriarchal blessing. Every worthy member of the Church is entitled to receive such a precious and priceless personal treasure.

"Patriarchal blessings," wrote the First Presidency in a letter to stake presidents, "contemplate an inspired declaration of the lineage of the recipient and, when so moved upon by the Spirit, an inspired and prophetic statement of the life mission of the recipient, together with such blessings, cautions and admonitions as the patriarch may be prompted to give for the accomplishment of such life's mission, it being always made clear that the realization of all promised blessings is conditioned upon faithfulness to the gospel of our

Lord, whose servant the patriarch is" (First Presidency letter to stake presidents, 28 June 1958).

The calling of a patriarch

Who is this man, this patriarch, through whom such seership and priesthood power flow? How is he called? The Council of the Twelve Apostles has special responsibility pertaining to the calling of such men. From my own experience I testify that patriarchs are called of God by prophecy. How else could our Heavenly Father reveal those to whom such prophetic powers are to be given? A patriarch holds an ordained office in the Melchizedek Priesthood. The patriarchal office, however, is one of blessing — not of administration. I have never called a man to this sacred office but what I have felt the Lord's guiding influence in the decision. May I share with you one treasured experience?

Many years back I had been assigned to name a patriarch for a stake in Logan, Utah. I found such a man, wrote his name on a slip of paper, and placed the note inside my scriptures. My further review revealed that another worthy patriarch had moved to this same area, making unnecessary the naming of a new patriarch. None was named.

Nine years later I was again assigned a stake conference in Logan. Once more a patriarch was needed for the stake I was to visit. I had been using a new set of scriptures for several years and had them in my briefcase. However, as I prepared to leave my home for the drive to Logan, I took from the bookcase shelf an older set of scriptures, leaving the new ones at home. During the conference I began my search for a patriarch: a worthy man, a blameless servant of God, one filled with faith, characterized by kindness. Pondering these requirements, I opened my scriptures and there discovered the slip of paper placed there long years before. I read the name written on the paper: Cecil B. Kenner. I asked the

stake presidency if by chance Brother Kenner lived in this particular stake. I found he did. Cecil B. Kenner was that day ordained a patriarch.

Profile of a patriarch

Patriarchs are humble men. They are students of the scriptures. They stand before God as the means whereby the blessings of heaven can flow from that eternal source to the recipient on whose head rests the hands of the patriarch. He may not be a man of letters, a possessor of worldly wealth, or a holder of distinguished office. He, however, must be blessed with priesthood power and personal purity. To reach to heaven for divine guidance and inspiration, a patriarch is to be a man of love, a man of compassion, a man of judgment, a man of God.

"Your patriarchal blessing is to you a personal Liahona"

A patriarchal blessing is a revelation to the recipient, even a white line down the middle of the road, to protect, inspire, and motivate activity and righteousness. A patriarchal blessing literally contains chapters from your book of eternal possibilities. I say eternal, for just as life is eternal, so is a patriarchal blessing. What may not come to fulfillment in this life may occur in the next. We do not govern God's timetable. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9).

Your patriarchal blessing is yours and yours alone. It may be brief or lengthy, simple or profound. Length and language do not a patriarchal blessing make. It is the Spirit that conveys the true meaning. Your blessing is not to be folded neatly and tucked away. It is not to be framed or published. Rather, it is to be read. It is to be loved. It is to be followed. Your patriarchal

blessing will see you through the darkest night. It will guide you through life's dangers. Unlike the struggling bomber of yesteryear, lost in the desert wastes, the sands and storms of life will not destroy you on your eternal flight. Your patriarchal blessing is to you a personal Liahona to chart your course and guide your way.

Choose the right path

In Lewis Carroll's classic, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Alice finds herself coming to a crossroads with two paths before her, each stretching onward but in opposite directions. She is confronted by the Cheshire Cat, of whom Alice asks, "Which path shall I take?"

The cat answers, "That depends where you want to go. If you do not know where you want to go, it doesn't really matter which path you take" (see *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* [London: J.M. Dent, 1954], p. 54).

Unlike Alice, each of us knows where he or she wants to go. It does matter which way we go, for the path we follow in this life surely leads to the path we shall follow in the next.

A patriarch's prophetic promise fulfilled

Patience may be required as we watch, wait, and work for a promised blessing to be fulfilled.

One afternoon Percy K. Fetzer, a righteous patriarch, came to my office by appointment. He was weeping as we visited together. He explained that he had just returned from the land of Poland, where he had been privileged to give patriarchal blessings to our worthy members there. After a long pause, the patriarch revealed that he had been impressed to promise to members of a German-speaking family by the name of Konietz declarations which could not be fulfilled. He had promised missions. He had promised temple blessings. These were beyond the reach of those whom he had blessed. He whispered that he had tried to withhold the

promises he knew were unattainable. It had been no use. The inspiration had come, the promises spoken, the blessings provided.

"What shall I do? What can I say?" he repeated to me.

I replied, "Brother Fetzer, these blessings have not come from you; they have been given of God. Let us kneel and pray to Him for their fulfillment."

Within several years of that prayer, an unanticipated pact was signed between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Polish nation which provided that German nationals trapped in Poland at war's end could now enter Germany. The Konietz family, whose members had received these special patriarchal blessings, came to live in West Germany. I had the privilege to ordain the father a bishop in the Dortmund stake of the Church. The family then made that long-awaited trek to the temple in Switzerland. They dressed in clothing of spotless white. They knelt at a sacred altar to await that ordinance which binds father, mother, brothers, and sisters not only for time, but for all eternity. He who pronounced that sacred sealing ceremony was the temple president. More than this, however, he was the same servant of the Lord, Percy K. Fetzer, who, as a patriarch years before, had provided those precious promises in the patriarchal blessings he had bestowed.

How far is Heaven?

It's not very far.

When you live close to God,

It's right where you are.

Your patriarchal blessing is your passport to peace in this life. It is a Liahona of light to guide you unerringly to your heavenly home. Of these sacred truths I testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has been our concluding speaker.

The Tabernacle Choir will sing in closing, "Lord, I Would Follow Thee." The benediction will be offered by Elder H. Burke Peterson of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

This conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The choir sang "Lord, I Would Follow Thee."

Elder H. Burke Peterson offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

FIFTH SESSION

The fifth session of the 156th Semiannual General Conference commenced at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, October 5, 1986.

President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

Music was provided by the Tabernacle Choir, directed by Donald Ripplinger with John Longhurst at the organ.

President Hinckley made the following remarks at the outset of the meeting.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked that I conduct this session.

We extend a sincere welcome to all assembled this afternoon in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City in the fifth and concluding session of the 156th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We also welcome those seated in the Assembly Hall, where Elder

Vaughn J. Featherstone and Bishop Robert D. Hales are seated on the stand.

We send our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere who are participating in these proceedings by radio, television, cable, or by means of satellite transmission.

The Tabernacle Choir, with Donald Ripplinger directing and John Longhurst at the organ, is providing the music for this session. The choir will begin this service by singing "Let Zion in Her Beauty Rise." The invocation will be offered by Elder F. Arthur Kay of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Let Zion in Her Beauty Rise."

Elder F. Arthur Kay offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our first speaker, following which the choir will sing "Joy in the Morning."

Elder Russell M. Nelson

"Joy cometh in the morning"

The title of my message is taken from the thirtieth Psalm, verse 5: "Joy

cometh in the morning." As I discussed this scripture with members of our family, they recalled that "men are, that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25),

but they had not pondered the intriguing concept that "joy cometh in the morning."

One of our family said: "News reports appear almost daily concerning people who have problems with drugs, drinking, and emotional distress. How can they, and we, attain the joy spoken of in the scriptures?"

"The gospel of Jesus Christ offers hope," I answered. "It declares joy to be part of our divine destiny. And to experience joy in the morning becomes our special challenge. The true test," I continued, "is to be able to look in the mirror, first thing in the morning, and feel real joy."

One of our daughters, who had recently announced that she was expecting a new addition to the family, said, "But Dad, that's the hardest time of the day for me!"

Factors needed to feel joy in the morning

"My dear ones," I replied, "in order to experience true joy in the morning, or at any time, at least three factors are needed. You need to feel good about the people with whom you live and work — your companions in life. You must feel good about yourself — not in any sense of conceit, but simply a proper esteem for yourself, well deserved. And possibly most important, you must feel good about your relation to God and sincerely love him."

As I so counseled my family in that conversation, we all might consider those three steps to achieve real joy in life.

Joy comes to those who are courteous

Joy in the morning begins with courtesy to companions. When shades of slumber first admit the light of dawn, I reach gently for my beloved companion nearby. I gain sweet reassurance that all is well with her even before my eyes are fully opened. That reminds me, incidentally, of advice given by

President David O. McKay, who said, "During courtship we should keep our eyes wide open, but after marriage keep them half-shut" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1956, p. 9).

My sweetheart has done that. Through our many long years of post-graduate study, professional responsibilities, and a growing family, she did not complain. Recently I overheard a conversation she had with young mothers enduring similar stress. They asked her how she had managed with ten children and a husband whose time to help was so limited. Kindness was reflected in her reply: "Through our struggling years I didn't expect much, so I was rarely disappointed."

She is special. With her, it is easy to obey the scriptural injunction to "live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of [thy] life" (Ecclesiastes 9:9).

Not all of us are blessed with such wonderful eternal companions — not yet anyway. Many of us who are married cannot be together as much as we would like. Thankfully, we all have companionship of family and friends.

Privilege of rendering significant service

Recently another General Authority was my partner for mission tours to dusty places. On occasion, when I returned from a morning shower, I found to my surprise that this considerate companion had shined my shoes. Gratefully I wondered if each of the thirty thousand missionaries now laboring in the Lord's service would have, and be, as kind a friend as he was to me, thoughtfully rendering simple acts of courtesy to a companion.

Joy cometh in the morning to those who have earned the night's rest of a laborer. One of life's sweetest returns is the privilege of rendering significant service of worth to others. To be able to do for fellow human beings something they could not do for themselves brings matchless satisfaction. Years of preparation are worth it.

And joy is derived in Church service. Alma so expressed this thought: "That perhaps I may be an instrument in the hands of God to bring some soul to repentance . . . is my joy" (Alma 29:9).

Through service in the temples, the concept of courtesy to companions can be nobly extended to those who have passed beyond the veil. The gospel brings glad tidings for the dead and a voice of gladness for the living and the dead — for all, glad tidings of great joy (see D&C 128:19).

Even when death's veil separates us from parents who gave so much that we might be, their righteous influence continues with us. And as they may watch from windows of heaven, their mornings will be brighter if they can truly say, as did the Apostle, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (3 John 1:4).

Be chaste

Above all, courtesy to companions cannot be defiled by disobedience to the law of chastity. That sin is joy's deadly poison. The first morning's glance in the mirror cannot reflect joy if there is any recollection of misdeeds the night before. The surest step toward joy in the morning is virtue in the evening! Virtue includes courtesy to companions all day long.

Joy comes to those who have proper self-esteem

The next prerequisite to joy is to feel good about yourself. The second of our Lord's two great commandments carries a double charge: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:39). Therefore, love of companion is governed, in part, by esteem of self, and so is joy in the morning.

Each individual should understand the nature of his or her own soul. Profound insight is provided by this revelation:

"For man is spirit. The elements are eternal, and spirit and element,

inseparably connected, receive a fullness of joy;

"And when separated, man cannot receive a fullness of joy" (D&C 93:33-34).

Therefore, spiritual and physical elements each must be nurtured if we are to earn proper self-esteem.

Gratitude, prayer, and scripture study bring spiritual self-esteem

Spiritual self-esteem begins with the realization that each new morning is a gift from God. Even the air we breathe is a loving loan from him. He preserves us from day to day and supports us from one moment to another (see Mosiah 2:21).

Therefore, our first noble deed of the morning should be a humble prayer of gratitude. Scripture so counsels: "Pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto [you]; and [you] shall see his face with joy" (Job 33:26; see also Alma 34:21, 37:37).

I did not fully appreciate the significance of prayerful greetings until I became a father myself. I am so grateful that our children never gave their mother or dad the silent treatment. Now I sense how our Heavenly Father may appreciate our prayers, morning and night. But I can imagine the pangs of his sorrow because of silence from any of his children. To me, such ingratitude seems comparable to sullen goldfish oblivious to kind providers who sprinkle food in their bowl. Indeed, those who pray can "worship God with exceedingly great joy" (Alma 45:1).

I learned long ago that a period of uninterrupted scriptural study in the morning brings enduring enrichment. I feel as did Jeremiah: "Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart" (Jeremiah 15:16). Sacred scriptures have been repeatedly described as "glad tidings of great joy" (Helaman 16:14, Mosiah 3:3, Alma 13:22; see also Luke 2:10). As we learn and abide their teachings, that joy becomes part of our lives.

Develop personal talents

Joy cometh in the morning when personal talents are developed. Each of us is blessed with different potential. I don't think I could get up early enough to become a portrait painter. But I have appreciated teachings since my earliest childhood from parents who knew the joy that good music brings. And some of the sweetest sounds in our home have been those from songs and instruments of children improving their talents.

Even in Old Testament days, "David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of musick, . . . sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy" (1 Chronicles 15:16).

Confidence to begin each morning ready to meet the challenges of the day comes from spiritual self-esteem.

Exercise regularly and obey the Word of Wisdom

Physical self-esteem also requires nurturing. Our bodies deserve thoughtful care. I echo this declaration of Paul:

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

"If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Corinthians 3:16-17).

Physical conditioning from regular exercise is important. And we can do so much more to keep our bodies strong.

In 1833 the Prophet Joseph Smith received the Word of Wisdom by revelation. It includes these simple directives: we are not to drink alcohol, tea, or coffee, and we are not to use tobacco. Prophets in our generation and in this conference have told us also to avoid harmful drugs. Now medical science increasingly confirms the physical benefits of compliance with these teachings.

The damaging effects of alcohol are so widely known, additional com-

ment is hardly needed. Harm inflicted by alcohol has been demonstrated, for example, by a study of the relationship between alcohol consumption among expectant mothers and the birth weight of their newborn infants. Findings published from the U. S. National Institutes of Health disclosed that consumption of one to two alcoholic drinks a day was associated with a substantially increased risk of producing a growth-retarded infant (see James L. Mills, et. al., "Maternal Alcohol Consumption and Birth Weight," *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 12 Oct. 1984, pp. 1875-79).

Scientists now know that smoking of tobacco is the number one preventable cause of death in all the world. It is the leading preventable cause of heart disease, lung disease, artery disease, and cancer (see William W. Pollin and R. T. Ravenholt, "Tobacco Addiction and Tobacco Mortality," *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 23 Nov. 1984, pp. 2849-54; 1986 *Heart Facts*, American Heart Association, 1986, p. 16; "The Health Consequences of Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General," publication DHHS (PHS) 84-50204, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Services, Office of Smoking and Health, Rockville, Md., 1983).

Still another report indicates that more than one-fourth of all deaths in the United States are now caused by conditions which physicians classify as addictive disorders (see Pollin and Ravenholt, p. 2849).

Obedience to the Word of Wisdom keeps one free from all such addictions. This protection is pronounced by covenant in the last verse of the eighty-ninth section of the Doctrine and Covenants:

"And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them" (D&C 89:21).

This reference to the first Passover reminds us that, *in faith*, ancient Israel was obedient to the commandment to take blood and "strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses" (Exodus 12:7).

"And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not . . . destroy you" (Exodus 12:13).

So, *in faith*, modern Israel is commanded to obey the Word of Wisdom. It becomes our token of a covenant with the Lord—a spiritual separator of covenant Israel from the rest of the world.

Joy cometh in the morning—to those who can stand before the mirror and feel clean, to those whose mouths are free from the taste of flavors forbidden by the Lord, to those whose spirits and bodies are free from feelings of self-remorse.

Joy comes to those who love God

The crowning attribute that leads to joy is love of God. Even that first look in the mirror can be more enjoyable knowing we are created in his image. Each of us can say, as did the Apostle, "Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance" (Acts 2:28; see also Psalm 16:11).

God, who gave us life, also gave us commandments to live by, that we might have joy. They have been revealed periodically by prophets from Adam to President Benson. One wrote this expression: "Consider . . . the blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God. For behold, they are blessed in all things, both temporal and spiritual" (Mosiah 2:41).

Seek blessings of repentance

But for those who have not known his ways or who have strayed from them, remember, it is not too late to change. Blessings from faith and repentance still can be yours.

To those who feel defeated and downtrodden, look to the early hours of the day for your rescue. The Lord tells us, "Cease to sleep longer than is needful; retire to thy bed early, that ye may not be weary; arise early, that your bod-

ies and your minds may be invigorated" (D&C 88:124).

The dawning of a brighter day heralds a time of forgiveness. Shadows of yesterday's grief melt in the rays of early morn's opportunity.

Posterity brings joy

Joy comes from our posterity, and we rejoice as they are blessed by the ordinances of salvation and exaltation.

Our family experienced that in a special way recently as our youngest daughter was sealed to her eternal companion in the holy temple. To witness this event, along with other family members, were her parents and all eight of her older sisters and their husbands. For us, there was truly joy in the morning on that day. Then we really felt the scriptural truth, "Men are, that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25).

Morning of the first resurrection

These experiences, glorious as they are, become but prelude to that great day ahead, when the faithful will stand at the latter day upon the earth. They shall abide the Second Coming of the Lord and shall stand with him when he appears (see Malachi 3:2–12, 3 Nephi 24:2–12). On that joyous morning, the mirror will reflect the miracle of the first resurrection. The faithful shall be crowned with glory, immortality, and eternal life (see D&C 75:5, 138:51).

Once again "morning stars [will] sing together, and . . . all the sons [and daughters] of God [will] shout for joy!" (D&C 128:23; see also Job 38:7). For on that morning, "the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together" (Isaiah 40:5; see also Ezekiel 20:48, Luke 3:6, D&C 101:23).

Then, "there'll be peace and contentment evermore, ev'ry heart, ev'ry voice on that day will rejoice. . . . There'll be joy in the morning on that day" (Natalie Sleeth, "Joy in the Morning," Carol Stream, Illinois: Hope Publishing Co., 1977, pp. 4–5, 9–10).

It shall be ours — through our faithfulness — I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Joy in the Morning."

President Hinckley

I promise that when I look in the mirror in the morning I will smile.

Elder Franklin D. Richards

Temple work brings joy

We have heard how the Holy Ghost directs us. I remember years ago in a temple meeting that President David O. McKay suggested that even though you prepare a talk ten days before conference, the Lord can inspire you then as well as when you are at the podium. I couldn't help but think of that as I listened to Elder Russell M. Nelson speak about joy and as the choir sang about joy, as I am about to speak to you about happiness and joy in temple work. My dear brothers and sisters, I am indeed happy to be with you in this great conference, and I pray that I may be guided by the Spirit of the Lord in speaking to you.

The First Presidency of the Church has outlined the mission of the Church to be to take the gospel to all mankind, to perfect the Saints, and to do temple and genealogy work for ourselves and the dead.

Many times I have spoken about the joy and happiness one receives in doing missionary work. Today I would like to make specific reference to the joy and happiness one receives in doing temple work. A few months ago, Sister Richards and I returned after having the great privilege of supervising the temple work in the Washington, D.C., Temple for a little over two years.

It may be rather late, but I would like to bring you the love and greetings of the workers and patrons of the Wash-

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "Joy in the Morning."

We shall now hear from Elder Franklin D. Richards of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and he will be followed by Elder A. Theodore Tuttle of that same quorum.

ington Temple, and I am pleased to report to you that there is a great spirit and substantial growth and development in the kingdom in that part of the Lord's vineyard.

Those two years in Washington were a period of many beautiful spiritual experiences for Sister Richards and myself, and daily we were able to see evidences of love and service to our fellowmen.

Our Father in Heaven is a loving parent. He has said, "For behold, this is my work and my glory — to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). To this end, He restored the gospel in this dispensation.

Why temples?

The Latter-day Saints build temples because they have been instructed to do so, in order that holy ordinances may be performed in them for both the living and the dead. The performance of these ordinances is possible because genealogical work and temple work are inseparably connected. It is important to realize that the blessings of the temple are not limited to any special class, but are available to all worthy Church members properly accredited.

I would like to refer briefly to three areas having to do with temple attendance.

First, for the living: For the living, such ordinances as baptism, the bestowal of the Holy Ghost, and the

ordination to the priesthood may be performed in any proper place outside of a temple. However, through modern revelation we are told that certain ordinances such as the endowment, eternal marriage, sealing ordinances for both the living and the dead, and baptisms for the dead must be performed in a temple.

The temple endowment embodies sacred covenants upon which blessings are predicated. It is also, in effect, a course of instruction whereby many of the answers are given to the question "What is the purpose of life?"

The endowment, of course, is an ordinance for the individual, whereas sealing ordinances pertain to a family relationship.

Second, for the dead: The ministry of Christ was not confined to the few who lived on the earth in the meridian of time, and it is not confined only to those living now. The Apostle Peter made it clear that those who do not have the opportunity to hear the gospel on this earth will have such an opportunity in the spirit world (see 1 Peter 3:18-20, 4:6). And the apostle Paul in writing to the Corinthians asked, "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?" (1 Corinthians 15:29).

Temple worship provides an opportunity to do ordinance work for our kindred dead and for others, an opportunity for us to serve the dead. This service is the source of eternal satisfaction. However, it is well to remember that vicarious service for the dead by the living does not affect the right of the dead to accept or reject such vicarious service.

Third, as a retreat: A temple is a retreat from the vicissitudes of life, a place of prayer and meditation providing an opportunity to receive inner peace, inspiration, guidance, and, frequently, solutions to the problems that vex our daily lives.

A temple is a place where the divine spark in man, or the infinite in man, can seek the infinite in God.

Spiritual experiences in the temple

I have witnessed the joy and satisfaction that come to those who serve in the temple. I recall on one occasion a sister coming through the temple door, her face bright with anticipation and her step quickened. She was a temple worker who had been back home for a visit. She grasped my hand and said: "It's so good to be back. I love my service in the temple, and know I cannot be happy, really happy, away from it. It brings me a joy and satisfaction that is found in no other place. I feel a sense of accomplishment in doing something of eternal value. It's a little like the work of the Savior, who did for mankind what they could not do for themselves. This work brings peace to my soul—yes, the peace that passeth understanding."

One day, Sister Richards and I walked into the baptistry about noon and noticed a young girl sitting on one of the benches. As we talked with her, she told us she was from West Virginia and it was her twelfth birthday. Her mother had asked her what she wanted for a birthday present, and she had asked that her mother bring her to the temple so that she could perform baptisms for the dead.

What an opportunity temple workers have to touch the hearts of our brothers and sisters of all ages!

I recall a letter from a bishop in an eastern Canadian ward. He stated in this letter:

"We appreciate the privilege of bringing our youth to the temple. Our kids must be worthy. We see kids waiting for their turn with tears running down their faces. We have had many spiritual experiences. One young man who wasn't going on a mission said, 'Now, I'll have to go.' Our temple trips have been successful beyond our hopes. Lives have literally been changed. The kids consider this a great spiritual experience."

As we do temple work, we develop a spiritual kinship with our Heavenly Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ that brings us peace, happiness, and eternal joy.

In the temple there is an influence and spirit that touches the minds, hearts, and souls of those present. Yes, it is truly the House of the Lord.

Temples are one of the great blessings of this dispensation

It has been said that the story of temple work is a story of love — the love of God for man, and of men for God and for each other.

Let us not allow the wealth, the honors of men, or the vain things of the world to keep us from being worthy of this sacred privilege that can be ours. We are indeed blessed to have come to earth at this time, when these beautiful saving ordinances have been restored to the earth, and to have the privilege of participating in them.

I encourage members of the Church to participate in temple work in every way possible, as a most rewarding way to build the kingdom of God. The purposes of the Lord are being ac-

complished, souls are being saved, and prophecy is being fulfilled. Yes, we can be grateful that we live in the dispensation of the fulness of times — when God the Father and His Son have appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith; when the gospel in its fulness has been restored; when the priesthood, or the power to act in the name of God, has been restored; and when Christ's church again is established upon the earth. And how we sustain our beloved prophet Ezra Taft Benson who, through revelation, leads and directs the affairs of the kingdom of God on the earth in this day.

May we leave this conference strengthened and motivated with a greater desire to lengthen our stride. May the kingdom of God go forth, that the kingdom of heaven may come, and may the choice blessings of our Father in Heaven be with you, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Elder Franklin D. Richards. We shall now be privileged to hear Elder A. Theodore Tuttle of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder A. Theodore Tuttle

My beloved brothers and sisters, I would be ungrateful if I did not thank the many of you who have prayed for my well-being over the past few months. Medical science is marvelous, but above and beyond that, it takes special blessings from our Heavenly Father for healing to occur. I appreciate your prayers in my behalf.

Have faith to do what the Lord commands

I was told of a conversation by a Primary teacher, who related what transpired in his class. He was teaching the eleven-year-olds. He asked the question: "Suppose the Lord asked you to

build a spaceship big enough to take you and your family and provisions off this planet? Could you do it?"

Steve spoke up and said, "Yes."

And the teacher said, "Have you ever built a spaceship?"

"No."

"Have you ever built a model spaceship?"

"No."

"Have you ever seen one?"

Steve said, "Yes, on TV." But then he declared, "You said the Lord told me to build it. If the Lord told me to build it, I could do it."

I wonder how many of us as adults have that kind of faith. I would like to read in the Book of Mormon a great

example of this kind of faith. I go to the seventeenth chapter of 1 Nephi:

"And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto me [Nephi], saying: Thou shalt construct a ship, after the manner which I shall show thee, that I may carry thy people across these waters" (v. 8).

Listen to the answer of this great Nephi:

"And I said: Lord, whither shall I go that I may find ore to molten, that I may make tools to construct the ship after the manner which thou hast shown unto me?" (v. 9).

And when his brothers realized that he was actually going to set about to build a ship, they said: "Why, you're a fool. You don't know how to construct a ship" (see v. 17).

And then Nephi set about to teach them a great lesson.

Spiritual history helps us develop faith in the Lord

How do you *develop* faith?

Let's learn a great lesson from what transpired with Nephi. He started to recount the things that had happened that they all knew were a part of their heritage. He went back to the coming of the children of Israel out of Egypt. He said: "You know what happened. There they were right against the Red Sea with the Egyptians coming, and the Lord saved them" (see vs. 26-27).

Then he goes on and talks about how they received manna in the wilderness, how they received water from a rock, how the Lord led them by a pillar of cloud in the daytime and a light at night, and how when they crossed the Jordan, it stopped when the feet of the priests touched the water (see vs. 28-30, 32; see also Exodus 13:21, Joshua 3:15-17). And then Nephi tells how the Lord scattered the people; and then how, when they came among the flying serpents, Moses fashioned a brazen serpent, raised it, and all they had to do was look at that serpent, and they would be healed. The account says that many perished because they wouldn't

even look (see vs. 32, 41; see also Numbers 21:8-9).

He was trying to do what you and I as parents need to do with our families today — to develop faith in the Lord. And the way to do it is to recount the examples of faith that have happened in our history and in our heritage and with our people. That's the value of history. It contains accounts of faith of our own blood and ancestry and of our own people and our children. As has already been said in this conference, we cannot go one generation without losing faith if we do not do this. And to rear a generation of faith for what we must do in these days, you and I simply must develop and increase faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Faith precedes the miracle

There's another principle: that is, that faith precedes the miracle. This lesson is found in Ether, chapter 12. You'll recall that Moroni was abridging the records of the twenty-four plates, and this is what he records:

"And it came to pass that Ether did prophesy great and marvelous things unto the people, which they did not believe, because they saw them not" (v. 5).

They couldn't see them; they wouldn't believe them. They needed to be taught that *believing* is seeing. And then Moroni interpolates here:

"And now, I, Moroni, would speak somewhat concerning these things; I would show unto the world that faith is things which are hoped for and not seen; wherefore, dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness until *after* the trial of your faith" (v. 6; italics added).

We need to learn that. We can't have just faith. We cannot have the miracle until *after* the exercise of faith. Moroni sets forth on the next page or so instances of those miracles that have occurred after the trial of the faith of the people. We need to learn that principle as well.

Faith to finance a mission

I recall that when I was twenty years old, I went for an interview with the bishop to go on a mission. When I returned, my mother, all smiles, said, "Well, Ted, what did the bishop say?"

"He said I couldn't go."

"Why not?" my mother asked.

And I said, "Because we don't have enough money."

"If my father could leave two children and another to be born shortly after he left, you can go."

I said, "I know that, but the bishop doesn't."

Parenthetically, I might say that he was doing his job right. He asked me if I had any money. I told him I had a few hundred dollars that I had earned that summer.

He said, "Then what?"

I said, "My dad would send it to me."

He said, "Does your dad have it?"

I said, "No," and he didn't. We had lost our sheep herd during the Depression. My father was a livestock dealer buying lambs and wool on commission, and that was a very uncertain income.

The bishop said, "The Brethren have had some serious experiences, and so you cannot go unless you can guarantee that you'll have sufficient money."

I accepted that, and that's what I told my mother.

That night we waited for Dad to come home and then held a family council. We concluded that we didn't then have enough money — and that we wouldn't, so far as we could see, anytime in the future. We decided to ask our neighbor, Tom Anderson, a rather wealthy man, if he would help. When we explained our situation, he said, "You tell the bishop that I will 'back you.'"

Before the bishop opened his business the next morning, I was there waiting to tell him that Tom Anderson said he would back me. The bishop said, "That's all I need to know."

The interesting thing was that we never did have to call on Brother Anderson. My folks would send that check and with it a note, "This is for this month, and we'll have the next month's, too."

Faith is essential to survival

I am a product of a household of faith. I learned faith in my home. I was taught it. It was drilled into me. I need that faith now as much as I ever did.

I think we all do. We're not going to survive in this world, temporally or spiritually, without increased faith in the Lord — and I don't mean a positive mental attitude — I mean downright solid faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the one thing that gives vitality and power to otherwise rather weak individuals.

I bear you my humble witness that I know that God lives. I know that he lives, that he is our Father, that he loves us. I bear witness that Jesus is the Christ, our Savior and our Redeemer.

I understand better what that means now. I am grateful for his atonement in our behalf and for knowing something about our relationship to him and to our Heavenly Father and about the meaning and purpose of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I am grateful for Joseph Smith. I know he was a prophet, and I know that President Ezra Taft Benson is a living prophet today. I bear that witness in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

He to whom we have just listened is Elder A. Theodore Tuttle of the First Quorum of the Seventy. I should perhaps be guilty of an indiscretion, but I think I will risk it and say that Brother Tuttle has been seriously ill and he needs our faith, the faith of which he has spoken. It will be appreciated if those who have listened to him across the Church would plead with our Father in Heaven, in the kind of faith which he has described, in his behalf.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet," following which Bishop Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, will speak to us.

The choir and congregation sang "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

Bishop Henry B. Eyring spoke without further announcement.

Bishop Henry B. Eyring

God honors his promises

At the close of the last general conference, President Benson said this: "I bless you with increased *understanding* of the Book of Mormon. I promise you that from this moment forward, if we will daily sup from its pages and abide by its precepts, God will pour out upon each child of Zion and the Church a blessing hitherto unknown" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1986, p. 100; or *Ensign*, May 1986, p. 78).

I bear my testimony that I have been blessed as He promised, and I have seen new blessings come to people I love. I am grateful that God honors the promises he makes through his prophet.

Some people doubt God's promises

Even as I feel that gratitude, I think of those whose hearts ache over promises yet unfulfilled. Tonight, or tomorrow, many of us will pray with real intent, and perhaps with tears, over someone whose happiness would bring us happiness, who has been promised all the blessings of peace that come with baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost, and yet who counts the promises worthless. None of us is immune, because all of us have circles of love large enough to include such people. My heart is drawn especially to those asking the question we all have asked: "How can I be sure I have done all I can to help?"

The spark of faith never dies

Fifty years ago, in October conference, President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., of the First Presidency, gave this answer, which I carry copied on a card:

"It is my hope and my belief that the Lord never permits the light of faith wholly to be extinguished in any human heart, however faint the light may glow. The Lord has provided that there shall still be there a spark which, with teaching, with the spirit of righteousness, with love, with tenderness, with example, with living the Gospel, shall brighten and glow again, however darkened the mind may have been. And if we shall fail so to reach those among us of our own whose faith has dwindled low, we shall fail in one of the main things which the Lord expects at our hands" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1936, p. 114).

That lovely metaphor — of a spark, a spark of faith — gives me confidence. President Clark pictured the spark nearly hidden, almost smothered by the ashes of transgression. It may be so small that the person can't feel its warmth. The heart may be hardened. Even the Holy Spirit may have been forced to withdraw. But the spark still lives, and glows, and may be fanned to flame.

Teach faith and repentance to fan the spark

President Clark also suggested what we can do. He did not suggest a single approach to reach all people. But he described what every effort that succeeds in fanning the spark will include.

Teaching is first. But what should we teach? Suppose time and opportunity are scarce, as they generally are with people who don't think they need your teaching. If you had the gift, and the chance, to teach only one thing, what would it be?

For me the answer is illustrated in the success of a great man whose heart ached over someone he loved. His name was Alma, and his son, Alma, went about trying to destroy the true church. You remember that in response to the prayers of his father, and of faithful members of the Church, God sent an angel to rebuke the son.

The rebuke brought young Alma such remorse that he would have been destroyed had he not remembered his father's teaching. He described it this way:

"And now, for three days and for three nights was I racked, even with the pains of a damned soul.

"And it came to pass that as I was thus racked with torment, while I was harrowed up by the memory of my many sins, behold, I remembered also to have heard my father prophesy unto the people concerning the coming of one Jesus Christ, a Son of God, to atone for the sins of the world.

"Now, as my mind caught hold upon this thought, I cried within my heart: O Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy on me, who am in the gall of bitterness, and am encircled about by the everlasting chains of death" (Alma 36:16-18).

Because his father had taught him that the Savior was his only source of hope, Alma began the process which took him to full repentance. If I had the chance to teach one thing, it would be what it means and how it feels to exercise faith in Jesus Christ unto repentance.

To do it I would try to take the person I loved on a journey from when we were with a loving Father in Heaven to when we can go home to him again. We would see the fall of Adam and Eve and feel its effects on us. We would go to Bethlehem and rejoice at the birth of

the Son of God, and to the Garden and to Golgotha as our hearts break at the transcendent gift of the Atonement. And we would go to the open tomb, and to Galilee, and to this hemisphere to feel hope in keeping the commandments of the risen Lord. Then we would go to a grove in New York to watch the boy Joseph Smith talk with God the Father and his resurrected Son, to begin the errand that restored the ordinances of the gospel, which can lead us home again.

Teach with love and tenderness

President Clark understood that a person in whom faith is an ember won't receive even great teaching unless his heart is softened. And so he said that we must touch the person with the spirit of righteousness, with love, and with tenderness. Now, you and I might rightly feel that what he asks is nearly superhuman. In our efforts to invite others back, we have felt rejection and even ridicule. We may feel fatigue, frustration, and sometimes guilt. How then can we keep reaching out in a spirit of righteousness, with love and tenderness?

The best answer I know comes from another wonderful father. His name was Mormon. He wrote a letter to his son Moroni in a time when they met not only rejection but unbridled hatred, and faced not only frustration but almost certain failure. Mormon wanted Moroni to meet even such a test with love and tenderness and the spirit of righteousness. He gave a formula, the same one given by true prophets in all ages. It has always worked. The promise is sure. Here it is, from Mormon's letter:

"And the first fruits of repentance is baptism; and baptism cometh by faith unto the fulfilling the commandments; and the fulfilling the commandments bringeth remission of sins;

"And the remission of sins bringeth meekness, and lowliness of heart; and because of meekness and lowliness of heart cometh the visitation

of the Holy Ghost, which Comforter filleth with hope and perfect love, which love endureth by diligence unto prayer, until the end shall come, when all the saints shall dwell with God" (Moroni 8:25–26).

If you try to imagine the Savior restoring a lost sheep to the fold, won't you picture him cradling it in his arms? That tenderness and love, Mormon testified to his son, is the natural result of the atonement of Jesus Christ operating in our lives. Our faith leads us to repentance, to the gifts of the Spirit, and from that to the perfect love which the Master Shepherd has, and knows we must have to serve him.

Teach by example

The effects of the Atonement in our lives can also produce in us the example those we love will need. I learned again the other night the example we need to be.

I was chatting with my wife at the end of a long day. Three of our children were in the room, listening. I turned and noticed that one of them was watching me — and watching my face intently. And then he asked me, softly, "Why are you unhappy?" I tried to give a reason for my furrowed brow, but I realized later that he could well have been asking this deeper question: "Can I see in you the hope for peace in this life that Jesus promised?"

To turn my thoughts from what darkened my look to what would brighten it, I went to another letter from Mormon to his son. Both Mormon and Moroni were facing days of difficulty that make my challenges pale. Mormon knew his son might be overcome with gloom and foreboding, so he told him the perfect antidote. He told him that he could choose, by what he put in his mind, to become an example of hope. Here is what he wrote:

"My son, be faithful in Christ; and may not the things which I have written grieve thee, to weigh thee down unto

death; but may Christ lift thee up, and may his sufferings and death, and the showing his body unto our fathers, and his mercy and long-suffering, and the hope of his glory and of eternal life, rest in your mind forever" (Moroni 9:25).

Center on the Savior and his atonement

What we can do to help — teaching, and doing it with the spirit of righteousness, with love, with tenderness, with example — centers on the Savior and his atonement. That is what we would teach. The Atonement working in our lives will produce in us the love and tenderness we need. And by remembering him and his gift, which we promise to do as we take the sacrament each week, we can put a light of hope in our faces which those we love need so much to see.

Live the gospel to ignite the spark of faith

President Clark reminded us, at the end of his suggestions, that there is, and always will be, free agency. The spark won't glow brighter until the person tries living the gospel. That is why we hope so much that those we love will be called and will fulfill some assignment, however small. After their choice to serve others, to sacrifice, to try the commandments with promise, the spark of faith ignites. Even after we have done all we can do, that choice — whether to act on what faith they have — must be theirs.

I bear my testimony that God lives, Jesus is the Christ, and in this dispensation, through prophets from Joseph Smith to Ezra Taft Benson, he has given the power to offer again the full blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I pray that we may never cease to offer the opportunity to choose those blessings to those in whom the spark of faith may yet be fanned to flame. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Bishop Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder F. Burton Howard of the First Quorum of the Seventy, who serves as president of the South America North Area of the Church in São Paulo.

Elder F. Burton Howard

"Come back to the Lord"

From the beginning, prophets have called almost all men to repentance. Those who have not known about the gospel have been exhorted to abandon their sinful ways, keep the commandments, and join with the people of the Lord.

But prophets have also pled with another group — those who were once believers, but who, because of pride or sin or something else, abandoned the faith. In this group are the less active, the critics, the uncommitted, and the rebellious. These are Church members who have grown away from God as they have grown older. To these, the invitation has always been to come back to the Lord.

As we think about members of the Church repenting and returning to activity, the stories of Saul or Alma may come to mind. Some may be waiting for a similar miraculous experience before committing themselves again. However, they will probably wait in vain. For, as the Savior taught his disciples, "if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:31).

The way back is clearly marked

Without some such incentive to change, others may wonder if it is possible to return to faith from doubt. Can the cynic ever really become as a little child? Can the slave of habit or passion become free again? Is there a way back? If so, is it worth the effort to find and follow it? Where and when does one begin?

There is a way — for surely prophets do not teach in vain. And, just as surely, the Lord hears the prayers of teachers and leaders and parents who pray for the return of those who are lost.

Some may think the way is not clearly marked, for in all of scripture there are but a few instances recorded of former believers ever repenting. Be that as it may, the fact remains that thousands have returned from inactivity. Let me tell you about some who did.

A couple that returned

When I was first called to be a bishop, I inherited a large ward. Many of the eight hundred or so members did not come out to church. I had never met them and resolved to do so.

One Sunday afternoon in November, I went to visit an inactive family. As I came up to the house, a woman was sweeping the porch. I introduced myself as the new bishop and asked if her husband was home.

"Yes," she said, "but he won't talk to you. We are tired of being bothered. My husband asked the other bishop to take our names off the records of the Church. We don't want home teachers. We don't want people collecting fast offerings. We just want to be left alone."

She changed her grip on the broom. "Now get out," she said. "Get off my porch, get out of my yard, and don't come back." The broom was coming at me as I backed down the steps. I stammered a few words of apology, which were ignored. "Git," she said, and I did.

I didn't sleep well that night. I had been humiliated. Worse still, it seemed, my office had been treated with disrespect. By Tuesday night, I had almost decided that the woman and her husband should be excommunicated. A wise counselor, and a careful reading of the instructions from Church headquarters, persuaded me otherwise.

I said hello to them on the street occasionally after that, but I never returned to the home. However, we did assign a relative to visit there each month to watch over them. As far as I know, no gospel message was given, and no other significant Church contact was had with that family during the years I served as bishop.

After a time the ward was divided. I was released and was called to be stake president. On another Tuesday night some years later, one of our bishops came to the stake office and asked if I would be available later in the evening to interview an older couple for a temple recommend. He had been working with them for months, and they were finally ready to go to the temple.

He said, "You may know them, President," and he mentioned the name of the woman with the broom.

I could hardly wait for that interview. About nine o'clock the bishop brought a well-dressed, elderly couple to my office and introduced them. I recognized them as the same people I had known before, but they were different somehow. I invited the good sister to come into the office first. I asked her if she knew who I was, and she replied, "Oh yes, you are the stake president."

"Do you remember a Sunday afternoon in November, thirteen years ago?" I asked. "A young bishop came to your door and wanted to know if you and your husband would like to become more active in the Church. Do you remember turning him away?"

"I don't remember anything like that," she said. "I'm sure I would never have done such a thing."

Then I said, "I have another question. Why have you waited so long to

come back to the Church?"

"Well, we always knew we would have to get active again someday," she replied. "We wanted to. We just never got around to it. My husband used to smoke a lot, and he didn't feel comfortable going to church. I prayed for years that he would quit. When he started to have health problems a couple of years ago, it just seemed like a good time to go back."

I finished the interview and talked with her husband as well. They were completely worthy. Shortly afterward, they went to the temple to be sealed.

Now, did you notice the elements of their return? It wasn't easy. They had always known. She had prayed for years. There was a lot of wasted time. Finally, before it was too late, they talked to the bishop, repentance took place, old attitudes and habits were forgotten, and they came back.

Aminadab's return

Another who came back was Aminadab (see Helaman 5). He had once belonged to the church of God, but he became critical and contentious. He evidently sympathized with the opposition, because he was present when two young missionaries named Nephi and Lehi were taken captive by an army of Lamanites.

A cloud of darkness came upon him, and he heard a still, mild voice whisper, "Repent . . . and seek no more to destroy my servants" (vs. 29-30). Surprised, he turned around and looked at Nephi and Lehi. Their faces shone through the darkness, and they appeared to be lifting their voices to heaven (see v. 36).

Aminadab then recognized them for what they were. In a loud voice he told the Lamanites that the young men were servants of God. As the army turned to look, they too became aware of the darkness which surrounded them. They asked Aminadab how to dispel it, and he, drawing on truth learned, I believe, at another time, said:

"You must repent, and cry unto the [Lord], even until ye shall have faith in Christ; . . . and when ye shall do this, the cloud of darkness shall be removed from overshadowing you" (v. 41).

Now notice again, the scripture speaks of darkness overshadowing those who have abandoned the faith. The effect of darkness is to prevent one from seeing clearly. To find the way back, as Aminadab discovered, one must repent and pray until doubt and darkness disappear and important things can be seen again.

A young priest repents and comes back

One final story — once again from when I was a bishop. One night, while I was in a sound sleep, the doorbell rang. I stumbled to answer it and found a young member of my priests quorum at the door. I knew him well — well enough to have gone on outings with him, to have prayed with and about him, and to have taught him. I knew him as well as a good bishop knows any active eighteen-year-old priest, which was well enough for me to ask what he was doing at my front door in the middle of the night.

He said, "I have to talk to you, bishop. I've just done something serious, and I can't go home."

He was right. It was serious. I invited him in, and we talked. He talked and I listened, then I talked and he listened, until dawn. He had many questions. He had committed a terrible sin. He wanted to know if there was hope. He wanted to know how to repent. He wanted to know if repentance included telling his parents. He wanted to know if there was any chance of his going on a mission. He wanted to know many other things.

I didn't have all of the answers, but I told him there was hope. I told him the way back would be difficult, but it was possible. I explained what I knew about the process of repentance and helped him see what he must do. I told him if he really wanted to go on a mis-

sion that that decision could only be made in the future after he had repented. Then I told him to go home, and he did.

He made his peace with his parents. He asked forgiveness from those he had wronged. He put sin and bad company behind him and did everything he could to repent.

A year or so later, five young men from that quorum went on missions. He was one of them. I was close to them all. I attended each of their farewells. They all served honorable missions. Within a brief time after returning home, they all were married in the temple. My wife and I attended each of the ceremonies. I could take a piece of paper, even today, and write their names and the names of their wives and some of their children. That is how well I knew them.

Sins repented of are forgotten

But now let me tell you something — something very private and very important. I cannot remember the name of the young man who came to my home in the middle of the night. I know he was one of the five, but I don't remember which one.

There was a time I used to worry about that. I thought perhaps my memory might be failing. I consciously tried to recall who it was that had the problem, but I could not.

I was eventually released, and I put the entire incident out of my mind. On a late evening walk some years later, I found myself in the ward where I had once been bishop. The shadowy quiet brought back many memories. I was deep in thought when I realized I was walking in front of a house where one of my priests had lived years before. Suddenly, the story of the young man I have mentioned came to mind, and again I tried to remember which of the five he had been. Had he lived in that house? I wondered. Why couldn't I remember?

As I continued on my way, something happened — something difficult

to explain, but real to me. I seemed to hear a voice which said: "Don't you understand, my son? I have forgotten that. Why should you remember?"

I was chagrined. There was no satisfactory answer to the question. I have never wondered about it again. And I knew more surely than I had ever known before that the Lord is pleased when his children return to him.

All who are shepherds and all lost sheep should note this one last thing. The Lord really meant it when he said, "He who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more" (D&C 58:42).

It is possible to come home

Some years ago it was fashionable in certain circles to use the phrase, "You can never go home again." That is just simply not true. It is possible to return. It is possible for those who have ceased to pray, to pray again. It is possible for those who are lost to find their way through the dark and come home.

And when they do, they will know, as I know, that the Lord is more concerned with what a man is than with what he was, and with where he is than with where he has been. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Brother F. Burton Howard, for those reminders of serious things. Before hearing President Benson's concluding remarks, we should like to express appreciation and sincere gratitude to all who have provided the music for this great

conference — to the Mormon Youth Chorus, the Murray Region Family Choir, and this great Tabernacle Choir who have sung to us so powerfully today, to their conductors and organists and all who have to do with it.

We thank our city officials for the cooperation given, to the Relief Society and Church Health Unit nurses who have been on hand to render service, to the ushers and interpreters.

We express appreciation to the local and national press representatives for coverage given to the conference, and to the owners and managers of the many radio and television stations and cable systems who have given time and facilities to carry sessions of this conference in many countries.

We have had in attendance all of the General Authorities except two: Brother Richard Clarke, who presides over the mission in Cape Town, South Africa, and who has remained at his post, and President Marion G. Romney, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, who now eighty-nine years of age lingers in a weakened condition. And as I suggested that we remember Brother Tuttle in our prayers, we should also remember President Romney and do so with faith.

We shall now be pleased to listen to President Ezra Taft Benson, our beloved prophet and leader, after which the Tabernacle Choir will sing "Abide with Me."

The benediction will then be offered by Elder Helio da Rocha Camargo of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and this conference will then stand adjourned for six months.

President Ezra Taft Benson

Thanks for latter-day scripture

My beloved brothers and sisters, on this glorious occasion as we have gathered here together, I wish to give thanks to our Father in Heaven for the gift of modern revelation and particu-

larly for the books of latter-day scripture which He has given us.

I love the Bible, both the Old and the New Testaments. It is a source of great truth. It teaches us about the life and ministry of the Master. From its

pages we learn of the hand of God in directing the affairs of His people from the very beginning of the earth's history. It would be difficult to underestimate the impact the Bible has had on the history of the world. Its pages have blessed the lives of generations.

But as generation followed generation, no additional scripture came forth to the children of men. Without additional revelation to guide them, men began to interpret the Bible differently. Numerous churches and creeds developed, each using the Bible as its authoritative source.

But this in no way lessens the worth of the Bible. That sacred and holy book has been of inestimable worth to the children of men. In fact, it was a passage from the Bible that inspired the Prophet Joseph Smith to go to a grove of trees near his home and kneel in prayer. What followed was the glorious vision that commenced the restoration of the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the earth. That vision also began the process of bringing forth new scripture to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Bible in bearing witness to a wicked world that Jesus is the Christ and that God lives and loves His children and is still intimately involved in their salvation and exaltation.

Through the prophet Nephi, the Lord warned against those who might say that the Bible was all the scripture the world would need. He said:

"Know ye not that there are more nations than one? Know ye not that I, the Lord your God, have created all men, . . . and I bring forth my word unto the children of men, yea, even upon all the nations of the earth? . . .

"Know ye not that the testimony of two nations is a witness unto you that I am God, that I remember one nation like unto another? . . .

"And I do this that I may prove unto many that I am the same yesterday, today, and forever" (2 Nephi 29:7-9).

Today we have three new books of scripture: the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. I love all of these sacred

volumes. This afternoon I would like to speak particularly about the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants. These two great books of latter-day scripture are bound together as revelations from Israel's God for the purpose of gathering and preparing His people for the Second Coming of the Lord. As President John Taylor wrote, the bringing forth of these two sacred volumes "cost the best blood of the nineteenth century" (D&C 135:6), namely the lives of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum.

To the Prophet Joseph Smith the Lord said, "This generation shall have my word through you" (D&C 5:10). The Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants are part of the fulfillment of that promise. Together these two great works of scripture bring great blessings to this generation.

Powerful proclamations of modern scripture

Each of these two books of modern scripture contains a powerful proclamation to the world. The Book of Mormon title page declares its purpose is threefold: to show what great things the Lord has done, to teach of the covenants of the Lord, and to convince both Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ.

Section 1 of the Doctrine and Covenants is the Lord's preface to the book. The Doctrine and Covenants is the only book in the world that has a preface written by the Lord Himself. In that preface He declares to the world that His voice is unto all men (see v. 2), that the coming of the Lord is nigh (see v. 12), and that the truths found in the Doctrine and Covenants will all be fulfilled (see vs. 37-38).

New witnesses of Jesus Christ

Each of these two great latter-day scriptures bears powerful and eloquent witness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Virtually every page of both the Doctrine and Covenants and the Book of Mormon teaches about the Master — His great

love for His children and His atoning sacrifice — and teaches us how to live so that we can return to Him and our Heavenly Father.

Essential knowledge and counsel in modern scripture

Each of these two great latter-day books of scripture contains the knowledge and the power to help us live better lives in a time of great wickedness and evil. Those who carefully and prayerfully search the pages of these books will find comfort, counsel, guidance, and the quiet power to improve their lives.

Of the Book of Mormon, President Marion G. Romney has said:

"If our young folks are traditioned in the teachings of the Book of Mormon, they will not only be inspired with righteous courage to choose the right by example, . . . they will also be so schooled in the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ that they will know what is right.

"From almost every page of the book, there will come to them a moving testimony that Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Son of the Living God, our Redeemer and Savior. *This witness alone will be a sustaining anchor in every storm*" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1960, p. 112; italics added).

Speaking of the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants, President Joseph Fielding Smith said: "If we will put them into practice, if we will keep the commandments of the Lord, we will know the truth and there shall be no weapon formed against us that shall prosper. There shall be no false doctrines, no teaching of men that will deceive us. . . . If we will search these revelations then we will be fortified against errors and we will be made strong" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1931, p. 17).

The Lord gives modern scripture to preserve his people

Many years before the coming of the Savior to this earth, the prophet Enoch saw the latter days. He observed the great wickedness that would prevail on the earth at this time and foretold the "great tribulations" that would result from such wickedness; but in the midst of what was otherwise a very gloomy prophecy, the Lord promised, "But my people will I preserve" (Moses 7:61). How would He do so? Note what the Lord Himself promised He would do to preserve His people. He said:

"And *righteousness will I send down out of heaven; and truth will I send forth out of the earth*, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten; . . . and *righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out mine elect from the four quarters of the earth, unto a place which I shall prepare*" (Moses 7:62; italics added).

The Lord promised, therefore, that righteousness would come from heaven and truth out of the earth. We have seen the marvelous fulfillment of that prophecy in our generation. The Book of Mormon has come forth out of the earth, filled with truth, serving as the very "keystone of our religion" (see Introduction to the Book of Mormon). God has also sent down righteousness from heaven. The Father Himself appeared with His Son to the Prophet Joseph Smith. The angel Moroni, John the Baptist, Peter, James, and numerous other angels were directed by heaven to restore the necessary powers to the kingdom. Further, the Prophet Joseph Smith received revelation after revelation from the heavens during those first critical years of the Church's growth. These revelations have been preserved for us in the Doctrine and Covenants.

These two great works of scripture, then, become a major tool in the Lord's hand for preserving His people in the latter days: the Book of Mormon, written under the hand of inspiration for

our day, preserved through the centuries to come forth in our time, translated by the gift and power of God. It is the keystone of our religion. It is the keystone of our doctrine. It is the keystone of our testimony. It is a keystone in the witness of Jesus Christ. It is a keystone in helping us avoid the deceptions of the evil one in these latter days. Satan rages in the hearts of men and has power over all of his dominions (see D&C 1:35). But the Book of Mormon has greater power — power to reveal false doctrine, power to help us overcome temptations, power to help us get closer to God than any other book (see Introduction to the Book of Mormon).

Study the Book of Mormon to receive God's approval

The Book of Mormon must be reenthroned in the minds and hearts of our people. We must honor it by reading it, by studying it, by taking its precepts into our lives and transforming them into lives required of the true followers of Christ. Speaking of the central role of the Book of Mormon in our worship, President Joseph Fielding Smith said:

"It seems to me that any member of this Church would never be satisfied until he or she had read the Book of Mormon time and time again, and thoroughly considered it so that he or she could bear witness that it is in very deed a record with the inspiration of the Almighty upon it, and that its history is true. . . .

"... No member of this Church can stand approved in the presence of God who has not seriously and carefully read the Book of Mormon" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1961, p. 18; italics added).

Doctrine and Covenants given directly to this generation

Likewise, the Doctrine and Covenants becomes an essential part of our

spiritual life. The Prophet Joseph Smith said, "In these infant days of the Church, there was great anxiety to obtain the word of the Lord upon every subject that in any way concerned our salvation" (*History of the Church*, 1:207).

Thus, the Doctrine and Covenants is a glorious book of scripture given directly to our generation. It contains the will of the Lord for us in these latter days that precede the Second Coming of Christ. It contains many truths and doctrines not fully revealed in other scripture. Like the Book of Mormon, it will strengthen those who carefully and prayerfully study from its pages.

Use modern scripture to bless lives and resist evil

Do we, as Saints of the Most High God, treasure the word He has preserved for us at so great a cost? Are we using these books of latter-day revelation to bless our lives and resist the powers of the evil one? This is the purpose for which they were given. How can we not stand condemned before the Lord if we treat them lightly by letting them do no more than gather dust on our shelves?

My beloved brothers and sisters, I bear my solemn witness that these books contain the mind and the will of the Lord for us in these days of trial and tribulation. They stand with the Bible to give witness of the Lord and His work. These books contain the voice of the Lord to us in these latter days. May we turn to them with full purpose of heart and use them in the way the Lord wishes them to be used, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Abide with Me."
Elder Helio da Rocha Camargo
offered the benediction.

SALT LAKE TABERNACLE CHOIR AND ORGAN BROADCAST

The following broadcast, announced by J. Spencer Kinard and originating with KSL Radio and Television, Salt Lake City, Utah, was presented from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, October 5, 1986, through the courtesy of the Columbia Broadcasting System's network throughout the United States, parts of Canada, and through other facilities to several points overseas.

Announcer: Once more we welcome you within these walls with a program of inspirational Music and Spoken Word from the crossroads of the West.

CBS and its affiliated stations bring you at this hour the Mormon Tabernacle Choir from Temple Square in Salt Lake City, with Jerold Ottley conducting the choir, Robert Cundick, Tabernacle organist, and the Spoken Word given by Spencer Kinard.

(Choir: "Be Not Afraid" — Mendelssohn)

Announcer: "Be not afraid, saith God the Lord; thy help is near." The Tabernacle Choir opened today's broadcast with a chorus from Mendelssohn's oratorio, *Elijah*.

Optimism, as the story of *Elijah* teaches us, is a double-edged sword. A sense of strength based upon the flattering words and promises of false prophets can lead individuals and nations to destruction, while those who trust fully in God and live by His word have nothing to fear.

Personal anguish that leads to honest and sincere soul-searching can bring even the most unworthy of us into contact with the Infinite Healer, as we hear in this choral setting of Charles Gounod's "O Divine Redeemer."

(Choir: "O Divine Redeemer" — Gounod)

Announcer: From the English liturgical tradition of the late nineteenth century, Robert Cundick has selected a

work by Liverpool organist, William Faulkes, entitled "Elevation."

(Organ: "Elevation" — William Faulkes)

Announcer: Jesus said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14).

The choir turns now to the words and music of Natalie Sleeth:

How will they know, these babes for whom we care,

That God is love and with us ev'rywhere,

That life is good with blessings all can share?

How will they know unless we teach them so?

(Choir: "How Will They Know?" — Sleeth)

Announcer: Nowhere in sacred literature is the need for love in our lives more beautifully expressed than in the Apostle Paul's letter to the Corinthians (see 1 Corinthians 13). He called it charity. Today, we usually refer to it as love.

And so, in reverent paraphrase, we express the need for this basic human value — for the greatest of these is love.

Though we pay our church donations and attend all our religious services, and have not love — it is nothing.

Though we conform to church ritual, and proselyte as missionaries, and bear titles of ecclesiastical power or authority, but do it without love — we are as the empty shells which line the seashore, having the semblance of life, but not the spirit.

Though we bequeath our money to great universities and charitable causes; and though magnificent buildings bear our names, monuments our visage, and newspapers our photograph — in the absence of love, we are none the better.

And even if we develop the technology to speed ourselves to the far

reaches of the universe, or to peer at the smallest microbe, or have the knowledge to cure ourselves of all disease and poverty — if love is lacking, it profits us little.

Love is patient and wise — patient with the gentle forbearance which waits on others before itself, and wise with the gentle wisdom of old eyes which, having looked on time, know that the simple act of being kind is greater than all the wisdom of the wise.

Love is not boastful or self-interested, but understands that no man has achieved success without the help and sacrifice of others.

Where love is, there also are faith, hope, and endurance. Without love, the richest man is made poor; with love, the poorest man is made rich.

When war is nothing more than a rusting relic of a frightful past; when the gallows and ghettos have crumbled into dust; when the last terrorist, the last tyrant, the last murderer and rapist have crept silently to rest — love will remain, and will rule, because love knows no death.

Fame dies, honors perish, and the worldly hope men set their hearts upon turns to ashes. But love lives on — through decades, through centuries, through eons — for the greatest of these is love.

(Choir: "Our Savior's Love" — Gates)

Announcer: We spoke earlier of optimism, of trust in God, of knowing that

God cares for us. The choir has recalled this theme in a hymn by Edward L. Hart, with music by Crawford Gates: "Our Savior's Love."

We close now with another song of peace and hope, with words adapted from the twenty-fourth Psalm, by Carl Nygard, Jr.: "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. Who can rightly ascend the hill of the Lord, And who may enter His House? The pure in heart."

(Choir: "The Earth Is the Lord's" — Nygard)

Announcer: Again we leave you from within the shadows of the everlasting hills. May peace be with you this day . . . and always.

Announcer (on radio): This concludes the two-thousand, nine-hundred, eighty-first performance continuing the fifty-eighth year of this traditional broadcast from the Mormon Tabernacle on Temple Square, brought to you by CBS and its affiliated stations, originating with station KSL in Salt Lake City.

Jerold Ottley conducted the choir, Robert Cundick was at the organ, and the Spoken Word was given by Spencer Kinard.

In another seven days at this same hour, Music and the Spoken Word will be heard again from the crossroads of the West.

This is the CBS Radio Network.

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THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY
SAINTS

Official Report of the
One Hundred Fifty-seventh
Annual General

CONFERENCE

of The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints

held in the Tabernacle
Salt Lake City, Utah

April 4 and 5, 1987

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THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The 157th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 4, 1987, at 10:00 A.M.

The general sessions of the conference were held at 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday, April 4 and 5, 1987. The general priesthood session was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, April 4, 1987, at 6:00 P.M.

President Ezra Taft Benson presided at all sessions of the conference. President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday morning and Sunday afternoon sessions. President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday afternoon, general priesthood, and Sunday morning sessions.

Television and radio stations carried portions or all of some of the conference sessions to large audiences throughout the world. In addition, the general sessions and priesthood session were carried via satellite transmission to more than one thousand stake centers. The general priesthood session was also carried by closed-circuit transmission to approximately nine hundred locations in many countries.

General Authorities present

The following General Authorities of the Church attended one or more of the general sessions:

The First Presidency: Ezra Taft Benson, Gordon B. Hinckley, and Thomas S. Monson.

The Council of the Twelve:
Howard W. Hunter, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson,

Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, and Joseph B. Wirthlin.

The Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy: Dean L. Larsen, Richard G. Scott, Marion D. Hanks, Wm. Grant Bangerter, Jack H. Goasling, Robert L. Backman, and Hugh W. Pinnock.

Additional Members of the First Quorum of the Seventy: Franklin D. Richards, Theodore M. Burton, Paul H. Dunn, Hartman Rector, Jr., Loren C. Dunn, Robert L. Simpson, Rex D. Pinegar, J. Thomas Fyans, Adney Y. Komatsu, Gene R. Cook, Charles Didier, William R. Bradford, George P. Lee, Carlos E. Asay, John H. Groberg, Jacob de Jager, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Royden G. Derrick, Robert E. Wells, James M. Paramore, F. Enzo Busche, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Ronald E. Poelman, Derek A. Cuthbert, Rex C. Reeve, Sr., F. Burton Howard, Ted E. Brewerton, Angel Abrea, John K. Carmack, Russell C. Taylor, Robert B. Harbertson, Devere Harris, Spencer H. Osborn, Philip T. Sonntag, John Sonnenberg, F. Arthur Kay, Keith W. Wilcox, Victor L. Brown, H. Burke Peterson, J. Richard Clarke, Hans B. Ringger, Waldo P. Call, Helio da Rocha Camargo, H. Verlan Andersen, George I. Cannon, Francis M. Gibbons, Gardner H. Russell, George R. Hill III, John R. Lasater, Douglas J. Martin, Alexander B. Morrison, L. Aldin Porter, Glen L. Rudd, Douglas H. Smith, and Lynn A. Sorensen.

The Presiding Bishopric: Robert D. Hales, Henry B. Eyring, and Glenn L. Pace.

General Authorities Emeritus: Eldred G. Smith, Sterling W. Sill, Bernard P. Brockbank, and Joseph Anderson.¹

¹President Marion G. Romney and Elder John H. Vandenberg were excused due to ill health.

Other authorities present

Other Church authorities in attendance included Regional Representatives, presidents of stakes and their counselors, presidents of temples,

bishops of wards, and presidencies and members of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood quorums.

Many general, stake, and ward auxiliary officers also attended.

FIRST DAY MORNING SESSION

The first general session of the 157th Annual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 4, 1987, at 10:00 A.M. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The music for the opening session was provided by the Mormon Youth Chorus with Robert C. Bowden conducting and Clay Christiansen at the organ.

Before the meeting the Mormon Youth Chorus sang "Hark, All Ye Nations!" without announcement.

President Monson made the following remarks:

President Thomas S. Monson

We welcome you this morning from the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City in this, the first general session of the 157th Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I'm Brother Monson, and our beloved prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked me to conduct this session.

We welcome all who are participating in the large audience assembled in the Tabernacle and the overflow gathering in the nearby Assembly Hall, where Elders Loren C. Dunn and Angel Abrea are seated on the stand. We welcome also the many others who are

receiving these conference proceedings by satellite transmission, radio, cable, and television.

We acknowledge the General Authorities of the Church, all of whom are in attendance except President Marion G. Romney and Elder John H. Vandenberg, who are ill. We also acknowledge the Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary general presidencies, who are seated on the stand. We extend a special welcome to government, education, and civic leaders who are present.

The Mormon Youth Chorus, under the direction of Brother Robert C. Bowden, with Brother Clay Christiansen at the organ, opened this session by singing "Hark, All Ye Nations!" The chorus will now sing "Our Savior's Love." Following the singing, the invocation will be offered by Elder Dean L. Larsen, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The chorus sang "Our Savior's Love."

Elder Dean L. Larsen offered the invocation.

President Monson

We will now be privileged to listen to President Ezra Taft Benson, President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

President Ezra Taft Benson

The Book of Mormon is changing Church members' lives

My dear brothers and sisters, as we commence another great general conference of the Church, my heart is full of love and gratitude to the Latter-day Saints throughout the world.

During the past six months I have been deeply touched by the response of members of the Church who have heeded counsel to read and reread the word of the Lord as set forth in the Book of Mormon. This has resulted in increased spirituality and is helping to cleanse the inner vessel.

Adults, youth, and children have borne powerful testimonies as to how the Book of Mormon has changed their lives. My life, too, continues to be changed by this sacred volume of scripture.

Parallel histories

Recently I have been reading again the marvelous account in the Book of Mormon of the visit of the resurrected Savior to the American continent. As Easter approaches, I have been deeply impressed with the beauty and power of this scriptural account in 3 Nephi, and with its great value for our time and our generation.

The record of the Nephite history just prior to the Savior's visit reveals many parallels to our own day as we anticipate the Savior's second coming. The Nephite civilization had reached great heights. They were prosperous and industrious. They had built many cities with great highways connecting them. They engaged in shipping and trade. They built temples and palaces.

But, as so often happens, the people rejected the Lord. Pride became commonplace. Dishonesty and immorality were widespread. Secret combinations flourished because, as Helaman tells us, the Gadianton robbers "had seduced the more part of the righteous until they had come down to believe in

their works and partake of their spoils" (Helaman 6:38). "The people began to be distinguished by ranks, according to their riches and their chances for learning" (3 Nephi 6:12). And "Satan had great power, unto the stirring up of the people to do all manner of iniquity, and to the puffing them up with pride, tempting them to seek for power, and authority, and riches, and the vain things of the world," even as today (v. 15).

Mormon noted that the Nephites "did not sin ignorantly, for they knew the will of God concerning them" (v. 18).

There were but few righteous among them (see v. 14). Nephi led the Church with great power and performed many miracles, yet "there were but few who were converted unto the Lord" (3 Nephi 7:21). The people as a whole rejected the Lord. They stoned the prophets and persecuted those who sought to follow Christ.

Christ's coming to the Americas preceded by terrible destruction

And then the God of nature intervened, even Jesus Christ. A storm began such as had never before been known in all the land. Lightning flashed and thunder shook the earth. Violent winds carried people away, never to be seen again.

"Many great and notable cities were sunk, and many were burned, and many were shaken till the buildings thereof had fallen to the earth, and the inhabitants thereof were slain" (3 Nephi 8:14).

"The whole face of the land was changed" (v. 12).

For three hours the forces of nature raged. Finally when the thunder, lightning, storm, tempest, and quaking had ceased, a thick darkness settled over the land. For three days no light could be seen, no candle could be lit. The vapor of darkness was so thick that it could be felt, "and there was great

Saturday, April 4

First Day

mourning and howling and weeping among all the people. . . .

“ . . . They were heard to cry and mourn, saying: O that we had repented before this great and terrible day, and had not killed and stoned the prophets, and cast them out” (vs. 23, 25).

Then a voice began to speak—a voice from the heavens that was heard throughout the entire land.

The voice spoke of the terrible destruction and announced that this was a direct result of the wickedness and the abominations among the people.

Imagine the feelings of the people when the voice asked, “Will ye not now return unto me, and repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you?” (3 Nephi 9:13).

Then the voice identified itself: “Behold, I am Jesus Christ the Son of God” (v. 15). It was the voice of the very person who had been mocked and ridiculed and rejected by the wicked! It was the voice of Him whom the prophets proclaimed and for whom they were stoned and killed! It was the voice of the Master!

He declared that by Him redemption came, that in Him the law of Moses was fulfilled, and that they were to offer a sacrifice unto Him of a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

Resurrected Christ appears to the multitude

When the darkness had dispersed, a great multitude gathered around the temple in the land of Bountiful. Twenty-five hundred men, women, and children had come together. As they were conversing about this Jesus Christ, of whom the sign had been given concerning his death, they once again heard the voice.

Mormon tells us that “it was not a harsh voice, neither was it a loud voice; nevertheless, and notwithstanding it being a small voice it did pierce them that did hear to the center, insomuch that there was no part of their frame that it did not cause to quake; yea, it did pierce them to the very soul,

and did cause their hearts to burn” (3 Nephi 11:3). The first time and the second time the voice spoke, the people heard it but could not understand it.

The record then states that “again the third time they did hear the voice, and did open their ears to hear it. . . .

“And behold, the third time they did understand the voice which they heard; and it said unto them:

“Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name—hear ye him” (vs. 5–7).

How few people in all the history of the world have heard the actual voice of God the Father speaking to them. As the people looked heavenward, “they saw a Man descending out of heaven; and he was clothed in a white robe; and he came down and stood in the midst of them” (v. 8).

A glorious, resurrected being, a member of the Godhead, the Creator of innumerable worlds, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, stood before their very eyes!

“And it came to pass that he stretched forth his hand and spake unto the people, saying:

“Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world.

“And behold, I am the light and the life of the world; and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world, in the which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning” (vs. 9–11).

The multitude worships Christ and feels his wounds

The whole multitude fell to the earth. Jesus commanded them to rise and come forth unto Him. He invited them to thrust their hands into his side and feel the prints of the nails in His hands and feet. One by one each of the twenty-five hundred present went forth.

Indeed they "did see with their eyes and did feel with their hands, and did know of a surety and did bear record, that it was he, of whom it was written by the prophets, that should come" (v. 15).

When the last one had stood face to face with the Savior and had come to know with an absolute surety of the reality of His resurrection, "they did cry out with one accord:

"Hosanna! Blessed be the name of the Most High God! And they did fall down at the feet of Jesus, and did worship him" (vs. 16–17).

Christ bestows authority and teaches the people

He called the faithful prophet Nephi and others and commissioned them with power and authority to baptize in His name.

The Savior taught the people: "Ye must repent, and be baptized in my name, and become as a little child, or ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God" (v. 38).

He gave them the glorious sermon which we today call the Sermon on the Mount.

And then He said:

"I perceive that ye are weak, that ye cannot understand all my words which I am commanded of the Father to speak unto you at this time.

"Therefore, go ye unto your homes, and ponder upon the things which I have said, and ask of the Father, in my name, that ye may understand, and prepare your minds for the morrow, and I come unto you again" (3 Nephi 17:2–3).

As the Master announced His departure, "he cast his eyes round about again on the multitude, and beheld they were in tears, and did look steadfastly upon him as if they would ask him to tarry a little longer with them" (v. 5).

Christ heals the sick, prays, and blesses the children

Moved with tender compassion, the resurrected Lord commanded them

to bring their sick, their handicapped, their diseased.

"And it came to pass that when he had thus spoken, all the multitude, with one accord, did go forth with their sick and their afflicted, and their lame, and with their blind, and with their dumb, and with all them that were afflicted in any manner; and he did heal them every one as they were brought forth unto him" (v. 9).

The Savior then called for the little children. He commanded the multitude to kneel as He prayed to the Father.

Mormon tells us that "no tongue can speak, neither can there be written by any man, neither can the hearts of men conceive so great and marvelous things" as were spoken in that prayer (v. 17). Then, weeping with joy, Jesus took the little children to Him one by one and blessed them. Finally, turning to the multitude, He said, "Behold your little ones" (v. 23).

As they lifted their eyes, "they saw the heavens open, and they saw angels descending out of heaven as it were in the midst of fire; and they came down and encircled those little ones about, and they were encircled about with fire; and the angels did minister unto them" (v. 24).

Read and apply the powerful testimony of Christ in 3 Nephi

There is not time to speak of all the remarkable events of that glorious day and the days that followed. But it is clear that 3 Nephi contains some of the most moving and powerful passages in all scripture. It testifies of Jesus Christ, His prophets, and the doctrines of salvation. At this Easter time, what a blessing it would be if every family would read together 3 Nephi, discuss its sacred contents, and then determine how they can liken it unto themselves and apply its teachings in their lives.

Christ instructs his disciples

Third Nephi is a book that should be read and read again. Its testimony of

the resurrected Christ in America is given in purity and beauty. As the Savior prepared to leave his disciples, he said unto them:

"Behold I have given unto you my gospel, and this is the gospel which I have given unto you—that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me.

"And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me, that as I have been lifted up by men even so should men be lifted up by the Father, to stand before me, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil. . . .

"And it shall come to pass, that whoso repenteth and is baptized in my name shall be filled; and if he endureth to the end, behold, him will I hold guiltless before my Father at that day when I shall stand to judge the world. . . .

"And no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end.

"Now this is the commandment: Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, this is my gospel" (3 Nephi 27: 13–14, 16, 19–21).

Christ has revealed himself again in our day

The mission of the resurrected Christ did not end with His appearance to those in the Holy Land or even to those in ancient America, for the continuing miracle is that He has revealed Himself again to men in our day.

In section 76 of the Doctrine and Covenants the Prophet Joseph Smith records the marvelous vision which he

and Sidney Rigdon had. The Prophet declared:

"And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

"For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—

"That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God" (vs. 22–24).

"All shall rise from the dead"

Now what does all of this mean to us? It means that as Christ lives today with a resurrected body, so shall we. It means that life is a probation, to be followed by death, resurrection, and judgment.

In the Book of Mormon, the key-stone of our religion, we read: "Death comes upon mankind; . . . nevertheless there was a space granted unto man in which he might repent; therefore this life became a probationary state; a time to prepare to meet God; a time to prepare for that endless state which has been spoken of by us, which is after the resurrection of the dead" (Alma 12:24).

All shall rise from the dead. "The spirit and the body shall be reunited again in its perfect form; both limb and joint shall be restored to its proper frame; . . . and we shall be brought to stand before God, . . . and be arraigned before the bar of Christ the Son, and God the Father, and the Holy Spirit, . . . to be judged according to [our] works, whether they be good or whether they be evil" (Alma 11:43–44).

Be like Christ

In light of our mortal probation, our future resurrection, and our final judgment, we need to remember the question which the resurrected Lord posed to His disciples as recorded in 3 Nephi in the Book of Mormon.

He asked them, "Therefore, what manner of men ought ye to be?" And He answered, "Verily I say unto you, even as I am" (3 Nephi 27:27).

He is our Exemplar, our Redeemer, our Lord.

Testimony of Christ

I testify that 3 Nephi is a true account of the resurrected Christ's visit to ancient America and contains His teachings in their pristine truth.

I testify that Jesus is the Christ and that He stands at the head of His church today, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

I testify that He will come again in power and great glory and that He will leave nothing undone for our eternal welfare.

May we daily be the manner of men He is and thus be prepared to meet and dwell with Him, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The chorus sang "Awake and Arise" without announcement.

President Monson

We appreciate the beautiful message about sharing the restored gospel as sung by the Mormon Youth Chorus in the hymn "Awake and Arise." Prior to the singing we were blessed to hear the opening address of our beloved prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson.

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now speak to us.

Elder Russell M. Nelson

At this pulpit today, I am truly honored to follow the President of the Church, President Ezra Taft Benson. I sustain him as a living prophet of God. He was ordained an Apostle in 1943, before I entered medical school. Now he is the senior Apostle on earth, and I am privileged to add my gratitude for a prophet and for his message of instruction and inspiration.

He has taught us of the ministry of the resurrected Lord to the inhabitants of ancient America. This precious knowledge recorded in the Book of Mormon is of transcendent importance to all people. Truly, the Book of Mormon is another testament of Jesus Christ!

Evidences of life after life are carefully documented

As President Benson spoke, my thoughts momentarily flashed back some years ago to a conversation I had

with a book publisher. He was interested in the topic of possible continuation of life after what we know as death. The publisher asked if I could contribute stories from patients who had come close enough to death to experience the other side and yet had survived to share those accounts. Sensing public interest in that subject, he would entitle the book *Life after Life*.

When I considered that request, I remembered many such incidents which had been whispered in confidence to me over the years. But those seemed too sacred to share in a worldly way, especially to the benefit of a commercial venture. Besides, what would be the validity of isolated stories of life after life without supporting testimonies of witnesses?

To me, much more logical and convincing would be a study of well-documented and carefully witnessed evidences of life after life.

President Benson has spoken of one of these priceless records. The activities of the *living* Christ in America followed his own resurrection *from the dead*. Many witnesses in many places have seen the risen Lord, before, during, and after the account to which President Benson has referred.

Christ appeared to associates in the Holy Land

1. The first mortal person known to have seen the resurrected Savior was Mary Magdalene (see John 20:16–17).

2. Another recorded appearance of the risen Lord was to other women. Witnessing this event were Mary (mother of James), Salome (mother of James and John), Joanna, Susanna, and many others (see Mark 16:1, Luke 8:3).

3. Jesus appeared to Simon Peter (see 1 Corinthians 15:5), the senior Apostle, who held the keys of priesthood authority on earth then, as President Benson does now.

4. Later the same day, Cleopas and presumably Luke, while journeying on the road to Emmaus, were met by the resurrected Lord. The Savior partook of food with them (see Luke 24:30, 33).

5. He also revealed himself to the Apostles in an upper room. He showed them his hands and his feet. "They gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he . . . did eat before them" (Luke 24:42–43).

6. Eight days after he so appeared to the Apostles, Jesus came again to them. This time, skeptical Thomas was present (see John 20:26–28). Christ said unto Thomas, "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:29).

7. At the Sea of Tiberias, Jesus appeared to seven of the Twelve who had fished all night and caught nothing. The Master then caused their nets to be filled with fish. Later, Peter was com-

manded to feed the flock of God (see John 21:1–24).

8. Perhaps the greatest congregation in Palestine to witness the risen Lord occurred on the mount near Galilee's shore. Here he was seen by more than five hundred brethren at once (see 1 Corinthians 15:6).

9. Later the Master again took the eleven to "a mountain where Jesus had appointed them." There he gave that endless charge to his Apostles, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations" (Matthew 28:16, 19).

10. Then Jesus was seen by his brother, James, who became one of his special disciples (see 1 Corinthians 15:7).

11. Paul added, "And last of all he was seen of me" (1 Corinthians 15:8; see also Acts 9:4–5).

12. Prior to his ascension from the Mount of Olives, Jesus bade farewell to the leaders of his church in Asia and foretold, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8; see also Mark 16:19, Luke 24:50–51).

13. When Stephen was stoned as a martyr at the gate of Jerusalem, he "looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7:55).

Christ appeared to the Nephites

14. The ministry of the resurrected Lord to the Nephites who lived on the American hemisphere has been spoken of so eloquently by President Benson. He told us that there at least twenty-five hundred souls heard his voice, felt the nail marks in his hands and feet, and thrust their hands into his side (see 3 Nephi 11:7–17, 17:25). I sense that many of them wet his feet with their tears of joyous adoration.

Christ's postmortal ministry

15. The postmortal ministry of the Lord continued in other realms. Jesus ministered unto the dead in the post-

earthly spirit world (see 3 Nephi 23:9–10). Peter testified that “the gospel [was] preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit” (1 Peter 4:6; see also 1 Peter 3:19–21).

John taught of this as well: “The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live” (John 5:25). In our day, additional scriptures have been added which attest to the ministry of the living Lord among the dead (see D&C 138).

Christ’s visit to the lost tribes

16. From the Book of Mormon we read that Jesus was to visit the lost tribes of the house of Israel—to do for them, we presume, what he had done for others (see 2 Nephi 29:13; 3 Nephi 17:4, 21:26).

Christ appeared to those of this dispensation

After almost two thousand years, new witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus have added their testimonies of this transcendent truth.

17. The Prophet Joseph Smith was visited in 1820 by God the Father and his Son, the resurrected Lord (see Joseph Smith—History 1:17). Joseph saw them and heard their voices. He received a personal witness of the divine sonship of Jesus from the Father himself. Joseph learned that “the Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s; the Son also” (D&C 130:22).

18. Twelve years later, the Savior again revealed himself to Joseph Smith and to Sidney Rigdon. “We saw him,” they exclaimed, “even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father” (D&C 76:23).

19. On April 3, 1836 (151 years ago yesterday), with Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple, the Prophet Joseph saw the Master once more:

“We saw the Lord standing upon the breastwork of the pulpit, before us; . . .

“His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying:

“I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father” (D&C 110:2–4).

Redemption and resurrection extended to all

Yes, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the most carefully documented events in history. I have mentioned many of those appearances, but additional instances have been recorded.

Even more remarkable is the fact that his mission among men—the Atonement, the Resurrection—extends privileges of redemption from sin and a glorious resurrection to each and every one of us! In some marvelous way, fully comprehended only by Deity, this is his work and his glory—“to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39).

Teachers in the Church so instruct the old and the young. Sometimes the results are humorous. One leader shared this story with me:

As a little boy came home from Primary one day, his mother asked him what he had learned, and he said, “My teacher told me that I used to be dust and I would be dust again once more. Is that true, Mommy?”

“Yes,” the mother replied. “A scripture tells us so: ‘For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return’ (Genesis 3:19).”

The little boy was amazed at this! The next morning, he was scurrying around getting ready for school, looking for his shoes. He crawled under the bed. Lo and behold, there he saw balls

of dust. He ran to his mother in wonder, saying, "Oh, Mommy, somebody's under my bed, and they're either coming or going."

Resurrected bodies are immortal

Yes, compounds derived from dust—elements of the earth—are combined to make each living cell in our bodies. The miracle of the Resurrection is matched only by the miracle of our creation in the first place.

No one knows precisely how two germ cells unite to make one. Nor do we know how that resulting cell multiplies and divides to make others—some to become eyes that see, ears that hear, or fingers that feel glorious things about us. Each cell contains chromosomes with thousands of genes, chemically insuring identity and independence of each individual. Our bodies undergo constant rebuilding according to genetic recipes that are uniquely ours. Each time we take a bath, we lose not only dirt, but cells dead and dying, as they are replaced by a newer crop. This process of regeneration and renewal is but prelude to the promised phenomenon and future fact of our resurrection.

"If a man die, shall he live again?" asked Job (Job 14:14). In faith, he answered his own question:

"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

"And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God" (Job 19:25–26).

At the time of our resurrection, we shall take up our immortal tabernacles. Bodies that now age, deteriorate, and decay will no longer be subject to processes of degeneration: "This mortal must put on immortality" (1 Corinthians 15:53).

The keys of the Resurrection

This great priesthood power of resurrection is vested in the Lord of this

world. He taught that "all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18). Though he supplicated his Father for aid at the eleventh hour, the final victory over death was earned by the Son. These are his words:

"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

"No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (John 10:17–18).

This power he subtly proclaimed when he said unto the Jews: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. . . .

"But he spake of the temple of his body" (John 2:19–21).

The keys of the Resurrection repose securely with our Lord and Master. He said:

"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

"And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:25–26).

The universal nature of the Resurrection

But obedience to the commandments of God is requisite if one is to be resurrected with a celestial body. Laws leading to celestial glory will be discussed at this conference. Our challenge is to learn them and abide by them.

I thank God for his Son, Jesus Christ, for his mission in mortality, and for his ministry as the resurrected Lord. He brought about his own resurrection. Testimonies of thousands, from ancient and modern times, attest to the truth that the resurrected Jesus is the Savior of mankind. He brought about a universal resurrection: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22; see also Mosiah 3:16).

His sacrifice and his glory assure that "the spirit and the body shall be reunited again in its perfect form; both limb and joint shall be restored to its proper frame, even as we now are at this time" (Alma 11:43).

Gratefully and positively, I affirm that there is life after life, first in the spirit world and then in the Resurrection, for each and every one of us. I know that God lives and that Jesus the Christ is his Son. He is "the resurrection, and the life" (John 11:25). He lives. He is my Master. I am his servant. With all my heart, I love him, and I testify of him, in his holy name—the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

Upon the signal of Brother Bowden, the chorus and congregation will now join in singing "The Spirit of God," following which Elder William Grant Bangerter, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will speak.

The chorus and congregation sang "The Spirit of God."

Elder William Grant Bangerter

What it means to be a saint

I would like to speak about what it means to be a saint. Some people call us Mormons. Some call us a sect or a cult. We call ourselves Saints. What do these designations signify?

A Mormon could be any kind of a person who has membership in the Church.

A sect is a body of persons following certain principles or doctrines. The earliest followers of the Savior were called a sect.

A cult is described as a particular system of religious worship having a fixed veneration for a person.

A saint is one who follows Christ in holiness and devotion with a view fixed on *eternal* life.

With proper understanding, there is nothing wrong with any of these designations. When they are used to imply ridicule and slander, they can all be offensive.

What really matters

Many members of the Church become upset when those terms are used by name-callers. Calling people names to ridicule them or to offend them is an

old, childish practice. Children respond by chanting with some truth: "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me."

It isn't very important what impolite people call this church and its people. Name-calling has been an age-old pastime among people who profess to be religious. The words *heretic*, *blasphemer*, *bigot*, *hypocrite*, and *heathen* have all had their day.

What really matters is what we ourselves believe, what we do, and most important, what we are. "Are you a born-again Christian?" Well, in the sense that some others think of it, perhaps not—that is, if the phrase means something like to have "confessed Christ" as the only requirement for salvation. On the other hand, if this question is considered in a literal and doctrinal sense, we might reflect on a positive answer.

Act accordingly

Brother Carmen Bria, a neighbor of ours converted from another church, was assisting prisoners as a social worker. A certain young prisoner became interested in the gospel. His

father, a minister from another church, visited the boy and was very upset that his son was studying Mormon doctrine, even more than he was by the fact that his son was in prison.

Brother Bria approached the father and asked why he was so distressed. The father replied, "You are not saved."

"Why do you say that?" asked Brother Bria.

"Well," said the father, "you have not taken Christ as your personal Savior. You have not been born again in Christ."

Brother Bria responded, "Sir, let me explain it to you. We may not say it just the way you do, but we most certainly do believe in a literal salvation through Jesus Christ. We *have* accepted him as our personal Savior, have taken upon us his name, and we have been born again in Christ."

As Paul said: "Therefore we are buried with him by *baptism* into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4; italics added).

Members of the Church should know that they are born again—"redeemed of God," as the Prophet Alma said, "[to] be numbered with those of the first resurrection, that ye may have eternal life" (Mosiah 18:9).

King Benjamin said: "And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name; therefore, ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters" (Mosiah 5:7).

If, then, we understand that we are born again, having taken upon us the name of Christ, the big question is, do we act like it?

A saint is one who follows Christ in holiness and devotion. This is the commitment of a Latter-day Saint.

Strive for perfection

Another question: Are we perfect? As a response to that question, I repeat a story about the speaker who said to his congregation, "If there is anyone here who is perfect, will he please stand." One man stood, and the speaker inquired, "Sir, do you really believe that you are perfect?"

The man responded, "Oh, no. I am not standing for myself. I stand as proxy for my wife's first husband."

Few members of the Church would claim to be perfect, although it should always be our goal. What we do is to strive with faith and devotion onward toward perfection in order to obtain eternal life.

There are many ways to be imperfect. After a long sermon of admonition, King Benjamin said: "I cannot tell you all the things whereby ye may commit sin; for there are divers ways and means, even so many that I cannot number them."

"But this much I can tell you, that if ye do not *watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe the commandments of God, and continue in the faith* of what ye have heard concerning the coming of our Lord, even unto the end of your lives, ye must perish. And now, O man, remember, and perish not" (Mosiah 4:29–30, italics added).

The many imperfections which trouble our daily lives require us to be a repenting as well as a repentant people. We should pay attention to the gentle admonitions as well as the thundering warnings.

At the conclusion of the October 1975 general conference, President Spencer W. Kimball said: "While sitting here, I have made up my mind that when I go home from this conference this night there are many, many areas in my life that I can perfect. I have made a mental list of them, and I expect to go to work as soon as we get through with conference" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1975, p. 164; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1975, p. 111).

God has established conditions for us to return to his presence

So this mortal part of our eternal life is a time of probation. We desired the experience before we were born. Now we are in the midst of the great test. "And we will prove them herewith," said the Lord, "to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them" (Abraham 3:25).

Great numbers of the Saints throughout the world are doing very well. They take their probation seriously. They have established happy, righteous homes. Children grow up in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Enos 1:1). Their theme song is "Love at Home." Home evenings, love for the scriptures, association in meetings with their brothers and sisters, payment of their tithes, plans for education and missionary service are the direction of their efforts with their faces steadfastly turned toward the temple.

This is far different from "confessing Christ" as the one single requirement for salvation. *Saints* take literally the parable in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew about the Judgment Day (see vs. 31-46). They reach out to one another and to the poor and distressed. Thus, they may be found on the right hand of God. No matter who you are and what you may think, God has established certain conditions or requirements to return to his presence. "They who keep their first estate shall be added upon; . . . and they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever" (Abraham 3:26).

Ordinances and covenants of the gospel

Saints go beyond the required righteous living to enter into the covenants and receive the ordinances of the gospel. These are taught and administered through his authorized servants by the power of the holy priesthood. *Holy* priesthood is not man-made. The ordinances and covenants belong to *this*

priesthood. Beyond baptism, without which the Lord said we "cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5), are further gifts and blessings which are received in the temple. There we enter into solemn covenants with God. Through the priesthood we receive the ordinances which direct us toward the veil, that we may enter again into his presence.

Now, of course the ordinances alone do not make us saints. Our actions do that, but even saints have not the power to return to God's presence without Christ's infinite atonement. That is why we enter into the covenants.

We are only stewards

In this second estate, is our perspective short-range or is it eternal? Elder Spencer W. Kimball, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, drew this to our attention in 1968: "One day," he said, "a friend took me to his ranch. He unlocked the door of a large new automobile, slid under the wheel, and said proudly, 'How do you like my new car?' We rode in luxurious comfort . . . to a beautiful new landscaped home, and he said with no little pride, 'This is my home.'

"He drove to a grassy knoll. The sun was retiring behind the distant hills. He surveyed his vast domain. . . .

"... With a wide sweeping gesture, he boasted, 'From the clump of trees, to the lake, to the bluff, and to the ranch buildings and all between—all this is mine. . . .

"... I saw him lying in his death," said President Kimball, "among luxurious furnishings in a palatial home. His had been a vast estate. . . . I spoke at his funeral, and I followed the cortege . . . to his grave, a tiny, oblong area the length of a tall man, the width of a heavy one.

"Yesterday I saw that same estate, yellow in grain, green in lucerne, white in cotton, seemingly unmindful of him who had claimed it" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1968, pp. 73-74;

or *Improvement Era*, June 1968, pp. 81-82).

The earth is the Lord's. We are only stewards.

Take priesthood ordinances seriously

Some who have made the covenant do not take it seriously. Having received baptism as a form and not as a covenant, they scarcely advance to the sacrament table. Saints will take it seriously. The ordinances of the priesthood and the covenants entered into in the temple direct us toward the consecrated life God expects of those who have taken the name of Jesus Christ.

Speaking in Logan in 1984, President Ezra Taft Benson taught that Adam and his posterity were commanded "to enter into the order of the Son of God. To enter into the order of the Son of God," he said, "is the equivalent today of entering into the fullness of the Melchizedek Priesthood, which is only received in the

house of the Lord" (*Ensign*, Aug. 1985, p. 8).

"For without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live" (D&C 84:22).

That the Saints will accept this priesthood, receive its ordinances, and keep the covenants, I pray through Jesus Christ, amen.

The chorus sang "Precious Lord, Take My Hand" without announcement.

President Monson

Elder William Grant Bangerter, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has addressed us, followed by that matchless rendition of "Precious Lord, Take My Hand" as performed by the Mormon Youth Chorus singing under the baton of Robert Bowden.

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our next speaker.

Elder M. Russell Ballard

Reexamine life's priorities

My dear brothers and sisters, since last general conference, I have felt in my own life the power of priesthood blessings and the power of the faith and prayers of Church members. For many years, I have given blessings to others. I have fasted and prayed for their well-being and have exercised my faith for their recovery. Recently, during a serious illness, I was the recipient of such faith, prayers, and blessings. I thank you, brothers and sisters, for the prayers that you have offered in my behalf.

One of my colleagues said to me that some good would come from this illness. He suggested that it is good, on occasion, for everyone to face adversity, especially if it causes intro-

spection that enables us to openly and honestly assess our lives. That is what I did.

The night before my surgery, my doctors talked about the possibility of cancer. When I was left alone, my mind filled with thoughts of my family and of my ministry. I found comfort in the ordinances of the gospel that bind me to my family if we are faithful. I realized that I needed to rearrange some of my priorities to accomplish the things that matter most to me.

Sometimes we need a personal crisis to reinforce in our minds what we really value and cherish. The scriptures are filled with examples of people facing crises before learning how to better serve God and others. Perhaps if you, too, search your hearts and coura-

geously assess the priorities in your life, you may discover, as I did, that you need a better balance among your priorities.

All of us must come to an honest, open self-examination, an awareness within as to who and what we want to be.

Reviewing covenants helps us balance life's demands

As most of you know, coping with the complex and diverse challenges of everyday life, which is not an easy task, can upset the balance and harmony we seek. Many good people who care a great deal are trying very hard to maintain balance, but they sometimes feel overwhelmed and defeated.

A mother of four small children said: "There is no balance at all in my life. I am completely consumed in trying to raise my children. I hardly have time to think of anything else!"

A young father, who felt the pressure of being the family provider, said: "My new business requires all of my time. I realize that I am neglecting my family and church duties, but if I can just get through one more year I will make enough money, and then things will settle down."

A high school student said, "We hear so many contrasting views that it is hard to always know what is right and what is wrong."

How often have we heard this one? "No one knows better than I do how important exercise is, but I just have no time in my day for exercising."

A single parent said: "I find it next to impossible to accomplish all that I need to do to manage my home and lead my family. In fact, sometimes I think the world expects too much of me. Regardless of how hard I work, I never will live up to everyone's expectations."

Another mother of four remarked, "My struggle is between self-esteem, confidence, and feelings of self-worth versus guilt, depression, and discouragement for not doing everything I am

told we must do to attain the celestial kingdom."

Brothers and sisters, we all face these kinds of struggles from time to time. They are common human experiences. Many people have heavy demands upon them stemming from parental, family, employment, church, and civic responsibilities. Keeping everything in balance can be a real problem.

A periodic review of the covenants we have made with the Lord will help us with our priorities and with balance in our lives. This review will help us see where we need to repent and change our lives to ensure that we are worthy of the promises that accompany our covenants and sacred ordinances. Working out our own salvation requires good planning and a deliberate, valiant effort.

I have a few suggestions that I hope will be valuable to those of you concerned with balancing life's demands. These suggestions are very basic; their concepts can easily be overlooked if you are not careful. You will need a strong commitment and personal discipline to incorporate them into your life.

Use an eternal perspective to set priorities

First, think about your life and set your priorities. Find some quiet time regularly to think deeply about where you are going and what you will need to do to get there. Jesus, our exemplar, often "withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed" (Luke 5:16). We need to do the same thing occasionally to rejuvenate ourselves spiritually as the Savior did. Write down the tasks you would like to accomplish each day. Keep foremost in mind the sacred covenants you have made with the Lord as you write down your daily schedules.

Set reasonable short-term goals

Second, set short-term goals that you can reach. Set goals that are well

balanced—not too many nor too few, and not too high nor too low. Write down your attainable goals and work on them according to their importance. Pray for divine guidance in your goal setting.

You recall that Alma said he would like to be an angel so he could “speak with the trump of God, . . . to shake the earth, and cry repentance unto every people!” (Alma 29:1). He then said, “But behold, I am a man, and do sin in my wish; for I ought to be content with the things which the Lord hath allotted unto me. . . .

“ . . . Why should I desire more than to perform the work to which I have been called?” (Alma 29:3, 6).

Become financially responsible and secure

Third, everyone faces financial challenges in life. Through wise budgeting, control your real needs and measure them carefully against your many wants in life. Far too many individuals and families have incurred too much debt. Be careful of the many attractive offers to borrow money. It is much easier to borrow money than it is to pay it back. There are no shortcuts to financial security. There are no get-rich-quick schemes that work. Perhaps no one needs the principle of balance in their lives more than those who are driven toward accumulating “things” in this world.

Do not trust your money to others without a thorough evaluation of any proposed investment. Our people have lost far too much money by trusting their assets to others. In my judgment, we never will have balance in our lives unless our finances are securely under control.

The prophet Jacob said to his people: “Wherefore, do not spend money for that which is of no worth, nor your labor for that which cannot satisfy. Hearken diligently unto me, and remember the words which I have spoken; and come unto the Holy One of Israel, and feast upon that which per-

isheth not, neither can be corrupted, and let your soul delight in fatness” (2 Nephi 9:51).

Brothers and sisters, remember to always pay a full tithing.

Build close relationships with family and friends

Fourth, stay close to your spouse, children, relatives, and friends. They will help you keep a balance in your life. In a recent study by the Church, adults in the United States were asked to identify a time when they were very happy and to describe the experience. They were also asked to describe a time when they were very unhappy. For most people, one thing that had made them the most happy or the most sad was their personal relationships with others. Much less important were their personal health, employment, money, and other material things. Build relationships with your family and friends through open and honest communication.

A good marriage and good family relationships can be maintained through gentle, loving, thoughtful communication. Remember that often a glance, a wink, a nod, or a touch will say more than words. A sense of humor and good listening are also vital parts of good communication.

Study the scriptures

Fifth, study the scriptures. They offer one of the best sources we have to keep in touch with the Spirit of the Lord. One of the ways I have gained my sure knowledge that Jesus is the Christ is through my study of the scriptures. President Ezra Taft Benson has called upon members of the Church to make the study of the Book of Mormon a daily habit and a lifetime pursuit. The Apostle Paul’s advice to Timothy is good counsel for each of us. He wrote, “From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:15-16).

Rest, exercise, and relax

Sixth, many people, including me, have difficulty finding the time for sufficient rest, exercise, and relaxation. We must schedule time on our daily calendars for these activities if we are to enjoy a healthy and balanced life. Good physical appearance enhances our dignity and self-respect.

"Teach one another the gospel"

Seventh, the prophets have taught repeatedly that families should teach one another the gospel, preferably in a weekly family home evening. This family practice, if we are not very careful, can slowly drift away from us. We must not lose this special opportunity to "teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom" (D&C 88:77), which will lead families to eternal life.

Satan is always working to destroy our testimonies, but he will not have the power to tempt or disturb us beyond our strength to resist when we are studying the gospel and living its commandments.

Pray often

My last suggestion is to pray often as individuals and as families. Parents need to exercise the discipline required to lead out and motivate children to join together for regular family prayers. Our youth can know the right decisions to make each day through constant, sincere prayer.

The prophet Alma summarized the importance of prayer in these words: "But that ye would humble yourselves before the Lord, and call on his holy name, and watch and pray continually, that ye may not be tempted above that which ye can bear, and thus

be led by the Holy Spirit, becoming humble, meek, submissive, patient, full of love and all long-suffering" (Alma 13:28). When I am in tune spiritually, I find that I can balance everything in my life much more easily.

Do all things in wisdom and order

I realize, brothers and sisters, that other suggestions could be added to these. However, I believe that when we focus on a few basic objectives, we are more likely to be able to manage the many demands that life makes on us. Remember, too much of anything in life can throw us off-balance. At the same time, too little of the important things can do the same thing. King Benjamin counseled "that all these things are done in wisdom and order" (Mosiah 4:27).

Often the lack of clear direction and goals can waste away our time and energy and contribute to imbalance in our lives. A life that gets out of balance is much like a car tire that is out of balance. It will make the operation of the car rough and unsafe. Tires in perfect balance can give a smooth and comfortable ride. So it is with life. The ride through mortality can be smoother for us when we strive to stay in balance. Our main goal should be to seek "immortality and eternal life" (Moses 1:39). With this as our goal, why not eliminate from our lives the things that clamor for and consume our thoughts, feelings, and energies without contributing to our reaching that goal?

Help rather than hinder

Just a word to Church leaders: Be very careful that what you ask from members will help them attain eternal life. For Church members to be able to balance their lives, Church leaders must be sure they do not require so much from members that they have no time to accomplish their personal and family goals.

Do your best each day

Not long ago, one of my children said, "Dad, sometimes I wonder if I will ever make it." The answer I gave to her is the same as I would give to you if you have had similar feelings. Just do the very best you can each day. Do the basic things and, before you realize it, your life will be full of spiritual understanding that will confirm to you that your Heavenly Father loves you. When a person knows this, then life will be full of purpose and meaning, making balance easier to maintain.

Live every day with joy in your heart, brothers and sisters. I humbly

testify that life can be wonderful, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The chorus sang "Praise to the Man" without announcement.

President Monson

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has spoken to us, following which the Mormon Youth Chorus sang "Praise to the Man Who Communed with Jehovah."

President Howard W. Hunter, Acting President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our concluding speaker for this session.

President Howard W. Hunter

Stand firm in the battle for the souls of men

At a critical moment in the battle of Waterloo, when everything depended on the steadiness of the soldiery, an anxious courier dashed into the presence of the Duke of Wellington, announcing that unless the troops were immediately relieved or withdrawn, they must yield before the impending assault of the French army. The Duke replied, "Stand firm!"

"But we shall perish!" remonstrated the officer.

"Stand firm!" again was the answer of the ironhearted Duke.

"You'll find us there!" rejoined the courier, as he galloped away.

And, of course, the British were victorious that day as a result of such loyalty and determination (see Walter Baxendale, ed., *Dictionary of Anecdote, Incident, Illustrative Fact* [New York: Thomas Whittaker, 1889] p. 225).

Today another battle of far more serious consequence is being waged. It is a battle being fought for the souls of men. Its outcome likewise depends on the steadiness of the soldiery. The clar-

ion call of the chieftain is heard above the fierce artillery of the archenemy, "Stand firm! Be true!"

Brothers and sisters, I am grateful that most within the sound of my voice are standing firm and remaining true to the kingdom of God. Like Helaman's stripling warriors, "they stand fast in that liberty wherewith God has made them free; and they are strict to remember the Lord their God from day to day; yea, they do observe to keep his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments continually; and their faith is strong in the prophecies concerning that which is to come" (Alma 58:40). I am referring to those members of the Church who live their Christian beliefs in the quiet commonplace of their daily lives.

"Am I a true and living member?"

On November 1, 1831, at a conference of the Church in Hiram, Ohio, the Lord revealed in the preface to the Doctrine and Covenants that this is the "only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth." Then he added, "with which I, the Lord, am well pleased, speaking unto the church

collectively and not individually" (D&C 1:30). This should raise a question in our minds of eternal significance: We know that this is the true and living church institutionally, but am I a true and living member individually?

This question may appear as a play on the words of the Lord when he said this is the true and living church. When I ask, "Am I a true and living member?" my question is, am I deeply and fully dedicated to keeping the covenants I have made with the Lord? Am I totally committed to live the gospel and be a doer of the word and not a hearer only? Do I live my religion? Will I remain true? Do I stand firm against Satan's temptations? He is seeking to cause us to lose our way in a storm of derision and a tide of sophistry. We can have victory, however, by responding to that inner voice calling, "stand firm!"

To answer affirmatively the question, "Am I a living member?" confirms our commitment. It means that we now and always will love God and our neighbors as ourselves. It means our actions will reflect who we are and what we believe. It means that we are every day Christians, walking as Christ would have us walk.

Press forward and stay committed

Living members are those who strive to have a total commitment. They follow the admonition of Nephi, who wrote:

"And now, my beloved brethren, after ye have gotten into this strait and narrow path, I would ask if all is done? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; for ye have not come thus far save it were by the word of Christ with unshaken faith in him, relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save.

"Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the

Father: Ye shall have eternal life" (2 Nephi 31:19-20).

Living members recognize their duty to press forward. They are baptized as a first step of their living journey. It is a sign to God, to angels, and to heaven that they will follow God's will. We especially welcome those of you throughout the world who have recently taken upon yourselves these covenants. We express our love for you and want you to know of our concern for you and all members everywhere. We welcome you into the brotherhood and sisterhood of the Latter-day Saints. The word *saint* does not mean that any of us is perfect. What it does mean is that we are all trying, all serving, and all vowing to stand firm in the faith.

A living member never strays from the path of his commitment. On one occasion a certain man came to the Savior and said unto him:

"Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

"And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:61-62).

To dig a straight furrow, the plowman needs to keep his eyes on a fixed point ahead of him. That keeps him on a true course. If, however, he happens to look back to see where he has been, his chances of straying are increased. The results are crooked and irregular furrows. We invite those of you who are new members to fix your attention on your new goal and never look back on your earlier problems or transgressions except as a reminder of your growth and your worth and your blessings from God. If our energies are focused not behind us but ahead of us—on eternal life and the joy of salvation—we assuredly will obtain it.

Heed the Spirit and put Christ first

Living members give heed to the Spirit, which quickens the inner life. They constantly seek its direction.

They pray for strength and overcome difficulties. Their hearts are not set upon the things of this world but upon the infinite. Spiritual renewal is not sacrificed for physical gratification.

Living members put Christ first in their lives, knowing from what source their lives and progress come. There is a tendency for man to put himself in the center of the universe and expect others to conform to his wants and needs and desires. Yet nature does not honor that erroneous assumption. The central role in life belongs to God. Instead of asking him to do our bidding, we should seek to bring ourselves in harmony with his will, and thus continue our progress as a living member.

The first great commandment is to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matthew 22:37). In order to love him we need to do the things he has asked us to do. We need to show that we are willing to become like him.

Strengthen others

Living members, once they are converted, fulfill the commandment to strengthen their brothers and sisters. They are anxious to share their joy with others, and they never lose this desire. Patrick Henry said at the closing scene of his life: "I have now disposed of all my property to my family. . . . There is one thing more I wish I could give them, and that is the Christian religion. . . . If they had that, and I had not given them one shilling, they would have been rich, and if they had not that, and I had given them all the world, they would be poor" (*The New Dictionary of Thoughts*, comp. Tyron Edwards [Garden City, New York: Standard Book Co., 1961], p. 561).

Work anxiously to forward God's work

Living members recognize the need to put into action their beliefs. These Saints are anxiously engaged in bringing to pass many good and noble

works of their own free will and accord. President Heber J. Grant once observed that "the power is in us wherein we are agents unto ourselves, and that we should not wait to be commanded in all things, and he that is compelled in all things is a slothful and not a wise servant. We should have the ambition, we should have the desire, we should make up our minds that, so far as the Lord Almighty has given to us talent, we will do our full share in the battle of life. It should be a matter of pride that no man shall do more than you will do, in proportion to your ability, in forwarding the work of God here upon the earth" ("The Reward of Doing," *Improvement Era*, Oct. 1939, p. 585).

Love one another and believe in God

Living members love one another. They visit the fatherless and the widows in their afflictions. They keep themselves unspotted from the world.

As members of the living church we have a belief in the living God. Prior to crossing the Jordan River, Joshua summoned the children of Israel, saying, "Come hither, and hear the words of the Lord your God.

" . . . Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you" (Joshua 3:9-10).

Young David, in response to Goliath's challenge, courageously spoke to the men near him, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" (1 Samuel 17:26). Jeremiah likewise referred to the Lord as the true and living God (see Jeremiah 10:10).

We have a firm belief in the statement that this is the true and living church of the true and living God. The question we have yet to answer is, Am I dedicated and committed, a true and living member?

May we stand firm and be true and living members of the Church and receive the promised reward to be among those spoken of in the Doctrine and Covenants "who are come unto Mount

Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly place, the holiest of all" (D&C 76:66). This is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

President Howard W. Hunter of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

We are grateful to the managers and operators of the many television and radio stations and cable systems for offering their facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this

conference to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

The Mormon Youth Chorus will now sing "How Great Thou Art." The benediction will then be given by Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone of the First Quorum of the Seventy. This conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon

The chorus sang "How Great Thou Art."

Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone offered the benediction.

FIRST DAY AFTERNOON SESSION

The second general session of the 157th Annual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 4, 1987, at 2:00 P.M. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

Music for this session was provided by the Kearns Region mixed choir with Jane K. Poulsen conducting and Robert Cundick at the organ.

At the beginning of the meeting, President Gordon B. Hinckley made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My beloved brethren and sisters, President Ezra Taft Benson has asked that I conduct this, the second general session of the 157th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We welcome all who are in attendance or who are participating by means of television, cable, or radio, and the very many who are watching in stake centers throughout the United States,

Canada, and Puerto Rico, to which the conference is being carried by satellite transmission. We express our appreciation to the owners and operators of the many radio and television stations and cable systems for their cooperation in making these proceedings available to members and friends of the Church in many countries.

We note that Elders Carlos E. Asay and Russell C. Taylor are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall.

The music for this session will be provided by the Kearns Region mixed choir, under the direction of Sister Jane K. Poulsen, with Brother Robert Cundick at the organ.

The choir will begin this session by singing "O Love That Glorifies the Son." The invocation will then be offered by Elder Jack H. Goaslind of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "O Love That Glorifies the Son."

Elder Jack H. Goaslind offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

The choir will now sing "Come, Ye Children of the Lord," following which President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will present the General Au-

thorities of the Church for your sustaining expression.

The choir sang "Come, Ye Children of the Lord."

President Thomas S. Monson

Sustaining of General Authorities and general officers

My brothers and sisters, I shall now present to you the General Authorities and general officers of the Church for your sustaining vote.

It is proposed that we sustain President Ezra Taft Benson as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Gordon B. Hinckley as First Counselor in the First Presidency; and Thomas S. Monson as Second Counselor in the First Presidency. Those in favor may manifest it. Those opposed may manifest it.

It is proposed that we sustain Marion G. Romney as President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, Howard W. Hunter as Acting President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, and the following as members of that council: Marion G. Romney, Howard W. Hunter, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, and Joseph B. Wirthlin. Those in favor, please manifest it. Those opposed.

It is proposed that we sustain the Counselors in the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

It is proposed that we sustain the following brethren as additional members of the First Quorum of the Seventy to serve for a period of five years: George R. Hill III, John R. Lasater,

Douglas J. Martin, Alexander B. Morrison, L. Aldin Porter, Glen L. Rudd, Douglas H. Smith, and Lynn A. Sorensen. All in favor, please signify. Those opposed may manifest it.

Sister Maurine J. Turley has accepted a call to accompany her husband in his assignment as president of the Arkansas Little Rock Mission. It is therefore necessary to release her as first counselor in the Young Women general presidency. We likewise release Sister Jayne B. Malan as second counselor. All who wish to join in an expression of gratitude to these sisters for their devoted service in these respective calls may indicate it by the uplifted hand. Thank you.

Sister Ardeeth G. Kapp, president of the Young Women, has asked Sister Jayne B. Malan to serve as her first counselor and sister Elaine Low Jack to serve as her second counselor. Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed by the same sign.

It is proposed that we sustain all of the other General Authorities and general officers of the Church as at present constituted. Those in favor, please manifest it. Those opposed, by the same sign.

President Benson, it appears that the voting has been unanimous in the affirmative. We invite the newly sustained brethren and Sister Jack to take their places on the stand.

President Hinckley

Everyone take a good look, as you will have an opportunity to do over the next five years. These brethren, all of

whom are well qualified by reason of long experience and faithful experience, as well as by a call from the President of the Church, will serve faithfully and well.

Brother Wilford G. Edling will now read the auditor's report, following which Brother F. Michael Watson will present the statistical report of the Church for the year 1986.

Auditor's Report 1986

Wilford G. Edling

For the purpose of evaluating the adequacy of controls over receipts and expenditures of the general funds of the Church and its controlled organizations, we have reviewed the system of budgeting, accounting, and auditing, and the related financial statements of the Church for the year ended December 31, 1986, and the manner in which funds are received and expenditures are controlled.

Expenditures of general Church funds for the year were authorized by the First Presidency and were made in compliance with budgetary procedures. The budget is authorized by the Council on Disposition of Tithes, composed of the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, and the Presiding Bishopric. The Appropriations Committee, in weekly meetings, administers major expenditures under the budget.

The general fund accounts of the Church are maintained by its Finance and Records Department, which uses modern accounting technology and equipment to keep abreast of the rapidly expanding and varied activities of the Church.

The Auditing Department, which is independent of all other departments, performs financial audits, operational audits, and audits of computer systems employed by the Church. These auditing services are performed on a continuing basis for Church departments and other Church-controlled organizations engaged in worldwide operations, including missions, schools, administrative offices, and departmental activities. The extent and scope of the

Auditing Department services in safeguarding the resources of the Church are expanding to encompass the growth and widening activities of the Church.

The audits of local funds of wards and stakes are performed by stake auditors. The audit procedures are established and the audit reports are reviewed by the Church Auditing Department. Incorporated businesses owned or controlled by the Church for which accounts are not maintained in the Finance and Records Department are audited by the Church's internal staff of certified public accountants, by independent professional auditing firms, or by government regulatory agencies.

Based on our review of the system of financial controls within the Church, together with continuing discussions with personnel of the Finance and Records and Auditing departments, and the Office of Church Legal Counsel, we are of the opinion that budgeting, accounting, and auditing controls are adequate for Church needs and purposes, and that in all material respects the general funds of the Church received and expended during the year ended December 31, 1986, have been controlled and accounted for in accordance with established Church policy and procedures.

Respectfully submitted,

Church Audit Committee
Wilford G. Edling
David M. Kennedy
Warren E. Pugh
Merrill J. Bateman
Ted E. Davis

Statistical Report 1986

F. Michael Watson, secretary to the First Presidency

For the information of the members of the Church, the First Presidency has issued the following statistical report concerning the growth and status of the Church as of December 31, 1986. (Membership figures include estimates based on 1986 reports available prior to conference.)

Church Units

Number of stakes	1,622
Number of districts	346
Number of missions	193
Number of wards	10,527
Number of branches in stakes	2,792
Number of branches in missions	2,070
Number of sovereign countries with organized wards or branches	98
Number of territories, colonies, and possessions with organized wards or branches	24

(These statistics reflect an increase of 40 stakes and 379 wards and branches during 1986.)

Church Membership

Total membership at the close of 1986	6,170,000
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Church Growth during 1986

Increase in children of record	93,000
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Children of record

baptized	72,000
Converts baptized	216,210

Priesthood

Adults males with Melchizedek Priesthood	745,000
Adult males and young men with Aaronic Priesthood	844,000

Missionaries

Full-time missionaries	31,803
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Prominent Members Who Have Passed Away Since Last April

Elder A. Theodore Tuttle, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy; Elder Henry D. Taylor, an emeritus member of the First Quorum of the Seventy; Elder James A. Cullimore, an emeritus member of the First Quorum of the Seventy; Elder O. Leslie Stone, an emeritus member of the First Quorum of the Seventy; May J. Dyer, widow of Elder Alvin R. Dyer, former Counselor in the First Presidency and member of the First Quorum of the Seventy; Beverly J. Call, wife of Elder Waldo P. Call of the First Quorum of the Seventy; G. Carlos Smith, Jr., former general superintendent of the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association.

President Hinckley

Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our first speaker.

Elder Boyd K. Packer

Elder Tuttle's request

I hope it is not presumptuous of me to place into the record of this conference, and therefore into the history of the Church, a note to complete the record of the last one.

In the last session of October conference, Elder A. Theodore Tuttle gave a touching and inspiring sermon on faith. He spoke from his heart, with scriptures in hand, without a prepared text. When he had concluded, Presi-

dent Hinckley, who conducted that session, said:

"I should perhaps be guilty of an indiscretion, but I think I will risk it and say that Brother Tuttle has been seriously ill and he needs our faith, the faith of which he has spoken. It will be appreciated if those who have listened to him across the Church would plead with our Father in Heaven, in the kind of faith which he has described, in his behalf" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, p. 93).

President Ezra Taft Benson, who was the concluding speaker, endorsed what President Hinckley had said and appealed himself for fasting and prayers of faith for the recovery of Brother Tuttle.

But Brother Tuttle did not recover. He died seven weeks later.

Now, lest there be one whose faith was shaken, believing prayers were not answered, or lest there be one who is puzzled that the prophet himself could plead for the entire Church to fast and pray for Brother Tuttle to live and yet he died, I will tell you of an experience. I had intended to tell this at his funeral, but my feelings were too tender that day to speak of it.

One Sunday when Brother Tuttle was at home, confined mostly to his bed, I spent a few hours with him while Marné and the family went to church. He was deeply moved by the outpouring of love from across the world. Each letter extended prayers of faith for his recovery. Many of the messages came from South America, where the Tuttle family had labored for so many years.

That day we reviewed his life, beginning with his birth in Manti, Utah, to an ordinary Latter-day Saint couple. We talked of his father, whom I knew, and of his mother, a faithful temple worker. He talked of his mission, his college days, his marriage to Marné Whitaker, and his heroic service in the Marines. Then we relived our days teaching seminary in Brigham City and supervising the seminaries and institutes of religion.

He talked of his seven faithful children and the flock of grandchildren whom he always described as "the best kids in the world."

He spoke of his call to the First Quorum of the Seventy and the assignments that followed. Soon the Tuttle family was called to South America. They were hardly settled back home when the Brethren interviewed him about returning.

Others could say, "Of course, if you should *call* us, we would go." But not him, nor Marné, for they had made covenants. Without complaint, his wife and family followed him back time after time for a total of seven years.

No matter that he had never recovered from serious physical troubles which began on his first assignment there. That day Brother Tuttle spoke tenderly of the humble people of Latin America. They who have so little had greatly blessed his life.

He insisted that he did not deserve more blessings, nor did he need them. Others needed them more. And then he told me this: "I talked to the Lord about those prayers for my recovery. I asked if the blessings were mine to do with as I pleased. If that could be so, I told the Lord that I wanted him to take them back from me and give them to those who needed them more."

He said, "I begged the Lord to take back those blessings and give them to others."

Brother Tuttle wanted those blessings from our prayers for those struggling souls whom most of us hardly remember, but whom he could not forget.

The scriptures teach that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

Can you not believe that the Lord may have favored the pleadings of this saintly man above our own appeal for his recovery?

We do not know all things, but is it wrong to suppose that our prayers were not in vain at all? Who among us would dare to say that humble folk here and there across the continent of South

America will not receive unexpected blessings passed on to them from this man who was without guile?

May not lofty purposes such as this be worked out in our lives if we are submissive?

Now, I know that skeptics may ridicule such things. But I, for one, am content to believe that our prayers were accepted and recorded and re-directed to those whose hands hang down in despair, just as Brother Tuttle had requested.

In any case, ought we not to conclude all our prayers with "Let thy will, O Lord, be done"?

During his last weeks he was always pleasant, invariably comforting those who came to comfort him. I was present when he called his doctors to his bedside and thanked each one for the care he had received.

He was determined to live through Thanksgiving Day lest his passing cast a shadow of sorrow upon his family on that holiday in future years. That evening he saw each of his children, called those who were away, expressed his love and blessings, and bade them farewell. It was very late when they reached Clarie, who lives in Alaska, but his parting must be delayed until that was done.

Early the next morning, without resistance, with a spirit of quiet anticipation, he slipped away. At that moment, there came into that room a spirit of peace which surpasseth understanding.

Marné had been before, was then, and has been since, a perfect example of serenity and acceptance.

Now, to draw a lesson from this experience.

Service as temple president was the crowning experience

Brother Tuttle served twenty-eight years as a General Authority. He traveled the world. He supervised the work in Europe for a time. But with all the places he would go and all of the

things he was to do, he repeatedly said that the crowning experience of his ministry was his service as president of the Provo Temple with his beloved Marné at his side.

Few know the demanding schedule of a temple president. The day may begin at three in the morning and end only too close to that same hour.

It was not that he was presiding *over* the temple but that the calling allowed him to be *in* the temple. He would have been quite content to serve under another. His feelings about that assignment were due not so much to his understanding of what a *call* is, as to his understanding of what a *covenant* is.

Understanding the word covenant

A covenant is a sacred promise, as used in the scriptures, a solemn, enduring promise between God and man. The fulness of the gospel itself is defined as the new and everlasting covenant (see D&C 22:1, 66:2).

Several years ago I installed a stake president in England. In another calling, he is here in the audience today. He had an unusual sense of direction. He was like a mariner with a sextant who took his bearings from the stars. I met with him each time he came to conference and was impressed that he kept himself and his stake on course.

Fortunately for me, when it was time for his release, I was assigned to reorganize the stake. It was then that I discovered what that sextant was and how he adjusted it to check his position and get a bearing for himself and for his members.

He accepted his release, and said: "I was happy to accept the call to serve as stake president, and I am equally happy to accept my release. I did not serve just because I was under *call*. I served because I am under *covenant*. And I can keep my covenants quite as well as a home teacher as I can serving as stake president."

This president understood the word *covenant*.

While he was neither a scribe nor a gospel scholar, he somehow had learned that exaltation is achieved by keeping covenants, not by holding high position.

Set a spiritual sextant to guide life's journey

The mariner gets his bearing from light coming from celestial bodies—the sun by day, the stars by night. That stake president did not need a mariner's sextant to set his course. In his mind there was a sextant infinitely more refined and precise than any mariner's instrument.

The spiritual sextant, which each of us has, also functions on the principle of light from celestial sources. Set that sextant in your mind to the word *covenant* or the word *ordinance*. The light will come through. Then you can fix your position and set a true course in life.

No matter what citizenship or race, whether male or female, no matter what occupation, no matter your education, regardless of the generation in which one lives, life is a homeward journey for all of us, back to the presence of God in his celestial kingdom.

Ordinances and covenants become our credentials for admission into His presence. To worthily receive them is the quest of a lifetime; to keep them thereafter is the challenge of mortality.

Performing vicarious ordinances is a Christ-like service

Once we have received them for ourselves and for our families, we are obligated to provide these ordinances vicariously for our kindred dead, indeed for the whole human family.

Now, there are those who scoff at the idea of vicarious ordinances performed for the salvation of souls. They think it all to be very strange.

No thinking Christian should be surprised at such a doctrine. Was not the sacrifice of Christ a vicarious offering for and in behalf of all mankind?

The very Atonement was wrought vicariously.

The Lord did for us what we could not do for ourselves. Is it not Christ-like for us to perform in the temples ordinances for and in behalf of those who cannot do them for themselves?

Genealogical work is an important duty

Genealogies, or family histories, as I prefer to call them, are an indispensable part of temple work. Temples are nourished with names. Without genealogies, ordinances could be performed only for the living. Searching out the names of our kindred dead is a duty of consummate importance. There is a spirit which accompanies this work very similar to that which attends us in the temple itself.

Missionaries and those with small children may not be able to devote much time to this work at present, but you can keep the spirit of it. You can talk to the old folks and record what they say, keep family records, attend the temple.

There is the tendency on the part of some to regard genealogical work as a tedious, onerous burden. And they are quite content to leave it to the aged or to others "who have an interest in such things."

Be careful! It may well be that those who have that interest in such things have chosen the better part. And I would say to you, if you are called to other service, or do not have an interest in genealogy, do not belittle or stand in the way of those who do. Give them every encouragement; contribute what you can.

The Prophet Joseph Smith said: "The doctrine or sealing power of Elijah is as follows:—If you have power to seal on earth and in heaven, then we should be wise. The first thing you do, go and seal on earth your sons and daughters unto yourself, and yourself unto your fathers in eternal glory" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt

Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 340).

The Spirit of Elijah of which the prophets have spoken is very real and accompanies those who seek for the records of their kindred dead.

Christ's redemptive power

The more I have to do with genealogical work, the more difficulty I have with that word *dead*. I know of no adequate substitute. I suppose *departed* would suit me as well as any. I have had too many sacred experiences, of the kind of which we never speak lightly, to feel that the word *dead* describes those who have gone beyond the veil.

Temple and genealogical work are visible testimonies of our belief in the resurrection and atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. Should we doubt that we live again beyond the veil, what reason would we have to do the things we are doing?

This work is our witness of the redemptive power of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Those who go beyond the veil

Now what of Brother Tuttle or of his family? I remind you that it is a veil,

not a wall, that separates us from the spirit world. He kept his covenants. Veils can become thin, even parted. We are not left to do this work alone.

They who have preceded us in this work and our forebears there, on occasion, are very close to us. I have a testimony of this work; it is a supernal work in the Church. I am a witness that those who go beyond the veil yet live and minister here, to the end that this work might be completed.

God grant that we who have an opportunity to have part in it might seek that opportunity and labor with all our might, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "With Songs of Praise and Gratitude" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has spoken to us, followed by the choir singing "With Songs of Praise."

Elder Charles Didier, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now address us.

Elder Charles Didier

Liberalizing values brings insecurity

Since the beginning, truth and knowledge about ourselves and our environment have been a quest for the natural man and have led him to great scientific discoveries and also to debatable theories. There seems to be no limit to his questions, and the proposed answers that might have been true yesterday will probably change today and again tomorrow.

This quest is not limited only to science, but to every aspect of our lives. More than ever before, our

values and roles as men, women, and children are being challenged and scrutinized—supposedly to liberate individuals from anxiety, bondage, fears, and bigotry, and to give them a feeling of security. It seems that the natural man always wants to secure his truths and knowledge to fit his own carnal security.

Submerged by this continual flow of conflicting reconsideration of every possible value, one should not be surprised to see that these constant changes bring a state of constant insecurity rather than security in the lives of common people to the point

where many, especially the youth, have abdicated their responsibilities, and many have even given up their lives. What a paradox!

Spiritual security is essential

In our lives of trials and tribulations and constant changes, it is obvious that we all seek for some measure of security—something steady and unchanging to cling to—and we have surrounded ourselves with all kinds of devices or organizations that carry the word *security*. For example, we use security blankets to soothe and comfort our children. We install security systems to protect our homes and our personal possessions. The Social Security system was created as a protection against temporal storms. In the political arena, the Security Council of the United Nations attempts to maintain peace among the nations of the world. At times we are amused by this all-consuming search for so-called security, but we require it and are willing to pay for it. However, despite all our efforts, we still do not gain the *real* security that we seek. Is it because we put our trust in the arm of flesh?

Security is an essential ingredient in our lives. It includes knowledge about our true identity and the purpose of life, how to interact with others, and how to face our daily adversities and challenges. It can be a matter of life and death. Every day of our lives we are faced with what is good and what is evil, what is right and what is wrong. From childhood to old age, if we don't feel secure or if we live by deceiving carnal security, our attitudes, goals, and interrelationships with others will suffer. When we gain a feeling of security from loving parents as a child and continue on to experience the security enjoyed by obeying laws, we bless our own lives and the lives of others. The real issue, then, has always been where and how to find righteous security as opposed to carnal security. For our

purpose here, we will call righteous security spiritual security.

Trust in the Lord

Spiritual security provides interesting advantages: you do not have to pay taxes on it, it does not change, it does not take away your liberty or free agency, and it brings positive, comforting, spiritual, and eternal results.

Security cannot be guaranteed because free agency also brings insecurity, and spiritual security does not automatically suppress or eliminate danger, oppression, or opposition.

Then how can we gain spiritual security? The very simple answer is perhaps too simple for too many: first, turn to the Lord. King Limhi said, "But if ye will turn to the Lord with full purpose of heart, and put your trust in him, and serve him with all diligence of mind, if ye do this, he will, according to his own will and pleasure, deliver you out of bondage" (Mosiah 7:33).

Second, trust the Lord. As Nephi of old said:

"O Lord, I have trusted in thee, and I will trust in thee forever. I will not put my trust in the arm of flesh; for I know that cursed is he that putteth his trust in the arm of flesh. Yea, cursed is he that putteth his trust in man or maketh flesh his arm.

"Yea, I know that God will give liberally to him that asketh" (2 Nephi 4:34–35).

The true nature of Deity

To turn to the Lord and to trust him is to learn from his revelations. Spiritual security comes from revelation that unveils the true nature of Deity. The kind of God in whom we believe generally determines the kind of people we are and will become. Without revelation about the true nature of Deity, the natural man will walk "in his own way, and after the image of his own god, whose image is in the likeness of the world" (D&C 1:16).

The plan of salvation

Spiritual security is derived from revelation describing a plan of salvation for our benefit. "God conversed with men, and made known unto them the plan of redemption, which had been prepared from the foundation of the world" (Alma 12:30). The plan of salvation gives a direction to be followed, a sure way to strengthen ourselves against the pitfalls of the world.

Spiritual security is revelation that tells us about the source of the plan of salvation: Jesus Christ.

"And we talk of Christ," said Nephi, "we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins" (2 Nephi 25:26). The source is identified, clarified, and verified. We do not need to seek elsewhere.

Eternal life

Spiritual security comes from revelation that relieves the anxiety of death. "But there is a resurrection, therefore the grave hath no victory, and the sting of death is swallowed up in Christ" (Mosiah 16:8). How reassuring it is to know the reality not only of the Resurrection, but also of eternal life.

"And what is it that ye shall hope for? Behold I say unto you that ye shall have hope through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection, to be raised unto life eternal" (Moroni 7:41).

Spiritual security

Spiritual security is enhanced as a result of revelation that promises an unchanging, everlasting, eternal way of life.

"For do we not read that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and in him there is no variableness neither shadow of changing?" (Mormon 9:9). There is no need for

daily heartrending revisions or reconsideration of our values.

Spiritual security increases because revelation teaches us about our true identity and our relationship with God. From the beginning this was revealed to Adam: "Behold, thou art one in me, a son of God" (Moses 6:68). Then it was revealed to others, such as Moses: "Thou art my son" (Moses 1:4). "Thou art in the similitude of mine Only Begotten; and mine Only Begotten is and shall be the Savior" (Moses 1:6). In our day it has also been revealed to Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, and to many others: "Behold, I say unto you, my son" (D&C 9:1).

Knowing who we really are prepares us to use that knowledge to face temptations, to resist them, and then to act righteously. Moses, knowing he was a son of God, as revealed to him, told Satan, "Get thee hence, Satan; deceive me not; for God said unto me: Thou art after the similitude of mine Only Begotten" (Moses 1:16). The result did not wait, as the Lord called him, saying, "Blessed art thou, Moses, for I, the Almighty, have chosen thee, and thou shalt be made stronger than many waters; for they shall obey thy command as if thou wert God" (v. 25). The spiritual security becomes evident as the Lord added, "I am with thee, even unto the end of thy days" (v. 26).

Roles of men and women

Spiritual security is edified by revelation that describes the roles of men and women. After the Fall, Heavenly Father addressed Adam and Eve personally and directly and instructed them about their roles. Relationships, gender, behavior, marriage—all matters related to males and females were and still are clearly defined to strengthen us in our divine roles.

Rewards for obedience

Spiritual security is strengthened by revelation that explains the results of

observing the commandments. "And moreover, I would desire that ye should consider on the blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God. For behold, they are blessed in all things, both temporal and spiritual; and if they hold out faithful to the end they are received into heaven, that thereby they may dwell with God in a state of never-ending happiness" (Mosiah 2:41).

Ordinances of salvation

Finally, spiritual security is reinforced step-by-step by revelation, and this security becomes power as we receive, one by one, the ordinances of salvation. The ordinances of salvation represent covenants with the Lord. John A. Widtsoe said, "When ordinances are performed, blessings are received which give power to man, power that belongs to the everyday affairs of this life as to a future life. It is not merely knowledge; not merely consecration; not merely a labeling, so to speak; but the actual conferring of power that may be used every day" (*The Message of the Doctrine and Covenants*, ed. G. Homer Durham [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969], p. 161).

The Book of Mormon builds spiritual security

Yesterday's revelations gave security to the people about the coming of Jesus Christ and the assurance that the words of the Lord spoken by holy prophets are always fulfilled. Today's revelations in the Book of Mormon, to which I have purposely referred, carry the same promise. President Ezra Taft Benson has declared: "God expects us to use the Book of Mormon in several ways. We are to read it ourselves. . . .

"We are to use the Book of Mormon as the basis for our teaching. . . .

"... We are to liken the Book of Mormon scriptures unto us 'that it

might be for our profit and learning' (1 Nephi 19:23).

"We are to use the Book of Mormon in handling objections to the Church. . . .

"... [We] have to be . . . the tellers and testifiers, of the Book of Mormon unto the ends of the earth" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1975, pp. 95-96; or *Ensign*, May 1975, pp. 64-65).

Because of its message for our day, the Book of Mormon helps us to respond to the call of God and of a living prophet to become partners in the plan of salvation and to build spiritual security by helping us to resist and combat the false concepts and evil influences of our time that bring insecurity, unhappiness, and destruction of our ethics and moral values.

Turn to the Lord

To turn to the Lord and to trust him through revelation will help any individual, at any time, in any part of the world, understand and interpret correctly and righteously life's experiences from the only true perspective, which is the Lord's perspective revealed to man. To turn to the Lord and to trust his revelations is to live in such a way as to resist the floods and the winds of doubt and uncertainty.

It is truly the foundation of our commitment to serve and to make the right choices. It also brings true security and sets forth the promises given by Jesus Christ when we come unto him. His yoke indeed becomes easy and his burden light.

I testify of the power of personal revelation and of the scriptures in my life. I know that God lives and that President Ezra Taft Benson is a living prophet. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Brother Didier. The choir and congregation will now join in

singing "Come, Come, Ye Saints." Following this, Elder J. Thomas Fyans of the First Quorum of the Seventy will address us.

The chorus and congregation sang
"Come, Come, Ye Saints."

Elder J. Thomas Fyans

Spiritual nutrients

To attend this conference, we have traveled by many modes of transportation. Some came on the ground, in cars or buses or trains. Others came by airplane. But whatever the means, we have all arrived at a common destination.

There is something else that we all had in common on this journey—something that we all needed in order to arrive here safely. Those of us who came by plane were reminded of it very carefully by the airline staff. Upon boarding we were pleasantly greeted with "Welcome aboard." Then carefully prepared instructions were given: "In case of a loss of cabin pressure, oxygen masks will automatically appear. Place your own mask over your nose and mouth first, then help others who require assistance, such as children."

The oxygen in air is of vital importance. Our physical bodies are completely dependent upon the continuous supply of this most precious commodity. The lack of it for even minutes or seconds can do severe damage to our minds and bodies. Prolonged lack of air can end our mortal lives. But only those of us who traveled by airplane had to be reminded about it, because air, under normal circumstances, is all about us. All we have to do is allow it to flow into our lungs and feed the necessary oxygen to vital parts of our bodies.

Yet even with the ample supply of this life-prolonging substance, after three score and ten years, or some other measure of time, our mortal body ceases to function. What is there that transcends this mortality? What is

taken to the other side? In the Book of Mormon Amulek teaches us,

"That same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life, that same spirit will have power to possess your body in that eternal world" (Alma 34:34).

What is to the spirit as air is to the body? A sure knowledge of the Father and his Son:

"This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

Another Testament of Jesus Christ

Our eternal life is as dependent upon spiritual nutrients as our mortal life is upon air. The most important spiritual nutrients are knowledge of God and knowledge of his Son. We know the Father by knowing the Son. What is the best source on the face of the earth to learn about the Son? It is in studying another testament of him, commonly known as the Book of Mormon, and then having the Holy Ghost bear witness to you that it is true.

Many testimonies have been and will be borne in this conference to truths from the Book of Mormon, Another Testament of Jesus Christ. We are blessed with the prophets' utterances in the Old Testament of Jesus Christ as they foresaw his coming. We are doubly blessed with the New Testament, wherein he appeared in the flesh and many knew him. We are triply blessed with another testament of him. My wife, Helen, and I have read the Book of Mormon several times in the past few months. We have asked ourselves, "If this is another testament of Jesus Christ, how does it perform this task?"

Witnesses of Christ

We determined to note every reference to the Savior as we prayerfully prepared ourselves for another excursion through this special witness. We had just turned the very first page in this sacred record, and the curtain began to open to a panorama of testimony that Jesus is the Christ.

Here is the first scene. Lehi, praying with all his heart, had this experience:

"There came a pillar of fire and dwelt upon a rock before him; and he saw and heard much. . . .

"And it came to pass that he saw One descending out of the midst of heaven, and he beheld that his luster was above that of the sun at noon-day.

"And he also saw twelve others following him, and their brightness did exceed that of the stars in the firmament.

"And they came down and went forth upon the face of the earth; and the first came and stood before my father, and gave unto him a book, and bade him that he should read" (1 Nephi 1:6, 9-11).

What was Lehi's reaction to this heaven-sent scene? "He testified that the things which he saw and heard, and also the things which he read in the book, manifested plainly of the coming of a Messiah, and also the redemption of the world" (v. 19).

We were still in the first chapter of 1 Nephi, having barely begun our quest. As we continued, verse after verse, chapter after chapter bore witness of his reality.

Still in 1 Nephi, but in chapter 13, we discovered, in just sixteen verses, twenty-two references to the Lamb, another name for the Lord, the Redeemer, the Messiah, Jesus the Christ.

Christ's visit to the Americas

Time dictates that we must now pass by dozens, yes hundreds of references to this Savior of mankind found

in this sacred record. Six hundred years escape us. Now we hold time still. We stop to drink deeply and spiritually meditate as we study this scene:

"A great multitude gathered together, of the people of Nephi, round about the temple. . . .

"And they were also conversing about this Jesus Christ, of whom the sign had been given concerning his death" (3 Nephi 11:1-2). They heard a voice. Again they heard a voice, and they understood it not.

"And again the third time they did hear the voice, and did open their ears to hear it, and their eyes were towards the sound thereof; and they did look steadfastly towards heaven, from whence the sound came.

"And behold, the third time they did understand the voice which they heard; and it said unto them:

"Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name—hear ye him" (vs. 5-7).

And the Savior responded to the invitation of the Father to speak in this manner:

"Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world.

"And behold, I am the light and the life of the world; and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world, in the which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning.

"And it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words the whole multitude fell to the earth; for they remembered that it had been prophesied among them that Christ should show himself unto them after his ascension into heaven.

"And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto them saying:

"Arise and come forth unto me, that ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet,

that ye may know that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world.

"And it came to pass that the multitude went forth, and thrust their hands into his side, and did feel the prints of the nails in his hands and in his feet; and this they did do, going forth one by one until they had all gone forth, and did see with their eyes and did feel with their hands, and did know of a surety and did bear record, that it was he, of whom it was written by the prophets, that should come" (vs. 10–15).

The heavens were opened and had kissed the earth with certain knowledge. Then the Savior continued:

"And this is my doctrine, and it is the doctrine which the Father hath given unto me. . . . I bear record that the Father commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent and believe in me.

"And whoso believeth in me, and is baptized, the same shall be saved; and they are they who shall inherit the kingdom of God" (vs. 32–33).

"Come unto Christ"

Once again we must pass by many references and several hundred years of sacred history. Now the final page of this record, which speaks with a familiar voice:

"Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye

are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God. . . .

" . . . If ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy, without spot" (Moroni 10:32–33).

Seek the elements of eternal life

By plane or car or bus or train, we traveled safely to this common destination. There is another common destination that beckons us—eternal life with our Father in Heaven. And just as during our physical journey our bodies were dependent on air, so on our spiritual journey we are dependent on spiritual nutrients.

On the journey to eternal life, we pleasantly bid you, "Welcome aboard."

Fill your spiritual lungs with the elements of eternal life by constantly inhaling the truths in the Book of Mormon, Another Testament of Jesus Christ, so that you may arrive safely once again in the presence of our Eternal Father.

The Savior lives today. This I witness to you in the very sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder J. Thomas Fyans has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

Rewards of patience are great

One of the greatest sentences to fall upon human ears comes from the

Book of Mormon: "Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25). That sentence captures the major possibilities of

life. Let me add, we will have genuine joy and happiness only as we learn patience.

Dictionaries define patience in such terms as bearing pain or sorrow calmly or without complaint; not being hasty or impetuous; being steadfast despite opposition, difficulty, or adversity.

In a passage from the Book of Mormon, Alma helps us understand patience. After telling about planting a seed that can grow to become a tree, he adds these insightful words: "And behold, as the tree beginneth to grow, . . . if ye nourish it with much care it will get root, and grow up, and bring forth fruit. . . .

"And because of your diligence and your faith and your patience . . . ye shall pluck the fruit thereof, which is most precious, which is sweet above all that is sweet, . . . and ye shall feast upon this fruit even until ye are filled, that ye hunger not, neither shall ye thirst.

" . . . Ye shall reap the rewards of your faith, and your diligence, and patience" (Alma 32:37, 42-43).

Patience needed to endure trials

I don't know whether we Church members fully appreciate the Book of Mormon, one of our sacred scriptures, as we really should. One of the clearest explanations of why we need patience to endure the trials of life is set forth by Nephi in these striking words: "For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things. If not so, . . . righteousness could not be brought to pass, neither wickedness, neither holiness nor misery, neither good nor bad. Wherefore, all things must needs be a compound in one. . . .

"And if ye shall say there is no law, ye shall also say there is no sin. If ye shall say there is no sin, ye shall also say there is no righteousness. And if there be no righteousness there be no happiness. And if there be no righteousness nor happiness there be no punishment nor misery. And if these

things are not there is no God. And if there is no God we are not, neither the earth; for there could have been no creation of things, neither to act nor to be acted upon; wherefore, all things must have vanished away" (2 Nephi 2:11, 13).

The Apostle Paul gave the purpose of patience in his epistle to the Saints in Rome: "We glory in tribulations, . . . knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

"And patience, experience; and experience, hope" (Romans 5:3-4).

"Slipping from our old moorings"

Just forty years ago, President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., a member of the First Presidency, gave an address titled "Slipping from Our Old Moorings." He described how we have slipped away from living the Ten Commandments (see *Church News*, 8 Mar. 1947, pp. 1, 8-9).

If we had slipped away then, where are we forty years later? In 1947, television and computers were in their infancies. We had no satellite broadcasts or videotapes and no computer fraud. Certainly our moral standards of decency and propriety have slipped from where they were in 1947. The obscenity, nudity, and other forms of pornography that would have made us blush and turn away in shame in 1947 are now thrust at us openly in printed and audiovisual material. They are even paraded through our homes unless we are careful to keep them out. As a people, we are slipping further from our old moorings today because we are not following our prophets.

Impatience is a major cause of unhappiness

A certain amount of impatience may be useful to stimulate and motivate us to action. However, I believe that a lack of patience is a major cause of the difficulties and unhappiness in the world today. Too often, we are impatient with ourselves, with our family

members and friends, and even with the Lord. We seem to demand what we want right now, regardless of whether we have earned it, whether it would be good for us, or whether it is right. Some seek immediate gratification or numbing of every impulse by turning to alcohol and drugs, while others seek instant material wealth by questionable investments or by dishonesty, with little or no regard for the consequences. Perhaps the practice of patience is more difficult, yet more necessary, now than at any previous time.

A divine attribute

To the Latter-day Saints, the Lord gave patience as one of the divine attributes that qualifies a person for the ministry (see D&C 4:6), he counseled them to be patient in their afflictions (see D&C 24:8, 31:9, 54:10, 98:23–24), and he admonished them to make their decisions in patience (see D&C 107:30). The Savior taught us to be perfect (see Matthew 5:48, 3 Nephi 12:48) and said, “Ye are not able to abide the presence of God now, neither the ministering of angels; wherefore, continue in patience until ye are perfected” (D&C 67:13).

The patience of Christ, Paul, and Joseph Smith

The Lord, Jesus Christ, is our perfect example of patience. Though absolutely unyielding in adherence to the truth, he exemplified patience repeatedly during his mortal ministry. He was patient with his disciples, including the Twelve, despite their lack of faith and their slowness to recognize and understand his divine mission. He was patient with the multitudes as they pressed about him, with the woman taken in sin, with those who sought his healing power, and with little children. Finally, he remained patient through the sufferings of his mock trials and his crucifixion.

During the Apostle Paul’s ministry of about thirty years, between his

conversion and his martyrdom in Rome, he was flogged five times, beaten severely at least three times, imprisoned several times, shipwrecked three times, and stoned and left for dead on one occasion (see 2 Corinthians 11:23–27). Through all of this affliction, he continued his powerful ministry. He wrote to the Romans that God “will render to every man according to his deeds:

“To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

“But unto them that are contentious [impatient], and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,

“Tribulation and anguish” (Romans 2:6–9).

The Prophet Joseph Smith’s afflictions and sufferings paralleled those of Paul in many respects. Beyond imprisonments, mobbings, and beatings, he suffered the anguish of betrayal by disloyal, unfaithful associates. But he offered the hand of friendship and fellowship to them even after they had opposed and betrayed him.

Far-reaching consequences

Some years ago, President Roy A. Welker of the German-Austrian Mission, one of the outstanding mission presidents of the Church, needed to assign a missionary to labor in Salzburg, Austria, to solve a problem in the branch there. Eight new missionaries were soon to arrive in the mission. He prayed that one of them would have the proper visa and currency to labor in Austria. He continued to pray and waited two weeks for an answer. The night before the eight arrived, the Spirit of the Lord whispered to the president the name of the missionary who should be assigned to Salzburg. The one whose name he received was the one who had the proper credentials to go to Austria. I was that elder.

The president’s patience not only helped solve a problem in the branch, but it also blessed me and our family in

a way that I never could have foreseen. Shortly after I arrived in Salzburg, that part of the German-Austrian Mission was changed into the Swiss-Austrian Mission. Later, I was transferred to Zurich, Switzerland, where I met Brother Julius Billeter, a warm and friendly member who was a genealogist. He was acquainted with the genealogical records of my progenitors. He researched the names of 6,000 of my ancestors for whom temple work later was completed.

Recognize strengths and weaknesses

We should learn to be patient with ourselves. Recognizing our strengths and our weaknesses, we should strive to use good judgment in all of our choices and decisions, make good use of every opportunity, and do our best in every task we undertake. We should not be unduly discouraged nor in despair at any time when we are doing the best we can. Rather, we should be satisfied with our progress even though it may come slowly at times.

We should be patient in developing and strengthening our testimonies. Rather than expecting immediate or spectacular manifestations, though they will come when needed, we should pray for a testimony, study the scriptures, follow the counsel of our prophet and other Church leaders, and live the principles of the gospel. Our testimonies then will grow and mature naturally, perhaps imperceptibly at times, until they become driving forces in our lives.

Be patient with family members

Patience with family members and others who are close to us is vital for us to have happy homes. However, we often seem more willing to be courteous and polite with strangers than with those in our own family circles. For some reason, criticism, sharp language, and quarreling too often seem to

be acceptable at home but not away from home.

Husbands, be patient with your wives; and wives, be patient with your husbands. Don't expect perfection. Find agreeable ways to work out the differences that arise. Remember President David O. McKay's wise counsel regarding marriage: keep your eyes wide open before marriage and half closed afterward (see Conference Report, Apr. 1956, p. 9). Perhaps, on occasion, our wives could get into the car and honk the horn while we, as husbands, get the children ready.

Parents, be patient with your children. Read to your little children and help them with their schoolwork, even if you need to tell or show them the same thing many times. Elder Richard L. Evans said, "If they find that they can trust us with their trivial questions, they may later trust us with more weighty ones" (*Ensign*, May 1971, p. 12). Capitalize on their natural curiosity and help them develop a love for learning. Teach them the principles of the gospel in simple terms. Be patient with them if they disturb family home evening or family prayers. Convey to them the reverence you feel for the gospel, Church leaders, and the Savior.

Be patient with your youth, especially as they make the transition from adolescence to adulthood. Many of them have the appearance of adults and think they are adults, but they have had little experience with which to make adult judgments. Help them to get the experience they need and to avoid the pitfalls that can harm them.

On the other hand, I urge you children to be patient with your parents. If they seem to be out of touch on such vital issues as dating, clothing styles, modern music, and use of family cars, listen to them anyway. They have the experience that you lack. Very few, if any, of the challenges and temptations you face are new to them. If you think they know nothing about the vital issues I just mentioned, take a good look at their high school and college

yearbooks. Most important, they love you and will do anything they can to help you be truly happy.

Be patient in financial matters

I advise you to be patient in financial matters. Avoid rash or hurried financial decisions; such decisions require patience and study. Get-rich-quick schemes seldom work. Beware of debt. Be especially careful of easily obtained credit even if the interest is tax deductible. You young couples should not expect to begin your married lives with homes, automobiles, appliances, and conveniences comparable to those your parents have spent years accumulating.

Do not assert a timetable

Finally, a word about patience with our Heavenly Father and his plan of eternal progression. How incredibly foolish to be impatient with him, the Father of our spirits, who knows everything and whose work and glory, through his Son, Jesus Christ, is "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). As Elder Neal A. Maxwell said, "Patience is tied very closely to faith in our Heavenly Father. Actually, when we are unduly impatient, we are suggesting that we know what is best—better than does God. Or, at least, we are asserting that our timetable is better than his. Either way we are questioning the reality of God's omniscience" ("Patience," *Ensign*, Oct. 1980, p. 28).

The personification of patience

Elder Richard L. Evans said: "There seems to be little evidence that the Creator of the universe was ever in a hurry. Everywhere, on this bounteous and beautiful earth, and to the farthest reaches of the firmament, there is evidence of patient purpose and planning and working and waiting" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1952, p. 95).

Quoting from Elder Marvin J. Ashton: "We do not have to worry about the patience of God, because he is the personification of patience, no matter where we have been, what we have done, or what we, to this moment, have allowed ourselves to think of ourselves. . . .

"... God will not forsake [us]" ("Patience Is a Great Power," in *Speeches of the Year: BYU Devotional Addresses, 1972-73* [Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1973], p. 104).

I am truly grateful for the Lord's patience with his children. I am infinitely grateful for his patience with me and for the privilege I have to serve as a special witness of the divinity of Jesus Christ.

I am gratified, as I travel among the members of the Church, to see how many truly live the gospel principles. To them, I quote a promise given by the Lord: "Those that live shall inherit the earth, and those that die shall rest from all their labors; . . . and they shall receive a crown in the mansions of my Father, which I have prepared for them."

"Yea, blessed are they . . . who have obeyed my gospel; for they shall receive for their reward the good things of the earth. . . .

"And they shall also be crowned with blessings from above" (D&C 59:2-4).

I pray that we might be patient, especially in adversity, as we meet our challenges of uncertainty, trials, pressure, and tribulation in today's world.

I close with my testimony to you that patience is a divine attribute. I testify that our Heavenly Father lives and loves each of us and that Jesus is the Christ, our Lord and Savior. Joseph Smith is the prophet through whom the Lord restored the gospel in these latter days. President Ezra Taft Benson is the Lord's prophet who directs this work today. I bear this testimony in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have just heard from Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder L. Tom Perry of that same Council will be our concluding speaker.

Elder L. Tom Perry

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God”

President, I'm starting to receive the distinct impression that we've been listening to you. I, too, will take my text from the Book of Mormon, that great and ancient record that offers us special perspective that comes only from studying what is roughly one thousand years of human history. We see the cycles of nations as they turn to and then away from righteousness. We see the unity that comes from a faith in God and a desire to build His kingdom. And we see the dissension that results when the hearts of the people turn to selfish wants and desires, to the pleasures of the flesh, to riches and worldly possessions.

One of the first warnings from the prophets in ancient America is found in the second chapter of the book of Jacob. Jacob denounces his people's love of riches and the pride that has found a place in their hearts. He implores them to turn their hearts again to the Lord. He begins with these words:

“And the hand of providence hath smiled upon you most pleasingly, that you have obtained many riches; and because some of you have obtained more abundantly than that of your brethren ye are lifted up in the pride of your hearts, and wear stiff necks and high heads because of the costliness of your apparel, and persecute your brethren because ye suppose that ye are better than they.

“And now, my brethren, do ye suppose that God justifieth you in this thing? Behold, I say unto you, Nay. But he condemneth you, and if ye persist in these things his judgments must speedily come unto you” (Jacob 2:13–14).

Now, we see that often this turning away from the Lord comes with prosperity. Those who are more prosperous can become filled with pride, and they look down on their brothers and sisters who have less, thinking them inferior. Although Jacob does not say it, this process can also work the other way. Those who are less fortunate begin to feel deprived. They become consumed by what they do not have, blaming others for their predicament and blaming the Lord. They, also, turn their hearts away from Him.

The important point is that the Lord condemns both the preoccupation with worldly possessions and the lack of occupation with building His kingdom, whether it is a consequence of having too much or too little.

Invest in eternal things

Jacob further counsels, “Think of your brethren like unto yourselves, and be familiar with all and free with your substance, that they may be rich like unto you” (Jacob 2:17).

Here we see a direct application of the second great commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves. Jacob tells his people not to discriminate against their brothers and sisters who have less than they do, but to share what they have with them.

“But before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God.

“And after ye have obtained a hope in Christ ye shall obtain riches, if ye seek them; and ye will seek them for the intent to do good—to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick and the afflicted” (Jacob 2:18–19).

So often it is the order of things that is fundamental in the Lord's instructions to us. The Lord is not telling us that we should not be prosperous. This would be inconsistent with the many records we have of Him blessing His people with prosperity. But He is telling us that we should seek prosperity only after we have sought and found Him. Then, because our hearts are right, because we love Him first and foremost, we will choose to invest the riches we obtain in building His kingdom.

As we have been told by our prophets, one of the important reasons the Book of Mormon record was kept, and through miraculous circumstances placed into the hands of Joseph Smith to be translated, was to serve as a warning to the people of this generation. Accordingly, we need to take Jacob's counsel to heart. We should read this scripture as though it were written expressly for us in these days, because it was. His words should cause us to ask soul-searching questions of ourselves. Is the order of things right in our own lives? Are we investing, first and foremost, in the things that are eternal in nature? Do we have an eternal perspective? Or have we fallen into the trap of investing in the things of this world first and then forgetting the Lord?

These, of course, are difficult questions to answer. Sometimes a contrast will offer a perspective that cannot otherwise be gained. Stories of the early Church leaders have always been helpful to me as examples of what it means to place the kingdom of God first. These stories really began to live for me when I was a young missionary. In those days missionaries were not blessed with the many teaching aids that we have today. We had the scriptures and a big, black box that contained a record player and a set of records entitled *The Fullness of Times*. (I always hoped and prayed for a small companion because we would carry this big black box on a broomstick between us. If I was taller, the weight would always shift to my companion!) These records depicted the historical

account of the early history of the Church from the First Vision to the Nauvoo period.

Story of Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball departing on missions

There was one episode depicted on the records that would nearly bring tears to my eyes as my companion and I would listen to it over and over again. It was the account of Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball leaving their wives, children, and humble homes to journey to Great Britain in response to their mission calls to that faraway land. Heber C. Kimball records the event in these words:

"September 14th, . . . President Brigham Young left his home at Montrose to start on the mission to England. He was so sick that he was unable to go to the Mississippi, a distance of thirty rods, without assistance. After he had crossed the river he rode behind Israel Barlow on his horse to my house, where he continued sick until the 18th. He left his wife sick with a babe only three weeks old, and all of his other children were sick and unable to wait upon each other. Not one soul of them was able to go to the well for a pail of water, and they were without a second suit to their backs, for the mob in Missouri had taken nearly all he had. On the 17th, Sister Mary Ann Young got a boy to carry her up in his wagon to my house, that she might nurse and comfort Brother Brigham to the hour of starting.

"September 18th, Charles Hubbard sent his boy with a wagon and span of horses to my house; our trunks were put into the wagon by some brethren; I went to my bed and shook hands with my wife who was then shaking with a chill, having two children lying sick by her side; I embraced her and my children, and bade them farewell. My only well child was little Heber P., and it was with difficulty he could carry a couple of quarts of water at a time to assist in quenching their thirst.

"It was with difficulty we got into the wagon, and started down the hill about ten rods; it appeared to me as though my very inmost parts would melt within me at leaving my family in such a condition, as it were almost in the arms of death. I felt as though I could not endure it. I asked the teamster to stop, and said to Brother Brigham, 'This is pretty tough, isn't it; let's rise up and give them a cheer.' We arose, and swinging our hats three times over our heads, shouted: 'Hurrah, hurrah for Israel.' Vilate, hearing the noise, arose from her bed and came to the door. She had a smile on her face. Vilate and Mary Ann Young cried out to us: 'Goodbye, God bless you!' We returned the compliment, and then told the driver to go ahead. After this I felt a spirit of joy and gratitude, having had the satisfaction of seeing my wife standing upon her feet, instead of leaving her in bed, knowing well that I should not see them again for two or three years'" (Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1967], pp. 265-66).

I have often wondered how these brethren, as valiant as they were, could do what they did. Truly they were willing to make any sacrifice asked of them to build the kingdom of God. They were laying up "treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt" (Matthew 6:20).

Unite in building the kingdom

There is something else about this story, however, that has always intrigued me. As Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball left on their missions to Great Britain, there appeared to be a lot of support from their brethren to help them on their way. Israel Barlow assisted Brigham Young across the Mississippi River. Later, Charles Hubbard sent his son with a wagon to the Kimball home to assist the two missionaries as they began their long journey.

If we look carefully at this story, we catch a glimpse of the unity that

must have existed among the Saints in those early days. As husbands and fathers would leave for missionary service, their departure was made easier because they knew that brothers, sisters, priesthood leaders, and friends would step in to help fill the void created by their absence.

These brethren were able to invest in building the kingdom of God in far-away lands because they knew that others would be investing in building the kingdom at home by helping their loved ones whenever assistance was needed. There was a unique bonding, a special faith in the community of Saints, dedicated to a common goal, a common purpose. If we return to Jacob's counsel to his people, we see the same message communicated as he instructed them to be familiar with all and to share freely of their substance (see Jacob 2:17).

What this testifies to me is that we can tell whether or not we put the kingdom of God first by looking at how we treat our brothers and sisters in the Church. Is there a special bond uniting us? Is there an absence of envy and backbiting? Do we rejoice in the success of a brother or sister as much as in our own? Do we share our substance so that all may be rich like unto us? Ultimately, are we our brothers' and sisters' keepers?

As I travel throughout the Church I marvel at all the positive things that are occurring. Yet I never feel that we, as a people, are living up to our real potential. My sense is that we do not always work together, that we are still too much interested in aspirations for personal honors and success, and show too little interest in the common goal of building the kingdom of God.

Deepen commitment

When we look at all the Lord asks of us, it can sometimes seem overwhelming. Of course, where much has been given, much is expected. I believe it is helpful when faced with an enormous challenge to view it as a step-by-step process. We begin by taking the

first step, then continue by taking one step at a time. I am certain that the Lord is pleased even with our small beginnings, because in His infinite wisdom He knows that small things often become great things.

The first step always involves a deepening of commitment to the Lord and His glorious work. Again, this is a commitment to consider His work first. Our subsequent steps are guided by this initial commitment, but can, of course, take several directions.

Serving our brothers and sisters

We can help by serving our brothers and sisters in the Church. We can go to those who have not yet received the gospel and convert them to its truths. We can go to the temple and perform this great redeeming work for the dead. As we engage in the work of the Lord, He will increase our capacity as we increase our desire. We will pull closer together as a people engaged in a common effort. Through sacrifices we make one for another and for Him, we will realize our potential as His children and prepare the way for His eventual, glorious return.

May each of us accept the challenge to seek the kingdom of God first, before and above all else, and by so doing draw closer together as a people, until we are all of one heart and one mind, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

We remind the brethren of the general priesthood session which will convene here in the Tabernacle this evening at 6:00 P.M. It's held at that earlier hour so that those in the East who receive it by satellite will not have to be up so late.

The nationwide CBS Tabernacle Choir Broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those desiring to attend this broadcast must be in their seats by 9:15 A.M.

We call your attention to the fact that the choir broadcast and the conference sessions tomorrow will be broadcast according to mountain daylight time because of the change to daylight saving time tonight. All of you should be sure to move your clocks ahead one hour before you retire tonight.

We express our very deep appreciation to the Kearns Region mixed choir for the inspirational music we have heard this afternoon.

The choir will now sing in closing, "The Love of God." The congregation is invited to join in singing "I Know That My Redeemer Lives" when directed to do so by Sister Poulsen. Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder Robert E. Wells of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "The Love of God."

Elder Robert E. Wells offered the benediction.

GENERAL PRIESTHOOD SESSION

The general priesthood session, the third session of the 157th Annual General Conference, convened in the Tabernacle at 6:00 P.M. on Saturday, April 4, 1987. President Ezra Taft

Benson presided, and President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for this session was provided by the combined priesthood

choir from the institutes in Logan, Salt Lake City, Ogden, Provo, and Orem, Utah. Brother S. Brent Farley conducted the choir, and Brother Clay Christiansen was at the organ.

President Hinckley opened the meeting with the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Brethren, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked me to conduct this general priesthood session. We extend our love and best wishes to all of the brethren participating wherever they may be.

These services are being relayed by closed-circuit and satellite transmission to holders of the priesthood gathered in the Assembly Hall and in many countries around the world. For the information of the brethren in outlying areas, we announce that at the session this afternoon Elders George R. Hill, John R. Lasater, Douglas J. Martin, Alexander B. Morrison, L. Aldin Porter, Glen L. Rudd, Douglas H. Smith, and Lynn A. Sorensen were sustained as members of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

We note that Elders John H. Groberg and Devere Harris are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall, and

Elders Rex D. Pinegar and Robert B. Harbertson are seated on the stand in the BYU Marriott Center.

The singing during this session will be furnished by the combined priesthood institute choirs from Logan, Salt Lake City, Ogden, Provo, and Orem, Utah, under the direction of Brother S. Brent Farley with Brother Clay Christiansen at the organ.

We shall begin by the choir singing "Oh Say, What Is Truth?" Following the singing, Elder James M. Paramore of the First Quorum of the Seventy will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "Oh Say, What Is Truth?"

Elder James M. Paramore offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

The choir will now favor us with "Onward, Ye Peoples!" Following the choir number, Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Council of the Twelve will speak to us.

The choir sang "Onward, Ye Peoples!"

Elder Dallin H. Oaks

Heber C. Kimball blesses his sons

In the spring of 1866, during what is called the Black Hawk War, our pioneers were struggling to beat back deadly Indian attacks on many settlements in southern Utah. Two of President Heber C. Kimball's sons were called into military service for a three-month expedition against the Indians. Before they left he gave them a priesthood blessing. Apparently concerned

that his sons might shed the blood of their Lamanite brothers, he first counseled them about the great promises God has made to this branch of the house of Israel. He then blessed his sons and promised them they would not see a single Indian on their campaign. His sons, full of fight and eager to smell gunpowder, were disappointed at this promise, but the blessing was fulfilled. When they returned three months later, they reported:

"We . . . rode hundreds of miles, following the tracks of different bands of hostile Indians, and were close upon them a great many times. They were attacking settlements all around us, killing the settlers and driving off stock." But the company did not see a single Indian (Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1967], p. 429).

Characteristics and purposes of priesthood blessings

In a priesthood blessing a servant of the Lord exercises the priesthood, as moved upon by the Holy Ghost, to call upon the powers of heaven for the benefit of the person being blessed. Such blessings are conferred by holders of the Melchizedek Priesthood, which has the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the Church (see D&C 107:18, 67).

There are many kinds of priesthood blessings. As I give various examples, please remember that priesthood blessings are available for all who need them, but they are only given on request.

Blessings for the healing of the sick are preceded by anointing with oil, as the scriptures direct (see James 5:14–15; Mark 6:13; D&C 24:13–14; 42:43–48; 66:9). Patriarchal blessings are conferred by an ordained patriarch.

Persons desiring guidance in an important decision can receive a priesthood blessing. Persons who need extra spiritual power to overcome a personal challenge can receive a blessing. Expectant mothers can be blessed before they give birth. Many LDS families remember a sacred occasion where a worthy father gave a priesthood blessing to a son or daughter who was about to be married. Priesthood blessings are often requested from fathers before children leave home for other purposes, such as school, service in the military, or a long trip.

Newly called missionaries often request a father's blessing before they

depart. I have a friend who is blind. He remembers how his father blessed him that despite his physical disability he would be able to complete the mission, be successful in his calling, and develop a great love for the people. I am a witness to the fulfillment of that blessing in the life of a wonderful Latter-day Saint.

Blessings given in circumstances such as I have just described are sometimes called blessings of comfort or counsel. They are usually given by fathers or husbands or other elders in the family. They can be recorded and kept in family records for the personal spiritual guidance of the persons blessed.

Over ten years ago a teenage boy requested a blessing from President Ezra Taft Benson. Even though the boy's father was not an active elder, President Benson asked, "How would you like to talk to him at an opportune time and ask him if he would be willing to give you a father's blessing?" Though doubtful, the young man agreed to try. He later reported:

"Brother Benson, that's the sweetest thing that has happened in our family. . . . He gave me one of the most beautiful blessings you could ever ask for. . . . When he got through there was a bond of appreciation and gratitude and love between us that we have never had in our home" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1977, pp. 45–46; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, p. 32).

Priesthood blessings are also given in connection with a priesthood ordination or with the setting apart of a man or woman for a calling in the Church. These are probably the most frequent occasions for priesthood blessings.

Many of us have requested a priesthood blessing when we were about to embark upon a new responsibility in our employment. I received such a blessing many years ago and felt its immediate comfort and long-term guidance.

Blessing given to Dr. Russell M. Nelson

In setting Dr. Russell M. Nelson apart as a stake president, a General Authority blessed him with power to meet the extremely demanding time requirements of his profession as a heart surgeon. Elder Nelson has described how that blessing was fulfilled by significant reductions in the risk of certain heart operations and in the time required for postoperative care. Eight years later, the man who had blessed him became his patient. Elder Spencer W. Kimball was scheduled for a complex heart operation. Presidents Harold B. Lee and N. Eldon Tanner blessed Dr. Nelson "that the operation would be performed without error, that all would go well, and that [he] need not fear for [his] own inadequacies, for [he] had been raised up by the Lord to perform this operation" (*Ensign*, May 1984, p. 88). That blessing was realized. A little over a year later, his fully recovered and vigorous patient became President of the Church and gave leadership through events and growth that will never be forgotten.

Significance of priesthood blessings

What is the significance of a priesthood blessing? Think of a young man preparing to leave home to seek his fortune in the world. If his father gave him a compass, he might use this worldly tool to help him find his way. If his father gave him money, he could use this to give him power over worldly things. A priesthood blessing is a conferral of power over spiritual things. Though it cannot be touched or weighed, it is of great significance in helping us overcome obstacles on the path to eternal life.

Remember how the Savior intervened to assure that the little children could come unto him. And then "he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them" (Mark 10:16). When the risen Lord visited the people on this continent, "he took their little children, one by one, and blessed

them, and prayed unto the Father for them" (3 Nephi 17:21).

A sacred responsibility

It is a very sacred responsibility for a Melchizedek Priesthood holder to speak for the Lord in giving a priesthood blessing. As the Lord has told us in modern revelation, "My word . . . shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same" (D&C 1:38). If a servant of the Lord speaks as he is moved upon by the Holy Ghost, his words are "the will of the Lord, . . . the mind of the Lord, . . . the word of the Lord, . . . [and] the voice of the Lord" (D&C 68:4).

But if the words of a blessing only represent the priesthood holder's own desires and opinions, uninspired by the Holy Ghost, then the blessing is conditioned on whether it represents the will of the Lord.

Blessings given to posterity

Worthy Melchizedek Priesthood holders can give blessings to their posterity. The scriptures record many such blessings, including Adam's (see D&C 107:53-57), Isaac's (see Genesis 27:28-29, 39-40; 28:3-4; Hebrews 11:20), Jacob's (see Genesis 48:9-22; 49; Hebrews 11:21), and Lehi's (see 2 Nephi 1:28-32; 4).

When Joseph Smith, Sr., was dying, his children gathered to receive his final blessing. After first blessing his wife, Father Smith began with Hyrum, his eldest, and gave each child what he called a "dying blessing" (see Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, ed. Preston Nibley [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1956], pp. 308-13; Pearson H. Corbett, *Hyrum Smith, Patriarch* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1963], pp. 240-41).

In modern revelation, parents who are members of the Church are commanded to bring their children "before the church," where the elders "are to lay their hands upon them in the name

of Jesus Christ, and bless them in his name" (D&C 20:70). This is why parents bring babies to a sacrament meeting, where an elder—usually the father—gives them a name and a blessing.

If any of the young men in this priesthood meeting has thought he has never received a priesthood blessing, I hope he has now realized that he has already received at least two and perhaps more.

Blessings not limited

Priesthood blessings are not limited to those blessings spoken as hands are laid on the head of one person. Blessings are sometimes pronounced on groups of people. The Prophet Joseph Smith "pronounced a blessing upon the sisters" working on the Kirtland Temple. He also blessed "the congregation" (*History of the Church*, 2:399). As recently as last April conference President Benson blessed the Latter-day Saints and "good people everywhere . . . with increased power to do good and to resist evil" and "with increased understanding of the Book of Mormon" (in Conference Report, April 1986, p. 100; or *Ensign*, May 1986, p. 78).

Blessings on places and edifices

Priesthood blessings are also pronounced on places. Nations are blessed and dedicated for the preaching of the gospel. Temples and houses of worship are dedicated to the Lord by a priesthood blessing. Other buildings may be dedicated when they are used in the service of the Lord. "Church members may dedicate their homes . . . as sacred edifices where the Holy Spirit can reside" (*General Handbook of Instructions* [1985], p. 11-5). Missionaries and other priesthood holders can leave a priesthood blessing upon homes where they have been received (see D&C 75:19, Alma 10:7-11). Young men, within a short time you may be asked to give such a blessing.

I hope you are preparing yourselves spiritually.

Promised blessings

In the time that remains, I will mention some other examples of priesthood blessings.

About a hundred years ago, Sarah Young Vance qualified as a midwife. Before she began serving the women of Arizona, a priesthood leader blessed her that she would "always do only what was right and what was best for the welfare of her patients." Over a period of forty-five years Sarah delivered approximately fifteen hundred babies without the loss of a single mother or child. "Whenever I came up against a difficult problem," she recalled, "something always seemed to inspire me and somehow I would know what was the right thing to do" (L. J. Arrington and S. A. Madsen, *Sunbonnet Sisters: True Stories of Mormon Women and Frontier Life* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1984], p. 105).

In 1864, Joseph A. Young was called on a special mission to transact Church business in the East. His father, President Brigham Young, blessed him to go and return in safety. As he was returning, he was involved in a severe train wreck. "The whole train was smashed," he reported, "including the car I was in to within one seat of where I sat, [but] I escaped without a scratch" (*Letters of Brigham Young to His Sons*, ed. Dean C. Jessee [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1974], p. 4).

A blessing from Joseph Smith

As a boy, I was inspired by a story of courage in Nauvoo, which involved my grandfather's uncle. In the spring of 1844, some men were plotting against the Prophet Joseph Smith. One of the leaders, William Law, held a secret meeting at his home in Nauvoo. Among those invited were nineteen-year-old Dennison Lott Harris and his friend, Robert Scott. Dennison's father, Emer Harris, who is my second

great-grandfather, was also invited. He sought counsel from the Prophet Joseph Smith, who told him not to attend the meeting but to have the young men attend. The Prophet instructed them to pay close attention and report what was said.

The spokesmen at this first meeting denounced Joseph Smith as a fallen prophet and stated their determination to destroy him. When the Prophet heard this, he asked the young men to attend the second meeting. They did so, and reported the plotting.

A third meeting was to be held a week later. Again the Prophet asked them to attend, but he told them this would be their last meeting. "Be careful to remain silent and not to make any covenants or promises with them," he counseled. He also cautioned them on the great danger of their mission. Although he thought it unlikely, it was possible they would be killed. Then, the Prophet Joseph Smith blessed Dennison and Robert by the power of the priesthood, promising them that if their lives were taken, their reward would be great.

In the strength of this priesthood blessing, they attended the third meeting and listened to the murderous plans. Then, when each person was required to take an oath to join the plot and keep it secret, they bravely refused. After everyone else had sworn secrecy, the whole group turned on Dennison and Robert, threatening to kill them unless they took the oath also. Because any refusal threatened the secrecy of their plans, about half of the plotters proposed to kill these two immediately. Knives were drawn, and angry men began to force them down into a basement to kill them.

Other plotters shouted to wait. Parents probably knew where they were. If they didn't return, an alarm would be sounded and a search could reveal the boys' deaths and the secret plans. During a long argument, two lives hung in the balance. Finally, the group decided to threaten to kill the young men if they ever revealed any-

thing that had occurred and then to release them. This was done. Despite this threat, and because they had followed the Prophet's counsel not to make any promises to the conspirators, Dennison and Robert promptly reported everything to the Prophet Joseph Smith.

For their own protection, the Prophet had these courageous young men promise him that they would never reveal this experience, not even to their fathers, for at least twenty years. A few months later, the Prophet Joseph Smith was murdered.

Many years passed. The members of the Church settled in the West. While Dennison L. Harris was serving as bishop of the Monroe Ward in southern Utah, he met a member of the First Presidency at a Church meeting in Ephraim. There, on Sunday, 15 May 1881, thirty-seven years after the Prophet Joseph Smith had sealed his lips to protect him against mob vengeance, Dennison Harris recited this experience to President Joseph F. Smith (see Verbal Statement of Bishop Dennison L. Harris, 15 May 1881, MS 2725, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City; the account was later published in the *Contributor*, Apr. 1884, pp. 251-60). Dennison Harris's posterity includes many notable Latter-day Saints, including Franklin S. Harris, long-time president of Brigham Young University.

Seek priesthood blessings

As I speak of priesthood blessings, I have a flood of memories: I remember my sons and daughters asking for blessings to help them through the most stressful experiences of their lives. I rejoice as I recall inspired promises and the strengthened faith that came when they were fulfilled. I feel pride in the faith of a new generation when I think of a son, apprehensive about a professional examination and unable to reach his faraway father, seeking a priesthood blessing from the most accessible priesthood holder in his

family, the husband of his sister. I remember a confused young convert to the Church seeking a blessing to help him change the self-destructive pattern of his life. He received a blessing so unusual I was astonished when I heard the words I spoke.

Brethren, young and old, do not be hesitant to ask for a priesthood blessing when you are in need of spiritual power. Fathers and other elders, cherish and magnify the privilege of blessing your children and the other children of our Heavenly Father. Be prepared to give priesthood blessings under the influence of the Holy Ghost whenever you are requested in sincerity and faith.

This is the true church of our Savior. I testify of the saving mission of

Jesus Christ. We are bearers of his priesthood. God bless us to exercise that priesthood under his direction, for the blessing of his children. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to listen to Elder Robert L. Simpson, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy and General President of the Sunday School.

Elder Robert L. Simpson

The faith and zeal of youth

My beloved brethren, and you wonderful young men of the Aaronic Priesthood, I just can't tell you how good you look. It's wonderful to see you here, wonderful that you've met your appointment with the Lord in this important priesthood meeting.

Where would we be without the faith of youth? I'm thinking of a boy named David in the Old Testament. I'm thinking of a young lad named Nephi in Book of Mormon history. I'm thinking of a young fifteen-year-old named Joseph Smith, who had faith and who became the head of this dispensation. I'm so grateful for the zeal of youth and the faith and the discernment of youth.

One short story: a preacher finally came to the point where he felt that he had enough faith to walk on water. And so he sent the word out to all the land, and people came from far and near. There were thousands there. But right in the front row was a deacon from the LDS Church. He had great interest in this kind of faith. He'd heard about it in Sunday School and in family home

evening, and he was on the front row, not fifteen feet away.

As the preacher walked up to the water, he paused momentarily and as he bent down to roll up his trousers the boy said, "Mister, you'll never make it." And he didn't.

Three recurring questions

Recently I was impressed by a group of teenage Aaronic Priesthood holders who were assembled together with their bishops and advisers for an informal gospel discussion. It was a small, relaxed gathering, just to talk things over, to reason together. By the initial comments and greetings, it became obvious that each young man respected his bishop and had appreciation for the quorum advisers. It was also clear from their comments that they loved the Lord. But with all of this, there were still some who were struggling and wondering about a few things. Three main concerns came out of the discussion that morning. First, the question, Why does life have to be so hard?

A little later, a boy about fifteen years of age, obviously worried about some mounting peer pressure at school, commented, "I am not so sure it's worth it all."

And finally this—they all wanted to know, "How can I be certain that the Church is true?"

These questions are not new. They are as old as man. Nor are they reserved for just a few. I doubt that there is even one in this vast congregation who has not been faced with these same recurring questions through the years.

The Lord will help us

Let's start with the first question about life being hard. I like what one of the seminary students said. He commented, "Life here in mortality is no different from the explanation we received in the premortal existence." He went on, "According to our Sunday School teacher, we shouted for joy and not only agreed to come to earth but literally clamored for the opportunity."

One of the advisers turned to a scripture to show how the Lord is always there to help us over the rough spots if we do our part.

He read, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock," said the Savior. "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20). Did you catch the point, young men, that it is up to us to open the door? I think the Savior gives us another vital key as He declares, "For without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). That's powerful!

We can receive all that God has

Remember the next comment? "I am not sure if it is worth it all." One of the bishops was quick to ask this question: "Do you think it would be worth it to some day become eligible to receive all that the Father has?" He went on to remind us that to receive all that the Father has is the very essence of the oath and covenant of the priesthood.

Let's reread together those words given us in the eighty-fourth section of the Doctrine and Covenants with regard to that sacred obligation, an obligation that we all share alike. Please listen carefully. I'm going to start with the thirty-third verse:

"For whoso is faithful unto the obtaining these two priesthoods of which I have spoken, and the magnifying their calling, are sanctified."

And then skipping down to the thirty-eighth verse:

"And he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father's kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto him.

"And this is according to the oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood" (vs. 33, 38–39).

My young friends, please realize that these conditions that we just read are set. They have all been affirmed. We have already had priesthood authority conferred upon us. The Lord has promised a guaranteed destiny for all who magnify that priesthood; and that destiny is eternal life, which, according to scripture, is the greatest of all the gifts (see D&C 14:7). Because we have been ordained, we are on our way. Not only are we on our way, but it looks like we have reached the point of no return, for the Savior assures us that this is an oath and covenant of the Father "which he cannot break, neither can it be moved" (D&C 84:40).

Agency is preserved

Let me interject an interesting little sidelight. As we read that last scripture concerning the oath and covenant that cannot be broken and neither can it be moved, one of the lads said, "Hey, where is my free agency in all of this?" A boy who had just been ordained a priest then spoke up: "We exercised our free agency in the premortal existence; people agree to baptism before they are baptized; we choose to renew the baptismal covenant each week during the sacrament service; we agreed to the conditions of the priest-

hood during the bishop's interview. No," he concluded, "I don't think our free agency has been violated."

He was right. There has not been a violation of our free agency.

Adversity can help sanctify us

I would hope that no one who has taken upon himself the sacred covenant of the priesthood would ever throw his hands up, walk away, and say, "I'm sorry, it's just too difficult." Nephi had problems galore: Laman, Lemuel, Laban, and so on down the list. But he realized in his hour of need that all the forces of heaven were available to him. Remember when he declared, "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them" (1 Nephi 3:7).

At this point, one of the young deacons quipped, "Yeah, but Nephi didn't have to go to my school." He was telling us that his problem was just about as big as Nephi's but in a little different way. And he may be right, but the point is this: the Lord didn't forsake Nephi. He didn't forsake the Prophet Joseph Smith in Liberty Jail. And he won't forsake a boy with peer pressure at school or with any other problem.

All of us who are to stand prepared for the great blessings associated with this priesthood authority that is ours must be sanctified from time to time by whatever process the Lord has in mind. Just as surely as we are assembled here, whether a General Authority, a bishop, an elder, a deacon, the process is exactly the same. We must try to understand that when adversity comes, it is likely a means of preparing us for something ahead. Yes, it's worth it. Believe me, young men, it's worth it all.

A lifelong endeavor

Now the third great question: "How can we be certain that the Church is true?" Can anyone gain a so-called perfect testimony here in mortality? I think all of us here are still in the never-ending process of a developing testimony. Youth of Zion, forget about receiving a miracle, or the so-called sure sign from heaven. There are no shortcuts to eternity. Thus, extreme patience becomes another key factor as we develop our testimony over a lifetime. It is simply "line upon line, precept upon precept; here a little, and there a little," just as the scriptures say (D&C 128:21).

Principles of developing a testimony

There are basic principles that never change in the development of a testimony.

Let's use the Book of Mormon as an example. The great promise found in Moroni 10:4, with which we are all familiar, states that we must read the book—then ask Heavenly Father about it with a sincere heart, with faith in Christ. Then He says when we have done this, the truth will be manifest to us by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Now, whether it be a testimony about the Book of Mormon, tithing, the Word of Wisdom, the law of the fast, keeping the Sabbath day holy, or any other principle, the process is exactly the same. First we must understand it through the scriptures and then we live it to the best of our ability; then we ask Heavenly Father with a sincere heart, with faith in Christ; then the truth of that principle will be manifest to us by the power of the Holy Ghost.

If you want to know the truth, you become informed, you be willing, and you be available.

Be informed about truth by reading the scriptures and by listening to inspired leaders.

Be willing to live that truth to the best of your ability.

And then be available to the gifts of the Spirit through your personal worthiness that you may be directed and that you may recognize the answer when it comes.

Use God's gifts to develop faith

O youth of the noble birthright, you young men of a royal priesthood, become a modern-day Nephi in your faith. Yes, we all agree, it's hard at times, but the rewards are overwhelming. And never forget this: anyone who has been foreordained as you have been, anyone who has been given the gift of the Holy Ghost as you have, and anyone who has had priesthood authority conferred upon him as you have, will surely find within his grasp the ability to acquire a strong testi-

mony—a testimony that should never stop growing. As with Joshua of old, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). And just as surely as you do that, the "doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven" (D&C 121:45). May it be so, I pray humbly, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have listened to Elder Robert L. Simpson of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will now speak to us.

President Thomas S. Monson

"The worth of souls is great"

Have you ever pondered the worth of a human soul? Have you ever wondered concerning the potential which lies within each of us?

Early in my service as a member of the Council of the Twelve, I was attending the conference of the Monument Park West Stake in Salt Lake City. My companion for the conference was a member of the General Church Welfare Committee, Paul C. Child. President Child was a student of the scriptures. He had been my stake president during my Aaronic Priesthood years. Now we were together as conference visitors.

When it was his opportunity to participate, President Child took the Doctrine and Covenants and left the pulpit to stand among the priesthood to whom he was directing his message. He turned to section 18 and began to read:

"Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God. . . .

"And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father" (vs. 10, 15).

President Child then raised his eyes from the scriptures and asked the question of the priesthood brethren: "What is the worth of a human soul?" He avoided calling on a bishop, stake president, or high councilor for a response. Instead, he selected the president of an elders quorum—a brother who had been a bit drowsy and had missed the significance of the question.

The startled man responded: "Brother Child, could you please repeat the question?" The question was repeated: "What is the worth of a human soul?"

I knew President Child's style. I prayed fervently for that quorum president. He remained silent for what seemed like an eternity and then declared: "Brother Child, the worth of a human soul is its capacity to become as God."

All present pondered that reply. Brother Child returned to the stand, leaned over to me, and said: "A profound reply; a profound reply!" He proceeded with his message, but I continued to reflect on that inspired response.

Touching souls is a monumental task

To reach, to teach, to touch the precious souls whom our Father has prepared for His message is a monumental task. Success is rarely simple. Generally it is preceded by tears, trials, trust, and testimony.

Think of the magnitude of the Savior's instruction to His Apostles:

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19-20).

The men to whom he gave this instruction were not owners of land, nor did they have the education of the learned. They were simple men—men of faith, men of devotion, men "called of God."

Paul testified to the Corinthians: "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

"But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty" (1 Corinthians 1:26-27).

On this, the American continent, Alma likewise counseled his son Helaman: "I say unto you, that by small and simple things are great things brought to pass" (Alma 37:6).

The Lord sustains his servants

Then and now, servants of God take comfort from the Master's assur-

ance: "I am with you alway" (Matthew 28:20). This magnificent promise sustains you brethren of the Aaronic Priesthood who are called to positions of leadership in the quorums of deacons, teachers, and priests. It encourages you in your preparations to serve in the mission field. It comforts you during those moments of discouragement, which come to all. This same assurance motivates and inspires you brethren of the Melchizedek Priesthood as you lead and direct the work in the wards, the stakes, and the missions.

"Wherefore, be not weary in well-doing," said the Lord, "for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great.

"Behold, the Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind" (D&C 64:33-34).

An abiding faith, a constant trust, a fervent desire have always characterized those who serve the Lord with all their hearts.

Faith, trust, and desire

This description typified the early beginnings of missionary work following the restoration of the gospel. As early as April of 1830, Phineas Young received a copy of the Book of Mormon from Samuel Smith, brother of the Prophet, and a few months later traveled to Upper Canada. At Kingston he gave the first known testimony of the restored Church beyond the borders of the United States.

In 1833, the Prophet Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Freeman Nickerson traveled to Mount Pleasant, Upper Canada. There they taught, they baptized, they organized a branch of the Church. At one time, in June of 1835, six of the Twelve held a conference in that land.

In April of 1836, Elder Heber C. Kimball and others entered the home of Parley P. Pratt and, filled with the spirit of prophecy, they placed their hands on the head of Brother Pratt and declared: "Thou shalt go to Upper Canada, even

to the city of Toronto, . . . and there thou shalt find a people prepared for the fullness of the gospel, and they shall receive thee, and thou shalt organize the Church among them, . . . and many shall be brought to the knowledge of the truth and shall be filled with joy; and from the things growing out of this mission, shall the fullness of the gospel spread into England, and cause a great work to be done in that land" (*Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1975], pp. 130–31).

In July of this year there shall be commemorated the 150th anniversary of the beginning of the work in England. We rejoice in the tremendous accomplishments of those early missionaries and those whom the Lord prepared to play such a part in the advancement of this latter-day work.

The call to serve

The call to serve has ever characterized the work of the Lord. It rarely comes at a convenient time. It brings humility, it provokes prayer, it inspires commitment. The call came—to Kirtland. Revelations followed. The call came—to Missouri. Persecution prevailed. The call came—to Nauvoo. Prophets died. The call came—to the basin of the Great Salt Lake. Hardship beckoned.

That long journey, made under such difficult circumstances, was a trial of faith. But faith forged in the furnace of trials and tears is marked by trust and testimony. Only God can count the sacrifice; only God can measure the sorrow; only God can know the hearts of those who serve Him—then and now.

Lessons from the past can quicken our memories, touch our lives, and direct our actions. We are prompted to pause and remember that divinely given promise: "Wherefore, . . . ye are on the Lord's errand; and whatever ye do according to the will of the Lord is the Lord's business" (D&C 64:29).

Obtaining glass for the St. George Tabernacle

Such a lesson was recounted on a radio and television program many remember with fondness. The program was entitled "Death Valley Days." The narrator, known as the Old Ranger, seemed to come right into our living rooms as he would tell the tales of the West.

On one program, the Old Ranger related how the glass was obtained for the windows of the St. George Tabernacle. The glass had been manufactured in the East. Then it had been placed on a ship in New York, which sailed forth on the long and at times perilous journey around Cape Horn and up to the West Coast of America. The precious glass, stored in cartons, was then transported to San Bernardino, California, to await the overland trek to St. George.

David Cannon and the brethren in St. George had the duty to go to San Bernardino with their teams and wagons to retrieve the glass, that the tabernacle of the Lord could be completed. One problem: They needed the then-astronomical sum of \$800 to pay for the glass. They had no money. David Cannon turned to his wife and his son and asked, "Do you think that we can raise the money, that we might obtain the glass for the tabernacle?"

His tiny boy, David, Jr., said, "Daddy, I know we can!" He then produced two cents of his own money and gave it to his father. Wilhelmina Cannon, David's wife, went through the secret hiding places that all women have in their houses. Her search produced \$3.50 in silver. The community was scoured for money, and at length the sum of \$200 was accumulated—\$600 short of the required amount.

David Cannon sighed the sigh of despair of one who had failed although he had tried his best. The little family was really too weary to sleep and too discouraged to eat, so they prayed. Morning dawned. There gathered the teamsters with their wagons and teams,

prepared to undertake the long journey to San Bernardino. But they had no \$600.

Then there came a knock at the door, and Peter Nielsen, from the nearby community of Washington, entered the house. He said to David Cannon, "Brother David, I have had a persistent dream that I should bring the money that I had saved to expand my house—bring it to you, that you would have a purpose for it."

While all of the men gathered around the table, including little David, Jr., Peter Nielsen took out a red bandanna and dropped gold pieces, one by one, upon the table. When David Cannon counted the gold pieces, they totaled \$600—the exact amount needed to obtain the glass. Within an hour the men waved good-bye and, with their teams, set forth on their journey to San Bernardino to retrieve the glass for the tabernacle.

When that true story was told on "Death Valley Days," young David Cannon, Jr., was then eighty-seven years of age. He listened to the story with rapt attention. I feel that in his mind, he once again heard those gold pieces, one by one, dropping upon the table as astonished men saw with their very eyes the answer to their prayers.

Trials and testimonies help build spiritual temples

Tabernacles and temples are built with more than stone and mortar, wood and glass. Particularly is this true when we speak of the temple described by the Apostle Paul: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of

God dwelleth in you?" (1 Corinthians 3:16). Such temples are built with faith and fasting. They are built with service and sacrifice. They are built with trials and testimonies.

"Courage, brethren; and on, on to the victory!"

If any brethren within the sound of my voice feel unprepared, even incapable of responding to a call to serve, to sacrifice, to bless the lives of others, remember the truth: "Whom God calls, God qualifies." He who notes the sparrow's fall will not abandon the servant's need.

God bless you, my brethren—you who bear the priesthood. You "are a chosen generation; a royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9).

May we respond affirmatively to the Prophet Joseph, who urged: "Brethren, shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward and not backward. Courage, brethren; and on, on to the victory!" (D&C 128:22). This is my earnest and humble prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have just heard President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Put Your Shoulder to the Wheel."

The choir and congregation sang "Put Your Shoulder to the Wheel."

President Gordon B. Hinckley spoke without announcement.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

President Benson and the Brethren have asked that I deal with two or three matters of concern to all of us.

A spirit of reverence and worship in meetings

The first of these is reverence in our meetings, particularly in our sacra-

ment meetings. This is a matter that ought to concern every holder of the priesthood, whether Aaronic or Melchizedek, as well as every member of the Church.

Why do we go to sacrament meeting? We go, of course, to renew our covenants in partaking of the sacrament. This is the most important element of these meetings. And we also go to be instructed, to meditate upon the things of God, and to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth. We go because of the commandment of the Lord, who said in revelation:

"Thou shalt offer a sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in righteousness, even that of a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

"And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day;

"For verily this is a day appointed unto you to rest from your labors, and to pay thy devotions unto the Most High" (D&C 59:8-10).

We need, every one of us needs, to pause from the hectic pace of our lives and to reflect upon things sacred and divine. I recall that when I was a missionary in London, England, more than fifty years ago, we held our meetings in the Battersea town hall, which we rented. The floors were hard, and we sat on chairs. Every time a chair moved there was a noise. But this was not the worst aspect of the situation. Far worse was the noisy socializing of the members of the branch.

On one occasion we invited a family whom we had met while tracting. With great expectation we as missionaries stood by the door to welcome them. There was the usual convivial spirit in the hall, with the members talking noisily one with another. When this family came into the room, they quietly moved toward some chairs, knelt for a moment, and closed their eyes in a word of prayer. They then sat in an attitude of reverence amidst all the commotion.

Frankly, I was embarrassed. They had come to what they regarded as a worship service, and they behaved themselves accordingly.

At the close of the meeting they left quietly, and when we next met they spoke of their disappointment in what they had experienced. I have never forgotten that.

I invite you brethren of the priesthood, wherever you may be, and particularly you members of bishoprics, to begin an earnest effort to cultivate a more beautiful spirit of worship in our sacrament meetings and an attitude of increased reverence generally in our church buildings.

The spirit of worship

I am grateful that we now have carpeted aisles in our chapels, and in many of the newer buildings, carpet over the entire floor. Fixed pews are in place rather than folding chairs. In planning, in renovating, in maintaining our structures, we ought always to have in mind the importance of those physical aspects which contribute to a spirit of worship.

Music, of course, is an important factor. Our buildings for the most part are equipped with organs, which when properly played, can add much to the worship atmosphere of the service. The singing of hymns and the rendition of selections from the great sacred oratorios by ward choirs all enhance the spirit of worship.

Avoid socializing in the chapel

Socializing is an important aspect of our program as a church. We encourage the cultivation of friends with happy conversations among our people. However, these should take place in the foyer, and when we enter the chapel we should understand that we are in sacred precincts. All of us are familiar with the account in Exodus of the Lord's appearance to Moses at the burning bush. When the Lord

called, Moses answered, "Here am I" (Exodus 3:4).

And the Lord said, "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (v. 5).

We do not ask our people to remove their shoes when they come into the chapel. But all who come into the Lord's house should have a feeling that they are walking and standing on holy ground and that it becomes them to deport themselves accordingly.

The example of those on the stand will do much to create the proper atmosphere. If there is preparation beforehand, if there is a brief prayer meeting preceding the service, it would be exceptional when there might be any need for conversation among those seated on the stand while the service is in progress.

Administer the sacrament reverently

The young men of the Aaronic Priesthood should be trained to know that the sacrament which they administer is sacred and holy unto the Lord. Encouragement and training should be given to see that the prayers are spoken plainly and in a spirit of communion with our Father in Heaven. The priest at the sacrament table places all in the congregation under sacred covenant. The offering of the prayer is not a ritual to be thoughtlessly spoken. It is, rather, the voicing of an obligation and a promise. Cleanliness of hands, as well as purity of heart, should be taught to the priests who officiate at the sacrament table.

At the conclusion of the administration of the sacrament, it is not uncommon for the priests and even the deacons to leave their places and scatter all over the chapel. Possibly the bench on which the priests sit is not comfortable. If so, perhaps space could be reserved on the front row to which they could quietly move at the conclusion of the sacrament service.

Most important of all is the training of our people, and particularly our young people, in the importance of reverence in the chapel.

How to improve

I wish that every father in the Church would make this a matter of discussion with his family at the next family home evening and occasionally in family home evenings thereafter. The subject for discussion might be something like this: "What each of us can do to improve the spirit of our sacrament meetings." Wonderful things will happen if this is done.

With our block-plan scheduling, three hours is a long time for a small child to sit in meetings. It is a long time for a mother who has small children around her. But with thoughtful training and careful consideration of all elements of the situation, a great improvement can be brought to pass. Mothers with small babies may plan to sit near the aisle so that, if necessary, they can leave quietly to care for their children.

To ancient Israel Jehovah said, "Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and *reverence my sanctuary*: I am the Lord" (Leviticus 19:30; italics added).

Brethren, we ask that you discuss this important matter in your homes and that you who are officers discuss it in your planning meetings. There is much room for improvement, and with a little effort it can happen. As reverence is improved, all will be blessed. I leave the matter in your hands.

The plague of AIDS

I speak next on an item of great delicacy. I pondered much over whether it should be discussed in the leadership meeting last night or whether it should be discussed in this general priesthood meeting. I concluded that the subject is of such widespread concern and that some knowledge about it is had so generally,

even by boys and girls of the deacons' age, that I might properly treat it here. I do so with sensitivity for the nature of the subject.

There is a plague of fearsome dimensions moving across the world. Public health officials are greatly concerned, and everyone else should be.

The Surgeon General of the United States has forecast an AIDS death toll of 170,000 Americans in just four years. The situation is even more serious in some other areas of the world.

AIDS is a commonly fatal malady caused primarily from sexually transmitted disease and secondarily from drug abuse. Unfortunately, as in any epidemic, innocent people also become victims.

Chastity would help check this epidemic

We, with others, hope that discoveries will make possible both prevention and healing from this dread affliction. But regardless of such discoveries, the observance of one clearly understandable and divinely given rule would do more than all else to check this epidemic. That is chastity before marriage and total fidelity after marriage.

Prophets of God have repeatedly taught through the ages that practices of homosexual relations, fornication, and adultery are grievous sins. Sexual relations outside the bonds of marriage are forbidden by the Lord. We reaffirm those teachings. Mankind has been given agency to choose between right and wrong. Said the prophet Lehi to Jacob:

"Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself" (2 Nephi 2:27).

Negative consequences follow wrong choices

I repeat, each of us has a choice between right and wrong. But with that choice there inevitably will follow consequences. Those who choose to violate the commandments of God put themselves at great spiritual and physical jeopardy. The Apostle Paul said, "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

Jacob taught, "Remember, to be carnally-minded is death, and to be spiritually-minded is life eternal" (2 Nephi 9:39).

Jesus gave a commandment to control our thoughts as well as our deeds. He said, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:28).

There is a principle of accountability with reference to human behavior. The prophet Alma declared:

"For our words will condemn us, yea, all our works will condemn us; we shall not be found spotless; and our thoughts will also condemn us; and in this awful state we shall not dare to look up to our God. . . .

"But this cannot be; we must come forth and stand before him in his glory, and in his power, and in his might, majesty, and dominion, and acknowledge to our everlasting shame that all his judgments are just" (Alma 12:14-15).

Control thoughts to control actions

Mental control must be stronger than physical appetites or desires of the flesh. As thoughts are brought into complete harmony with revealed truth, actions will then become appropriate.

The timeless proverb is as true now as when it was first spoken: "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7).

Each of us, with discipline and effort, has the capacity to control his thoughts and his actions. This is part of the process of developing spiritual, physical, and emotional maturity.

A prophet taught that "the natural man is an enemy to God, . . . and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord" (Mosiah 3:19).

We plead with people everywhere to live in accordance with the teachings of our Creator and rise above carnal attractions that often result in the tragedies that follow moral transgression.

Homosexual inclinations should be overcome before marriage

The Lord has proclaimed that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and is intended to be an eternal relationship bonded by trust and fidelity. Latter-day Saints, of all people, should marry with this sacred objective in mind. Marriage should not be viewed as a therapeutic step to solve problems such as homosexual inclinations or practices, which first should clearly be overcome with a firm and fixed determination never to slip to such practices again.

Reach out

Having said this, I desire now to say with emphasis that our concern for the bitter fruit of sin is coupled with Christ-like sympathy for its victims, innocent or culpable. We advocate the example of the Lord, who condemned the sin, yet loved the sinner. We should reach out with kindness and comfort to the afflicted, ministering to their needs and assisting them with their problems. We repeat, however, that the way of safety and the road to happiness lie in abstinence before marriage and fidelity following marriage. Declared the Lord in this dispensation: "Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly" (D&C 121:45). There follows a remarkable and wonderful promise: "Then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God. . . .

"The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an

unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion" (vs. 45-46).

Guard against sexual adventurism

Now, in conclusion, this leads to a related matter I wish to mention, and that is the sexual adventurism which is spreading like another plague across the world.

There is a philosophy among large numbers of people that sex education in our schools is the answer to the terrible problems of teenage pregnancies, abortions, and other grievous matters.

I am not disposed to discuss in this forum the merits or otherwise of sex education in the public schools. But in passing, I am inclined to agree with one who was recently quoted in the newspaper *USA Today*: "More sex education in public schools will not reverse the damaging legacy of the sexual revolution unless the clear message is premarital chastity and marital monogamy."

This writer continues: "There are many defects in sex education courses. The philosophy behind them is to ridicule chastity, scoff at fidelity, and glamorize sexual adventurism. They teach there is no such thing as right and wrong. . . .

"Thirty years of advocating sexual liberation has brought raging venereal diseases and rampant teen-age pregnancy. . . .

"Most sex education in the public schools morally disarms the students rather than giving them moral sensitivity to help them make the proper sexual choices. . . .

"Sex education fights the modesty and morality endemic to human life" (Tottie Ellis, "Teaching about Sex Endangers Children," 16 Mar. 1987, p. 12A).

Teach moral cleanliness

There is in each of us that sense of modesty and morality to which this writer refers. To the young men who

are here tonight I wish to say that the Lord has made it clear, and the experience of centuries has confirmed it, that happiness lies not in immorality, but rather in abstinence. The voice of the Church to which you belong is a voice pleading for virtue. It is a voice pleading for strength to abstain from that which is evil. It is a voice declaring that sexual transgression is sin. It is contrary to the will of the Lord. It is contrary to the teachings of the Church. It is contrary to the happiness and well-being of those who indulge in it.

You should recognize, you *must* recognize, that both experience and divine wisdom dictate virtue and moral cleanliness as the way that leads to strength of character, peace in the heart, and happiness in life. Will and Ariel Durant, who wrote eleven large volumes of history covering thousands of years, declared: "A youth boiling with hormones will wonder why he should not give full freedom to his sexual desires; and if he is unchecked by customs, morals, or laws, he may ruin his life before he matures sufficiently to understand that sex is a river of fire that must be banked and cooled by a hundred restraints if it is not to consume in chaos both the individual and the group" (*The Lessons of History* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968], pp. 35-36).

My dear young brethren, the Lord has been very good to you. He has brought you forth in this, the greatest age in the history of the earth. He has made you the beneficiary of His glorious gospel, restored to the earth for your blessing. No other generation has been the beneficiary of so much knowledge, of so much experience, of so much affluence and opportunity.

For your own sakes, for your happiness now and in all the years to come, and for the happiness of the generations who come after you, avoid sexual transgression as you would a plague.

Prove your strength, show your independence, by saying no when enticement from peers comes your way. Your own strength will add strength to those who are weak. Your own example will give determination to others.

God bless you, my beloved brethren—you of the noble birthright, you of the great promise. "Look to God and live" (Alma 37:47). May you do so, I humbly pray as I leave my love and blessing with you, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

It will now be our privilege to listen to the counsel of President Ezra Taft Benson, our beloved prophet leader. He will be our concluding speaker.

Before President Benson speaks, we note that the nationwide CBS Tabernacle Choir Broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 tomorrow morning. Those desiring to attend must be in their seats before 9:15 A.M.

We change time at midnight tonight, so please move your clocks one hour ahead so that you will be here when the conference convenes.

We are grateful to you choice young men of this combined institute choir for your inspiring music, and we ask the blessings of the Lord upon you.

Following President Benson's closing remarks, the choir will sing "Brightly Beams Our Father's Mercy," and the benediction will be offered by Elder George P. Lee of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

President Ezra Taft Benson

My beloved brethren of the priesthood, it has been a joy to be with you this evening and to be instructed by

these choice men of God. I have felt of your power and faith, and I commend you for your attendance here tonight.

Home teaching is a sacred calling

I rejoice in this opportunity to say a few words to you tonight. I feel impressed to speak to you about a priesthood program that has been inspired from its inception—a program that touches hearts, that changes lives, and that saves souls; a program that has the stamp of approval of our Father in Heaven; a program so vital that, if faithfully followed, it will help to spiritually renew the Church and exalt its individual members and families.

I am speaking about priesthood home teaching. With all my heart, I pray that you will understand, by the Spirit, exactly my feelings about home teaching.

Brethren, home teaching is not just another program. It is the priesthood way of watching over the Saints and accomplishing the mission of the Church. Home teaching is not just an assignment. It is a sacred calling.

Home teaching is not to be undertaken casually. A home teaching call is to be accepted as if extended to you personally by the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Savior Himself was a teacher. The only perfect man to walk the face of the earth was a humble, dedicated, inspired teacher who brought to His followers salvation and exaltation.

Oh, that all the brethren of the Church would catch that vision of home teaching!

Watch over and strengthen the Church

Tonight I am not teaching new doctrine, but I am reaffirming old doctrine. Quoting from section 20 of the Doctrine and Covenants, revealed to the Prophet Joseph in April of 1830, the Lord declared to the priesthood:

"Watch over the church always, and be with and strengthen them;

"And see that there is no iniquity in the church. . . .

"And see that the church meet together often, and also see that all the

members do their duty" (vs. 53–55).

"And visit the house of each member, exhorting them to pray vocally and in secret and attend to all family duties" (v. 51).

Brethren, that is priesthood home teaching.

This kind of teaching was done in Christ's time by His early disciples. It was practiced in Book of Mormon times. In the first chapter of Jacob, we read:

"For I, Jacob, and my brother Joseph had been consecrated priests and teachers of this people, by the hand of Nephi.

"And we did magnify our office unto the Lord, taking upon us the responsibility, answering the sins of the people upon our own heads if we did not teach them the word of God with all diligence" (vs. 18–19).

"Into every home and heart"

From the beginning of this inspired program in our day, leaders of the Church have emphasized over and over again the importance of home teaching.

President Marion G. Romney, in general conference, declared:

"Home teaching, properly functioning, brings to 'the house of each member' two priesthood bearers divinely commissioned and authoritatively called into the service by their priesthood leader and bishop. These Home Teachers—priesthood bearers—carry the heavy and glorious responsibility of representing the Lord Jesus Christ in looking after the welfare of each Church member. They are to encourage and inspire every member to discharge his duty, both family and Church" (address given at general conference home teaching meeting, 8 Apr. 1966, p. 3).

President David O. McKay stated: "Home teaching is one of our most urgent and most rewarding opportunities to nurture and inspire, to counsel and

Romney," he responded, "it's cold outside, and I left my car engine running so it wouldn't stop. I just stopped in so I could tell the bishop I made my calls."

We can do better than that, brethren—much better.

Teach by the Spirit

The second fundamental to effective home teaching is to *know well the message you are to deliver in each home*. And know that it is the particular message the Lord would have you give to the families and individuals you have been asked to serve.

Home teachers should have a purpose or goal in mind and should plan each visit to help meet that purpose. Before making their visits, home teaching partners should meet together to pray, to review instructions from their leaders, to go over the message they will take to the families, and to discuss any special needs.

Home teachers should present an important message that they have prepared or that they bring from priesthood leaders. We strongly recommend that the home teachers use the monthly message from the First Presidency printed in the *Ensign* and the Church's international magazines. The head of the family may also request a special message for family members.

And, as a vital part of that message, whenever possible, read together the scriptures with the families you home teach. Make this a regular part of your visit. Especially read together verses from the Book of Mormon that will fortify your message, always remembering the words of the Prophet Joseph, that "a man would get nearer to God by abiding by [the] precepts [of the Book of Mormon], than by any other book" (Book of Mormon Introduction). Your families need the continual strength of the Book of Mormon.

May our message be like Alma instructed the teachers of his day: "He commanded them that they should teach nothing save it were the things which he had taught, and which had

been spoken by the mouth of the holy prophets" (Mosiah 18:19).

Carry the right message, and then teach with the Spirit. The Spirit is the single most important ingredient in this work. Through the Spirit, the individuals and families you teach will know of your love and concern for them and will also know of the truthfulness of your message and will have a desire to follow it.

As home teachers, live the kind of lives yourselves that will invite the Spirit. Live the gospel so you can effectively teach it.

Alma instructs us:

"Trust no one to be your teacher nor your minister, except he be a man of God, walking in his ways and keeping his commandments. . . .

"... Therefore [Alma] consecrated all their priests and all their teachers; and none were consecrated except they were just men.

"Therefore they did watch over their people, and did nourish them with things pertaining to righteousness" (Mosiah 23:14, 17–18).

Also remember that, whenever possible, praying in the home should be a part of every home teaching visit. As you may be called upon to pray, pray with the Spirit, pray with real intent, and invoke the Lord's blessings upon the individuals and families you are teaching.

Yes, the second fundamental to effective home teaching is to know well your message, teach it by the Spirit, and make praying and reading the scriptures an integral part of that message.

Magnify your calling

May I now suggest the third and final ingredient to effective home teaching—and that is to *truly magnify your calling as a home teacher*.

Do not settle for mediocrity in this great priesthood program of home teaching. Be an excellent home teacher in every facet of the work. Be a real shepherd of your flock. Make your

direct our Father's children. . . . It is a divine service, a divine call. It is our duty as home teachers to carry the divine spirit into every home and heart. To love the work and do our best will bring unbounded peace, joy, and satisfaction to a noble, dedicated teacher of God's children" (foreword to *Leaders' Handbook*).

Opportunity to render service

My good brethren of the Melchizedek Priesthood and the Aaronic Priesthood, home teaching is an inspired program.

It is the heart of caring, of loving, of reaching out to the one—both the active and the less active.

It is priesthood compassionate service.

It is how we express our faith in practical works.

It is one of the tests of true discipleship.

It is the heart of the activation effort of the Church.

It is a calling that helps to fulfill the scriptural injunction, "Out of small things proceedeth that which is great" (D&C 64:33).

There is no greater Church calling than that of a home teacher. There is no greater Church service rendered to our Father in Heaven's children than the service rendered by a humble, dedicated, committed home teacher.

There are three fundamentals that are essential to effective home teaching. May I discuss these briefly.

Know and befriend the families

First, *know well those you are to home teach.*

Really know them! You can't serve well those you don't know well. President Marion G. Romney emphasized this:

"Each pair of home teachers should become [personally] acquainted with every child, youth, and adult in the family to whom they are assigned. . . .

"To perform fully our duty as a Home Teacher we should be continually aware of the attitudes, the activities and interests, the problems, the employment, the health, the happiness, the plans and purposes, the physical, temporal, and spiritual needs and circumstances of everyone—of every child, every youth, and every adult in the homes and families who have been placed in our trust and care as a bearer of the Priesthood, and as a representative of the bishop" (priesthood home teaching seminar, 9 Aug. 1963, pp. 3-4).

And the key to effectively working with the family is to be close to the father. Know his righteous desires for his family and help him to realize them. And I would urge you to do the little things, the small things that mean so much to a family. For example, know the names of all the family members. Be aware of birthdays, blessings, baptisms, and marriages. On occasion, write an appropriate note of commendation or make a phone call congratulating a member of the family on a special achievement or accomplishment.

With your home teaching companion, regularly review pages 8 and 9 of the *Melchizedek Priesthood Handbook* for some excellent suggestions on how to be helpful to those you home teach.

Above all, be a genuine friend to the individuals and families you teach. As the Savior declared to us, "I will call you friends, for you are my friends" (D&C 93:45). A friend makes more than a dutiful visit each month. A friend is more concerned about helping people than getting credit. A friend cares. A friend loves. A friend listens, and a friend reaches out.

We remember the story President Romney used to tell about the so-called home teacher who once called at the Romney home on a cold night. He kept his hat in his hand and shifted nervously when invited to sit down and give his message. "Well, I'll tell you, Brother

home teaching visit early in the month, allowing enough time for additional follow-up contacts as necessary.

Whenever possible, make a definite appointment for each visit. Let your families know when you are coming, and respect their time.

Melchizedek Priesthood bearers, when you have an Aaronic Priesthood young man as your companion, train him well. Use him effectively in working with your families and in teaching them. Have these young men feel of your love of home teaching so that when they become senior companions they will love their callings and magnify them as you have.

Remember, both the quality and quantity of home teaching are essential in being an effective home teacher. You should have quality visits, but you should also make contact with each of your families each month. As shepherds to all of your families, both active and less active, you should not be content with only reaching the ninety and nine. Your goal should be 100 percent home teaching every month.

So that this can be quality home teaching, we urge priesthood leaders not to assign more than three to five families or individuals to a pair of home teachers. This may be a challenge in some cases, but we would invite you to give prayerful consideration to these assignments.

Keeping faithful track of each member you are called to home teach is essential. The Book of Mormon beautifully teaches this principle. In the sixth chapter of Moroni we read:

"And after they had been received unto baptism, . . . they were numbered among the people of the church of Christ; and their names were taken, that they might be remembered and nourished by the good word of God, to keep them in the right way, to keep them continually watchful unto prayer, relying alone upon the merits of Christ, who was the author and the finisher of their faith" (v. 4).

Brethren, may we remember all of our individuals and families and

"number" them each month and nourish them by the good word of God to keep them in the right way.

We call upon quorum leaders to conduct spiritual monthly home teaching interviews, receive a report on the home teachers' activities, evaluate current needs, make assignments for the coming month, and teach, strengthen, and inspire the home teachers in their sacred callings. Such interviews with home teachers provide a setting for leaders to measure progress and better serve the individuals and members they have been called to serve.

Recollections of two faithful home teachers

May I close by bearing you my personal testimony regarding home teaching. I can remember, as if it were yesterday, growing up as a young boy in Whitney, Idaho. We were a farm family, and when we boys were out working in the field, I remember Father calling to us in a shrill voice from the barnyard: "Tie up your teams, boys, and come on in. The ward teachers are here." Regardless of what we were doing, that was the signal to assemble in the sitting room to hear the ward teachers.

These two faithful priesthood bearers would come each month either by foot or by horseback. We always knew they would come. I can't remember one miss. And we would have a great visit. They would stand behind a chair and talk to the family. They would go around the circle and ask each child how he or she was doing and if we were doing our duty. Sometimes Mother and Father would prime us before the ward teachers came so we would have the right answers. But it was an important time for us as a family. They always had a message, and it was always a good one.

We have refined home teaching a lot since those early days in Whitney. But it is still basically the same. The same principles are involved: caring, reaching out, teaching by the Spirit,

leaving an important message each month, and having a concern and love for each member of the family.

Joy comes to those who magnify callings as home teachers

God bless the home teachers of this church. You are in the front line of defense to watch over and strengthen the individual and the family unit.

Understand the sacredness of your calling and the divine nature of your responsibility.

Know well those you are to home teach. Know well your message, and

deliver it with the Spirit. And finally, truly magnify your calling as a home teacher.

As you do this, I promise you the blessings of heaven and the indescribable joy that comes from helping to touch hearts, change lives, and save souls. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Brightly Beams Our Father's Mercy."

Elder George P. Lee offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY MORNING SESSION

The fourth session of the 157th Annual General Conference convened at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 5, 1987. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music, with Brothers Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducting and Brother John Longhurst at the organ.

Before the session, the choir sang "All Creatures of Our God and King" without announcement.

President Hinckley made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

We welcome you this morning from the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, Utah, in this, the fourth general session of the 157th Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Our beloved prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked that I conduct.

We extend our greetings to all participating in the large audience in

the Tabernacle and in the overflow gathering in the nearby Assembly Hall, where Elders Royden G. Derrick and Victor L. Brown are seated on the stand; and to the many others who are participating by radio, television, cable, or satellite transmission. We express appreciation to the owners and operators of these stations who are broadcasting this conference.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders, and officers and members of the Church from many lands who have assembled to worship and to counsel together in this conference.

The Tabernacle Choir is providing the music for this session under the direction of Brothers Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger, with Brother John Longhurst at the organ.

The choir opened these services by singing "All Creatures of Our God and King" and now will sing "Where Can I Turn for Peace?" following which Elder Richard G. Scott of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "Where Can I Turn for Peace?"

Elder Richard G. Scott offered the invocation.

The choir sang "Behold, This Is the Way" without announcement.

President Hinckley

The choir has just sung "Behold, This Is the Way." President Benson has asked that I now speak to you.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

A time of miracles and rejoicing

My brothers and sisters, I am grateful for the privilege and opportunity of being with you in this great world conference. I am thankful that I am alive to see this day of prophecy fulfilled in the mighty work of the Lord.

There was never a brighter day than today in the history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. There was never a season when the work of the Lord prospered as it now prospers.

There was never a time for greater rejoicing and gratitude on the part of Latter-day Saints everywhere.

The Church's growth

You heard yesterday the annual statistical report of the Church. To some, that may have seemed as a dull exercise in numbers. To me, the information given represents a miracle. At the end of the year, the membership of the Church moved comfortably past the six million mark. What a miraculous and remarkable flowering from that small seed planted April 6, 1830, in the log home of Peter Whitmer where six men formally organized the Church.

As of the end of 1986, there were 1,622 organized stakes of Zion. What an advancement of geometric

proportions from that first small stake organized in Kirtland in 1831!

At the end of last year, there were more than 15,000 local congregations scattered through 122 colonies, territories, and sovereign nations. There were 193 organized missions and almost 32,000 missionaries serving therein. What a change from the single effort of Samuel Smith who, even before the Church was organized, put a few copies of the Book of Mormon in his knapsack and tramped the roads of western New York to leave a copy here and a copy there to touch for everlasting good the lives of those who read them.

There were 5,000 copies of that first edition, made possible in their printing by the generosity of Martin Harris, who mortgaged a farm to pay for them. Last year there were 1,643,000 copies of this same book printed and distributed in English alone, with a total distribution in all languages approaching 3,000,000.

Notwithstanding his problems, I have a great feeling of love for Martin Harris, who pledged the security of his lands to make possible the printing of this sacred record. It was an act of faith which has borne sweet fruit—the fruit of conversion and testimony and love for the Lord—in the lives of many millions over the earth. I am grateful for the repeated urging of our prophet of this day that we read this sacred record with a promise that in doing so we shall draw nearer to the Lord.

Providing housing for Church units

Each week the Church Appropriations Committee meets to consider and authorize the expenditure of Church funds for the building of chapels and other purposes. The agenda is essentially a list of place-names, in terms of wards and stakes, together with figures of expenditure.

A stranger looking upon that exercise, week after week, might regard it as a rather prosaic thing. But to me, it is a constantly renewing miracle. I have picked a short sample from a typical agenda: (1) a new building for the Mikkelin Ward of the Helsinki Finland Stake, (2) another for the Obrajes Ward of the La Paz Bolivia Miraflores Stake, (3) yet another for the Quilmes Oeste Ward of the Buenos Aires Argentina Quilmes Stake, (4) similarly for the Campo Grande First Ward of the Brazil São Paulo North Stake, (5) the Gympie Ward of the Brisbane Australia Stake, (6) the Bu Chon Ward of the Seoul Korea Kang Seo Stake, (7) the Kennedy First Ward of the Bogota Colombia Kennedy Stake, and (8) the Caurimare Ward of the Caracas Venezuela Stake. There were yet others. I have named these only to illustrate the growing universality of this work.

And so it goes, week after week, in the great undertaking to provide housing for units of the Church far and near.

The Kirtland Temple was the first structure built by the Church in this dispensation. That was only 151 years ago. What a miraculous change has come to pass!

Comments from Temple Square visitors

This morning I think of this Temple Square on which we meet in the Tabernacle. It has become one of the significant tourist attractions of the nation, with 2.6 million people coming to see us last year. Let me read to you a

few comments left by some of these visitors in a single week.

From a Presbyterian from Michigan: "I can see an absolute commitment to Jesus Christ in you people."

From a California Christian: "The impact Temple Square had on me is beyond belief. I must hear more about it."

From a Baptist pastor from California: "This visit is wonderful to me. I am amazed. May God bless you."

From a tourist from Argentina: "I need you."

From a Lutheran from Wisconsin: "Life had lost direction. I have read the Book of Mormon, and it has made a great impression on me."

From Australia: "I appreciate what your tour on the life of Christ has shown me."

From Illinois: "I hope you have a church in Chicago."

From a Baptist from Canada: "I want to have the inner peace with me all of the time as I felt it on Temple Square."

From a Church of England member: "I want to be part of this. I want to be a member of this church. Is this possible?"

Sesquicentennial of the Church in the British Isles

Is not all of this a miracle, my brethren and sisters? I mention in passing one other impressive and remarkable thing. This coming July will be a season of celebration for members of the Church in the British Isles. There will be commemorated the 150th anniversary of the opening of the British Mission. That, too, was an act of faith.

Heber C. Kimball called to introduce the gospel

The year was 1837. The Latter-day Saints were settled in two locations, most of them in and around Kirtland, Ohio, and others, some eight hundred miles distant in Missouri. It was a season of economic depression. Banks failed, fortunes were lost.

Among the failures was the bank in Kirtland. A spirit of criticism and evil speaking threatened the Church. In those circumstances, Joseph Smith said to Heber C. Kimball, "Brother Heber, the Spirit of the Lord has whispered to me. 'Let my servant Heber go to England and proclaim my Gospel, and open the door of salvation to that nation'" (Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1967], p. 104).

It is difficult for us to comprehend the enormity of that call. Such a request from one ordinary man to another would have been incredible. It meant leaving a family destitute. It meant traveling to New York and crossing the sea when he had no money. It meant that a man with very little schooling, who had grown up and lived in frontier communities, would go to the great cities of the British Isles among a people known for their education and enlightenment.

In his mind, Heber C. Kimball demurred. He thought of all of these problems. He then wrote in his journal:

"However, all these considerations did not deter me from the path of duty; the moment I understood the will of my Heavenly Father, I felt a determination to go at all hazards, believing that He would support me by His almighty power, and endow me with every qualification that I needed; and although my family was dear to me, and I should have to leave them almost destitute, I felt that the cause of truth, the Gospel of Christ, outweighed every other consideration" (*Life of Heber C. Kimball*, p. 104).

That undertaking will be much spoken of during these coming months. Suffice it to say that Heber C. Kimball and his six associates, at the call of Joseph Smith, left their homes, traveled over land and sea, and laid the foundation of a mighty work in the British Isles, from where the cause spread to Europe and subsequently across the world.

Joseph Smith is a prophet of God

What is all of this of which I speak? It is the lengthened shadow of the hand of God. It is the lengthened shadow of a mighty prophet, Joseph Smith, who was called and ordained to open this, the dispensation of the fullness of times spoken of in the scriptures. His numerous critics, now as in the past, spend their lives in trying to explain him on some basis other than the one which he gave.

Of what credibility, I ask, is their estimate in comparison with the opinions of those who were at his side in laying the foundations of this ever-growing, ever-strengthening cause?

Permit me to give you four or five testimonies of men who knew him, who worked with him, who prayed with him, who suffered with him, who forfeited comfort and wealth and ease because of their conviction that he was the anointed of the Almighty, a prophet in this generation.

Brigham Young's testimony

I begin with Brigham Young, who investigated for two years before he joined the Church. Said he concerning this leader:

"Who can justly say aught against Joseph Smith? I was as well acquainted with him, as any man. I do not believe that his father and mother knew him any better than I did. I do not think that a man lives on the earth that knew him any better than I did; and I am bold to say that, Jesus Christ excepted, no better man ever lived or does live upon this earth. I am his witness" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, ed. John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1941], p. 459).

John Taylor's testimony

John Taylor was a gifted and educated Englishman, a lay preacher of the gospel, a man of recognized intelligence. Said he:

"I was acquainted with Joseph Smith for years. I traveled with him; I have been with him in public and in private; I have associated with him in councils of all kinds; I have listened hundreds of times to his public teachings, and his advice to his friends and associates of a more private nature. . . . I was with him living and with him when he died; when he was murdered in Carthage Jail by a ruthless mob with their faces painted black. I was there and was myself wounded in my body. I have seen him under all these various circumstances, and I testify before God, angels and men that he was a good, honorable, and virtuous man, that his private and public character was irreproachable, and that he lived and died a man of God" (in Ezra C. Dalby, "Joseph Smith, Prophet of God" [ms. talk delivered in Salt Lake City, 12 Dec. 1926], p. 13).

Wilford Woodruff's testimony

Wilford Woodruff was not baptized until three or four years after the Church was organized. He went to Kirtland and there met Joseph Smith. He traveled with him to Missouri. He said:

"We traveled a thousand miles together. There I had my first experience in the dealings of God with His Prophet. I understood perfectly well that he was a prophet. I read the vision, I read his revelations, and I knew they could not come from any man on the face of the earth but by the inspiration of Almighty God" (Matthias F. Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1964], p. 610).

Orson Pratt's testimony

Orson Pratt, a man with a sharp and incisive mind, said:

"In 1830 I became intimately acquainted with the Prophet Joseph Smith, and continued intimately acquainted with him until the day of his death. I had the great privilege . . . of boarding . . . at his house, so that I not

only knew him as a public teacher, but as a private citizen, and as a husband and father. I witnessed his earnest and humble devotions, both morning and evening in his family. I heard the words of eternal life flow from his lips, nourishing and soothing and comforting his family, neighbors and friends. I saw his countenance lighted up as the inspiration of the Holy Ghost rested upon him, dictating the great and most precious revelations now printed for our guide. . . .

"I knew that he was a man of God. It was not a matter of opinion with me, for I received a testimony from the heavens concerning that matter" (in Ezra C. Dalby, p. 14).

Such were the words of appraisal of four of those who knew him intimately and who would have given their lives for him.

Other appraisals of Joseph Smith

But there were others of his generation and not of his faith who offered appraisals of his character. Most quoted is Josiah Quincy, the gifted New Englander who visited Nauvoo forty-three days prior to the Prophet's death and who subsequently became the distinguished mayor of Boston. His observation of the Prophet Joseph Smith bears repeating:

"Born in the lowest ranks of poverty, without book-learning and with the homeliest of all human names, he had made himself at the age of thirty-nine a power upon earth. Of the multitudinous family of Smith, . . . none had so won human hearts and shaped human lives as this Joseph. His influence, whether for good or for evil, is potent to-day, and the end is not yet" (Josiah Quincy, *Figures of the Past*, 5th ed. [Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1883], p. 400).

One who loved him has said concerning this mighty prophet:

"When a man gives his life for the cause he has advocated, he meets the highest test of his honesty and sincerity that his own or any future generation

can in fairness ask. When he dies for the testimony he has borne, all malicious tongues should ever after be silent, and all voices hushed in reverence before a sacrifice so complete" (Ezra C. Dalby, p. 1).

Other evidences of Joseph Smith's divine calling

This Book of Mormon, which he brought forth by the power and inspiration of the Almighty, this remarkable thing alone would be more than enough to guarantee his place in history forever. Add to this the marvelous revelations that came by the power of God through him, and we have a prophet whose stature looms above all his insignificant detractors, as a sainted giant looking down on a crowd of pygmies.

W. W. Phelps's testimony

To quote another, one who betrayed and offended him and later knew his forgiveness and love:

*Great is his glory and endless his
priesthood.
Ever and ever the keys he will
hold.
Faithful and true, he will enter his
kingdom,
Crowned in the midst of the
prophets of old.
("Praise to the Man," Hymns
[1985], no. 27)*

Parley P. Pratt's testimony

Is it any wonder that this work moves on from nation to nation, from people to people? Is it any wonder that it grows in strength and numbers, in influence and interest, notwithstanding its critics and naysayers? It is the work

of God restored to the earth through a prophet of whom Parley P. Pratt, his contemporary, said:

"His works will live to endless ages, and unnumbered millions yet unborn will mention his name with honor, as a noble instrument in the hands of God, who, during his short and youthful career, laid the foundation of that kingdom spoken of by Daniel, the prophet, which should break in pieces all other kingdoms and stand forever" (*Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1975], p. 46).

Only a beginning

As I said at the outset, I marvel at what is happening in the growth and expansion of this work. And yet I know that what we see today is but the scratching of the surface of far greater things yet to come. I testify of this by the power of the Holy Spirit. I testify of the living reality of God the Eternal Father and of the Lord Jesus Christ. I testify of the divine calling of the Prophet Joseph Smith and of every other man who has succeeded in that prophetic calling. I testify of the truth and vitality of this church, in the name of Him whose name it bears and whose work it is, even Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

The choir is going to sing "Sing Praise to Him," after which Elder David B. Haight of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will address us.

The choir sang "Sing Praise to Him."

Elder David B. Haight

"Who is my neighbour?"

Jesus was once asked a provocative question by a lawyer: "Who is my neighbour?" (Luke 10:29). Indeed, that is a question we all should ask—"Who is my neighbor?"

The Savior provided a penetrating, unexpected answer to the lawyer. He taught him with a parable—the parable of the Good Samaritan.

An unfortunate victim traveling to Jericho fell among thieves. He was robbed, beaten, and left for dead.

A priest, on his way to the temple, saw him and passed by. Likewise, a Levite, who in that day assisted the priests, passed him by. To the Jews in Jesus' day this unconcern for the victim in the parable was considered appropriate religious behavior. Their rabbinical teaching declared, "We are not to contrive the death of the Gentiles, but if they are in any danger of death we are not bound to deliver them, . . . for such a one is not thy neighbour" (in *A Commentary on the Holy Bible*, ed. J. R. Dummelow [New York: The Macmillan Co., 1936], p. 751).

The Samaritan, though despised by the Jews, saw the suffering victim and did three things: (1) he had compassion on him, (2) he went to him and bound up his wounds, and (3) he cared for him (see Luke 10:30–35).

After relating the parable, Jesus asked the lawyer which of the three was neighbor to him that fell among the thieves—the priest, the Levite, or the Samaritan. The lawyer could not avoid the evident truth. "He that shewed mercy on him," he replied. To which the Savior said, "Go, and do thou likewise" (Luke 10:37).

A more perfect parable could not have been conceived to teach the eternal truth that God is the Father of us all and therefore we are brothers one to another.

My neighbor—my brother! Such is the teaching of our Lord and Savior. We are to esteem every man as our

brother, our neighbor as ourselves (see D&C 38:24).

The spirit of "Box B"

This truth is the fundamental basis for our inspired missionary effort throughout the world—to share the glorious truths of the restored gospel with our neighbors, who are our brothers and sisters.

Since our early days, our prophets—beginning with Joseph Smith—have taught that every worthy member was expected to testify and warn his neighbor. Many priesthood holders were called into the mission field on short notice. Some heard their names announced as missionaries in general conference without any forewarning. Thousands responded to the call to serve.

We have heard President Benson tell of the call from "Box B" that came to his father. A letter from "Box B" in those days was a call from the First Presidency to serve a mission. President Benson's father answered that call—leaving his wife and children—which resulted in a powerful missionary spirit that came into that home that has blessed countless lives.

Today, that call—in the spirit of "Box B"—has been extended to all young men. They are prepared from an early age to serve the Lord. Thousands upon thousands have responded. The spirit of "Box B"—the call to serve—rests not only on all young men and dedicated young women who desire to serve, but now it has also been extended—and has been for some time—to mature couples.

The need for mature couples to serve

Eleven years ago, President Spencer W. Kimball announced:

"We could use hundreds of couples, older people like some of you

folks, whose families are reared, who have retired in their business, who are able to go and spend their own money, to teach the gospel. We could use hundreds of couples. You just go and talk to your bishop," he continued, "that is all you need to do. Tell him, 'We are ready to go, if you can use us.' I think you will probably get a call" (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball [Salt Lake City, Bookcraft, 1982], p. 551).

Since President Kimball made that plea, the demand has continued to increase, and today we could use not only hundreds but thousands of prepared couples.

There are many hundreds of experienced, devoted couples—those whose hair may be graying and perhaps with a wrinkle here or there—you know, those distinguishing features of maturity—that are retiring from their professional careers but with several productive years still remaining before their golden years, whose children have made lives of their own, who are in good health, and who dream of that eventful moment when they say to their bishop, "We're ready—ready to do something really important—to go on a mission, to go anywhere the Lord needs us."

Such was the situation of Hollis and Gwen Kersey, who sold their home, bought a little farm, fixed up the house to be warm and comfortable, cleared the land, and planted a garden. "We settled down to be retired," they said.

They were Baptists and had no thought of changing religions this late in life. But missionaries and a neighbor family touched their lives, and they were baptized. On their fortieth wedding anniversary they were sealed in the Atlanta Temple. They were soon called as stake missionaries and later called to serve a full-time mission.

As they arrived at the Missionary Training Center, the Kerses remarked:

"We gave away the chickens, turkeys, rabbits, took the pony and two

dogs . . . [to our] son, . . . emptied the freezers and gave away the cats, . . . boarded up the windows, nailed up the sheds, had everything turned off, went and kissed our ten grandchildren good-bye, and here we are!"

What a marvelous attitude!

Expand to meet the challenges

Those of you who have been delaying—perhaps because of feelings of apprehension and inadequacy—approach your bishop, as our prophets have suggested, and make that first contact that could bring you into the inspiring missionary activity of proclaiming the gospel of our Lord and Savior.

One of the most important lessons I have learned is that our capacity as children of God becomes what it has to be. We should never minimize or underestimate our ability to deal with challenges placed before us. The size or complexity of challenges need not be a cause for alarm or despair. Human potentiality is perhaps the most squandered resource on earth, and possibly the least tapped.

Perhaps second only in importance to acquiring a personal knowledge of God our Eternal Father and Jesus Christ, is our freedom and ability to learn, to meet problems with a capacity to comprehend and do!

Mature couples can revitalize wards and branches

Many of you may not appreciate what you can do. You can become a great anchor of strength to a new branch or to a weak ward.

It is not necessary for you to proselyte in the same way as our young elders and sisters. Couples are often among the most fruitful missionaries because of their maturity, seasoned experience, insight, and compassion that open many doors in an unusual way.

An example of this comes from a mission president as he describes an unforgettable couple:

"I confess," he said, "that when Elder and Sister Leslie arrived, I wondered how well they would do. He was seriously overweight and wore a hearing aid. She was limited with two artificial knee implants. But their spirit was sweet and their enthusiasm so strong. *Two wonderfully ordinary people—full of love.*

"I felt inspired to send them to Jamestown, Tennessee," he said, "where we had a tiny, struggling branch that had been without missionaries for years.

"I knew they couldn't tract, and for the first few weeks nothing was noted on their weekly reports. Their letters said, 'We are getting to know the people.'

"After a few weeks their letters told of nonmembers who were attending church with them—at first two, then four, then seven. They had as many as twenty-four investigators at church on one occasion. Soon the baptisms started to flow. No set of missionaries, young or old, equaled the baptisms they brought about."

And the mission president went on to say, "I doubt that either of them could give the missionary discussions in a way that closely resembled the suggested form that we have for the regular missionaries. What they had was a great love for the people. They wove themselves into the fabric of that little community, winning them over with friendship, compassionate service, and understanding hearts.

"Today, the Jamestown Branch is thriving, with a new building and more than 100 members attending. Many contributed their faith and works, but none more significantly or generously than Harry and Frances Leslie."

Compassion . . . service . . . caring—these are qualities of those who truly love their neighbors as themselves.

New blessings through missionary service

Though you have had many years of married life together, you will dis-

cover new blessings. You will never work so closely and so intensely with one another in such a rewarding effort. Your love will deepen and you will discover wonderful new dimensions of your companion's inner soul and the depth of his understanding. You will have a greater feeling of unity, and a heavenly relationship will be strengthened.

Who is your neighbor? Like the Good Samaritan, by bringing the true gospel to those waiting to hear it, giving compassion and a listening ear—you bind up their wounds, and in a special way you freely give loving care to all.

Mature couples can give love in many ways

When Lynn and Dorothea Shawcroft arrived in Ecuador, they were in a state of cultural shock for two weeks and were unable to communicate very well.

"We thought, '[Eighteen] months [will be] a very long time.'"

But then they went on to say, "We saw vividly the conditions in which [some of the] missionaries lived. . . . Our first thoughts were—until we learned more of our own duties—we could at least make life more pleasant for the [full-time missionaries]. So we shopped for pans and ingredients to make cookies and cinnamon rolls. We bought chocolate bars and cut them up to make chocolate chip cookies.

"We learned so much from the [missionaries]. It didn't matter that they learned the language more quickly than we did. Seeing the joy . . . on their faces as they enjoyed a chocolate chip cookie was worth every effort. We represented a bit of home, a bit of something they missed.

"It [may] sound like we did nothing but make cookies for the missionaries. Not so! . . . [We worked] with the [local Church] leaders in activation,

teaching, music, . . . genealogy, and welfare. We had open house each week for the . . . missionaries and their investigators. We worked together. . . .

"On preparation day, [the missionaries] came and made cookies or cinnamon rolls. [We] discussed the scriptures. When . . . discouraged, they came and talked about it. . . . How we loved them! . . .

"After teaching a young couple to read or seeing the happiness in a family [because] the father was again attending church, we would walk back to our [little] apartment with a heart that was singing and feet that hardly touched the cobblestone street. Seeing a young mother clap her hands with joy as she truly realized that she was reading or watching a baby . . . and knowing that perhaps [this child] wouldn't be alive now had we not [been serving in that city at that time]. These experiences, each and every one, made our mission worth every minute of it.

"Was it worth it to struggle with [another] language? It certainly was! . . . Did we feel that we had to keep up with [the younger missionaries]? No. We worked in our own way. . . . Were we accepted? Were we ever!"

Sister Shawcroft recommends that every couple take on their mission a good chocolate chip cookie recipe, lots of love, a good recipe for cinnamon rolls, a strong testimony of the gospel, the scriptures, and then more love!

Each of these couples exemplifies the Savior's teaching to give of ourselves, to reach out to people. In doing so they achieved value to themselves, their families, and to the Church for missionary service rendered in the golden years of their lives.

"Do something really important"

Some couples are now going on their second and third missions. Others are studying another language so they can go to a country where their talents are so needed.

A few years ago, a prominent man in California said to me, after learning that Sister Haight and I were leaving our affairs and going to Scotland to serve our church, "I wish my life had been lived in such a way that someone would ask me to do something really important."

Deep inside the human soul is a longing to be identified with and involved in something really important. There comes a time in our lives when we are spiritually prepared and ready to be lifted from comfortable and sometimes mundane activities and to make a major decision to respond to a call from our prophet that will ennoble our souls as well as bless others.

Every physically able couple should serve

The goal of every physically able couple in the Church, just as it is for every nineteen-year-old young man in the Church, should be to serve a mission. No finer example can be given, no finer testimony can be borne by parents to children or grandchildren, than through missionary service in their mature years.

Serve a world of neighbors

Who are our neighbors? They are *all* of our Father's children. What a blessing we can be to them as we, with mature wisdom and love, bring them the gospel of our Savior, with its eternal covenants and blessings.

We invite bishops to prayerfully review possible calls with appropriate couples, who, after following our Savior's promise to the Nephites to "pray unto the Father in my name; . . . believing that ye shall receive, [and] it shall be given unto you," will know by the Spirit how to respond (3 Nephi 18:19–20).

Great joy and fulfillment will come to you as you humbly serve in your newly expanded world of neighbors.

This work is divinely directed. God lives. Jesus is the Son of God. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder David B. Haight of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Joseph Smith's First Prayer." After that, we shall hear from Elder Hugh W. Pinnock of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation sang "Joseph Smith's First Prayer."

Elder Hugh W. Pinnock

Four critical commandments

There are four critical commandments, four declarations from the Lord so powerful that almost everything else we think upon and live pales in comparison.

They are from the teachings of the Master, where he stated:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

"This is the *first* and great commandment.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37-39; italics added).

"The third?" you ask. "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

And the fourth, "If ye are not one ye are not mine" (D&C 38:27).

It is the fourth, the concept of unity, of which I would like to speak.

Unity fosters family growth

We first might ask, "Are we one with our families? Is there truly peace at home?"

A man in a distant city was struggling to make a living, raise a family, and attend to his Church callings. His debts were piling up, there was discontent at home, and his children seemed to be misbehaving increasingly, with

everyone going a different direction. Suddenly his job was threatened, and the pressures mounted.

About the time when he didn't know if he could take any more, his teenage daughter, who had been noticing his frustration and pain, said, "Dad, as a family we can do anything. Hey, let's work together! I have a wonderful job after school, and Bill has found a paper route. Besides, isn't it about time we started to eat from our food supply in the basement?"

Well, the entire family caught the spirit. They concentrated their efforts. With time and the mutual support of one another, things did work out.

Can you see father Lehi gathering his loved ones around him near the end of his life? As a loving patriarch who had been tested and tried, he asked his family to leave their comfortable home and travel to a distant place in a new world. There they encountered dire circumstances, dangers, and contentions. He spoke to his family:

"And now that my soul might have joy in you, and that my heart might leave this world with gladness because of you, that I might not be brought down with grief and sorrow to the grave, arise from the dust, my sons, . . . and be determined in one mind and in one heart, united in all things, that ye may not come down into captivity" (2 Nephi 1:21).

As a loving father, he knew that if they were to flourish they must be one.

Unity betters communities

Are we one with our neighbors? Is the street where you live a little more peaceful because you dwell there?

There were two ranchers living side by side in southwestern Montana. They bickered and fought because each thought a rusty barbed wire fence that separated their ranches was not the true property line. Each felt the other was encroaching upon his land. The real estate records were unclear at the county courthouse.

They forbade their children to play with one another. The conflict became worse. Finally, after years of exchanging words and threats, one of the ranchers said to himself, "Enough of this." He drove down the lane from his place onto the county road and then down the long driveway to his neighbor's place.

"What do you want?" his adversary asked.

"Look, you take your hired men and your sons, and I'll take mine; and we'll put the fence wherever you'd like it. I've had enough of this. I want us to be friends."

His raw-boned neighbor softened, and tears ran down both of their faces. The neighbor responded, "Hey, let's drive to Virginia City and record that the present fence is where both of us want the property line to be."

They did and the problem was solved. Why? Because a neighbor wanted to be one with the family next door.

There could have been serious contentions in a community not far from here. But a group of neighbors, in unity, solved a problem before it became serious. A lovely young lady told the following story at a stake conference. She said, "I am a convert from upstate New York. My parents wanted their children to have eternal marriages. There were no Latter-day Saint

members to marry in our little branch, so our family moved to Utah.

"Eventually I found myself a husband. He was the president of the local motorcycle club—black leather jackets and motorcycle boots. We rode together—perhaps not what my mother had hoped—but by that time I had wandered from the Church."

She reported: "We moved into a house. Often our friends would gather there. I'm afraid our neighbors were quite uncomfortable with us. At least one neighbor would take her children into the house when we were roaming about.

"But do you know what our neighbors did? They mowed our lawn and fixed things up because we didn't have a mower. They would bring flowers when there was illness, and quite often they would bring food to our home. Our little daughter was included in the activities of the other children, including a party on her birthday."

As she and her husband attempted to thank their neighbors, they replied, "Well, we all like to help each other." They were made to feel welcome living next to unified and loving neighbors.

She continued, "About ten months later, we traded our black leather jackets and motorcycle boots for the white clothing and slippers of the temple. As we knelt across the altar from each other and looked around that room, there were our neighbors—those who had been mowing our lawn and making things better for us."

Now they were truly one. She reported to me there is still a wonderful feeling of unity in their neighborhood and ward. It wasn't temporary.

Unity brings blessings to any good endeavor

Most of us have observed a basketball, football, or soccer team slip into a state of such perfect harmony that those five or eleven athletes are like one. Suddenly the game changes. In fact, if unity can be maintained, we know which team will win.

Yes, the blessings of being unified are found almost everywhere. As a young man still in my twenties, I was called to be a bishop. I was inexperienced and inexperienced. I called two older men as counselors, men who knew far more than I knew, men who were obviously more skilled than I. What did they do? They unified themselves to accomplish the work. We served five wonderful years together because they were mature and wanted to bless the kingdom in harmony.

How often we see that when a mission, ward, stake, Young Women, or Sunday School class is unified great things happen. We forget personal pettiness and silliness as we work together. We subordinate ourselves to serve the organization and the cause.

General Authorities are united

As if memories were never to fade, we can still see President Kimball sitting on the stand at general conference, being aided in sensitive and kind ways by his counselors, and then by one strong counselor. They were serving as one during those vital years, just as our First Presidency serves as one today. And just as all the Brethren are one in their ministries, we are all united in our pursuit of the three-fold mission of the Church—to proclaim the gospel, to perfect the Saints, and to redeem those that have passed on. But are we all united in bringing these eternal blessings into the lives of those we know?

Unity brought forth a miracle

I remember a special event that occurred in Idaho. It was early spring. The stake president called and said, "I think you had better look things over up here." So I drove to southern Idaho. He took me to a reservoir several miles above some little towns. The water was almost ready to lap over the edge of the dam. He said, "Most people don't realize that we are going to have a flood this

year. They are relaxed down there in the valley. Most do not understand what is going to happen if a canal is not built to contain the excess water and take it away from the reservoir."

He told me that as a young man he had walked those hills but had never seen so much snow left that late or so much water in the reservoir that time of year. Here was a man who knew what he was doing. The only thing I could say to him was, "Do what's right. Do what you must."

I went back a few weeks later and saw huge earth-moving equipment going back and forth, almost as if by some predetermined melody, digging a channel. Men and boys worked with shovels; people worked together. A miracle was being performed as a canal was dug twenty-three miles long in a matter of several days. The communities were saved. Yes, some of the farms were injured, but a whole area was now safe. How? Why? Because of the unity of courageous people doing what needed to be done together. No one person could have done it. No small group of men or women could have accomplished the task. But with the unity which that stake president helped to create, we saw the National Guard, construction companies (not knowing if or when they would be paid), and men from near and far loaning their valuable equipment so that a valley could be rescued. It was a latter-day miracle brought about by unity.

Unity strengthens the Church

I was speaking with a remarkable business leader and teacher of Christianity in New York City a few weeks ago—a man who is actively working with some 220 different Christian denominations. He continued to comment upon the effectiveness of the Latter-day Saint Church. He said many wonderful things about our members, about their dedication and the certainty of their beliefs.

He reported: "One of the most remarkable characteristics of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is that you seem to be working together. You are headed in the same direction. As one, you concentrate upon doing that which you believe Jesus wants you to do. You all study the same doctrine. You respond to your leaders. You are unified."

That was a great lesson! Even though I already realized much of what he said, to hear it from a man who had more contact with other churches than almost anyone added special meaning to the importance of our like-mindedness and the bonds of our harmony.

You see, one of the facets that makes us different is that we strive for compatibility. We sustain our leaders and generally follow their counsel and direction. There are many reasons to be unified, but perhaps the greatest reason is that we have been asked to be one. In the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord asks us to assemble ourselves together to agree upon his word (see D&C 41:2). Joseph Smith stated, "Unity is power" (*History of the Church*, 6:198), when speaking about stability in governments. Just so, unity adds power in the Church and in our families.

Christ's emphasis on unity

Let us turn again to the Book of Mormon, where the Savior is preaching to his other sheep. Jesus is praying with those in the Western Hemisphere, "And now Father, I pray unto thee for them, and also for all those who shall believe on their words" (3 Nephi 19:23). He was not only praying for the believers and those that would be missionaries who were gathered there but for those they would be teaching, "that they may believe in me, that I may be in *them* as thou, Father, art in me, that we may be one" (3 Nephi 19:23; italics added).

Yes, we can almost see Jesus standing before those ancient Americans as he continues, "Father, I pray

not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me out of the world, because of their faith, that they may be purified in me, that I may be in them as thou, Father, art in me, that we may be one, that I may be glorified in them" (3 Nephi 19:29). It was this same Jesus, as Jehovah of the Old Testament, who inspired these words, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1).

Help others join the fold

How do we glorify Jesus? How do we say thank you for the Atonement? How do we state gratitude for the ordinances and the covenants? How do we express appreciation for his teachings? Of course, we do it by loving God, by loving our neighbor, by living the commandments, and also by being one. We adapt to the Master's teachings. We place him and others with us into one: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism," as Paul taught (Ephesians 4:5). We accept those called over us as our leaders without creating a fuss. Our leaders know of our loyalty because we do what they call us to do.

May we be one in this great work, brothers and sisters. May we in loving and sensitive ways work with those who are not yet members of the Church so that they will understand. May we also seek out those that have wandered away to help them come back so that they may be one with us. May our children observe this solidarity and a genuine desire to be one that enhances our lives with peace and with power.

With gratitude in my heart, brothers and sisters, for you and for that which we are doing together, I pray that we may each resolve, in this era of social problems and economic difficulty, to follow as one our prophet-leader and others who have been called to direct us. May we avoid the pain and problems that come to families, neighborhoods, and institutions when they are not one, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, amen.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Elder Hugh W. Pinnock of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy has just spoken to us.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve will now address us.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

"I am an adult now"

Some weeks ago a man holding a high office in the Church asked a special favor of me. "Would you be good enough to take the time to listen while a mother, father, and their teenage daughter, special friends of mine, try to talk to each other?"

As the four of us sat together, it immediately became obvious that all channels of communication were jammed with prejudice, threats, accusations, and resentment. As the verbal storms developed with bitter intensity, I found myself the only listener. Even though they had individually and collectively agreed I would be the counselor, judge, arbiter, or referee, if you please, I found myself waiting patiently for an opportunity to be heard. During the heated and emotional confrontation, the teenager repeatedly expressed her resentment with: "You can't talk to me like that. I am an adult now. You can't treat me like that. I am an adult now. You can't dominate my life anymore. I am an adult now."

Maturity is shown by conduct

Each time she said "I am an adult now," I cringed. By definition, an adult is a person who has attained the age of maturity—full grown. While it is true a person may be legally classified as an adult when he or she reaches a certain age, for our purposes today the kind of adult status we are talking about must be earned by actions and attitude.

I am not quite sure who has the right or responsibility to declare someone an adult, but I am quite certain that

often the least qualified to make the declaration would be the individual himself. If a person is mature, he or she will not need to announce it. Personal conduct is the only true measurement of maturity. Adult classification, when it pertains to behavior, does not come with age, wrinkles, or gray hair. Perhaps it is not too far off the mark to say adult conduct is a process. Mature conduct is generally developed through self-discipline, resilience, and continuing effort.

In fairness to the teenager, even though her declaration of "I am an adult now" didn't impress me favorably, there were times during the visit when I thought she showed more maturity than others in the room. When we who are more senior use an expression like "I am older than you" to clinch a point, I am not too sure it is very effective. How much better it is to gain respect and love through worthy parental conduct than to seek it through the means of the age differential.

Follow Christ's path

Young men and young women worldwide, you, as well as your parents, need not announce or proclaim your maturity. By your faith and works you will be known for what you are. By your fruits you will be known and classified. Those among us who use abusive arguments, temper tantrums, demeaning and painful criticism, fruitless counter-complaints, and disrespect will benefit no one. Let us put away petty malice, resentment, and retaliatory practices that are self-destructive and return to a path of safety well marked by the Good Shepherd.

It takes courage to flee from verbal contention. When maturity begins to set in, adult lives set in. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:31-32). It is alarming how many older people go through life without ever becoming real adults.

Jesus standing before Pilate

For many years I have had a very vivid picture in my mind of Jesus Christ standing before Pilate. While Jesus stood in front of an angry mob, who sneered and condemned, Pilate tried to get Him to respond and retaliate. He tried to get Him to declare himself a king. Jesus was silent. His life was his sermon. He was perfect in character, a worthy son, the Only Begotten of the Father. His maturity, if you please, would speak for itself.

"And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.

"And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.

"Then said Pilate unto him, Hearst thou not how many things they witness against thee?

"And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly" (Matthew 27:11-14).

The Church provides opportunities to mature

There are many opportunities to acquire mature behavior in the organizations in the Church. The other day a charming teenager paid a deserving tribute to her Young Women's teacher. She said: "From her example and good lessons, we learned the importance of good grooming. We learned that

though each of us is different, each is equally important. She taught us to solve our differences by discussion, not by shouting."

The success of the Scouting program is that it teaches boys to stay on the trail. Boulders and hills don't stop the hike to the top of the mountain. Top awards are not given unless the difficult merit badges are earned as well as the easier ones. The boys' tenacity to continue on the Scouting path, not the honors awarded, is the maturing element of the program.

Scriptural examples of maturity and immaturity

"A certain man had two sons:

"And the younger . . . said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me [I am an adult now]. And he divided unto them his living" (Luke 15:11-12).

The prodigal son parable is well known to all of us. He left and wasted his substance with riotous living. "When he came to himself, he said, . . .

"I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

"And am no more worthy to be called thy son: [but I am more of an adult now] . . .

"And he arose, and came to his father. . . His father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him" (vs. 17-20).

I believe it appropriate to say the father, too, had become more mature during the separation. Think, too, of the maturing and the becoming of more of an adult on the part of the elder son when he witnessed and participated in the Christ-like example of his father (see vs. 25-32).

There is no doubt in my mind that one of the primary reasons Laman and Lemuel murmured and spoke harsh words to their brother Nephi and did smite him with a rod was because they were older and more adult than Nephi,

so they supposed. Can't you just hear Laman saying, "Nephi, you can't treat me like that. I am an adult now."

Nephi displayed real maturity when he declared, "I, Nephi, said unto my father: I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them."

"And it came to pass that when my father had heard these words he was exceedingly glad, for he knew that I had been blessed of the Lord" (1 Nephi 3:7-8). Lehi was adult enough to know which son was the most mature and who would be blessed of the Lord accordingly.

True maturity is maintained consistently

Too many of us fail to realize adult conduct is a process, not a status. To become a disciple of Jesus Christ, we must continue in righteousness and in His word. When someone shares with enthusiasm his joy in now being an active member of the Church, the thought crosses my mind, "Wonderful, but for how long will you stay that way?" Incidentally, some years ago I was contacted by an insurance agent. When he started his sales approach with "I am an active member of the Church," the first thought that crossed my mind was, "Who said so?"

When someone overcomes the drug habit, and thankfully many have, less time should be spent on announcing the present status and more on staying away from bad habits. Those who are morally clean will conduct themselves in a more adult fashion if they will spend less time declaring it and more time living and teaching others the blessings of chastity. Full-tithe payers will receive more joy and reward from being obedient to the principle of tithing than from being so classified or recommended.

Making and keeping commitments

Some will chide and belittle leaders and students of higher education for participating in code of conduct guidelines, but those appropriately involved in the wholesome process of mature behavioral discipline welcome the environment. Responsible student conduct on any campus is applauded. A pledge of "on my honor I will do my best," either in writing or when self-enforced, can make the difference in character development. Making and keeping commitments may seem restrictive and outdated in a today world where "play it loose" is the pattern, but the benefits are clear to the mature.

The mature welcome counsel

Those who are immature resent counseling or having to report in. They may feel that such interviews are juvenile. Those who strive for continual growth realize that counselors can help one analyze himself and find solutions to personal problems. In our church, counselors are a source of great strength for the prophet as well as for all of us.

Beware of those seeking excuses for conduct with "I am an adult now. You can't treat me like that." Moral maturity and scholastic maturity must be blended to produce a truly adult person. A commitment to improve on a daily basis should be a high priority in the lives of those who would move in the right direction.

Church activity should foster maturity

There is real purpose and power in the First Presidency's continuing invitation to all Church members to come back. Strength, growth, and happiness result from analyzing the direction our lives are taking. Those who have been lost, misunderstood, or offended and those totally involved in the Church are invited to come and fellowship together

within the framework of the gospel of Jesus Christ. To be a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is not enough. Participation in priesthood, Relief Society, Young Women, Young Men, Primary, and Sunday School opportunities is necessary if we are to move forward anxiously in personal development that is adult, real, and eternal. Perhaps all of us would do well to realize that as we promote personal activity and involvement in the Church, it might be much better to be classified a member of "good coming" instead of a member in good standing. It is our responsibility and privilege to encourage the immature and give them opportunities for growth and development.

Maturity measured by endurance

Joseph Smith declared to the world he was like a rough stone shaped and polished by the stream of life. Bumps, disappointments, and the unexpected helped him gain the status of being wise beyond his years. Oftentimes maturity can best be measured by our endurance. "If the heavens gather blackness, and all the elements combine to hedge up the way; and above all, if the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee, know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good.

"The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he?" (D&C 122:7-8).

Avoid placing self-labels

My young friends, in a spirit of love I make the suggestion that we avoid the placing of self-labels. For you to classify yourself as all-state, all-American, or even all-world doesn't mean anything if you alone determine the winner and present the trophy to yourself. By the same token, who

among us has the right to label himself as a loser, no good, a dropout, or a failure? Self-judgment in any direction is a hazardous pastime. It is a fact of life that the direction in which we are moving is more important than where we are. I have never heard the best-educated ever declare, "I am educated now." Some of the most potentially wise people in the world forfeit that classification when they spend their time advertising their abilities and knowledge rather than using their wisdom to improve themselves and help those with whom they associate.

Patience brings eternal maturity

Mothers, fathers, and family members, maturity does not necessarily come with age. Let us communicate in words and deeds our concern and love for each other. Threats, ears that do not hear, eyes that do not see, and hearts that do not feel will never bring joy, unity, and growth. Patience with others, self, and God brings eternal maturity. Let God and our daily actions determine the authenticity of the statement "I am an adult now."

God is our Father. Jesus is the Christ. May our knowledge of them on a continuing basis give us Christ-centered adult conduct, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Faith of Our Fathers" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve has just addressed us, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "Faith of Our Fathers."

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will be our concluding speaker.

President Thomas S. Monson

Consider God's expectations

A few months ago I stood before a capacity audience in the Marriott Center on the campus of Brigham Young University. Mine was the responsibility to speak, to lift, to motivate, to inspire. There came to my mind the realization that here were men and women of promise. They represented the hopes, the dreams, and the aspirations of parents, of family, of teachers, of God. All were participants in the passing parade of mortality. Some were gifted in the arts, others leaned toward the humanities, while some found their talents prompted a study of the natural or physical sciences. These students stood on the stage of study. Soon they would disperse to make their marks in life, to fulfill the measure of their creation, and to learn from their own lives those lessons which would prepare them for the exaltation they seek.

My thoughts turned to others striving to become master craftsmen through apprenticeship and experience. Then I reflected on that vast throng who had abandoned preparation, formed undesirable friendships, and adopted habits and practices which diverted them from that pathway which leads to perfection and enticed them along one of the many detours where sorrow, discouragement, and destruction await.

The wayward son, the willful daughter, the pouting husband, the nagging wife—all can change. There can occur a parting of the clouds, a break in the storm. Maturity comes, friendships alter, circumstances vary. "Cast in concrete" need not describe human behavior.

From the perspective of eternity, our sojourn in this life is ever so brief. Detours are costly; they must be shunned. The spiritual nature within us should not be dominated by the physical. It behooves each of us to remember who he or she is and what God expects him or her to become.

Trust God's guidance

The poet Wordsworth, in his inspired *Intimations of Immortality*, inclined our thoughts to that heavenly home from whence each of us came:

*Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The soul that rises with us, our
life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we
come
From God, who is our home.*
(*Ode: Intimations of Immortality
from Recollections of Early
Childhood*, lines 58–65)

In finding and trailing this spiritual contact with the infinite, we will feel the touch of inspiration and know that God will guide us as we put in Him our trust. That wise and righteous man, Job, declared the profound truth: "There is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth . . . understanding" (Job 32:8). It is this inspiration which we at times allow to grow dim, causing us to wander far below the level of our possibilities.

Love can work wonders

During the Great Depression, the homeless, the downtrodden, the unemployed "rode the rails" that passed not far from our home. On numerous occasions, there would be a soft knock on the back door. When I opened the door, there I would see a man, sometimes two, ill-clothed, ill-fed, ill-schooled. Generally, such a visitor held in his hand the familiar cap. His hair would be tousled, his face unshaven. The question was always the same: "Could you spare some food?" My dear mother invariably responded with a pleasant,

"Come in and sit down at the table." She would then prepare a ham sandwich, cut a piece of cake, and pour a glass of milk. Mother would ask the visitor about his home, his family, his life. She provided hope and words of encouragement. Before leaving, the visitor would pause to express a gracious thank-you. I would note that a smile of content had replaced a look of despair. Eyes that were dull now shone with new purpose. Love, that noblest attribute of the human soul, can work wonders.

Everyone faces challenges and failures

In our journey on earth, we discover that life is made up of challenges—they just differ from one person to another. We are success oriented, striving to become "wonder women" and "super men." Any intimation of failure can cause panic, even despair. Who among us cannot remember moments of failure?

One such moment came to me as a young basketball player. The game was close—hotly contested—when the coach called me from the bench to run a key play. For some reason which I shall never understand, I took the pass and dribbled the ball right through the opposing team. I jumped high toward the basket; and, as the basketball left my fingertips, I came to the abrupt realization that I was shooting for the wrong basket. I offered the shortest prayer I have ever spoken: "Dear Father, don't let that ball go in." My prayer was answered, but my ordeal was just beginning. I heard a loud cheer erupt from the adoring fans: "We want Monson, we want Monson, we want Monson . . . OUT!" The coach obliged.

Not long ago I read about an incident that occurred in the life of President Harry S. Truman after he had retired and was back in Independence, Missouri. "He was at Truman Library, talking with some elementary school students, and answering their questions.

Finally, a question came from an owlish little boy. 'Mr. President,' he said, 'was you popular when you was a boy?' The President looked at the boy, and answered, 'Why, no. I was never popular. The popular boys were the ones who were good at games and had big tight fists. I was never like that. Without my glasses, I was blind as a bat, and to tell the truth, I was kind of a sissy.' . . . The little boy started to applaud and then everyone else did, too" (Eugene W. Brice, "Good News about Failure," *Vital Speeches*, 1 Feb. 1983, p. 236).

Rise from failure to achievement

Our responsibility is to rise from mediocrity to competence, from failure to achievement. Our task is to become our best selves. One of God's greatest gifts to us is the joy of trying again, for no failure ever need be final. In 1902, the poetry editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* returned a sheaf of poems to a 28-year-old poet with this curt note: "Our magazine has no room for your vigorous verse." The poet was Robert Frost. In 1894, the rhetoric teacher at Harrow in England wrote on a sixteen-year-old's report card, "A conspicuous lack of success." The sixteen-year-old was Winston Churchill.

President Theodore Roosevelt said, "It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena" (Clifton Fadiman, ed., *The American Treasury: 1455-1955*, [New York: Harper and Brothers, 1955], p. 689).

The gospel can change lives

We know men and women can change—and change for the better. No more vivid example is recorded than the life of Saul of Tarsus. The sacred record reveals that Saul threatened the disciples of the Lord. Then came that light from heaven and the voice saying unto him: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"

"And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest" (Acts 9:4-5).

Saul's answer is a model for each of us: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (v. 6). Saul the persecutor became Paul the proselyter. Night had turned to day. Darkness had yielded to light.

Simon Peter, that fisherman who left his nets and followed the Lord, had his time of struggle. He had been weak and fearful and had denied his Lord with an oath. Then there came change. Never again would he deny or desert his Lord. He found his place in the kingdom of God.

We have the example of Alma the Younger, who turned his back on sinful practices and wasteful ways. Conversion came. He became an exponent of truth. His tender words of counsel to his sons Helaman and Corianton are literary classics. To Helaman: "O, remember, my son, and learn wisdom in thy youth; yea, learn in thy youth to keep the commandments of God" (Alma 37:35). To Corianton: "Suffer not yourself to be led away by any vain or foolish thing" (Alma 39:11).

Then and now, as President David O. McKay so consistently taught, the gospel of Jesus Christ can make bad men good and good men better, can alter human nature and change human lives.

Invitation to "come back"

Change for the better can come to all. In December of 1985 the First Presidency proclaimed "An Invitation to Come Back." To the inactive, the critical, the transgressor, the message declared: "'Come back. Come back and feast at the table of the Lord, and taste again the sweet and satisfying fruits of fellowship with the Saints'" (*Ensign*, Mar. 1986, p. 88). Hundreds, if not thousands, have responded to this invitation. Their lives have taken on new meaning. Their families have been blessed. They have drawn closer to God.

John Helander's determination

In the private sanctuary of one's own conscience lies that spirit, that determination to cast off the old person and to measure up to the stature of true potential. But the way is rugged, and the course is strenuous. So discovered John Helander from Goteborg, Sweden. John is twenty-six years of age and is handicapped, in that it is difficult for him to coordinate his motions.

At a youth conference in Kungsbacka, Sweden, John took part in a 1500-meter running race. He had no chance to win. Rather, his was the opportunity to be humiliated, mocked, derided, scorned. Perhaps John remembered another who lived long ago and far away. Wasn't He mocked? Wasn't He derided? Wasn't He scorned? But He prevailed. He won His race. Maybe John could win his.

What a race it was! Struggling, surging, pressing, the runners bolted far beyond John. There was wonderment among the spectators. Who is this runner who lags so far behind? The participants on their second lap of this two-lap race passed John while he was but halfway through the first lap. Tension mounted as the runners pressed toward the tape. Who would win? Who would place second? Then came the final burst of speed; the tape was broken. The crowd cheered; the winner was proclaimed.

The race was over—or was it? Who is this contestant who continues to run when the race is ended? He crosses the finish line on but his first lap. Doesn't the foolish lad know he has lost? Ever onward he struggles, the only participant now on the track. This is his race. This must be his victory. No one among the vast throng of spectators leaves. Every eye is on this valiant runner. He makes the final turn and moves toward the finish line. There is awe; there is admiration. Every spectator sees himself running his own race of life. As John approaches the finish line, the audience, as one, rises to its feet. There is a loud applause of acclaim.

Stumbling, falling, exhausted but victorious, John Helander breaks the newly tightened tape. (Officials are human beings, too.) The cheering echoes for miles. And just maybe, if the ear is carefully attuned, that Great Scorekeeper—even the Lord—can be heard to say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21).

Shed thoughts of failure

Each of us is a runner in the race of life. Comforting is the fact that there are many runners. Reassuring is the knowledge that our eternal Scorekeeper is understanding. Challenging is the truth that each must run. But you and I do not run alone. That vast audience of family, friends, and leaders will cheer our courage, will applaud our determination as we rise from our stumblings and pursue our goal. The race of life is not for sprinters running on a level track. The course is marked by pitfalls and checkered with obstacles. We take confidence from the hymn:

*Fear not, I am with thee; oh, be
not dismayed,
For I am thy God and will still
give thee aid.
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and
cause thee to stand,
Upheld by my righteous, . . .
omnipotent hand. . . .*

*The soul that on Jesus hath leaned
for repose*

*I will not, I cannot, desert to his
foes;
That soul, though all hell should
endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never
forsake!*
("How Firm a Foundation," Hymns
[1985], no. 85).

Let us shed any thought of failure. Let us discard any habit that may hinder. Let us seek; let us obtain the prize prepared for all, even exaltation in the celestial kingdom of God. This is my earnest prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has been our concluding speaker.

The choir will sing in closing, "God's Daily Care," following which Elder Ronald E. Poelman of the First Quorum of the Seventy will offer the benediction. This conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The choir sang "God's Daily Care."

Elder Ronald E. Poelman offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY AFTERNOON SESSION

The fifth session of the 157th Annual General Conference commenced at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, April 5, 1987. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

Music was provided by the Tabernacle Choir, directed by Jerold Ottley with Robert Cundick at the organ.

President Monson made the following remarks at the outset of the meeting.

President Thomas S. Monson

President Ezra Taft Benson, who has presided at all sessions of this conference, has asked that I conduct this fifth and concluding session of the 157th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We extend a sincere welcome to all assembled in the Tabernacle and to those seated in the Assembly Hall, where Elders F. Enzio Busche and J. Richard Clarke are seated on the stand. We also send our greetings and blessing to members of the Church and many friends everywhere who are participating in these proceedings by radio, television, cable, or satellite transmission.

The Tabernacle Choir, with Jerold Ottley directing and Robert Cundick at the organ, will begin this service by singing "Come, Rejoice." The invoca-

tion then will be offered by Elder Jacob de Jager of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Come, Rejoice."
Elder Jacob de Jager offered the invocation.

President Monson

The choir will now sing "I Am a Child of God." We invite the congregation to sing with the choir when directed to do so by Brother Ottley. Following the singing, Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our first speaker.

The choir and congregation sang
"I Am a Child of God."

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

Be settled in doing the will of God

Events and circumstances in the last days make it imperative for us as members of the Church to become more grounded, rooted, established, and settled (see Colossians 1:23, 2:7; 2 Peter 1:12). Jesus said to His disciples, "Settle this in your hearts, that ye will do the things which I shall teach, and command you" (JST, Luke 14:28). If not so settled, the turbulence will be severe. If settled, we will not be "tossed to and fro," whether by rumors, false doctrines, or by the behavioral and intellectual fashions of the world. Nor will we get caught up in the "talk show" mentality, spending our time like ancient Athenians "in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing" (Acts 17:21). Why be concerned with the passing preferences of the world anyway? "For the fashion of this world passeth away" (1 Corinthians 7:31).

Be settled about Jesus

However, we cannot be thus settled in doing what Jesus has commanded *unless* we are first settled about Him. If Jesus were only a man, albeit a very good man, His counsel is merely that of a meridian moralist. It is quite another thing, however, for the Creator of multiple worlds, whose central concern is our individual happiness, to command, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Our task, therefore, is to "reconcile [ourselves] to the will of God, and not to the will of . . . the flesh" (2 Nephi 10:24).

Some members are not settled

The poet-prophet Jacob witnessed among Church members how covenant-breaking wounded "delicate minds" and how hearts were "pierced with deep wounds" (Jacob 2:9, 35). He was

"weighed down" and so heavy with sorrow because some members esteemed their covenants so lightly (v. 3). As I witness some of today's walking wounded, I understand Jacob's feelings as never before!

Some Church members, alas, are neither reconciled to the will of God nor are they sufficiently settled as to their covenants.

Some unworthily covenant afresh, partaking of the broken bread while having broken their covenants of marriage.

Some give of their time yet withhold themselves, being present without giving of their presence and going through the superficial motions of membership instead of the deep emotions of consecrated discipleship.

Some try to get by with knowing only the headlines of the gospel, not really talking much of Christ or rejoicing in Christ and esteeming lightly His books of scripture which contain and explain His covenants (see 2 Nephi 25:26).

Some are so proud they never learn of obedience and spiritual submissiveness. They will have very arthritic knees on the day when every knee shall bend. There will be no gallery then to play to; all will be participants!

Maintaining Church membership on our own terms, therefore, is not true discipleship.

The nature of true discipleship

Real disciples absorb the fiery darts of the adversary by holding aloft the quenching shield of faith with one hand, while holding to the iron rod with the other (see Ephesians 6:16, 1 Nephi 15:24, D&C 27:17). There should be no mistaking; it will take both hands!

Real disciples are also, precept by precept and experience by experience, becoming ever more like the Master they serve. We can neither be the woman nor the "man of Christ"

(Helaman 3:29) unless we are coming to have the "mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16). This process can happily include, wrote Paul, those once "alienated and enemies in [their] mind" (Colossians 1:21; see Philippians 2:5). We can be so clever, like the adversary, and still not know the mind of God (see Moses 4:6).

We can be "ever learning" and yet allow the everlasting truths to get lost in life's shuffle as in this lamentation:

Where is the Life we have lost in living?

Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?

Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?

(T. S. Eliot, "Choruses from 'The Rock,'" in *The Complete Poems and Plays, 1909-1950* [New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1971], p. 96)

Prophets, scriptures, and covenants

To help us become true disciples, the Lord has given us prophets and scriptures to strengthen us, "to prepare the weak for those things which are coming on the earth, and for the Lord's errand in the day when . . . by the weak things of the earth the Lord shall thrash the nations by the power of his Spirit" (D&C 133:58-59).

Feasting upon the fulness of the gospel will help us to overcome. Additionally, if we will keep our covenants, the covenants will keep us spiritually safe.

One day, and why not soon, the people of the Church will fulfill this prophecy: "The power of the Lamb of God . . . descended upon the saints of the church of the Lamb, . . . the covenant people of the Lord, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth; and they were armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory" (1 Nephi 14:14).

However, our collective light does not yet shine brightly enough to be "a standard for the nations" (D&C 115:5).

Disciples deny themselves the appetites of the flesh

The Church would grow much faster now, numerically and spiritually, if it were not for the wickedness of the world (see 1 Nephi 14:12). It would also grow much faster if you and I were better by taking up the Christian cross daily (see Luke 9:23). Part of taking up the cross is denying ourselves the lusts and appetites of the flesh. "For it is better," the resurrected Jesus said, "that ye should deny yourselves of these things, wherein ye will take up your cross" (3 Nephi 12:30).

Thus, the *daily* taking up of the cross means *daily* denying ourselves the appetites of the flesh.

By emulating the Master, who endured temptations but "gave no heed unto them," we, too, can live in a world filled with temptations "such as [are] common to man" (1 Corinthians 10:13). Of course Jesus noticed the tremendous temptations that came to him, but He did not process and reprocess them. Instead, He rejected them promptly. If we entertain temptations, soon they begin entertaining us! Turning these unwanted lodgers away at the doorstep of the mind is one way of giving "no heed." Besides, these would-be lodgers are actually barbarians who, if admitted, can be evicted only with great trauma.

In a decaying environment, the mind is the last redoubt of righteousness, and it must be preserved even amid bombardment by evil stimuli. Christ is competent to see us through, "for in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (Hebrews 2:18).

As promised, He will make either "a way to escape" or a way "to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Keep covenants

We surely have been warned and forewarned about our time, a period in which the compression of challenges may make a year seem like a decade.

Members will be cleverly mocked and scorned by those in the "great and spacious building," representing the pride of the world (1 Nephi 8:26, 11:36). No matter, for ere long, He who was raised on the third day will raze that spacious but third-class hotel!

Ours will be a time of great inversion as well as perversion, as some will call good evil and evil good (see Isaiah 5:20, 2 Nephi 15:20, D&C 64:16, 2 Nephi 2:5). Others, in their ignorance of spiritual truths, will "speak evil of those things which they know not" (Jude 1:10; see 2 Peter 2:12).

Peace has already been taken from the earth (see D&C 1:35). Nation will rise against nation (see Matthew 24:7). It will also be a time of hardening as the love of many waxes cold and iniquity abounds (see D&C 45:27). Secular bewilderment will be epidemic amid the "distress of nations, with perplexity" (Luke 21:25) as various vexations will mock man's cosmetic remedies:

How small, of all that human hearts endure,

That part which laws or kings can cause or cure!

(Samuel Johnson, Lines added to Goldsmith's *Traveller*, in *Familiar Quotations*, comp. John Bartlett [Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1968], p. 428).

We cannot expect to live in such a world without experiencing certain consequences of these conditions. Yet we can always keep our covenants, even if we cannot keep such conditions from coming.

The spiritually settled will overcome

The Lord, who knows all that through which we will pass, will help us to overcome in our "small moment" of time (D&C 122:4). If we are settled, we will "endure it well" (D&C 121:8) and "hold fast" (1 Thessalonians 5:21). Endured righteously, "all these things shall give [us] experience, and shall be for [our] good" (D&C 122:7). "Think it not strange" when disciples are called

upon to pass through "the fiery trial," said Peter (1 Peter 4:12).

Even so, the Saints of God, as prophesied, will eventually "cry unto the Lord day and night until deliverance comes" (*Prophetic Sayings of Heber C. Kimball*, n.p., n.d., p. 6).

The spiritually settled will finally overcome, and the glorious promise is, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Revelation 3:21).

Perfection is a sacred process

Meanwhile, let us remember "what manner of persons [we] ought . . . to be" (2 Peter 3:11, 3 Nephi 27:27). Attributively, we are to become even as Jesus, with His virtues being increasingly replicated in our lives. Even in the midst of our obvious imperfections, a sacred process is to be underway—if slowly, nevertheless resolutely. Whatever one's unfolding agendum, he can be *overcoming* if he is *becoming* more like Christ!

Cast your cares upon Christ

Even though scarred by the past, if we are contrite, Jesus' promise is, "I shall heal them" (3 Nephi 18:32). Such shall become "alive again" (Luke 15:32) "in Christ because of [their] faith" (2 Nephi 25:25). As part of His infinite atonement, Jesus knows "according to the flesh" all that through which we pass. (Alma 7:11–12). He has borne the sins, griefs, sorrows, and, declared Jacob, the pains of every man, woman, and child (see 2 Nephi 9:21). Having been perfected in His empathy, Jesus thus knows how to succor us.

We can, therefore, actually do as Peter urged and cast our cares upon the Lord (see 1 Peter 5:7); He is familiar with them, including even the feeling of being forsaken (see Mark 14:50, 15:34). Nothing is beyond His redeeming reach or His encircling empathy. Therefore, we should not complain

about our own life's not being a rose garden when we remember who wore the crown of thorns!

Become and overcome through the atonement of Christ

I turn now to the conclusion of Jesus' mortal Messiahship. Luke reported Jesus' sweating in Gethsemane "as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44). This fact is fully validated in the "other books" of restoration scripture (1 Nephi 13:39–40): "Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, . . . to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink" (D&C 19:18).

The necessary but awesome shedding of Jesus' blood thus occurred not only in the severe scourging, but earlier in Gethsemane. A recent and thoughtful article by several physicians on the physical death of Jesus Christ indicates that "the severe scourging, with its intense pain and appreciable blood loss, most probably left Jesus in a preshock state." (We all recall, of course, that a dramatically weakened Jesus needed help to carry the cross.) "Therefore, even before the actual crucifixion, Jesus' physical condition was at least serious and possibly critical. . . . Although scourging may have resulted in considerable blood loss, crucifixion per se was a relatively bloodless procedure" ("On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ," *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 21 Mar. 1986, pp. 1458, 1461).

In addition to the consequences of scourging, how Christ's lifeblood had already flowed in Gethsemane! Remember, he suffered "both body and spirit" (D&C 19:18). Declared King Benjamin, Christ would suffer "even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death; for behold, blood cometh from every pore, so great shall be his anguish" (Mosiah 3:7).

Having bled at every pore, how red His raiment must have been in Gethsemane, how crimson that cloak!

No wonder, when Christ comes in power and glory, that He will come in reminding red attire (see D&C 133:48), signifying not only the winepress of wrath, but also to bring to our remembrance how He suffered for each of us in Gethsemane and on Calvary!

In recent years, as I have sung the hymns of the Atonement, it has been with an especially full heart—and also with full voice, when I can continue to sing—lines such as “How great thou art,” “I scarce can take it in,” “To rescue a soul so rebellious and proud as mine,” “I stand all amazed,” and “Oh, it is wonderful!” (*Hymns* [1985], nos. 86, 193).

Now, my brothers and sisters, let not Jesus’ redemption for us stop at the immortalizing dimension of the Atonement, “the loosing of the bands of death” (Alma 11:41). Let us grasp the proffered gift of eternal life! We will end up either choosing Christ’s

manner of living or His manner of suffering! It is either “suffer even as I” (D&C 19:16–17), or overcome “even as [He] . . . overcame” (Revelation 3:21). His beckoning command is to become “even as I am” (3 Nephi 27:27). The spiritually settled accept that invitation, and “through the atonement of Christ,” they *become* and *overcome*! (see Mosiah 3:18, 19).

In this unsettled world, may we settle in our hearts on this determination, I pray in the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder Paul H. Dunn of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Paul H. Dunn

Near here stands a tall building twenty-six stories high. In it are two banks of elevators, one an express, one that moves a little more normally.

Not long ago I got on the express elevator. Some of the workers there say it could qualify as a ride at Disneyland. A little boy and his father got on with me. Suddenly the elevator took off, and the little boy, not expecting the thrill, lost his breath and looked up at his dad with great faith and trust and said, “Daddy, does Heavenly Father know we’re coming?”

There is a great lesson in that experience.

Stress the positive

Dr. JoAnn Larsen, a Salt Lake City family therapist, recently gave some wise and practical counsel on teaching children and building their self-esteem. She reminded us of the tendency most parents have, in their

efforts to teach their children responsibility, of so often stressing the negative things the children do—the mistakes and misjudgments they make and the inconveniences and trouble they cause. She made the statement that between birth and twenty years of age the average child hears from parents, teachers, siblings, and peers probably one hundred thousand negative messages, which are rarely balanced with positive messages. With an extremely lucky child, the ratio would probably be ten negatives to one positive, which she claims can be highly damaging, often for life, to a child’s feelings of self-worth.

She encourages us all to develop lenses—vision that sees positives instead of negatives, thus making it possible to perform miracles sometimes and certainly to greatly improve the results of our teaching efforts and our parent-child relationships. The good accomplished toward the making of

a better world through upbuilding, trusting approaches to life situations, in contrast to those that tear down, could very possibly never be accurately assessed.

Why dwell on the negative?

Why is it that as humans we tend to emphasize the negative when there is so much to be positive about? We not only frequently criticize our children and each other, find fault, are very judgmental, and seek out and build up people's weaknesses and failings rather than their strengths and successes, but in our own personal life-styles there are those of us who are incessant, chronic worriers. We worry about all the negative things that could happen, but usually don't, rather than positively trying to face problems with some amount of faith and hope of success.

In our society, for some reason, we seem to dwell on the bizarre, the tragic, the profane, and the evils of our day. So often the newspapers and television reports center attention around the negative aspects of life: teenage suicides, drugs, AIDS, murders, infidelities, dishonesty, and a host of other social ills.

As I travel throughout the Church, I occasionally see another form of thinking that can become quite negative—members weighted down, sometimes grimly, with the serious tasks that they must perform to earn livings, pay mortgages, rear children, faithfully fulfill Church callings, attend to school and community responsibilities, live righteously and worthily—the list could go on and on.

I often think that for some of these people the joy and excitement have gone out of their lives and that all they look back on are crowded, grim days, often filled with great guilt because of the pressure of trying to accomplish everything they think is necessary and to be perfect right now. Interestingly,

negative attitudes seem to affect us in that way.

Negatives distract us from important principles

Now, of course, life is serious. Children must be taught, bills must be paid, we must live righteously—it is the Lord's counsel to us. We can't help but worry sometimes; there are and always will be never-ending negatives existing all around us which must be faced, dealt with, and solved. But I wonder if the constant bombardment of dilemmas and challenges and the often seemingly hopeless situations, both personal and nationwide, don't frustrate, discourage, and depress us sometimes to the point where our minds and attitudes are distracted from the very principles that would allow us to rise above the negative and find the positive answers we need.

In spite of the many negative occurrences in life, some people seem to have the knack of seeing the positive side. A young businessman was opening a new branch office, and a friend sent a floral arrangement to help celebrate the occasion. When the friend arrived at the opening, he was appalled to find the wreath bore the inscription "Rest in Peace." Angry, he later complained to the florist. After apologizing, the florist said, "Look at it this way. Somewhere today a man was buried under a wreath that said, 'Good luck in your new location.'"

Know and believe in God

In the Book of Mormon, in which we find many answers and so much direction in solving problems, there is a scripture that, to me, sheds great light on the matter of a positive, trusting, hopeful attitude of faith as a substitute for facing life's problems with discouragement and despair. Listen to the words of the prophet Ether as he exhorts us to know and believe in God as a foundation of hope and faith:

"By faith all things are fulfilled—
 "Wherefore, whoso believeth in
 God might with surety hope for a better
 world, yea, even a place at the right
 hand of God, which hope cometh of
 faith, maketh an anchor to the souls
 of men, which would make them sure
 and steadfast, always abounding in
 good works, being led to glorify God"
 (Ether 12:3-4).

Throughout the whole of this marvelous chapter we are taught the wonders accomplished by faith, love, and hope. It seems to me that dwelling on negative thoughts and approaches is, in fact, working directly opposite of hope, faith, and trust—in the Lord, ourselves, and others—and causes continual feelings of gloom, while the positive lifts and buoys us up, encourages us to forge ahead, and is an attitude that can be developed, a habit that we can cultivate.

Story of Thomas Moore

The epitome of celebrating the beautiful and overlooking the misfortune is the story of Thomas Moore.

Soon after he was married, Thomas Moore, the famous nineteenth-century Irish poet, was called away on a business trip. Upon his return he was met at the door, not by his beautiful bride, but by the family doctor.

"Your wife is upstairs," said the doctor. "But she asked that you not come up." Then Moore learned the terrible truth: his wife had contracted smallpox. The disease had left her once flawless skin pocked and scarred. She had taken one look at her reflection in the mirror and commanded that the shutters be drawn and that her husband never see her again. Moore would not listen. He ran upstairs and threw open the door of his wife's room. It was black as night inside. Not a sound came from the darkness. Groping along the wall, Moore felt for the gas jets.

A startled cry came from a black corner of the room. "No!" she said. "Don't light the lamps!"

Moore hesitated, swayed by the pleading in the voice.

"Go!" she begged. "Please go! This is the greatest gift I can give you now."

Moore did go. He went down to his study, where he sat up most of the night, prayerfully writing. Not a poem this time, but a song. He had never written a song before, but now he found it more natural to his mood than simple poetry. He not only wrote the words, but he wrote the music, too. The next morning, as soon as the sun was up he returned to his wife's room.

He felt his way to a chair and sat down. "Are you awake?" he asked.

"I am," came a voice from the far side of the room. "But you must not ask to see me. You must not press me, Thomas."

"I will sing to you, then," he answered. And so for the first time, Thomas Moore sang to his wife the song that still lives today:

"Believe me, if all those endearing young charms which I gaze on so fondly today, were to change by tomorrow and flee in my arms like fairy gifts fading away, thou would'st still be adored, as this moment thou art—let thy loveliness fade as it will."

Moore heard a movement from the dark corner where his wife lay in her loneliness. He continued:

"Let thy loveliness fade as it will, and around the dear ruin each wish of my heart would entwine itself verdantly still—"

The song ended. As his voice trailed off on the last note, Moore heard his bride rise. She crossed the room to the window, reached up, and drew open the shutters.

Recognize and praise the good

We need more such attitudes in the world. There is the story of the husband and wife who had saved and saved for a new car. After taking delivery, the husband told his wife that all the necessary legal documents and insurance in-

formation were in a packet in the glove compartment. On her first day out in the new car, she was involved in an accident which demolished the front end of the car. Unhurt, in tears, and near panic, she opened the packet to show the police officer her papers. There she found a handwritten note from her husband which read: "Now that you have had an accident, remember I can always replace the car, but not you. Please know how much I love you!"

As stated in the beginning that with children we so often see the negative before the positive, a little boy was almost squelched in his attempt to express his feelings because an adult didn't understand. A special friend of mine, Dr. Thomas Myers, shared this tender experience:

A small boy accompanied his father and grandparents into his medical office. The old man was leaning on the boy's two upstretched hands as he moved. The child encouraged him with: "Come on, Grandpa, you can make it! . . . Only a little farther, Grandpa. . . . The doctor will make your leg better." A sweet grandmother walked behind.

After the visit, the three exited the same way. The little boy was given a helium balloon on his way out. He helped his grandfather to the car, then ran back in and, pulling himself up to the counter, asked the receptionist, "Please, may I have another balloon?"

His grandmother, still standing there, scolded him, "Of course you can't. I warned you not to let that balloon go!" She apologized to the receptionist. "He did this last week—went right outside and let his balloon go. I really did warn him this time."

The little boy was trying to tell her something. She bent down to listen. Then, with tears showing on her thin, wrinkled face, the grandmother asked: "Could he please have another balloon?"

You see, his little sister died a few months ago, and he wanted her to have a balloon to play with, too!"

As critical and judgmental as we often must be, as much as we will have to correct, as truly as we must face unpleasant realities all of our days, let us recognize and praise the thousands of beauties of life around us; the many wonderful examples of virtuous living; the strengths and the courage of so many souls; the exceptional talents and achievements of our family members, neighbors, and associates; the countless blessings that we have been given. As has been quoted by so many, but seems to fit well here, "Two men look out through the same bars: One sees the mud, and one the stars" (Frederick Langbridge, *A Cluster of Quiet Thoughts*, cited in *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, 2nd ed. [London: Oxford University Press, 1966], p. 310).

And as the prophet Mormon taught us:

"But charity [in this case, the charity in our thinking of and appreciation of others] is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him" (Moroni 7:47).

Remember, my brothers and sisters, particularly you young people, Christ came to lift us up, not put us down. I, with these great brethren on this stand, as a witness, invite you to come unto him.

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Paul H. Dunn of the First Quorum of the Seventy has just addressed us. We are grateful that this marvelous communicator is well and able to be with us.

It will now be our privilege to listen to Bishop Robert D. Hales, Presiding Bishop of the Church.

Bishop Robert D. Hales

True shepherds care

The people of each dispensation of time have received the teaching and admonition of living prophets to care for one another.

The sons of Mosiah "were desirous that salvation should be declared to every creature, for they could not bear that any human soul should perish; yea, even the very thoughts that any soul should endure endless torment did cause them to quake and tremble" (Mosiah 28:3).

This spirit of being anxiously engaged in caring about those who are not partaking of the blessings of the gospel is not confined to those who are called as shepherds but should permeate the lives of all of God's children.

True shepherds nourish and care for each member of the flock and keep them in remembrance. They do not simply number them. Shepherds know and care for their flock. A shepherd cannot rest when even one of the flock is lost.

Satan uses our agency to entrap us

Some years ago, as a young man, I had an opportunity to work summers on a ranch with my wise Uncle Frank, who taught me an important lesson about shepherding. He described to me how lambs are enticed and led away from the safety of their mothers' sides and the flock that loves and cares for them.

Cunning coyotes send their pups to play near the flock—running, rollicking, tumbling—it *looks* so inviting to the little lambs. The frolicking pups look like they are having so much fun that the lambs are enticed to wander from the protective environment of the flock and their mothers' nurturing sides. In their innocence, they fail to observe that the adult coyotes are moving in a circle ready to pounce and cut

them off from the flock, ultimately killing and devouring them.

This is also Satan's way. He uses our free agency to entice us with apparent "good times." Soon we may become entrapped and, if not eventually brought back to the flock, we will not be able to go to the temple, enter into the covenants, and receive the ordinances necessary to attain eternal life, that we might live in the presence of God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Help lost sheep return to the fold

Some of us have strayed at one time or another. Some have repented and come back; but some, for one reason or another, are still looking for the right moment, the right person, or the right set of circumstances to come back.

As member shepherds of our Father in Heaven's flock, we should not judge why some have strayed, but rather should try unceasingly to bring them back again into the fold, knowing Jesus can heal them when none other can.

In 1829, the Lord instructed us through his first latter-day prophet, Joseph Smith, to "remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God. . . . And how great is his joy in the soul that repenteth!" (D&C 18:10, 13). We need to be as Lehi, who said in Book of Mormon times, "I have none other object save it be the everlasting welfare of your souls" (2 Nephi 2:30).

In this, the last dispensation, we have prophets to guide and direct us with their counsel.

Message to less-active members

A significant proclamation was given by the First Presidency at Christmastime in 1985. It was an invitation to come back. Because of the significance of this special message from prophets in our day, please let me share some of the key admonitions that apply to each of us as we serve one another.

The message from the First Presidency, in part, said:

"We are aware of some who are inactive, of others who have become critical and are prone to find fault, and of those who have been disfellowshipped or excommunicated because of serious transgressions.

"To all such we reach out in love. We are anxious to forgive in the spirit of Him who said: 'I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men.' (D&C 64:10).

"We encourage Church members to forgive those who may have wronged them. To those who have ceased activity and to those who have become critical, we say, 'Come back. Come back and feast at the table of the Lord, and taste again the sweet and satisfying fruits of fellowship with the Saints.'

"We are confident that many have longed to return, but have felt awkward about doing so. We assure you that you will find open arms to receive you and willing hands to assist you. . . .

"We know there are many who carry heavy burdens of guilt and bitterness. To such we say, 'Set them aside and give heed to the words of the Savior: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

" "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

" "For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

"We plead with you. We pray for you. We invite and welcome you with love and appreciation" (*Ensign*, Mar. 1986, p. 88; italics added).

"Have compassion, making a difference"

For you and me, as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, our responsibilities are clear; we are to—

- Reach out in love and be anxious to forgive those who have wronged us.

- Help by fellowshipping and caring for those who want to come back, receiving them with open arms and willing hands.

We must do as Jude, the brother of James, admonished:

"Have compassion, making a difference" (Jude 1:22; italics added).

Finding those who are lost

There are principles that will help us to "have compassion, making a difference." These principles are encompassed in Luke, chapter 15, where Jesus used three parables to give us examples of the importance He placed on finding those who are lost and rendering "compassion, making a difference."

In the parable of the lost sheep, the shepherd went after the lost sheep and searched until he found the lost lamb. He then returned, rejoicing (see vs. 4-7).

In the parable of the lost coin, the widow lit a candle, which gave light, and swept every corner to find the lost coin. She rejoiced upon finding it (see vs. 8-10).

Both of these parables are examples of action taken to search, light up the darkness, and sweep until a treasured possession or lost soul is found and returned to a rejoicing home.

On the other hand, in the parable of the prodigal son, a caring father patiently waited for his son to "come to himself" (see vs. 11-32). He provided a loving atmosphere at home to welcome his son with open arms and willing hands so that they might rejoice together. The key is that the son knew that upon his return he would be loved and welcomed home by his father.

Forgive others' faults

Coming home can have its challenges, too. When the prodigal son came home, his faithful brother was jealous of the attention extended to his

repentant brother. The faithful brother was judgmental and had not developed spiritually enough to rejoice at his brother's return. The father had to reassure the faithful son of his love.

Now the returning prodigal son had a chance to practice the same forgiving and accepting attitude toward his jealous brother that he was experiencing from his father. Those who return need a forgiving attitude toward others' faults, or complete repentance is not possible.

If we want the Lord and others to forgive our faults, we must be forgiving of others. Those who "come back" must not be judgmental, but must remember that none of us is perfect either.

Compassion and service

As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, how can we develop a caring environment in our homes and meetinghouses that will give comfort to those who want to come back, knowing they will be welcomed and loved upon their return?

A good example of compassion and service making a difference is the example of Don and Marian Summers, which represents the experiences of many other missionary couples. While serving in England, they were asked to serve the last six months of their mission in the Swindon Branch to teach and assist in activating members. For eighty years Swindon had been a branch with a faithful few and with many good members becoming less active.

Don and Marian recently wrote me, recalling the following:

"Our first visit to Swindon Branch was a bit disheartening as we met with the Saints in a cold, rented hall. The congregation numbered seventeen, including President and Sister Hales and four missionaries. Still wearing our winter coats, we all huddled around a small, inadequate heater while we listened to a Sunday School lesson."

The letter continued:

"A branch member approached me one day: 'Elder Summers, can I give you a bit of advice? Never mention the word *tithing* to the Swindon members; they really don't believe in it, and all you will do is upset them.'"

Brother Summers said: "We did teach tithing and all the other gospel principles. With example and the encouragement of a branch president, there was a change of heart, and faith and activity started to increase. The membership records were completely updated as we visited every member's home. When the leaders started caring, the members began to respond, and a whole new spirit pervaded the branch. The members became excited again about the gospel and helping one another."

"Firesides were held in our homes, and we worked closely with stake and other proselyting missionaries. We made a promise to the Lord that we would not let one new or reactivated member fall into inactivity while we were in Swindon."

"One young couple had a difficult adjustment to make as their customs, manners, and dress were different. They became offended at suggestions for changes. The couple twice wrote to the bishop [since by then it was a ward] and asked to have their names removed from the Church records. In the last letter they forbade any of the members to visit them, so Marian and I went to the florist and purchased a beautiful plant of chrysanthemums and had it delivered to the young couple. It was a simple note: '*We love you; we miss you; we need you. Please come back.*' Signed, Swindon Ward."

"The next Sunday was fast and testimony meeting and our last Sunday in Swindon. There were 103 members in attendance compared to seventeen six months before. The young couple was there and, in bearing his testimony, the husband thanked the Swindon Ward for not giving up on them."

Each of us can have similar experiences in our local wards and branches by working with and loving those who are less active. What a joy it is to give "compassion, making a difference" to those who may be ready to find themselves and then want to come back.

"Ye shall be the means of bringing salvation unto them"

Concerning those who were *not* numbered among His people, Jesus said to the Nephites:

"Nevertheless, ye shall not cast him out of your synagogues, or your places of worship, for unto such shall ye continue to minister; *for ye know not but what they will return and repent, and come unto me with full purpose of heart, and I shall heal them; and ye shall be the means of bringing salvation unto them*" (3 Nephi 18:32; italics added).

Brothers and sisters, may we leave this conference with a renewed determination, through our prayers of faith and "compassion, making a difference," to bring at least one precious soul back to salvation and exaltation. May the prayer of Alma also be our prayer:

"O Lord, wilt thou comfort my soul, and give unto me success, and also my fellow laborers who are with me. . . .

"Wilt thou grant unto them that they may have strength, that they may bear their afflictions which shall come upon them. . . .

"O Lord, wilt thou grant unto us that we may have success in bringing them again unto thee in Christ.

"Behold, O Lord, their souls are precious, and many of them are our brethren; therefore, *give unto us, O Lord, power and wisdom that we may bring these, our brethren, again unto thee*" (Alma 31:32-35; italics added).

We love you; we miss you; we need you. Please come back. Come back to go to the temple, enter into the covenants and receive the ordinances of eternal salvation. In the name of our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have just heard from Bishop Robert D. Hales, the Presiding Bishop of the Church.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Choose the Right," following which Elder Adney Y. Komatsu of the First Quorum of the Seventy will speak to us.

The choir and congregation sang "Choose the Right."

Elder Adney Y. Komatsu

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life"

My dear brothers and sisters, as we approach the Easter season, our minds and thoughts turn to the Lord Jesus Christ, His crucifixion, resurrection, and atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world.

John the Baptist, who was commissioned to be the forerunner of the

Savior in his day, declared that our Father in Heaven had not forgotten His children on this earth. He said:

"The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:35-36).

Prophecies of Christ's coming

The coming of the Savior was prophesied by many prophets in the Bible and in the Book of Mormon. The Old Testament prophet Isaiah predicted the coming of the Savior's birth when he said:

"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

The Book of Mormon, as another testament of Jesus Christ, records that an angel appeared unto King Benjamin and declared the glad tidings of great joy, 124 years before the coming of Christ. The angel said:

"For behold, the time cometh, and is not far distant, that with power, the Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, who was, and is from all eternity to all eternity, shall come down from heaven among the children of men, and shall dwell in a tabernacle of clay, and shall go forth amongst men, working mighty miracles, such as healing the sick, raising the dead, causing the lame to walk, the blind to receive their sight, and the deaf to hear, and curing all manner of diseases. . . .

"And he shall be called Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning; and his mother shall be called Mary" (Mosiah 3:5, 8).

Book of Mormon witnesses

Throughout the thousand years of Book of Mormon history, many prophets bore solemn witness of the divinity of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, of His premortal godhood, of His earthly ministry—His suffering, His death, His resurrection—and of the plan of salvation by which we can make His

atonement effective in our lives. These prophets spoke from pure knowledge, knowledge that came by personal visitations of the Savior to them, by the testimony of angels who spoke with them, by visions, and by the power of the Holy Ghost. They knew whereof they spoke and could not be shaken from their testimonies.

Let us consider the example of Jacob. Jacob was confronted by Sherem, who denied Christ and contended with Jacob and demanded a sign. Sherem preached with much flattery and much power of speech, questioning Jacob's testimony. Jacob said:

"And he had hope to shake me from the faith, notwithstanding the many revelations and the many things which I had seen concerning these things; for I truly had seen angels, and they had ministered unto me. And also, I had heard the voice of the Lord speaking unto me in very word, from time to time; wherefore, I could not be shaken" (Jacob 7:5).

President Ezra Taft Benson, our beloved prophet, has encouraged us to study the Book of Mormon, for, as he said, "the book that will get a man 'nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book' needs to be studied constantly."

I hope and pray that we will follow the admonition of our beloved prophet, President Benson, and constantly study the Book of Mormon. We all need the assurance that we are living in obedience to the commandments of God so that we can receive the Spirit and be guided by it in our daily lives.

Christ's example of obedience

The Savior, as the Son of God, showed you and me the great example of obedience in keeping the commandments of His Father. Nephi tells us that Christ was baptized so men can follow in His footsteps and receive the Holy Ghost:

"Know ye not that he was holy? But notwithstanding he being holy, he showeth unto the children of men that,

according to the flesh he humbleth himself before the Father, and witnesseth unto the Father that he would be obedient unto him in keeping his commandments" (2 Nephi 31:7).

Do not compromise

Several weeks ago I was assigned to a stake conference in Provo. The Sunday morning welfare meeting was scheduled to begin at 7:30 A.M., so it was necessary that I leave home about 6:15 A.M. Just as I came to an intersection before turning onto the on-ramp to enter the freeway, the light changed to red. As I stopped for the light at that early hour, now about 6:30 A.M., there were no cars in sight. Mine was the only car parked at the stop light.

The thought did cross my mind that if I ignored the red light, no one would be hurt or endangered, for not a car was in sight at that early hour. Nevertheless, I waited out the light change and proceeded on the green light. If I had turned left, no one would have known, but I would know that I was breaking the traffic code, and surely the Lord would know. I was reminded of the scripture which says:

"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

Brothers and sisters, oftentimes we are tempted to compromise with circumstances of the moment, but we must exercise care and live the principles of righteous living at all times so we will know what to do when called upon to make a decision of far greater importance. We must always be examples to the world as members of the Lord's kingdom and keep the laws of the land and the laws of God.

The Lord said in a latter-day revelation:

"Wherefore, be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great.

"Behold, the Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind; and the willing and obedient shall eat the good of

the land of Zion in these last days" (D&C 64:33-34).

Sufferings are a part of education

Recently, as a member of the Utah South Area Presidency, I was invited to participate in an institute program with men and women at the Utah State penitentiary. As I visited these men and women, my heart went out to them, for they are all our Heavenly Father's children. Many are there because of the wrong choices they made in life when temptation was put before them. I saw pain and suffering in their eyes, and yet, as I think of their loved ones—parents, brothers, sisters, wives, children—they, too, have suffered much and perhaps are still faced with more suffering in the future. President Kimball said we should hate the sin but love the sinner. He further stated that suffering can make saints of people as they learn patience, long-suffering, and self-mastery.

He also said the sufferings of our Savior were part of his education. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

"And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:8-9).

Elder James E. Talmage wrote, "No pang that is suffered by man or woman upon the earth will be without its compensating effect . . . if it be met with patience" (in Spencer W. Kimball, "Tragedy or Destiny," *Faith Precedes the Miracle* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1972], p. 98).

On the other hand, wrong choices can crush us with their mighty impact, if we yield to weaknesses, complaints, and criticisms.

In closing, may I quote Orson F. Whitney, who said:

"No pain that we suffer, no trial that we experience is wasted. It ministers to our education, to the development of such qualities as patience, faith, fortitude and humility. All that

we suffer and all that we endure, especially when we endure it patiently, builds up our characters, purifies our hearts, expands our souls, and makes us more tender and charitable, more worthy to be called the children of God . . . and it is through sorrow and suffering, toil and tribulation, that we gain the education that we come here to acquire and which will make us more like our Father and Mother in heaven" (in *Faith Precedes the Miracle*, p. 98).

The Lord, who suffered much for the sins of all mankind and was crucified and resurrected, said:

"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have

kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:10-12). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Adney Y. Komatsu, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our next speaker.

Elder James E. Faust

As we come to the closing minutes of this great conference, our souls are subdued and lifted by the inspiring messages of counsel and hope we have heard. I come prayerfully to this pulpit—not to judge, but to teach and to caution.

Prepare children for lasting happiness

Recently I saw on the wall of a stake president's office in Brisbane, Australia, a picture of a sad-faced little girl. Above the picture was written "Will I Be Happy?" I suppose everyone in the world could ask that question: "Will I be happy?" The Savior himself prayed that all of his disciples "might have . . . joy fulfilled in themselves" (John 17:13).

I wish to speak of a hope that children will know a future filled with some happiness and peace. No gift bestowed upon us is so precious as children. They are proof that God still loves us. They are the hope of the future.

In today's world, I cannot help wondering, Who will love them enough to help them be happy? Who will love

them enough to teach them faith and moral values? They must learn so much more than survival and self-gratification. There is such a great need for the teaching of the heart and not enough of the civilizing part of education. Where will children learn virtue? Who will care for them enough to mold their moral character? How can they become humane, kind, and happy and make life richer for themselves and others?

Provide moral anchors for children

This teaching of the next generation is not easy in a society where many fundamental beliefs are disappearing. Deadly mass marketing challenges almost every cherished human value. Excessive permissiveness under the banner of individual freedom is one driving force behind this. Reaching a public consensus on what values should be taught to the next generation is almost impossible. People strongly disagree about almost everything. Social restraints are weakened.

This means we will have to teach our children a life-style of our own and provide moral anchors in the sea of

self-indulgence, self-interest, and self-service in which they float.

How can this tide of wrong values be reversed? Can anything be done to combat these challenges? May I suggest three ways to increase the hope that the next generation will grow up with a greater chance to find some continued happiness.

"Private" choices have public consequences

First, adults need to understand, and our children should be taught, that private choices are not private; they all have public consequences.

There is a popular notion that doing our own thing or doing what feels good is our own business and affects no one but us. The deadly scourges that are epidemic all over the world have flourished in the context of this popular notion. But this is simply not true.

All immoral behavior directly impacts society. Even innocent people are affected. Drug and alcohol abuse have public consequences, as do illegitimacy, pornography, and obscenity. The public cost in human life and tax dollars for these so-called private choices is enormous: poverty, crime, a less-educated work force, and mounting demands for government spending to fix problems that cannot be fixed by money. It simply is not true that our private conduct is our own business. Our society is the sum total of what millions of individuals do in their private lives. That sum total of private behavior has worldwide public consequences of enormous magnitude. There are no completely private choices.

Morality is not outmoded

Second, adults and children need to know that public and private morality is not outmoded. We need to love our children enough to teach them that laws, policies, and public programs with a moral and ethical basis are necessary for the preservation of a peaceful, productive, compassionate, and

happy society. Without the qualities and characteristics of integrity, honesty, commitment, loyalty, respect for others, fidelity, and virtue, a free and open society cannot endure.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks recently responded to those who say, "Don't legislate morality." Said Elder Oaks: "I suppose persons who mouth that familiar slogan think they are saying something profound. In fact, if that is an argument at all, it is so superficial that an educated person should be ashamed to use it. As should be evident to every thinking person, a high proportion of all legislation has a moral base. That is true of the criminal law, most of the laws regulating family relations, businesses, and commercial transactions, many of the laws governing property, and a host of others" ("Gambling—Morally Wrong and Politically Unwise" [transcript of an address given at Ricks College, 6 Jan. 1987], p. 20).

Until recently, ethics and moral philosophy were the foundation of higher education. They were a legacy passed from generation to generation. Those values are as relevant today as when they were taught by Aristotle. Said he, "Man perfected by society is the best of all animals; he is the most terrible of all when he lives without law, and without justice" (*Politics*, 1.1253a, lines 31–34). Therefore, public and private morality need much greater emphasis everywhere.

Fortify the family

The third, and most important, way to prepare our children for some lasting happiness is to fortify the family. For centuries the family was the bedrock of this and many other nations. It was the glue that held society together. Now many families are in trouble, and the glue is coming unstuck. As a result, many children are bewildered: they are growing physically but lack the support system, the disciplined moral framework, and the love and understanding that a strong family can provide.

It is in a home and with a family that values are usually acquired, traditions are fostered, and commitments to others are established. There are really no adequate substitutes. Church, school, and government programs can only reinforce and supplement that which is acquired at home.

To strengthen the family, the morals of human sexuality need to be restored. Bryce Christensen recently wrote, "Children who have watched parents treat one another with affection and courtesy already understand more about the relationship between the sexes than they will ever learn from any class in reproductive physiology" (*The Family in America*, Mar. 1987, 1:3).

By the word of the Lord, all men and women are to practice chastity before marriage and fidelity after marriage. "Thou shalt not commit adultery," said the Lord (Exodus 20:14), "nor do anything like unto it" (D&C 59:6). The Apostle Paul was more explicit in his epistle to the Corinthians (see 1 Corinthians 6:9), as was Alma in the Book of Mormon (see Alma 39:1-13).

Alternatives to the legal and loving marriage between a man and a woman are helping to unravel the fabric of human society. That fabric, of course, is the family. These so-called alternative life-styles cannot be accepted as right because they frustrate God's commandment for a life-giving union of male and female within a legal marriage (see Genesis 1:28). If practiced by all adults, these life-styles would mean the end of family.

The scriptures clearly and consistently condemn all sex relations outside of legal marriage as morally wrong. Why is this so? It is so because God said so. It is so because we are made in the image of God, male and female (see Genesis 1:27). We are his spirit children (see D&C 76:24). We were with him in the beginning (see D&C 93:23). Bringing to pass our exaltation is his work and glory (see Moses 1:39). We are directed to be the children of light

(see D&C 106:5). We are heirs to eternal life. The Spirit gives light to every man and woman who comes into the world (see D&C 84:46).

Teach first principles of the gospel

What values can be taught most effectively in the home? By commandment, parents in this church are to teach their children faith in Christ, repentance, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost (see D&C 68:25). At home, in the warm security of discipline and love, we learn the values that never change. We learn the differences between right and wrong, as well as self-discipline, self-mastery, personal responsibility, all of the essentials of good character, concern for others, and civil manners.

Values, public as well as private, cannot last very long without being regenerated and sustained by religious belief; they are a matter of continued renewal. An awakening of faith and belief in religious values is essential. Family teachings are encouraged by the Church, and the Church, in turn, through its covenants and ordinances, unifies the eternal family. Our temples are testaments of our faith in the everlasting family.

The best answer to human problems

Some say families can't do the job because so many people just do not have families. It is true that a great many do not have a functioning family. Or it is said that too many families fail. Unfortunately, that is also true. However, with all its shortcomings, the family is far and away the greatest social unit, the best answer to human problems, in the history of mankind. Rather than further weaken family ties, they need to be strengthened. To aid parents, the Church has available a thoughtful booklet, *A Parent's Guide*. I would urge overburdened parents to accept every help. Cannot grandparents, brothers and sisters, aunts,

uncles, cousins, and friends also reinforce by example and precept their love and concern for members of the extended family?

My Aunt Angie has hand made 175 quilts for her children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and others. They are works of art; but more important, each is a labor of love. She can say to a member of her extended family, as she presents a specially made quilt, "Except when I pricked my finger, with every stitch I thought of my love for you."

The nature of a good family

Good family life seems to have little to do with whether we are in affluent or humble circumstances. All over the world the poor have good, resilient families. They do their best to raise their children and be good neighbors; they are "money-poor" but "value-wealthy." Family problems seem to fall on both the wealthy and the impoverished.

The White House Conference on Families reports that "Good families, rich or poor or in between, provide encouragement and support to their children, but no excuses. They teach character. They insist upon standards. They demand respect. They require performance" (*The White House Report on the Family*, Nov. 1986, p. 32).

The *White House Report on the Family* continues:

"For most . . . life is not a matter of legislative battles, judicial decrees and executive decisions. It is a fabric of helping hands and good neighbors; bedtime stories and shared prayers; loving-packed lunchboxes and household budget balancing; tears wiped away and a precious heritage passed along; it is hard work and a little put away for the future. In a healthy society, heroes are the men, women, children who hold the world together one home at a time; the parents and grandparents who forgo pleasures, delay purchases, foreclose options, and commit

most of their lives to the noblest undertaking of citizenship; raising children who, resting on the shoulders of the previous generation, will see farther than we and reach higher" (pp. 8-9).

Teach children moral truths

Troubled as many homes may be in our society, we cannot abandon the home as the primary teacher of moral values. Nowhere else will moral values be taught so effectively. As Brigham Young counseled, we must teach children "by faith rather than by the rod, leading them kindly by good example into all truth and holiness" (*Journal of Discourses*, 12:174).

There is a deep private and public need to retrieve for the children the comfort of belief and of belonging. The products of wealth, technology, and science all fail to satisfy inner spiritual hungering.

Without turning back to the word of our Creator, no one is wise enough to sort out what ethical, spiritual, and moral values should be taught to the next generation, and to their children, and to their children's children.

There is reason for hope. More people seem to recognize that public solutions are not as effective as family solutions. Some authority seems to be returning to the head of the home. But, most important, I see many adults, mostly parents and grandparents, who are "crazy about kids." If in the process we can bring back into our lives and into our homes sacred spiritual and moral truths, we will reclaim a sacred and precious part of our heritage.

Someone must love the children enough to do this. Then, if it is done everywhere, to the boys and girls who ask "Will I be happy?" we can answer: "Of course! You are going to be happy, and even more. If you keep the covenants and commandments of God, you will have the joy promised by the Savior when he walked upon the earth. You will have 'peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come'.

(D&C 59:23),” which is the ultimate message of this church to the world. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have just heard from Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Before hearing President Benson’s concluding remarks, we would like to express our sincere appreciation to all who have provided the music for this great conference—to the Mormon Youth Chorus, the Kearns Region mixed choir, the combined priesthood institute choir, and the Tabernacle Choir, and to their conductors and organists.

We thank our city officials for the cooperation given this conference, the Relief Society and Church Health Unit

nurses who have been on hand to render service, and the ushers and interpreters. All of you are unsung heroes.

We express appreciation to the local and national press representatives for the coverage given to the conference and to the owners and managers of the many radio and television stations and cable systems who have given time and facilities to carry sessions of this conference in many countries.

We shall now be pleased to listen to President Ezra Taft Benson, our beloved prophet, after which the Tabernacle Choir will sing “Love One Another.”

The benediction will be offered by Elder Derek A. Cuthbert of the First Quorum of the Seventy. This conference will then stand adjourned for six months.

President Ezra Taft Benson

My beloved brethren and sisters, I rejoice in this great conference. I am a better man because I was here. I thank the Lord for the great record that has been made. This has been another glorious conference of the Church. I commend to each of you the counsel of these, my brethren, who have spoken to us. I love them and sustain them, and I love the members of the Church everywhere.

Companionship of the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants

I would like to speak about two sacred volumes of modern scripture—the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants.

The Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants are bound together as revelations from Israel’s God to gather and prepare His people for the second coming of the Lord.

The bringing forth of these sacred volumes of scripture “for the salvation of a ruined world” cost “the best blood of the nineteenth century”—that of Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum (D&C 135:6).

Each divine witness contains a great proclamation to all the world—the title page of the Book of Mormon, and section 1, the Lord’s preface to the Doctrine and Covenants.

“This generation,” said the Lord to Joseph Smith, “shall have my word through you” (D&C 5:10). And so it has through the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and other modern revelations.

The Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants testify of each other. You cannot believe one and not the other.

The Book of Mormon testifies of modern books of scripture. It refers to them as “other books” and “last records” which “establish the truth” of

the Bible and make known the "plain and precious things which have been taken away" from the Bible (1 Nephi 13:39-40).

Excluding the witnesses to the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants is by far the greatest external witness and evidence which we have from the Lord that the Book of Mormon is true. At least thirteen sections in the Doctrine and Covenants give us confirming knowledge and divine witness that the Book of Mormon is the word of God (see D&C 1, 3, 5, 8, 10-11, 17-18, 20, 27, 42, 84, 135).

The Doctrine and Covenants is the binding link between the Book of Mormon and the continuing work of the Restoration through the Prophet Joseph Smith and his successors.

In the Doctrine and Covenants we learn of temple work, eternal families, the degrees of glory, Church organization, and many other great truths of the Restoration.

"Search these commandments," said the Lord of the Doctrine and Covenants, "for they are true and faithful, and the prophecies and promises which are in them shall all be fulfilled.

"What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; and though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same" (D&C 1:37-38).

The Book of Mormon brings men to Christ. The Doctrine and Covenants brings men to Christ's kingdom, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth" (v. 30). I know that.

The keystone and the capstone

The Book of Mormon is the "keystone" of our religion, and the Doctrine and Covenants is the capstone, with continuing latter-day revelation. The

Lord has placed His stamp of approval on both the keystone and the capstone.

The ancient preparation of the Book of Mormon, its preservation, and its publication verify Nephi's words that "the Lord knoweth all things from the beginning; wherefore, he prepareth a way to accomplish all his works among the children of men; for behold, he hath all power unto the fulfilling of all his words" (1 Nephi 9:6).

God's proof system

We are not required to prove that the Book of Mormon is true or is an authentic record through external evidences—though there are many. It never has been the case, nor is it so now, that the studies of the learned will prove the Book of Mormon true or false. The origin, preparation, translation, and verification of the truth of the Book of Mormon have all been retained in the hands of the Lord, and the Lord makes no mistakes. You can be assured of that.

God has built in His own proof system of the Book of Mormon as found in Moroni, chapter 10, and in the testimonies of the Three and the Eight witnesses and in various sections of the Doctrine and Covenants.

We each need to get our own testimony of the Book of Mormon through the Holy Ghost. Then our testimony, coupled with the Book of Mormon, should be shared with others so that they, too, can know through the Holy Ghost of its truthfulness.

Nephi testifies that the Book of Mormon contains the "words of Christ" and that if people "believe in Christ," they will believe in the Book of Mormon (2 Nephi 33:10).

Use the language of the scriptures

It is important that in our teaching we make use of the language of holy writ. Alma said, "I . . . do command you in the language of him who hath commanded me" (Alma 5:61).

The words and the way they are used in the Book of Mormon by the Lord should become our source of understanding and should be used by us in teaching gospel principles.

God uses the power of the word of the Book of Mormon as an instrument to change people's lives: "As the preaching of the word had a great tendency to lead the people to do that which was just—yea, it had had more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than the sword, or anything else, which had happened unto them—therefore Alma thought it was expedient that they should try the virtue of the word of God" (Alma 31:5).

Alma reminded his brethren of the Church how God delivered their fathers' souls from hell: "Behold, he changed their hearts; yea, he awakened them out of a deep sleep, and they awoke unto God. Behold, they were in the midst of darkness; nevertheless, their souls were illuminated by the light of the everlasting word" (Alma 5:7).

We need to use the everlasting word to awaken those in deep sleep so they will awake "unto God."

Use scriptural methods and messages

I am deeply concerned about what we are doing to teach the Saints at all levels the gospel of Jesus Christ as completely and authoritatively as do the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants. By this I mean teaching the "great plan of the Eternal God," to use the words of Amulek (Alma 34:9).

Are we using the messages and the method of teaching found in the Book of Mormon and other scriptures of the Restoration to teach this great plan of the Eternal God?

There are many examples of teaching this great plan, but I will quote just one. It is Mormon's summary statement of Aaron's work as a missionary:

"And it came to pass that when Aaron saw that the king would believe

his words, he began from the creation of Adam, reading the scriptures unto the king—how God created man after his own image, and that God gave him commandments, and that because of transgression, man had fallen.

"And Aaron did expound unto him the scriptures from the creation of Adam, laying the fall of man before him, and their carnal state and also the plan of redemption, which was prepared from the foundation of the world, through Christ, for all whosoever would believe on his name.

"And since man had fallen he could not merit anything of himself; but the sufferings and death of Christ atone for their sins, through faith and repentance" (Alma 22:12–14).

Understand the Fall

The Book of Mormon Saints knew that the plan of redemption must start with the account of the fall of Adam. In the words of Moroni, "By Adam came the fall of man. And because of the fall of man came Jesus Christ, . . . and because of Jesus Christ came the redemption of man" (Mormon 9:12).

Just as a man does not really desire food until he is hungry, so he does not desire the salvation of Christ until he knows why he needs Christ.

No one adequately and properly knows why he needs Christ until he understands and accepts the doctrine of the Fall and its effect upon all mankind. And no other book in the world explains this vital doctrine nearly as well as the Book of Mormon.

Brethren and sisters, we all need to take a careful inventory of our performance and also the performance of those over whom we preside to be sure that we are teaching the "great plan of the Eternal God" to the Saints.

Are we accepting and teaching what the revelations tell us about the Creation, Adam and the fall of man, and redemption from that fall through the atonement of Christ? Do we frequently review the crucial questions

which Alma asks the members of the Church in the fifth chapter of Alma in the Book of Mormon?

Do we understand and are we effective in teaching and preaching the Atonement? What personal meaning does the Lord's suffering in Gethsemane and on Calvary have for each of us?

What does redemption from the Fall mean to us? In the words of Alma, do we "sing the song of redeeming love"? (Alma 5:26).

Teach from scriptures, words of Church leaders, and promptings of the Spirit

Now, what should be the source for teaching the great plan of the Eternal God? The scriptures, of course—particularly the Book of Mormon. This should also include the other modern-day revelations. These should be coupled with the words of the Apostles and prophets and the promptings of the Spirit.

Alma "commanded them that they should teach nothing save it were the things which he had taught, and which had been spoken by the mouth of the holy prophets" (Mosiah 18:19).

The Doctrine and Covenants states, "Let them journey from thence preaching the word by the way, saying none other things than that which the prophets and apostles have written, and that which is taught them by the Comforter through the prayer of faith" (D&C 52:9).

Seal teaching with testimony

Now, after we teach the great plan of the eternal God, we must personally bear our testimonies of its truthfulness.

Alma, after giving a great message to the Saints about being born again and the need for them to experience a "mighty change" in their hearts, sealed his teaching with his testimony in these words:

"And this is not all. Do ye not suppose that I know of these things

myself? Behold, I testify unto you that I do know that these things whereof I have spoken are true. And how do ye suppose that I know of their surety?"

"Behold, I say unto you they are made known unto me by the Holy Spirit of God. Behold, I have fasted and prayed many days that I might know these things of myself. And now I do know of myself that they are true; for the Lord God hath made them manifest unto me by his Holy Spirit; and this is the spirit of revelation which is in me" (Alma 5:45-46).

Later Amulek joined Alma as his missionary companion. After Alma had delivered to the Zoramites his message concerning faith in Christ, Amulek sealed with his testimony the message of his companion in these words:

"And now, behold, I will testify unto you of myself that these things are true. Behold, I say unto you, that I do know that Christ shall come among the children of men, to take upon him the transgressions of his people, and that he shall atone for the sins of the world; for the Lord God hath spoken it" (Alma 34:8).

"Bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations"

In His preface to the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord said that the "voice of warning shall be unto all people, by the mouths of my disciples, whom I have chosen in these last days" (D&C 1:4).

The responsibility of the seed of Abraham, which we are, is to be missionaries to "bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations" (Abraham 2:9). Moses bestowed upon Joseph Smith in the Kirtland Temple the keys to gather Israel (see D&C 110:11).

Now, what is the instrument that God has designed for this gathering? It is the same instrument that is designed to convince the world that Jesus is the Christ, that Joseph Smith is His prophet, and that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is true. It is

that scripture which is the keystone of our religion.

It is that most correct book which, if men will abide by its precepts, will get them closer to God than any other book. It is the Book of Mormon (see Introduction to the Book of Mormon).

God bless us all to use all the scriptures, but in particular the instrument He designed to bring us to Christ—the Book of Mormon, the keystone of our religion—along with its companion volume, the capstone, the Doctrine and Covenants, the instrument to bring us to Christ's kingdom, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Prophetic blessing and promise

Now, by virtue of the sacred priesthood in me vested, I invoke the blessings of the Lord upon the Latter-day Saints and upon good people everywhere.

I bless you with added power to endure in righteousness amidst the growing onslaught of wickedness, about which we have heard a great deal during this conference.

I promise you that as you more diligently study modern revelation on gospel subjects, your power to teach and preach will be magnified and you will so move the cause of Zion that added numbers will enter into the house of the Lord as well as the mission field.

I bless you with increased desire to flood the earth with the Book of Mormon, to gather out from the world the elect of God who are yearning for the truth but know not where to find it.

I promise you that, with increased attendance in the temples of our God, you shall receive increased personal revelation to bless your life as you bless those who have died.

I testify that the Book of Mormon is the word of God. Jesus is the Christ. Joseph Smith is His prophet. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is true, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Love One Another."

Elder Derek A. Cuthbert offered the benediction.

SALT LAKE TABERNACLE CHOIR AND ORGAN BROADCAST

The following broadcast, announced by J. Spencer Kinard and originating with KSL Radio and Television, Salt Lake City, Utah, was presented from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 5, 1987, through the courtesy of the Columbia Broadcasting System's network throughout the United States and parts of Canada, and through other facilities to several points overseas:

Announcer: Once more we welcome you within these walls with a program

of inspirational Music and Spoken Word from the crossroads of the West.

CBS and its affiliated stations bring you at this hour the Mormon Tabernacle Choir from Temple Square in Salt Lake City, with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducting the choir, John Longhurst, Tabernacle organist, and the Spoken Word given by Spencer Kinard.

(Choir: "Rejoice, the Lord Is King"—Parker)

Announcer: "Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints. . . . Let the saints be joyful in

glory. . . .

"Let the high praises of God be in their mouth." In the spirit of the 149th Psalm, the Tabernacle Choir has sung a hymn by Charles Wesley, with the music of Horatio Parker. The arrangement is by John Longhurst: "Rejoice, the Lord Is King."

From the pen of the late American composer, Randall Thompson, comes another song of praise, the exquisite "Alleluia."

(Choir: "Alleluia"—Thompson)

Announcer: From the *Four Sketches for Organ* by Robert Schumann, we hear now Sketch No. 1 in C Minor. John Longhurst is at the Tabernacle organ.

(Organ: Sketch No. 1 in C Minor—Schumann)

Announcer: In the Proverbs of Solomon, we read: "A wise son maketh a glad father." And, in the words of the apostle Paul to the Ephesians: "Husbands, love your wives; . . . Children, obey your parents; . . . fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Appropriate to this scriptural theme, the Tabernacle Choir sings Robert Manookin's arrangement of a hymn by John Hugh McNaughton: "There is beauty all around, . . . there is joy in every sound, when there's love at home."

(Choir: "Love at Home"—McNaughton/arr. Manookin)

Announcer: Moses sought its quiet assurance among the wastes of Sinai. Buddah looked for its prophetic influence under the quiet shade of the ancient Bo tree. Thoreau petitioned its creative powers along the secluded shores of Waldon Pond.

Prophets and poets, sages and philosophers, and all who know themselves have required at least a portion of quiet, personal time. It is the mother of thought, spawner of creativity, engineer of character, and the creator of

inner strength and beauty. Its name is solitude.

It may be said that solitude has become almost un-American. We live out our lives in constant contact with others of our kind: learning, eating, working and playing, and even praying—but always together, always surrounded by the din and confusion of society.

We live almost as if we were afraid of solitude, afraid to be alone with ourselves. We seek the continual company of others perhaps as much to escape from ourselves as for socialization.

It is true that total solitude would poison the personality and inhibit the growth of character. Even the paradise of Eden would have been a Hades without Eve.

But, in its proper proportion (not, mind you, as a daily dish at every meal, but as seasoning), solitude is both tonic and therapy.

In solitude, there is no need for vanity, and fame becomes the nothing which it started from.

In solitude, the mind learns to rely upon itself, to trust itself, to become independent and strong.

In solitude, the heart grows wider and deeper, as the value of love and friendship is measured in their absence.

In solitude, thoughts are sharper; creativity is set loose; the imagination soars.

Far from the madding crowd, is the cliché; safe from the intrusions of society—it is there, in silent solitude, we search for the truth of existence. For it is when we are alone, truly alone, that we discover and communicate best with eternal powers and ourselves.

May we take the time and exercise the courage to spend a small portion of our lives in solitude. May we teach our children the difference between solitude and loneliness, the joys of self-analysis and introspection. May we all learn that the best company in all the world is often ourselves.

(Choir: "The Morning Breaks"—Careless)

Announcer:

The Morning Breaks, the shadows flee;

Lo, Zion's standard is unfurled!

The dawning of a brighter day

Majestic rises on the world.

The Choir has sung a triumphant text of Parley P. Pratt, set to music by George Careless.

Again from 149th Psalm, we recall the words, "Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King." Our program closes with a text by Saint Theodulph, from the ninth century, sung to a chorale melody by Teschner, as arranged by former Tabernacle organist Alexander Schreiner: "All Glory, Laud, and Honor to Thee, Redeemer, King."

(Choir: "All Glory, Laud, and Honor"—Schreiner)

Announcer: Again we leave you from within the shadows of the everlasting hills. May peace be with you this day . . . and always.

Announcer (on radio): This concludes the three-thousand seventh performance continuing the fifty-eighth year of this traditional broadcast from the Mormon Tabernacle on Temple Square, brought to you by CBS and its affiliated stations, originating with station KSL in Salt Lake City.

Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducted the choir, John Longhurst was at the organ, and the Spoken Word was given by Spencer Kinard.

In another seven days at this same hour, Music and the Spoken Word will be heard again from the crossroads of the West.

This is the CBS Radio Network

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE MUSIC

The Mormon Youth Chorus, conducted by Robert C. Bowden, furnished the choral numbers for the Saturday morning session of the conference.

Music for the Saturday afternoon session was provided by the Kearns Region mixed choir, conducted by Jane K. Poulsen.

At the general priesthood session, music was furnished by combined institute priesthood choirs from Logan, Salt Lake City, Ogden, Provo, and Orem.

S. Brent Farley conducted the combined choirs.

The Tabernacle Choir, conducted by Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger, provided music for the Sunday morning and Sunday afternoon sessions.

Throughout the conference sessions, prelude, postlude, and interlude music and accompaniments on the Tabernacle organ were played by Robert Cundick, John Longhurst, and Clay Christiansen, Tabernacle organists.

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THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY
SAINTS

Official Report of the
One Hundred Fifty-seventh
Semiannual General

CONFERENCE

of The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints

held in the Tabernacle
Salt Lake City, Utah

October 3 and 4, 1987

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THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-SEVENTH SEMIANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The 157th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, October 3, 1987, at 10:00 A.M.

The general sessions of the conference were held at 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday, October 3 and 4, 1987. The general priesthood session was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, October 3, 1987, at 6:00 P.M.

President Ezra Taft Benson presided at all sessions of the conference. President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday morning, general priesthood, and Sunday afternoon sessions. President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning sessions.

Television and radio stations carried portions or all of some of the conference sessions to large audiences throughout the world. In addition, the general sessions and priesthood session were carried via satellite transmission to more than one thousand stake centers. The general priesthood session was also carried by closed-circuit transmission to approximately nine hundred locations in many countries.

General Authorities present

The following General Authorities of the Church attended one or more of the general sessions:

The First Presidency: Ezra Taft Benson, Gordon B. Hinckley, and Thomas S. Monson.

The Council of the Twelve: Howard W. Hunter, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, and Joseph B. Wirthlin.

The Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy: Dean L. Larsen,

Richard G. Scott, Marion D. Hanks, Wm. Grant Bangerter, Robert L. Backman, Hugh W. Pinnock, and James M. Paramore.

Additional Members of the First Quorum of the Seventy: Franklin D. Richards, Theodore M. Burton, Paul H. Dunn, Hartman Rector, Jr., Loren C. Dunn, Robert L. Simpson, Rex D. Pinegar, J. Thomas Fyans, Adney Y. Komatsu, Gene R. Cook, Charles Didier, William R. Bradford, George P. Lee, Carlos E. Asay, John H. Groberg, Jacob de Jager, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Royden G. Derrick, Robert E. Wells, F. Enzo Busche,² Ronald E. Poelman, Derek A. Cuthbert, Rex C. Reeve, Sr., F. Burton Howard, Ted E. Brewerton, Jack H. Goasland, Angel Abrea, John K. Carmack, Russell C. Taylor, Robert B. Harbertson, Devere Harris, Spencer H. Osborn, Philip T. Sonntag, John Sonnenberg, F. Arthur Kay, Keith W. Wilcox, Victor L. Brown, H. Burke Peterson, J. Richard Clarke, Hans B. Ringger, Waldo P. Call, Helio da Rocha Camargo, H. Verlan Andersen, George I. Cannon, Francis M. Gibbons, Gardner H. Russell, George R. Hill III, John R. Lasater, Douglas J. Martin, Alexander B. Morrison, L. Aldin Porter, Glen L. Rudd, Douglas H. Smith, and Lynn A. Sorensen.

The Presiding Bishopric: Robert D. Hales, Henry B. Eyring, and Glenn L. Pace.

General Authorities Emeritus: Eldred G. Smith, Sterling W. Sill, Bernard P. Brockbank, and Joseph Anderson.¹

¹President Marion G. Romney and Elder John H. Vandenberg were excused due to ill health.

²Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi was away presiding over the Hawaii Honolulu Mission.

Other authorities present:

Other Church authorities in attendance included Regional Representatives, presidents of stakes and their counselors, presidents of temples,

bishops of wards, and presidencies and members of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood quorums.

Many general, stake, and ward auxiliary officers also attended.

FIRST DAY MORNING SESSION

The first general session of the 157th Semiannual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, October 3, 1987, at 10:00 A.M. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The music for the opening session was provided by the Mormon Youth Chorus with Robert C. Bowden conducting and Clay Christiansen at the organ.

Before the meeting, the Mormon Youth Chorus sang "More Holiness Give Me" without announcement.

President Hinckley made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

We welcome you this morning from the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City in this, the first general session of the 156th semiannual conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Our beloved prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked me to conduct this session.

We welcome all who are participating in the large audience assembled in the Tabernacle and the overflow gathering in the nearby Assembly Hall, where Elders Marion D. Hanks and Waldo P. Call are seated on the stand. We welcome also the many others who

are receiving these conference proceedings by satellite transmission, radio, cable, and television.

We acknowledge the General Authorities of the Church, all of whom are in attendance except President Marion G. Romney, Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi (who is presiding over the Hawaii Honolulu Mission), and Elder John H. Vandenberg. We also acknowledge the Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary general presidencies, who are seated on the stand. We extend a special welcome to government, education, and civic leaders who are present with us.

The Mormon Youth Chorus, under the direction of Brother Robert C. Bowden, with Brother Clay Christiansen at the organ, opened this session by singing "More Holiness Give Me." They will now sing "The Lord Is My Shepherd." Following the singing, the invocation will be offered by Elder F. Enzo Busche, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The chorus sang "The Lord Is My Shepherd."

Elder F. Enzo Busche offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

We will now be privileged to listen to President Ezra Taft Benson, President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

President Ezra Taft Benson

My beloved brethren and sisters, what a glorious blessing to be assembled in another great general conference of the Church. I ask for an interest in your faith and prayers as I speak to you about a subject that is very close to my heart and that affects the worldwide Church.

Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution

We have recently celebrated the bicentennial of the signing of the United States Constitution. That commemoration marked the beginning of a series of bicentennial anniversaries of events leading up to the ratification of the Constitution, implementation of the government it created, and the writing and ratification of the Bill of Rights. We look forward to the future commemoration of each of these important events during the next four years. It is as a result of these events that we are able to meet today in peace as members of the restored Church of Jesus Christ. For this we should *all* be eternally grateful.

A divine document

I desire, therefore, to speak to you about our divine Constitution, which the Lord said "belongs to *all* mankind" (D&C 98:5) "and should be maintained for the rights and protection of *all* flesh, according to just and holy principles" (D&C 101:77; italics added).

The Constitution of the United States has served as a model for many nations and is the oldest constitution in use today.

"I established the Constitution of this land," said the Lord, "by the hands of wise men whom I raised up unto this very purpose" (D&C 101:80).

The great prologue

For centuries the Lord kept America hidden in the hollow of His hand

until the time was right to unveil her for her destiny in the last days. "It is wisdom that this land should be kept as yet from the knowledge of other nations," said Lehi, "for behold, many nations would overrun the land, that there would be no place for an inheritance" (2 Nephi 1:8).

In the Lord's due time His Spirit "wrought upon" Columbus, the pilgrims, the Puritans, and others to come to America (see 1 Nephi 13:12-13). They testified of God's intervention in their behalf. The Book of Mormon records that they humbled "themselves before the Lord; and the power of the Lord was with them" (1 Nephi 13:16).

Our Father in Heaven planned the coming forth of the Founding Fathers and their form of government as the necessary great prologue leading to the restoration of the gospel. Recall what our Savior Jesus Christ said nearly two thousand years ago when He visited this promised land: "For it is wisdom in the Father that they should be established in this land, and be set up as a free people by the power of the Father, that these things might come forth" (3 Nephi 21:4). America, the land of liberty, was to be the Lord's latter-day base of operations for His restored church.

Declaration of Independence

The Declaration of Independence affirmed the Founding Fathers' belief and trust in God in these words: "We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness."

The Doctrine and Covenants states, "We believe that no government can exist in peace, except such laws are framed and held inviolate as will secure to each individual the free exercise of conscience, the right and control of

property, and the protection of life" (D&C 134:2). Life, liberty, property—mankind's three great rights.

At the conclusion of the Declaration of Independence, they wrote, "And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm Reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor." This Declaration was a promise that would demand terrible sacrifice on the part of its signers. Five of the signers were captured as traitors and tortured before they died. Twelve had their homes ransacked and burned. Two lost their sons in the Revolutionary War; another had two sons captured. Nine died from wounds or from the hardships of the war. The Lord said He "redeemed the land by the shedding of blood" (D&C 101:80). Nephi recorded that the Founders "were delivered by the power of God out of the hands of all other nations" (1 Nephi 13:19).

Constitutional Convention

The years immediately preceding the Constitutional Convention were filled with disappointments and threats to the newly won peace. Washington was offered a kingship, which he adamantly refused. Nephi had prophesied hundreds of years before that "this land shall be a land of liberty unto the Gentiles, and there shall be *no kings upon the land*" (2 Nephi 10:11; italics added).

Between the critical years of 1783 and 1787, an outsider viewing the affairs of the United States would have thought that the thirteen states, different in so many ways, could never effectively unite. The world powers were confident that this nation would not last.

Eventually, twelve of the states met in Philadelphia to address the problem. Madison said at the beginning of the Convention that the delegates "were now digesting a plan which in its operation would decide forever the fate of Republican Government" (in *Records of the Federal Convention of 1787*,

ed. Max Farrand, [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1911], 1:423).

"The Lord knoweth all things from the beginning," said Nephi; "wherefore, he prepareth a way to accomplish all his works among the children of men" (1 Nephi 9:6).

Four months later, the convention delegates had completed their work. As Gladstone said, it was "the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man" (William Gladstone, "Kin beyond Sea," *North American Review*, Sept.—Oct. 1878, p. 185), and the Prophet Joseph Smith called it "a glorious standard, . . . a heavenly banner" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 147).

God inspired the delegates

The delegates were the recipients of heavenly inspiration. James Madison, often referred to as the father of the Constitution, wrote, "It is impossible for the man of pious reflection not to perceive in it a finger of that Almighty hand which has been so frequently and signally extended to our relief in the critical stages of the revolution" (*The Federalist*, no. 37, [New York: Nal Penguin, Inc., 1961], pp. 230-31).

Alexander Hamilton, famous as the originator of *The Federalist* papers and author of fifty-one of the essays, said: "For my own part, I sincerely esteem it a system, which without the finger of God, never could have been suggested and agreed upon by such a diversity of interest" (in *Essays on the Constitution of the United States*, ed. Paul L. Ford [Brooklyn: Historical Printing, 1892], pp. 251-52).

Charles Pinckney, a very active participant and author of the Pinckney Plan during the Convention, said: "When the great work was done and published, I was struck with amazement. Nothing less than the superintending Hand of Providence, that so miraculously carried us through the war, . . . could have brought it about

so complete, upon the whole" (in *Essays on the Constitution*, p. 412).

Within ten months, the Constitution was ratified by nine states and was therefore in force for them. Prophecy had been fulfilled.

During his first inaugural address in 1789, President George Washington, a man who was raised up by God, said: "No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible hand, which conducts the Affairs of men, more than the People of the United States. Every step, by which they have advanced to the character of an independent nation, seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency" (*First Inaugural Address*, 30 Apr. 1789, in *The Writings of George Washington*, ed. John C. Fitzpatrick, 34 vols. [Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1939], 30:293).

In compliance with Article 6 of the Constitution, the very first act passed by Congress and signed by President Washington on June 1, 1789, was the actual oath to support the Constitution that was to be administered to various government officers.

The dedicatory prayer for the Kirtland Temple, as dictated by the Lord and found in the Doctrine and Covenants, contains these words: "May those principles, which were so honorably and nobly defended, namely, the Constitution of our land, by our fathers, be established forever" (D&C 109:54).

Temple work for Founding Fathers

Shortly after President Spencer W. Kimball became President of the Church, he assigned me to go into the vault of the St. George Temple and check the early records. As I did so, I realized the fulfillment of a dream I had had ever since learning of the visit of the Founding Fathers to the St. George Temple. I saw with my own eyes the record of the work which was done for the Founding Fathers of this great nation, beginning with George Washington.

Think of it: the Founding Fathers of this nation, those great men, appeared within those sacred walls and had their vicarious work done for them.

President Wilford Woodruff spoke of it in these words: "Before I left St. George, the spirits of the dead gathered around me, wanting to know why we did not redeem them. Said they, 'You have had the use of the Endowment House for a number of years, and yet nothing has ever been done for us. We laid the foundation of the government you now enjoy, and we never apostatized from it, but we remained true to it and were faithful to God' " (*The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, sel. G. Homer Durham [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1946], p. 160).

After he became President of the Church, President Wilford Woodruff declared that "those men who laid the foundation of this American government . . . were the best spirits the God of heaven could find on the face of the earth. They were choice spirits . . . [and] were inspired of the Lord" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1898, p. 89).

Apostasy from Constitutional principles

Unfortunately, we as a nation have apostatized in various degrees from different Constitutional principles as proclaimed by the inspired founders. We are fast approaching that moment prophesied by Joseph Smith when he said: "Even this nation will be on the very verge of crumbling to pieces and tumbling to the ground, and when the Constitution is upon the brink of ruin, this people will be the staff upon which the nation shall lean, and they shall bear the Constitution away from the very verge of destruction" (19 July 1840, as recorded by Martha Jane Knowlton Coray; ms. in Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City).

Befriend the Constitution

For centuries our forefathers suffered and sacrificed that we might be the recipients of the blessings of freedom. If they were willing to sacrifice so much to establish us as a free people, should we not be willing to do the same to maintain that freedom for ourselves and for future generations?

Only in this foreordained land, under its God-inspired Constitution and the resulting environment of freedom, was it possible to have established the restored church. It is our responsibility to see that this freedom is perpetuated so that the Church may more easily flourish in the future.

The Lord said, "Therefore, I, the Lord, justify you, and your brethren of my church, in befriending that law which is the constitutional law of the land" (D&C 98:6).

How then can we best befriend the Constitution in this critical hour and secure the blessings of liberty and ensure the protection and guidance of our Father in Heaven?

Be righteous

First and foremost, we must be righteous.

John Adams said, "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." (*The Works of John Adams*, ed. C. F. Adams [Boston: Little and Brown, 1851]). If the Constitution is to have continuance, this American nation, and especially the Latter-day Saints, must be virtuous.

The Book of Mormon warns us relative to our living in this free land: "Wherefore, this land is consecrated unto him whom he shall bring. And if it so be that they shall serve him according to the commandments which he hath given, it shall be a land of liberty unto them; wherefore, they shall never be brought down into captivity; if so, it shall be because of iniquity; for if iniquity shall abound cursed shall be the land for their sakes, but unto the righteous it shall be blessed forever" (2 Nephi 1:7).

"And now," warned Moroni, "we can behold the decrees of God concerning this land, that it is a land of promise; and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall serve God, or they shall be swept off when the fulness of his wrath shall come upon them. And the fulness of his

wrath cometh upon them when they are ripened in iniquity" (Ether 2:9).

Two great American Christian civilizations—the Jaredites and the Nephites—were swept off this land because they did not "serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ" (Ether 2:12). What will become of our civilization?

Learn Constitution's principles

Second, we must learn the principles of the Constitution in the tradition of the Founding Fathers.

Have we read *The Federalist* papers? Are we reading the Constitution and pondering it? Are we aware of its principles? Are we abiding by these principles and teaching them to others? Could we defend the Constitution? Can we recognize when a law is constitutionally unsound? Do we know what the prophets have said about the Constitution and the threats to it?

As Jefferson said, "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, . . . it expects what never was and never will be" (in *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Albert Ellery Bergh, 20 vols. [1903–5], 14:384).

Be involved in civic affairs

Third, we must become involved in civic affairs to see that we are properly represented.

The Lord said that "he holds men accountable for their acts in relation" to governments "both in making laws and administering them" (D&C 134:1). We must follow this counsel from the Lord: "Honest men and wise men should be sought for diligently, and good men and wise men ye should observe to uphold; otherwise whatsoever is less than these cometh of evil" (D&C 98:10).

Note the qualities that the Lord demands of those who are to represent us. They must be good, wise, and honest.

Vote, teach, and advise

Fourth, we must make our influence felt by our vote, our letters, our teaching, and our advice.

We must become accurately informed and then let others know how we feel. The Prophet Joseph Smith said: "It is our duty to concentrate all our influence to make popular that which is sound and good, and unpopular that which is unsound. 'Tis right, politically, for a man who has influence to use it. . . . From henceforth I will maintain all the influence I can get" (*History of the Church*, 5:286).

I have faith that the Constitution will be saved as prophesied by Joseph Smith. It will be saved by the righteous citizens of this nation who love and cherish freedom. It will be saved by enlightened members of this Church—among others—men and women who understand and abide the principles of the Constitution.

Testimony of the Constitution

I reverence the Constitution of the United States as a sacred document. To me its words are akin to the revelations of God, for God has placed His stamp of approval upon it.

I testify that the God of heaven sent some of His choicest spirits to lay

the foundation of this government, and He has now sent other choice spirits to help preserve it.

We, the blessed beneficiaries of the Constitution, face difficult days in America, "a land which is choice above all other lands" (Ether 2:10).

May God give us the faith and the courage exhibited by those patriots who pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor.

May we be equally as valiant and as free, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The chorus sang "Rock of Ages" without announcement.

President Hinckley

We have just heard the opening address of our beloved prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson. Following his remarks, the Mormon Youth Chorus sang for us "Rock of Ages."

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now speak to us.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

I am honored to follow President Ezra Taft Benson. I love him as my friend and leader. He is indeed our prophet, seer, and revelator.

Perseverance

In the context of my remarks today, *perseverance* means to continue in a given course until we have reached a goal or objective, regardless of obstacles, opposition, and other counter-influences. What is our course, what is our goal, and what are the obstacles and opposition that would hinder or divert us?

Our course as members of the Church should be compliance with the principles and ordinances of the gospel.

Our goal should be to fill the measure of our creation as sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father—that is, to reach exaltation and eternal life. The obstacles and opposition we meet are the temptations and enticements of Satan that are designed to frustrate the Lord's work and glory: "To bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39).

Perseverance is a positive, active characteristic. It is not idly, passively waiting and hoping for some good thing to happen. It gives us hope by helping us realize that the righteous suffer no failure except in giving up and no longer trying.

When some people have a difficult job to do, they give up everything else

until that job is finished. Others just give up. The need to persevere is expressed in the following lines:

"Genius is only the power of making continuous efforts. The line between failure and success is so fine that we scarcely know when we pass it; so fine that we are often on the line and do not know it. How many a man has thrown up his hands at a time when a little more effort, a little more patience would have achieved success. . . . A little more persistence, a little more effort, and what seemed a hopeless failure may turn into a glorious success. . . . There is no defeat except within, no really insurmountable barrier save [one's] own inherent weakness of purpose" (author unknown, in *Second Encyclopedia of Stories, Quotations, and Anecdotes*, comp. Jacob M. Braude [Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1957], p. 152).

We have numerous examples of perseverance in the scriptures, in secular history, and in our own experiences.

Job's perseverance

Perhaps the best-known Old Testament example of perseverance is the story of Job. As you know, it narrates the afflictions that befell a righteous man and considers reasons for those afflictions. It does not entirely answer the question of why Job, or anyone, might suffer pain and sorrow, but does state clearly that affliction is not necessarily a sign of God's anger and a punishment for sin, as Job's friends told him. The book suggests that affliction, if not for punishment, may be for experience, discipline, and instruction (see Bible Dictionary, LDS edition of the King James Version, s.v. "Job").

I do not know of anything that members of the Church need more than they need the conviction and perseverance of Job. He was a just man who feared God and avoided evil. After the Lord allowed Satan to torment Job, his afflictions included the loss of his

seven sons and three daughters, the loss of his wealth in flocks and herds, and serious physical illnesses. Remaining faithful to the Lord through his indescribable sorrow and suffering, Job was able to say, "Blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21). "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him. . . . He also shall be my salvation. . . . For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. . . . Yet in my flesh shall I see God" (Job 13:15-16, 19:25-26).

The result of Job's perseverance is told in the conclusion of the story. The Lord blessed him with a family, good health, and great possessions. He continued in his course, despite unrelenting opposition, until he saw the Lord (see Job 42:5).

Moroni's perseverance

The Book of Mormon is filled with stories of great people who endured to the very end, from Lehi and his family through Moroni, the son of Mormon. The life of Moroni is especially instructive in teaching perseverance. The obstacles he faced may seem beyond belief to us. He saw the entire Nephite nation destroyed by the sword in a terrible war because of the wickedness of the people. His father and all of his kinsfolk and friends were slain. He was alone for about twenty years, perhaps hiding and fleeing from savage Lamanites who sought to take his life (see Mormon 8:2-7). Yet he continued to keep the record as his father had commanded him.

As a result of his perseverance and righteousness, he was ministered to by the Three Nephites, whom the Savior permitted to tarry until His second coming (see Mormon 8:11). In these latter days, Moroni had the divine commission of instructing Joseph Smith in his calling as the Prophet of the Restoration and delivering the Book of Mormon record to him.

Joseph Smith's perseverance

Joseph Smith's determination and perseverance is another good example. After reading James 1:5, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him," Joseph knew that he must do as James directed or remain in darkness and confusion. From the moment he knelt in prayer, he encountered enormous obstacles and opposition. First, an evil, unseen power seized him. Then, he wrote:

"Just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun. . . .

"It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me. . . . One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—'This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!' " (Joseph Smith—History 1:16–17).

This marvelous event, near the start of the Prophet's mortal ministry, proved to be a pattern in his life. He suffered ridicule, violent attack by his enemies, betrayal by close associates whom he had trusted, forcible separation from his loved ones, trial and imprisonment on false charges, and, finally, martyrdom at the hands of a mob. Yet he remained true to the charge he had received and served faithfully in his calling as the Prophet to usher in the dispensation of the fulness of times. In addition to seeing our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, he received instruction and counsel from angels and other heavenly beings throughout his life.

Winston Churchill's perseverance

Secular history also teaches the principle of perseverance. Winston Churchill is well known for his determination as the leader of Great Britain during World War II. On one occasion

in his later years, he returned to a school where he had studied as a boy. Before he arrived, the headmaster told the students, "The greatest Britisher of our time is going to come to this school, and I want every one of you to be here with your notebooks. I want you to write down what he says, because his speech will be something for you to remember all your lives." The elderly statesman came in and was introduced. His glasses were down on the end of his nose, as usual. He stood and delivered the following words from an immortal speech that he once gave in Parliament. He said, "Never give in, *never, never, never*" (see "These Are Great Days," in *The Unrelenting Struggle: War Speeches of the Right Hon. Winston Churchill*, ed. Charles Eada [Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1942], pp. 287). His speech was unmatched. His message was indeed something to be remembered by every boy who heard it and by each of us. We must never give up, regardless of temptations, frustrations, disappointments, or discouragements.

Perseverance is vital to success

I believe that perseverance is vital to success in any endeavor, whether spiritual or temporal, large or small, public or personal. Think seriously of how important perseverance, or the lack of it, has been in your own endeavors, such as Church callings, schooling, or employment. I believe that essentially all significant achievement results largely from perseverance.

By applying this principle, some of our finest legacies have been produced. For example, John Milton was blind when he wrote *Paradise Lost*. Ludwig von Beethoven was deaf when he finished some of his greatest musical compositions. Abraham Lincoln was laughed at as a gangling, awkward country boy who had many failures; but he became one of the greatest and most eloquent presidents of the United States. Florence Nightingale devoted her life to save the lives of countless wounded soldiers. All of these people

left a permanent mark on the world. Their example should give hope to all of us. They succeeded not only because the Lord had endowed them with gifts, as he has each of us in varying degrees, but because they applied themselves steadfastly.

Jesus Christ's perseverance

Of course, the ultimate example of perseverance is our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who has and will overcome every obstacle in doing the will of our Heavenly Father. Indeed, Jesus is perfect in perseverance and has taught us to be perfect even as he and his Father are perfect (see 3 Nephi 12:48). Studying his life can help us learn and live this important principle.

From the time of the premortal council, in which Jesus became the Christ, the Messiah, the Savior of all mankind, through his millennial reign, he has and will persevere in perfection, doing all that his Father commanded. Because of his love for us, he offered to fulfill the plan of salvation with these words, "Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever" (Moses 4:2). How different from Satan's response to the plan: "I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; . . . give me thine honor" (Moses 4:1). The conflict between the forces of good and the forces of evil persists in the world today—with Jesus persevering in striving to save souls, and Satan striving to destroy them.

During his mortal ministry, as the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh, Jesus again taught the gospel. At the beginning of this ministry, we see his perseverance in one of the most stirring dramas ever recorded. He completely overcame every temptation that the cunning of Satan could devise (see Matthew 4:1–11). After Jesus had fasted forty days and forty nights, gathering miraculous inner strength, came a battle of opposing powers in the wilderness of Judea. First, Satan tempted Jesus by appealing to the basic appetite

of hunger, asking him to transform stones into bread. Jesus held to his divine course and refused. Satan next tempted the Savior to cast himself down from a pinnacle of the temple, saying angels would protect him if he were the Son of God. Jesus refused this request to misuse his divine power, saying, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Matthew 4:7). Satan seldom gives up. He next appealed to a drive that causes the downfall of otherwise invulnerable individuals—the almost irresistible hunger to have great possessions. Satan showed all the kingdoms of the world and offered them to Jesus if he would worship him. Jesus commanded Satan to leave, saying, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew 4:10). This is the type of perseverance in the face of temptation that each of us can and must exercise if we are to avoid the misery of sin.

Jesus persevered through the final days of his mortal life as the mood of the people changed from shouts of "Hosanna to the Son of David" (Matthew 21:9) to cries of "Crucify him" (Mark 15:13). He endured the indignities and physical abuse of his trials before Jewish and Roman leaders. Through his atonement and resurrection, he provided for all mankind both immortality and the possibility of eternal life. He paid the penalty for our sins if we will repent of them. How grateful I am for the effect upon me of his love and his perseverance!

Probably few of us will face opposition and obstacles like those encountered by the great ones I have mentioned. However, we each have our own challenges and trials to overcome as we strive to keep on the right course. Often the most important trials are those we must face and subdue privately within our own hearts.

I bear testimony that perseverance is essential to us in learning and living the principles of the gospel and that it will determine our progress as we strive to reach exaltation. Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. He directs this Church.

I am grateful to labor in his service and to be a special witness of his divinity. The gospel has been restored in these latter days through the Prophet Joseph Smith. President Ezra Taft Benson is our prophet, seer, and revelator. May we follow his stirring address this morning. I bear this testimony humbly in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

The chorus and congregation will now join in singing "How Firm a Foundation." After that, Elder Dean L. Larsen of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy will speak to us.

The chorus and congregation sang "How Firm a Foundation."

Elder Dean L. Larsen

Staying within the mark

When I was a young man, I enjoyed participating in athletic activities of various kinds. I was never very expert in these things, but this did not diminish my interest nor the satisfaction that came from my participation. I was particularly interested in track and field events. In my school years I competed in the hurdle races as well as in the shot put and the discus throw. These last two events required that the participant launch his effort from within a ring that was marked out on the playing field. So long as the competitor remained within the ring while making his throw of the discus or the put of the shot, his effort was qualified to be measured in the competition. If he stepped outside the circle, his effort was disqualified as a foul. Generally, three preliminary attempts were permitted in each of these events, and then three more for those whose tosses were long enough to qualify them for the finals. If a competitor fouled in each of his attempts, he was out of the competition.

Those of us who participated in these sports learned the importance of staying within the mark.

Israelites looked beyond the mark

I found myself reflecting on these early experiences recently as I read from the fourth chapter of Jacob in the Book of Mormon. In this part of his record, Jacob reminds us of the Israelites in ancient times who got themselves into great difficulty: "They despised the words of plainness, and killed the prophets, and sought for things that they could not understand. Wherefore, because of their blindness, which blindness came by *looking beyond the mark*, they must needs fall" (Jacob 4:14; italics added).

Generally, a figurative expression such as the one Jacob uses in this text—"looking beyond the mark"—comes from something that is common and familiar to the experience of those with whom it is used. Each language and each culture has similar idiomatic expressions.

I have wondered what was actually in Jacob's mind as he wrote of "looking beyond the mark" in describing a failing that was common to ancient Israel. As I have already indicated, Jacob's idiom brings to my mind the experiences of my early activities in certain sports events when it

was so important to stay within the mark. All of the strength and skill and effort a competitor could muster in the field events I have just described were of little value if he did not stay within the circle.

Jacob speaks of people who placed themselves in serious jeopardy in spiritual things because they were unwilling to accept simple, basic principles of truth. They entertained and intrigued themselves with "things that they could not understand" (Jacob 4:14). They were apparently afflicted with a pseudosophistication and a snobishness that gave them a false sense of superiority over those who came among them with the Lord's words of plainness. They went beyond the mark of wisdom and prudence, and obviously failed to stay within the circle of fundamental gospel truths, which provide a basis for faith. They must have reveled in speculative and theoretical matters that obscured for them the fundamental spiritual truths. As they became infatuated by these "things that they could not understand," their comprehension of and faith in the redeeming role of a true Messiah was lost, and the purpose of life became confused. A study of Israel's history will confirm Jacob's allegations.

Paul's counsel

It seems to me that every generation faces its challenges with "looking beyond the mark." The Apostle Paul worried about those whom he had helped to develop a testimony of Jesus Christ. Paul advised Titus to "avoid foolish questions . . . and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain" (Titus 3:9).

To Timothy, Paul wrote:

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap

to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

"And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Timothy 4:2-4).

Earlier, Paul had counseled Timothy not to "give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith" (1 Timothy 1:4).

How to stay within the mark

As I have wondered how we might protect ourselves in the present day from "going beyond the mark," I have resolved to do several things which I share with you for whatever application you may wish to make in your own lives.

I am going to give more time and attention to the study and pondering of the scriptures themselves, rather than to the commentaries and criticisms that others have written about them. In doing this, I am going to be as open as I can be to the Spirit of the Lord so that I can understand these things for myself. Jacob said: "For the Spirit speaketh the truth and lieth not. Wherefore, it speaketh of things as they really are, and of things as they really will be; wherefore, these things are manifested unto us plainly, for the salvation of our souls" (Jacob 4:13).

I am much more concerned about understanding the admonitions of Samuel the Lamanite as he stood on the walls of the city of Zarahemla and called the rebellious Nephites to repentance than I am about identifying the location of that city in today's geography.

I am more vitally interested in what the Father and the Son commissioned Joseph Smith to do, and the fruits of his prophetic labors, than I am in whether he made mention of one divine personage or two in his initial recounting of the First Vision.

I am going to make a greater effort to be worthy of holding an ordained office in the priesthood of God, and be

less concerned about confirming the exact date and place of the appearance of Peter, James, and John to restore this divine authority and power.

I think I am going to try to keep in my mind more consistently the perfect pattern for human relationships that the Savior demonstrated in his own life and try with greater effort to emulate that pattern of caring, love, and sacrifice.

I am going to try to be more earnest in teaching what the Savior would have me teach and be less concerned about having my own biases aired. If I am going to influence others, I want to influence them toward the things that promote faith rather than to unsettle them with speculation and questions that cannot be resolved.

I think I will not want to stifle a wholesome appetite for learning, for reaching out to new levels of understanding. But as I push toward these new horizons, I will want to come back always to the circle of my established faith, and I will continually nourish that faith with a prayerful study of God's revealed truths.

In the many hours I spent as a young man practicing to perfect my skills at putting the shot to greater distances, I sometimes moved outside the ring to work on a particular technique or detail. I learned, however, that unless the new device would allow me to remain safely within the mark when the competition was on, it was of little value to me.

Analogies are seldom perfect, and the one I have used in these remarks is probably less so than most; but sometimes it is useful to analyze our situation against the background of such a simple comparison.

Focus on things of eternal value

There are other ways in which many of us often look beyond the mark.

Sometimes we focus too much of our attention and energy upon our temporal wants, not only to entertain ourselves and gratify our physical appetites, but also to gain recognition, position, and power. We can become so consumed by the pursuit of these things that we sacrifice the sweetness and enduring peace of mind that are found in spiritual well-being, in well-nurtured family relationships, and in the love and respect of friends and associates.

Too often we permit the narrow demands of our daily routine to dull our appreciation of the beauty of God's creations and the refining influences that are all about us. We fail to experience the fulfillment that comes from developing the gifts and talents with which we have been endowed. We do not draw close enough to the Lord to know him and feel of his redeeming love.

In today's complicated world with its diversity of demands and sometimes distracting voices, it is so important for us to keep our eyes upon the basic things that matter most and that will have the greatest eternal consequence for us.

May God help us to do so and to keep from looking beyond that mark, I pray earnestly in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The chorus sang "Though Deepening Trials" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Elder Dean L. Larsen of the First Quorum of the Seventy has spoken to us, and the chorus then sang "Though Deepening Trials."

We will now be happy to hear from Elder David B. Haight of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder David B. Haight

Importance of Christian values

I have prayed for an interest in your faith and prayers, that I might say clearly what is in my heart.

James Peter Fugal was an honest man! He herded sheep much of his life in the rolling hills of Idaho—both his own sheep and sheep for others.

On one bitterly cold winter night, he was herding sheep for another man when a blizzard set in. The sheep bunched together, as sheep do, in the corner of a fenced area, and many died. Many other sheep on surrounding ranches also died that same night because of the weather.

Though the death of the sheep was no fault of his, James Fugal felt responsible and spent the next several years working and saving to repay the owner for his lost sheep.

This was the type of deep moral honor and accountability that was fostered by scripture-reading, God-fearing settlers on the early frontier.

This same desire to live Christian principles was evident in Aurelia Rogers, who was schooled on the plains and founded the Primary organization of the Church. She had a concern for the moral character and social development of children. Leaders of the Primary since Aurelia Rogers have proven to be worthy disciples and continue to teach wholesomeness, virtue, and love for one another as well as to instill a desire to understand and live by traditional values.

Recently, Sister Haight and I attended a ward sacrament meeting some distance from our home. After the sacrament, we found, to our delight, that the Primary would present the program, the theme being "We Believe in Being Honest."

I marveled at the eagerness and interest of these young children as they spoke about the fundamental principles they were learning in Primary of telling the truth, respecting the property of

others, being trustworthy, and standing for the right.

I thought of James Fugal, the humble shepherd, and how wonderful it was that these children were being taught the same values that made him a man of such noble character.

As we enjoyed the thoughtful and timely Primary presentation that emphasized these timeless moral and spiritual values, my thoughts seemed to concentrate on the similarity of two important heavenly directed events which we, as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, have special reason to be grateful for: the framing of the Constitution of the United States of America and the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ—each, in a significant way, sustaining the other. In addition to heavenly direction, both would require a membership of honest, virtuous people if their divine purposes were to be realized.

Rise and survival of America

We attribute the rise of the American nation and its survival to two vital factors. First, God aided the efforts of those who established the republic. James Madison, who is considered the father of the Constitution and to whom President Benson referred this morning, wrote, "It is impossible for the man of pious reflection not to perceive in [the Constitution] a finger of that Almighty hand which has been so frequently and signally extended to our relief in the [establishing of our republic]" (*The Federalist*, no. 37 [New York: Nal Penguin, Inc., 1961], pp. 230-31).

Second, the righteous conduct and example of its citizens. This is best expressed by Alexander Hamilton, a soldier turned statesman, who wrote that "it seems to have been reserved to the people of this country, by their conduct and example, to decide the

important question, whether societies of men are really capable or not of establishing good government from reflection and choice, or whether they are forever destined to depend for their political constitutions on accident and force" (*The Federalist*, no. 1, p. 33).

Flourishing of the Restoration

The important human attributes needed for this new nation to really become a cooperating and workable republic of separate states would be manifested by a people who demonstrated by their lives a belief and desire to live in a society of justice for all mankind. Likewise, the Lord, through the Prophet Joseph Smith, also recognized that, like the new nation, the restored gospel would have difficulty enduring without men and women of similar integrity and conduct.

On March 1, 1842, Joseph Smith, at the request of Mr. John Wentworth, editor of a Chicago newspaper, composed thirteen brief statements known as the Articles of Faith, which summarize some of the basic doctrines of the Church. As the concluding statement, the Prophet wrote this inspired code of conduct:

"We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things" (Articles of Faith 1:13).

What an inspiring description of good people, God-fearing people, people committed to deal justly with mankind! These would be the type of people who could raise up a nation and help it survive, and the kind of people to comprehend the true gospel of Jesus Christ with the needed faith to proclaim it to the inhabitants of the earth.

We here today, and people throughout the nation and the free

world, are indebted to freedom-loving individuals everywhere who had the faith and integrity necessary to build the foundations of our societies upon fundamental moral values. Only in an atmosphere of freedom and trust could values like honesty and integrity truly flourish and thus encourage others to pursue their rights to liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Alarming decline in moral values

Therefore, it is with great alarm that we read newspaper accounts and hear daily media reports that describe the decline of moral decency and the erosion of basic ethical conduct. They detail the corrupting influence of dishonesty, from small-time, childish stealing or cheating to major embezzlement, fraud, and misappropriation of money or goods.

Headlines and feature stories dramatically demonstrate the need for honesty and integrity in family relationships, in business affairs, and in the conduct of government officials and religious ministries. Recent cover stories from major national publications with titles such as "Lying in America" (*U.S. News and World Report*, 23 Feb. 1987) and "What Ever Happened to Ethics" (*Time*, 25 May 1987) emphasize the need for public concern over the direction in which we are moving.

Public virtue, which expects men to rise above self-interest and to act in the public interest with wisdom and courage, was so evident in leaders like George Washington, who, we used to declare, could never tell a lie, and Abraham Lincoln, known as "Honest Abe." In the past few years we have seen "official after official—both on the national and the local political scene—put self-interest . . . above the larger public interest" (Charles A. Perry, "Religious Assumptions Undergird the Entire U.S. Constitution," *Deseret News*, 27 Sept. 1987, sec. B, p. 19).

"Men and women have . . . been removed from federal office and even

gone to jail in our times because they exceeded the limits set by the framers [of our Constitution and God's commandments]" (Charles A. Perry, "Religious Assumptions," p. 19).

"Situational ethics"

One reason for the decline in moral values is that the world has invented a new, constantly changing and undependable standard of moral conduct referred to as "situational ethics." Now, individuals define good and evil as being adjustable according to each situation; this is in direct contrast to the proclaimed God-given absolute standard: "Thou shalt not!"—as in "Thou shalt not steal" (Exodus 20:15).

Teach children values

A recent Gallup Poll indicates that the vast majority of Americans want schools to do two things: teach our children to speak, think, write, and count; and help them develop standards of right and wrong to guide them through life. However, some teachers avoid questions of right and wrong or remain neutral or guide children into developing their own values, which is leaving many children morally adrift.

Many of our youth have either lost the knowledge of what is right and what is wrong or were never taught these basic values. President Harold B. Lee's classic statement that "the most important of the Lord's work that you will ever do will be the work you do within the walls of your own home" is most certainly true today. "Ours is the responsibility as parents to teach our children chastity . . . [and not only to be morally clean but to be] faithful [and] valiant, striving to live [all of] the Lord's commandments" (*Strengthening the Home* [pamphlet, 1973], pp. 4, 8).

Problem of secret sin

Some adults, including public officials and civic leaders, have also

been led astray by longings for luxury and leisure.

The devastation that comes to the families and loved ones of those convicted of crimes such as stealing, fraud, misrepresentation, child abuse, sexual transgression, or other serious crimes is immeasurable. So many sorrows, heartaches, and even broken homes result from a false belief that people can set their own rules and do what they want to do as long as they don't get caught.

Individuals may deceive and even go undetected or unpunished, but they will not escape the judgments of a just God. No man can disobey the word of God and not suffer for so doing. No sin, however secret, can escape retribution and the judgment that follows such transgression.

Obey to be free and to be saved

We declare: "There is only one cure for the evils of this world, . . . and that is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and . . . obedience to [His] commandments" (Mark E. Petersen, in Conference Report, Oct. 1963, p. 122; or *Improvement Era*, Dec. 1963, p. 1110).

We run the risk of losing both our domestic freedom and eternal salvation if we circumvent by greed and avarice the ethical and moral strictures inherent in the Constitution of this land and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The continued survival of a free and open society is dependent upon a high degree of divinely inspired values and moral conduct, as stated by the Founding Fathers. People must have trust in their institutions and in their leaders. A great need today is for leadership that exemplifies truth, honesty, and decency in both public and private life.

Honesty is not only the best policy, as stated by Benjamin Franklin, it is the only policy!

Someone said, "We have committed the Golden Rule to memory. May we now commit it to life." The Savior's

teaching, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" (Matthew 7:12), should be the basis for all human relationships.

The Lord is very clear about the conduct he expects from the inhabitants of this earth. Nephi declared:

"And again, the Lord God hath commanded that men should not murder; . . . should not lie; . . . should not steal; . . . should not take the name of the Lord . . . in vain; . . . should not envy; . . . should not have malice; . . . should not contend one with another; . . . should not commit whoredoms; . . . for whoso doeth them shall perish.

"For none of these iniquities come of the Lord; for he doeth that which is good among the children of men; . . . and . . . inviteth . . . all to come unto him and partake of, his goodness" (2 Nephi 26:32-33).

Rededicate ourselves

The time is now to rededicate our lives to eternal ideals and values, to make those changes that we may need to make in our own lives and conduct to conform to the Savior's teachings.

From the beginning to the end of His ministry, Jesus asked His followers to adopt new, higher standards in contrast to their former ways. As believers, they were to live by a spiritual and moral code that would separate them not only from the rest of the world but also even from some of their traditions. He asks nothing less of those who follow Him today.

Do we really believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, and virtuous? On this test may hinge the survival of our society, our constitutional government, and our eternal salvation.

I so declare, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The chorus sang "Praise to the Man" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Elder David B. Haight has just spoken to us, and the chorus has sung "Praise to the Man."

Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our concluding speaker for this session.

Elder Boyd K. Packer

The Balm of Gilead

Some years ago, I spoke at this pulpit and entitled my talk "The Balm of Gilead." The response was surprising. That very day two lawsuits were settled. One or both of the litigants decided that what they might gain materially was not worth the cost spiritually.

I wish to repeat much of what I said then.

In ancient times there came from Gilead, beyond the Jordan, an ointment made from the gum of a tree. It was a major commodity in trade. The Ishmaelite traders who purchased Joseph from his brothers were carrying this

balm of Gilead to Egypt (see Genesis 37:25).

It became symbolic for the power to soothe and to heal.

*There is a Balm in Gilead,
To make the wounded whole,
There is a Balm in Gilead,
To heal the sin sick soul.*
(*Recreational Songs* [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1949], p. 130)

My message was then, and is now, an appeal to those who are not at peace, those whose lives are touched with bit-

terness, with hostility, or with resentment. It is a plea to those who anxiously struggle with worry, or with grief or disappointment, with guilt, or with shame.

We see so much unnecessary suffering, so many who cripple themselves spiritually carrying burdens which could be put down. Many suffer from real misfortune and injustice. Sadly, some only imagine that they do. In either case, self-inflicted penalties soon become cruel and unusual punishment.

Problems of self-justification

If the burden is guilt, then repentance is the Balm of Gilead.

Some, however, seek to cure guilt with self-justification, a quack medicine which only covers the symptoms; it will never cure the cause. Self-justification leads one to blame another for his mistakes.

For example, when you seek financial gain, you may be tempted by others to miscalculate, even ignore, risks. When things go wrong—and they can go wrong even in carefully managed affairs—some look for others to blame. They want some “deep pocket” to make them whole. They want someone else to carry their responsibility like the scapegoat of Old Testament times, which was ceremonially burdened with the sins of others and left to wander in the wilderness.

They have little difficulty finding some attorney willing to act as high priest in transferring their responsibility to someone else. They file suit with little or no merit, intending to force others to settle in order to avoid the unconscionable cost of defending themselves in court.

There is no dishonor in appealing to a court of law for either justice or protection. I refer to those who do so to justify themselves and shift their own responsibility to someone else.

Such efforts are successful often enough to permit self-serving lawyers to convince yet another client that he

need not honor his own commitments. The word *integrity* becomes tarnished by counsel and client alike. And there follows that long trail of acrimony with brother against brother over property or money.

Be careful lest you yourself become the goat and carry unseen spiritual burdens into the wilderness. More serious by far than the loss of property or money are the unseen spiritual penalties which accrue like interest on a debt which one day, in the eternal scheme of things, must surely be paid.

More painful to be the offender

I read somewhere of a young couple who settled in the wilderness. While the man cleared the land, his wife tended things about the homestead. Occasionally, the cow would get into the garden, and the husband would complain.

One day, as he left to get supplies, he said in a sarcastic way, “Do you think you’ll be able to keep the cow in while I am gone?” She thought she could; she would try.

That night a terrible storm arose. Frightened by thunder, the cow escaped into the woods. Several days later the husband returned to an empty cabin and an apologetic note: “A storm came up, and the cow got out. I am so sorry, but I think I can find her.”

He searched; neither had survived. The author concluded the incident with these words:

*Boys flying kites haul in their
white-winged birds;
You can call back your kites, but
you can't call back your words.
“Careful with fire” is good advice,
we know;
“Careful with words” is ten times
doubly so.
Thoughts unexpressed will often
fall back dead.
But God Himself can't kill them,
once they are said!*
(Will Carleton, *The First Settler's
Story*)

It is painful to be the victim. But have you not yet learned how much more painful it is to be the offender?

How precious is that spiritual balm of Gilead, for there is a spirit in man.

“John, leave it alone”

There are spiritual disorders and spiritual diseases that can cause intense suffering.

If you suffer from worry, from grief or shame or jealousy or disappointment or envy, from self-recrimination or self-justification, consider this lesson taught to me many years ago by a patriarch. He was as saintly a man as I have ever known. He was steady and serene, with a deep spiritual strength that many drew upon.

He knew just how to minister to others who were suffering. On a number of occasions I was present when he gave blessings to those who were sick or who were otherwise afflicted. His was a life of service, both to the Church and to his community.

He had presided over one of the missions of the Church and always looked forward to the missionary reunions. When he was older, he was not able to drive at night, and I offered to take him to the reunions. That modest gesture was repaid a thousandfold.

On one occasion, when the Spirit was right, he gave me a lesson for my life from an experience in his own. Although I thought I had known him, he told me things about his life I would not have supposed.

He grew up in a little community with a desire to make something of himself. He struggled to get an education.

He married his sweetheart, and presently everything was just right. He was well employed, with a bright future. They were deeply in love, and she was expecting their first child.

The night the baby was to be born, there were complications. The only

doctor was somewhere in the countryside tending to the sick.

After many hours of labor, the condition of the mother-to-be became desperate.

Finally the doctor was located. In the emergency, he acted quickly and soon had things in order. The baby was born and the crisis, it appeared, was over.

Some days later, the young mother died from the very infection that the doctor had been treating at another home that night.

John's world was shattered. Everything was not right now; everything was all wrong. He had lost his wife. He had no way to tend both the baby and his work.

As the weeks wore on, his grief festered. “That doctor should not be allowed to practice,” he would say. “He brought that infection to my wife. If he had been careful, she would be alive today.”

He thought of little else, and in his bitterness, he became threatening. Today, no doubt, he would have been pressed by many others to file a malpractice suit. And there are lawyers who would see in his pitiable condition only one ingredient—money!

But that was another day, and one night a knock came at his door. A little girl said simply, “Daddy wants you to come over. He wants to talk to you.”

“Daddy” was the stake president. A grieving, heartbroken young man went to see his spiritual leader.

This spiritual shepherd had been watching his flock and had something to say to him.

The counsel from that wise servant was simply, “John, leave it alone. Nothing you do about it will bring her back. Anything you do will make it worse. John, leave it alone.”

My friend told me then that this had been his trial—his Gethsemane. How could he leave it alone? Right was right! A terrible wrong had been committed and somebody must pay for it. It was a clear case.

But he struggled in agony to get hold of himself. And finally, he determined that whatever else the issues were, he should be obedient.

Obedience is powerful spiritual medicine. It comes close to being a cure-all.

He determined to follow the counsel of that wise spiritual leader. He would leave it alone.

Then he told me, "I was an old man before I understood! It was not until I was an old man that I could finally see a poor country doctor—overworked, underpaid, run ragged from patient to patient, with little medicine, no hospital, few instruments, struggling to save lives, and succeeding for the most part.

"He had come in a moment of crisis, when two lives hung in the balance, and had acted without delay.

"I was an old man," he repeated, "before I finally understood! I would have ruined my life," he said, "and the lives of others."

Many times he had thanked the Lord on his knees for a wise spiritual leader who counseled simply, "John, leave it alone."

And that is the counsel I bring again to you. If you have a festering grudge, if you are involved in an acrimonious dispute, "Behold what the scripture says [and it says it fifty times and more]—man shall not smite, neither shall he judge; for judgment is mine, saith the Lord, and vengeance is mine also, and I will repay" (Mormon 8:20).

I say, therefore, "John, leave it alone. Mary, leave it alone."

Prayer

If you need a transfusion of spiritual strength, then just ask for it. We call that prayer. Prayer is powerful spiritual medicine. The instructions for its use are found in the scriptures.

One of our sacred hymns carries this message:

Ere you left your room this morning,

Did you think to pray? . . .

When your soul was full of sorrow,

Balm of Gilead did you borrow

At the gates of day?

Oh, how praying rests the weary!

Prayer will change the night to day.

So, when life gets dark and dreary,

Don't forget to pray.

("Did You Think to Pray?" Hymns [1985], no. 140)

Forgive others and yourself

Some frustrations we must endure without really solving the problem. Some things that ought to be put in order are not put in order because we cannot control them. Things we cannot solve, we must survive.

If you resent someone for something he has done—or failed to do—forget it.

Too often the things we carry are petty, even stupid. If you are still upset after all these years because Aunt Clara didn't come to your wedding reception, why don't you grow up and forget it?

If you brood constantly over a loss or a past mistake, look ahead—settle it.

We call that forgiveness. Forgiveness is powerful spiritual medicine. To extend forgiveness, that soothing balm, to those who have offended you is to heal. And, more difficult yet, when the need is there, forgive yourself!

I repeat, "John, leave it alone. Mary, leave it alone."

Purge and cleanse and soothe your soul and your heart and your mind and that of others.

The peace of a cleansed soul

A cloud will then be lifted, a beam cast from your eye. There will come that peace which surpasseth understanding.

The Lord said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

"If ye love me, keep my commandments.

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

"Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" (John 14:15-18).

I bear witness of Him who is that comfort, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Elder Boyd K. Packer, for that impressive message.

We are grateful to the managers and operators of the many television and radio stations and cable systems for offering their facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this conference to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

The Mormon Youth Chorus will now sing "O Divine Redeemer."

The benediction will then be given by Elder John K. Carmack of the First Quorum of the Seventy. This conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The chorus sang "O Divine Redeemer."

Elder John K. Carmack offered the benediction.

FIRST DAY AFTERNOON SESSION

The second general session of the 157th Semiannual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, October 3, 1987, at 2:00 P.M. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

Music for this session was provided by a Primary children's choir from the Sandy region. Patricia Swanson conducted, and John Longhurst was at the organ.

At the beginning of the meeting, President Monson made the following remarks:

President Thomas S. Monson

My beloved brethren and sisters, President Ezra Taft Benson has asked that I conduct this, the second general session of the 157th Semiannual Gen-

eral Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We welcome all who are in attendance or who are participating by means of television, cable, or radio, and many who are watching in stake centers throughout the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico, to which the conference is being carried by satellite transmission.

At the same time we express our appreciation to the owners and operators of many radio and television stations and to the owners and operators of cable systems for their cooperation in making these proceedings available to members and friends of the Church in many countries.

We note that Elders Franklin D. Richards and F. Arthur Kay are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall.

The music for this session will be provided by a Primary children's choir from the Sandy Utah Region, under the

direction of Sister Patricia Swanson, with Brother John Longhurst at the organ.

The choir will begin this session by singing "Thirteenth Article of Faith: Search, Ponder, and Pray." The invocation will then be offered by Elder Angel Abrea, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Thirteenth Article of Faith: Search, Ponder, and Pray."

Elder Angel Abrea offered the invocation.

President Monson

The choir will now sing "We'll Bring the World His Truth," following which President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, will present the sustaining of authorities.

The choir sang "We'll Bring the World His Truth."

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Sustaining of General Authorities and general officers

I shall now present to you the General Authorities and general officers of the Church for your sustaining vote.

It is proposed that we sustain President Ezra Taft Benson as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Gordon B. Hinckley as First Counselor in the First Presidency; and Thomas S. Monson as Second Counselor in the First Presidency. Those in favor may manifest it. Those opposed may manifest it.

It is proposed that we sustain Marion G. Romney as President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, Howard W. Hunter as Acting President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, and the following as members of the Council: Marion G. Romney, Howard W. Hunter, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, and Joseph B. Wirthlin. Those in favor, please manifest it. Any who may feel opposed may manifest it.

It is proposed that we sustain the Counselors in the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

It was announced a few months ago that Elder Jack H. Goasland has been released as a President of the First Quorum of the Seventy so that he may serve as President of the British Isles-Africa Area of the Church. Those who wish to extend a vote of appreciation to Elder Goasland for his dedicated service may do so by the uplifted hand.

We sustain as the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy Dean L. Larsen, Richard G. Scott, Marion D. Hanks, William Grant Bangerter, Robert L. Backman, Hugh W. Pinnock, and James M. Paramore. Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed by the same sign.

It is proposed that we sustain all of the other General Authorities and general officers of the Church as at present constituted. Those in favor please manifest it. Any opposed.

President Benson, it appears that the voting has been unanimous in the affirmative.

President Monson

Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our first speaker at this session.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

"To every man is given a gift"

One of the great tragedies of life, it seems to me, is when a person classifies himself as someone who has no talents or gifts. When, in disgust or discouragement, we allow ourselves to reach depressive levels of despair because of our demeaning self-appraisal, it is a sad day for us and a sad day in the eyes of God. For us to conclude that we have no gifts when we judge ourselves by stature, intelligence, grade-point average, wealth, power, position, or external appearance is not only unfair but unreasonable.

From Doctrine and Covenants 46:11-12, we have this truth: "For all have not every gift given unto them; for there are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God.

"To some is given one, and to some is given another, that all may be profited thereby."

God has given each of us one or more special talents. Socrates made the famous statement, "The unexamined life is not worth living" ("Apology," *The Dialogues of Plato*, trans. Benjamin Jowett [Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952], p. 210). It is up to each of us to search for and build upon the gifts which God has given. We must remember that each of us is made in the image of God, that there are no unimportant persons. Everyone matters to God and to his fellowmen.

Less-conspicuous gifts

From the Book of Mormon, particularly 3 Nephi, chapters 11 through 26, when the Savior Jesus Christ showed himself to the people on the

American continent, many gifts are referred to as being very real and most useful. Taken at random, let me mention a few gifts that are not always evident or noteworthy but that are very important. Among these may be your gifts—gifts not so evident but nevertheless real and valuable.

Let us review some of these less-conspicuous gifts: the gift of asking; the gift of listening; the gift of hearing and using a still, small voice; the gift of being able to weep; the gift of avoiding contention; the gift of being agreeable; the gift of avoiding vain repetition; the gift of seeking that which is righteous; the gift of not passing judgment; the gift of looking to God for guidance; the gift of being a disciple; the gift of caring for others; the gift of being able to ponder; the gift of offering prayer; the gift of bearing a mighty testimony; and the gift of receiving the Holy Ghost.

We must remember that to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God. It is our right and responsibility to accept our gifts and to share them. God's gifts and powers are available to all of us.

Time will permit my emphasizing only a few of these God-given gifts.

The gift of pondering

As I study the scriptures, I am challenged and moved by the word *ponder* used so frequently in the Book of Mormon. Dictionaries say that *ponder* means to weigh mentally, think deeply about, deliberate, meditate.

When Jesus Christ came to teach the Nephites, he said, "Therefore, go ye unto your homes, and ponder upon the things which I have said, and ask of

the Father, in my name, that ye may understand, and prepare your minds for the morrow, and I come unto you again" (3 Nephi 17:3).

Moroni used this term as he closed his record. "Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, . . . ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, . . . and ponder it in your hearts" (Moroni 10:3).

By pondering, we give the Spirit an opportunity to impress and direct. Pondering is a powerful link between the heart and the mind. As we read the scriptures, our hearts and minds are touched. If we use the gift to ponder, we can take these eternal truths and realize how we can incorporate them into our daily actions.

Today, millions, at President Benson's encouragement, are reading the Book of Mormon, some for the first time, others as a regular habit. We must remind all that the fruits of this great book are the most beneficial when we ponder as we read.

Pondering is a progressive mental pursuit. It is a great gift to those who have learned to use it. We find understanding, insight, and practical application if we will use the gift of pondering.

Look to God for direction

How often have we ourselves said or have heard others exclaim in times of crisis or trouble, "I just don't know where to turn"?

If we will just use it, there is a gift available to all of us—the gift of looking to God for direction. Here is an avenue of strength, comfort, and guidance.

"Behold, I am the law, and the light. Look unto me, and endure to the end, and ye shall live; for unto him that endureth to the end will I give eternal life" (3 Nephi 15:9).

"Look to God and live." This is the wonderful promise given so often in the scriptures.

If we look to God for guidance, what do we look for in his children that we may be profited thereby? Some of

us seem to prefer the practice of looking for and pointing out the weaknesses of our associates. The gifts others have, not their failings, make it possible for all to profit thereby.

What a spiritual comfort and blessing it is to know that, if we look to our Savior Jesus Christ and endure to the end, eternal life and exaltation can be ours. Our capacity to see and comprehend is increased only in proportion to our willingness to look. God becomes more approachable as we look to him. Looking to God teaches us to serve and live without compulsion. Being a leader in the Church should never diminish our "looking to God" time.

Hear and heed the small voice

Still, small heavenly voices penetrate the heart with their gentle, convincing declarations:

"And it came to pass that while they were thus conversing one with another, they heard a voice as if it came out of heaven; and they cast their eyes round about, for they understood not the voice which they heard; and it was not a harsh voice, neither was it a loud voice; nevertheless, and notwithstanding it being a small voice it did pierce them that did hear to the center, inasmuch that there was no part of their frame that it did not cause to quake; yea, it did pierce them to the very soul, and did cause their hearts to burn" (3 Nephi 11:3).

Most often, hope, encouragement, and direction come from a soft, piercing voice.

Small voices are heard only by those who are willing to listen. Soft and small voice communications with our associates make priceless friendships possible. I am appreciative of people who find no need to raise their voices as they try to impress or convince. It seems most people who argue and shout have ceased listening to what the small voice could powerfully contribute.

We love the small voice of a child saying, "Mommy, Daddy, I love you."

How powerful is a small voice that knows how and when to say, "Thank you."

Think of the heavenly voice saying, Joseph, this is my beloved son. Hear him (see Joseph Smith—History 1:17).

It is heartwarming and reassuring to hear the small voice declare, "Be still and know" (D&C 101:16).

Remember that one of our greatest gifts is the small voice of the Holy Ghost whispering directions in our lives and making mighty testimonies possible.

The gift of calming others

What a majestic gift it is to be able to calm others! We thank God for those who are calm instead of contentious.

"For verily, verily I say unto you, he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another" (3 Nephi 11:29).

Contention is a tool of the adversary. Peace is a tool of our Savior. What a wonderful tribute we pay people when we describe them as being gentle, firm, and calm!

Contention stops progress. Love brings eternal progression.

Where contention prevails, there can be no united effort in any purposeful direction.

"Cease to contend one with another; cease to speak evil one of another" (D&C 136:23).

Argument and debate must be supplanted by calm discussion, study, listening, and negotiation.

The gospel is one of harmony, unity, and agreement. It must be presented in love, and with glad tidings, by those who are calm.

We should learn to talk together, listen together, pray together, decide together, and avoid all forms of possible contention. We must learn to curb anger. Satan knows that when conten-

tion begins, orderly progress is thwarted.

There has never been a time when it is more important for us as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to take a stand, remain firm in our convictions, and conduct ourselves with calm assurance under all circumstances. We must not be manipulated or enraged by those who subtly foster contention over issues of the day.

"Behold, this is not my doctrine, to stir up the hearts of men with anger, one against another; but this is my doctrine, that such things should be done away" (3 Nephi 11:30).

"Ye should live in peace one with another" (Mosiah 2:20). Those with the gift of being calm make lasting peace possible.

The gift of caring

How grateful we should be for families, friends, and organizations who care! They make life easier and more meaningful. They, too, reap rewards in their Christlike caring when they serve for the right reasons. Leaders on every level should be primarily interested in rendering compassionate caring for others.

"And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God" (Mosiah 2:17).

Our Savior cares for all of his sheep. What a tribute it is to be recognized as one who cares. Let me share with you a story about the quiet caring of an unusual person who was brought to my attention during the last few weeks.

"Best Scouter Ever"

Recently, during a twenty-fifth anniversary ward reunion in the Salt Lake Valley, a "Best Scouter Ever" award was presented. The special eve-

ning in the cultural hall, which included dinner as well as a fine program, drew many people back to the ward event because of the good feelings created over the past twenty-five years.

The person acting as master of ceremonies introduced a young man to make this special award. He looked to be about six feet four inches tall and well over two hundred pounds. He walked to the microphone and said, "We would now like to pay tribute to the best Scouter this ward has ever had."

Immediately names and faces of past Scout leaders jumped into the minds of those attending. Who would it be? There had been many great Scoutmasters in this ward. How could those in charge decide?

The tall, handsome young man mentioned many names of past Scout leaders and then said, "No, it is none of these, though they have all been great Scouters. Our ward 'Best Scouter Ever' award goes to someone who has worked in the Primary and as a Scout leader teaching boys for forty years. This individual has received the Silver Beaver Award, one of the highest awards given in Scouting, and the Silver Beehive Award, the highest award given by the Church in Scouting." Then with a voice that trembled slightly, he said, "Our 'Best Scouter Ever' recognition goes to Sister Jennie Verl Keefer." There came a hush over the audience, then knowing voices of approval, then a burst of applause that seemed to go on forever.

Sister Keefer was called up to the front. All present intently watched her quietly make her way. From the back of the room, this gray-haired bundle of energy hesitatingly came forward, her five-foot frame barely taller than those who were seated. Once at the microphone, the surprised recipient expressed a quiet and emotional, yet firm, thanks. She said between tears of gratitude it wasn't quite forty years she had served. It was only thirty-seven years. And then Sister Keefer proudly added

that during all her time of service, she had never had a bad boy.

Then the presenter asked all those whom Sister Keefer had ever taught and cared for to come to the stage. Here was the amazing thing. Men and boys started from the audience and filled the space behind this tiny woman. Big men, men in suits, doctors, bishops, presidents of companies, husbands, fathers holding babies, returned missionaries, contractors, computer workers, dentists, carpenters, and more. All these Scouts had been boys touched by the service and caring of this one noble and great woman—the best Scouter ever in the ward's entire history. She had the gift of caring, and here were some of the fruits of her labors. Generations yet to come will bless her name for what she has done. What a great gift have those who know how to care!

Develop and share gifts

"And to every man is given a gift" (D&C 46:11). This is true. God help us to recognize, develop, and share our gifts that all may profit thereby is my earnest hope and plea.

God does live. He does bless us with gifts. As we develop and share our God-given gifts and benefit from the gifts of those around us, the world can be a better place and God's work will move forward at a more rapid pace. To these truths I bear my testimony and leave my personal witness in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Marvin J. Ashton, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us. Thank you for that tribute to a Scouter, Brother Ashton.

We shall now be pleased to listen to two of the Brethren who were sustained as members of the First Quorum of the Seventy at April conference: first, from the land of the long white cloud, way down in New Zealand,

Elder Douglas J. Martin; and then, from our neighbor to the north, the

dominion of Canada, Elder Alexander B. Morrison.

Elder Douglas J. Martin

Heed the Spirit's whisperings to serve

My dear brethren and sisters, several years ago in general conference, I listened as President Kimball encouraged those who had reared their families to sell their camper vans, leave their grandchildren behind, and, for a year or two, give their lives to the service of the Savior Jesus Christ in the mission field. His comments struck a chord in me, and when I returned home to New Zealand, I repeated what he said to my wife.

We decided that we would make our plans to be ready to serve by retiring a little earlier than we otherwise might have, and to do this when I turned sixty in April 1987. We told our sons, and while they said little, they were attuned to and supported us in our desires. I likewise informed my business colleagues three or four years ahead of time.

As 1987 approached, all our plans were falling neatly into place. I anticipated several months of doing many pleasant things, of which I had dreamed for years. Then in time, our mission call would come.

One day in late March of this year, however, I received a phone call that resulted in our coming to general conference in Salt Lake City ahead of that planned retirement date in April.

How grateful we are that we heeded the whisperings of the Spirit when listening to President Kimball several years ago!

There must be many in different nations in the Church today who are of similar age to ourselves and whose circumstances likewise are the same as ours. Perhaps that same still small voice may also be whispering to you. As it comes, remember the promise

given in revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith, "And now, verily, verily, I say unto thee, put your trust in that Spirit which leadeth to do good" (D&C 11:12).

Service in the Philippines

Now my wife and I are in the service of the Lord and have been assigned to labor in the islands of the Philippines, Micronesia, and Guam. We are only one month old in our service and our lives have been completely turned around. We went from winter to summer in just twelve hours, and from New Zealand lamb to a delightful fish called *lapu lapu*. We met a typically slender, dark-haired Filipino stake president who quietly responded, "I am the same age as you, Elder Martin."

Soon after our arrival in the Philippines, we left for our first stake conference some one hundred kilometers north. Along the way, we saw the evidence of poverty among so many of those lovely people. This also was a new experience, and our hearts were heavy as we drove. We checked in at a small hotel in a distant town and soon discovered that it lacked many of the facilities we considered normal and were used to. Then suddenly, as we entered the immaculate chapel grounds, our spirits lifted. We were greeted by sunny, smiling faces and outstretched hands, spotless dresses and shirts of dazzling white. We were not strangers or foreigners, but fellow-citizens with these Saints and of the household of God. Soon to follow was my most unforgettable Philippine experience thus far.

As we moved along the line exchanging handshakes and greetings, one slight young woman shyly extended her arm. As I took it, I realized

that she had no hand on it or on her other arm. We exchanged smiles and moved along.

I next encountered this young sister after she and her husband were invited to speak as a young couple married within the last eighteen months in the Manila Temple. When she arose to speak, I noticed that in addition to being born without hands, this young woman had an artificial leg. As first she and then her husband spoke, there unfolded a most remarkable story about their lives.

The stake president was her father. Despite what to others may have been a handicap, but what to her must have been only a difficulty, this young sister had completed a full-term proselyting mission. She described in beautiful terms her feelings about going to the Manila Temple to be married. Hers was a talk of such maturity in gospel understanding and humility that it would have been difficult to equal anywhere in the Church. Then her husband stood and told of how he had written to his girlfriend after being in the mission field two months and later toward the end, of how he wanted to marry her in the Manila Temple when he returned home. There were no second thoughts, no change of heart when far removed, but instead, a growing understanding of the meaning and blessing of temple marriage for them both.

As they proudly showed us their baby after conference, and when we considered the splendid achievements of this young husband and wife, we recalled the Savior's words, "Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it" (Luke 11:28).

Missionary couples are blessed

Since then, we have been to different places in the Philippines. Everywhere we meet missionary couples, a number of whom are older than ourselves. The Johnsons, a couple from Fremont, California, labor in distant

Vigan. They have been in the Church only a handful of years since their baptism. In Vigan, the carabao, or water buffalo, and motor tricycles are almost the only mode of transport. The Johnsons have a beautiful attitude.

Whenever I meet and talk with missionary couples, I am filled with love and respect for their humility and desire to help the Filipino Saints. They regard their missions as one of the great opportunities to serve the Master in their lives. They always ask, "How many grandchildren have you?" Our response of eight is quickly overshadowed with "We have sixteen," or "twenty-three," or maybe "twenty-seven," and almost always with "And there are two we haven't seen yet." They miss their family and grandchildren, but don't complain. Instead, they look forward to that great homecoming reunion. Meanwhile, they are given all the love they can absorb from devoted Filipino Saints.

Like us, all these missionary couples are finding new purpose and fulfillment in their lives. Section 4 of the Doctrine and Covenants is taking on new meaning.

"Therefore, if ye have desires to serve God ye are called to the work;

"For behold the field is white already to harvest; and lo, he that thrusteth in his sickle with his might, the same layeth up in store that he perisheth not, but bringeth salvation to his soul" (vs. 3-4).

I pray that couples whose families are grown may indeed listen to and obey the Spirit that prompts the call to prepare and serve the Lord in the mission field. I know that this is the Lord's church, that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, and that President Benson is God's prophet on earth today. I am grateful to be a member of the Church and for all the blessings it has brought into my life and the lives of my family. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Alexander B. Morrison

Come unto Christ

The prophets proclaim and the scriptures sweetly certify that all men and women, if they are to achieve true happiness, must "come unto Christ, and be perfected in him" (Moroni 10:32). Indeed, that is the very purpose of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—to invite, encourage, and assist all of God's children, both living and dead, to come to Christ and "lay hold upon every good gift" (Moroni 10:30), that "ye may receive a remission of your sins, and be filled with the Holy Ghost, that ye may be numbered with my people who are of the house of Israel" (3 Nephi 30:2).

That is why we do missionary work. That divine purpose explains why the risen Savior proclaimed to his chosen Apostles that they, after receiving the Holy Ghost, should be witnesses unto him "both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

The gospel light is bursting upon Africa

That phrase, "unto the uttermost part of the earth," was very much in my mind a few weeks ago as I was privileged to accompany Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve to a great, green land I dearly love—the continent of Africa. Under authority of the holy Apostleship, Elder Ashton dedicated two west African countries—Liberia and Ivory Coast—and one in central Africa—Zaire—to the work of the Lord and the preaching of the fulness of the gospel of Christ. Those countries join others in so-called "Black Africa," where the great work of bringing souls to Christ has already commenced. The time of harvest has come. We are witnessing the dawning of a new day, the beginning of a new era in Africa.

In his great hymn of the Restoration, Parley P. Pratt, an Apostle of earlier days, portrayed with poetic passion his glorious vision of this great latter-day work:

*The morning breaks, the shadows
flee;
Lo, Zion's standard is unfurled!
The dawning of a brighter
day . . .
Majestic rises on the world.
("The Morning Breaks," Hymns
[1985], no. 1)*

How fully those words apply to Africa! The light of the fulness of the gospel of Christ, like a beam of transcendent clarity and effulgent beauty, is bursting majestic upon those ancient lands and peoples. It dispels the spiritual gloom and drives away the shadows of error and superstition which long have lain over the "dark continent." It falls on a prepared people—a people prepared by the Spirit of God. The words of Alma, uttered in a different context, come to mind:

"The Lord did pour out his Spirit on all the face of the land to prepare the minds of the children of men, or to prepare their hearts to receive the word which should be taught among them. . . .

"That they might not be hardened against the word, that they might not be unbelieving, and go on to destruction, but that they might receive the word with joy, and as a branch be grafted into the true vine, that they might enter into the rest of the Lord their God" (Alma 16:16–17).

The African people are prepared

Our black African brothers and sisters truly "receive the word with joy." Anxious to learn and quick to understand, attentive and responsive, spiritually sensitive, thirsty for the living water and hungry for the bread of

life, they long have been in preparation for this day. If the price of spirituality be suffering and affliction, travail and sorrow, our humble African brothers and sisters are well prepared to receive and obey the fulness of the gospel of Christ. The vast majority are very poor; famine and pestilence dog their steps and visit their homes regularly. Opportunities for education and employment are extremely limited.

But through it all they are a happy people, generous and loving, anxious to learn and eager to obey the commandments of Christ. Among them, there is a great understanding of the importance of families. If one works, a dozen eat. Many in more technologically advanced societies have forgotten what the simplest of African peasants well knows: families are the fundamental building blocks upon which any society must be erected, if it is long to endure.

Pioneering spirit still lives

We Latter-day Saints take justifiable pride in our great pioneer heritage—in those hearty, courageous pioneers who, under conditions of great hardship and sacrifice, laid the foundation for further growth of the Church. How fortunate we are that the pioneering spirit lives on today! In every corner of Africa, there are faithful expatriate members of the Church, non-Africans who live and work there and are believing and behaving Latter-day Saints. They hail from many lands.

I testify they are not there by chance. As part of God's great and grand design for growth, they have been placed on the frontiers of the Church by divine providence, to serve as "nursing fathers" and "nursing mothers" (1 Nephi 21:23)—foci of strength around which the Church can grow. They are the right people at the right place and at the right time in history. Theirs is a mission of love and service.

Increasingly, they are being joined by wonderful missionaries, many of them retired couples from

North America and Europe, rich in Church experience and anxious to serve in a spirit of high adventure and sacrifice. The need for additional missionary couples to work in Africa is great, the rewards of such service sublime and eternal.

God loves all his children

The bursting of the gospel light upon Africa is a great manifestation and testimony of God's love for all of his children. In the words of the Nephi prophet Ammon, He is "mindful of every people, whatsoever land they may be in; yea, he numbereth his people, and his bowels of mercy are over all the earth" (Alma 26:37).

We know from the testimony of Peter that "God is no respecter of persons:

"But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35).

Nephi recorded that "the Lord esteemeth all flesh in one; he that is righteous is favored of God" (1 Nephi 17:35), for "he doeth that which is good among the children of men; and he doeth nothing save it be plain unto the children of men; and he inviteth them *all* to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth *none* that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; . . . and *all* are alike unto God" (2 Nephi 26:33; italics added).

"He gathereth his children from the four quarters of the earth; and he numbereth his sheep, and they know him; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd; and he shall feed his sheep, and in him they shall find pasture" (1 Nephi 22:25).

The gleanings and gathering of the children of God in Africa is just beginning. In the words of the Prophet Joseph, it will go forward "boldly, nobly, and independent, till . . . [the truth of God has] swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the

work is done" (*History of the Church*, 4:540). Of that I humbly testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elders Douglas J. Martin and Alexander B. Morrison have just addressed us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "I Am a Child

of God," following which Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone of the First Quorum of the Seventy will speak to us.

The choir and congregation sang "I Am a Child of God."

Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone

A champion of youth

In 1968 at the MIA June conference, Elder Harold B. Lee gave a marvelous talk which he entitled *A Leader—The Champion of Youth* (Salt Lake City: Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association, 1968). Since having heard and read the talk, I would like not only to address my remarks to that subject but to qualify as champion of and for the youth.

I recall the story of a teacher helping a young student on with his galoshes. They seemed smaller than his shoes. She got down on both knees and pushed, pulled, and stretched one boot until she finally got it on. Then she went through the same struggle and finally got the other one on. As she finally finished pulling it on, he said, "These are not my galoshes." The teacher pulled and struggled and finally got them off. Then he said, "They are my sister's, but my mother made me wear them."

Some who work with youth may feel that they do not "fit" the calling. It is not always comfortable to work with the youth, but for me, as God is my witness, I love them.

At an encampment in Finland, the Scouts decided I should know how to sauna. Finns heat their saunas to 170 or 180 degrees. President Olli Roto, the stake president who was teaching me, along with the Scouts, who were experts, made a small bundle of birch branches. When we really began to

perspire, he took the bundle of birch leaves and swatted me all over my back, chest, and legs, and said, "That brings the blood to the surface." I said, "It works." Then we ran down and dove into the Baltic Sea, then went back into the sauna. It's amazing what we learn when we're working with youth.

Help wayward youth

Elder Orson F. Whitney said: "You parents of the wilful and the wayward! Don't give them up. Don't cast them off. They are not utterly lost. The Shepherd will find his sheep. They were his before they were yours—long before he entrusted them to your care; and you cannot begin to love them as he loves them. They have but strayed in ignorance from the Path of Right, and God is merciful to ignorance. Only the fullness of knowledge brings the fullness of accountability. Our Heavenly Father is far more merciful, infinitely more charitable, than even the best of his servants, and the Everlasting Gospel is mightier in power to save than our narrow finite minds can comprehend" (in *Conference Report*, Apr. 1929, p. 110).

Elder Lee in his talk referred to Horace Mann, who was "called to dedicate a great school for boys. . . . He said, 'If this school costing all the millions that it has cost is able to save but one boy, it is worth all that it has cost.' One of his friends said to him after the

meeting, 'You let your enthusiasm run away with you, didn't you? You don't mean that the millions we have spent here would be worth it all if we saved just one boy.' Horace Mann looked at him and replied, 'No, my friend, it wouldn't be too much to spend if that one boy were my son.' "

Then Elder Lee with great power and emotion said: "I want to tell you it wouldn't be too much if that were one of my grandsons. They're precious to me and some of them are stubborn, hard-headed, and rascals just like their grandfather, hard to manage and difficult. If somebody, please, God, would just steer them past this dangerous age so that maybe they will find themselves like someone tried to help me when I was at that dangerous age, I would be most grateful" (*A Leader—The Champion of Youth*, p. 3).

A powerful force for good

The youth of today are wonderful. Elder L. Tom Perry, the Utah South Area Presidency, and the Young Women presidency recently held meetings for all the seminary students in the Salt Lake area. In Salt Lake City, youth filled the Tabernacle, the Assembly Hall, and the Salt Palace auditorium, and 4,000 youth crowded the grounds of Temple Square and listened to the public address system. We had 23,000 young people in the Marriott Center at BYU, 3,200 at Dixie College, and over 3,000 at Snow College. The total count exceeded the number of seminary students enrolled by 5,000.

We invited this marvelous modern army of Israel to put on the armor of God, to stand for truth, and to become a marvelous, forceful influence against immorality, drugs, and indulgence. The response has been wonderful. The youth of the Church are one of the most powerful forces for good on the earth today.

A chosen generation

It is not difficult to understand why the great God in heaven has reserved these special spirits for the final work of the kingdom prior to his millennial reign.

My heart, like Enoch's, seems to swell "wide as eternity" (Moses 7:41) as I consider what our youth and those being born in this time will accomplish. This generation will face trials and troubles that will exceed those of their pioneer forebears. Our generation has had some periods of respite from the foe. The future generation will have little or none. But their great faith in the Lord will give them needed strength.

Our youth influence their peer groups for good. President Wilford Woodruff said in a general conference in 1898, "Concerning the work of the dead, the Prophet Joseph Smith said that in the resurrection those who had been worked for would fall at the feet of those who had done their work, kiss their feet, embrace their knees and manifest the most exquisite gratitude." I believe our youth will rescue an entire generation. Their work will bring these same feelings and emotions from parents and grandparents of those spiritually rescued.

I believe the promise of Ammon to his brethren applies to the youth today. In the 26th chapter of Alma we read: "Yea, they shall not be beaten down by the storm at the last day; yea, neither shall they be harrowed up by the whirlwinds; but when the storm cometh they shall be gathered together in their place, that the storm cannot penetrate to them; yea, neither shall they be driven with fierce winds whithersoever the enemy listeth to carry them.

"But behold, they are in the hands of the Lord of the harvest, and they are his; and he will raise them up at the last day" (vs. 6-7).

This is a chosen generation.

Love your brothers and sisters

Some time back, I was in Raymond, Alberta, Canada. Debbie, a beautiful teenage girl, spoke at stake conference. Among other things she said, "I want to tell you about a friend I had when I went through high school." She said she felt homely but her friend told her she was beautiful. When there were dances, he would dance with her. He built her up. She said: "He was my very best friend. He was handsome and popular, and he lived his religion. I never heard him swear, he never violated the Word of Wisdom, and he faithfully went to church."

"It was a good thing that he was a strong member of the Church," she said, "because I tailed him everywhere he went. I did what he did, and I would have followed him anywhere. I cannot express the love and respect I have for him. I was not his girlfriend, but I sure loved him. He is on a mission now, and we write regularly. He still loves me and is still my best friend. He is my older brother."

What a blessing it is to the Church when brothers and sisters are filled with that kind of love and respect for each other!

Divine nature and roles of young men and women

In April 1945 Elder Harold B. Lee talked about our young men in the military. He said, "I listened to a doctor recently who said that the medical journals reported that the boys who had become mentally unbalanced in large majority [in World War II], were the boys who had broken homes, whose wives or sweethearts had been unfaithful at home." Then he said this: "We have heard much in this conference about our boys. We have heard but little about our girls" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1945, p. 165).

Thank God for great women like President Dwan Young and President Ardeth Kapp, who are great champions of youth. These are wonderful, noble,

great women with vision and understanding.

Women are endowed with special traits and attributes that come trailing down through eternity from a divine mother. A young woman has special God-given feelings about charity, love, and obedience. Coarseness and vulgarity are contrary to their natures. They have a modifying, softening influence on young men. Young women were not foreordained to do what priesthood holders do. Theirs is a sacred, God-given role, and the traits they received from heavenly mother are equally as important as those given to the young men.

Sometimes misguided women or men direct our youth away from their divinely appointed role. Worlds without end, men will never be able to bear children. Every young woman may be a procreator with God and carry a little one under her breast either in this life or in the eternal worlds. Motherhood is a wonderful, priceless blessing, no matter what all the world may say. Priesthood ordination is a blessing to men. There are serious consequences when either motherhood or priesthood is abused or laid aside.

Church leaders are champions of youth

All of the prophets have been champions of youth, but I think our beloved prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, stands at the pinnacle of those who love, defend, and champion our youth. Who will ever forget President Benson's marvelous recent counsel to the young men and the young women of the Church? Both of these talks have been distributed to the Church in pamphlet form (see *To Young Men of the Priesthood* [1986] and *To the Young Women of the Church* [1986]).

President Gordon B. Hinckley, during the February 1985 Diamond Jubilee of Scouting in America, said:

"What a wonderful thing it is to plant in the heart of a boy the compelling axiom—'Be prepared.' Be prepared for what? For tying knots, yes.

Knot tying is Tenderfoot duty, but it is important. In one sense this whole business of living and doing is one of tying knots, the kind of knots that will hold and not give under stress and strain. We see all around us the evidence of failure, of knots that slipped when they should have held. They are evident in career failures, in business failures, in professional failures, in marriage failures. To be able to tie the right knot for the right reason, for the right occasion, and to have it hold against every stress is a part of the process of being prepared" (Boy Scouts Program, 10 Feb. 1985).

And President Thomas S. Monson's entire life has been committed to the youth. He sits on the National Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America. His talks over the years have reflected a special love for youth. Who will ever forget his talk " 'Run, Boy, Run' " ? (in Conference Report, Oct. 1982, pp. 25-29; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, pp. 19-21).

Donald Dowdle, a great friend of mine, sat in a meeting years back. A young counselor in the stake presidency, Thomas S. Monson, had just concluded speaking. The old patriarch in the stake stood up in the congregation and said, "Thomas Monson will sit in the Quorum of Twelve Apostles." Then he sat down. Indeed, Thomas Monson would and has. And what a towering champion of youth he has been!

That great American philosopher Yogi Berra said, "Good pitching is better than good batting, and vice versa." He also said, "If you don't know where you are going, you are liable to end up some place else."

Lord Baden-Powell's message to Scouts

I think Lord Baden-Powell was endowed from on high with a fire burning in his bosom for the youth. He wanted them to know where they were going. He was another great champion of youth. He wrote what he called his

farewell message to Scouts of the world:

"Dear Scouts:

"If you have ever seen the play 'Peter Pan' you will remember how the pirate chief was always making his dying speech because he was afraid that possibly when the time came for him to die he might not have time to get it off his chest. It is much the same with me, and so, although I am not at this moment dying, I shall be doing so one of these days and I want to send you a parting word of good-bye.

"Remember, it is the last you will ever hear from me, so think it over.

"I have had a most happy life and I want each one of you to have as happy a life too.

"I believe that God put us in this jolly world to be happy and enjoy life. Happiness doesn't come from being rich, nor merely from being successful in your career, nor by self-indulgence. One step towards happiness is to make yourself healthy and strong while you are a boy, so that you can be useful and so can enjoy life when you are a man.

"Nature study will show you how full of beautiful and wonderful things God has made the world for you to enjoy. Be contented with what you have got and make the best of it. Look on the bright side of things instead of the gloomy one.

"But the real way to get happiness is by giving out happiness to other people. Try and leave this world a little better than you found it and when your turn comes to die, you can die happy in feeling that at any rate you have not wasted your time but have *done your best*. 'Be Prepared' in this way, to live happy and to die happy—stick to your Scout promise always—even after you have ceased to be a boy—and God help you to do it. Your friend, Robert Baden-Powell" (in *Baden-Powell*, E. E. Reynolds [New York: Oxford University Press, 1957], p. 264).

Prepare to do most important work

Now to my young friends also, from one who loves you:

What you do now, today, may have far-reaching consequences. I believe today's Aaronic Priesthood and young women of the Church will lead the youth of the world through the most trying time in history. It is time for the Aaronic Priesthood to come of age. The rod of iron leading to the tree of life for you, our young men, may well be the implementation of the complete and full work of the Aaronic Priesthood. As we marshal your forces in your true identity as deacons, teachers, and priests in the holy Aaronic Priesthood, we mobilize an army of Israel such as has never been known before in the Church. Your numbers are legion. I believe you will be expected to perform the most important work in this dispensation, with the exception of the work done by the Prophet Joseph Smith.

President Spencer W. Kimball said: "When I read Church history, I am amazed at the boldness of the early brethren as they went out into the world. They seemed to find a way. Even in persecution and hardship, they went and opened doors which evidently had been allowed to sag on their hinges and many of them to close. . . .

"These men of valor began to walk the earth with dignity and honor, with mantles on their shoulders, and keys in their hands and love in their hearts" (Regional Representatives' seminar, 4 Apr. 1974, p. 9).

My faithful young friends, you can match their boldness stride for stride. You can walk with equal dignity and honor, with the mantle on your shoulders and keys in your hands and love in your hearts.

Then we will exclaim as did Ammon: "Therefore, let us glory . . . in the Lord; yea, we will rejoice, for our joy is full; yea, we will praise our God forever. Behold, who can glory too much in the Lord? Yea, who can say too much of his great power, and of his mercy, and of his long-suffering towards the children of men? Behold, I say unto you, I cannot say the smallest part which I feel" (Alma 26:16).

I know of no more glorious work. As God is my witness, I love it with every particle of my heart and soul, and I love him with even more than my life. I hold it a high honor to walk by your side as a true and loyal champion of youth.

God bless you, youth of the noble birthright, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone of the First Quorum of the Seventy has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

The assurance that God lives

What John and Paul wrote about God's creations and the plurality of worlds, the restored gospel grandly affirms, declaring that "worlds without number" have been created (Moses 1:33; see also John 1:3; Hebrews 1:2, 11:3; D&C 93:10). These gospel truths are very significant assurances for us, situated as we are on this tiny "speck of sand" at the outer edge of a minor gal-

axy, the Milky Way. Without the gospel's fulness, we would appear to be living during one tick of the geological clock and in the midst of unexplained vastness.

Nevertheless, our focus is to be on this planet, just as the Lord told Moses:

"But only an account of this earth, and the inhabitants thereof, give I unto you. For behold, there are many worlds that have passed away. . . . Innumerable are they unto man; but all things

are numbered unto me, for they are mine and I know them" (Moses 1:35).

Enoch, to whom the Lord revealed so much, praised God amid His vast creations, exclaiming reassuredly, "Yet thou art there" (Moses 7:30; see also Jeremiah 10:12).

This same special assurance can see each of us through all the seasons and circumstances of our lives. A universal God is actually involved with our small, individual universes of experience! In the midst of His vast dominions, yet He numbers us, knows us, and loves us perfectly (see Moses 1:35, John 10:14).

Know God and his plan for us

Along with knowing that God is there, it is equally vital to know what He is like, including His perfected attributes of justice and mercy. More mortals die in ignorance of God's true character than die in actual defiance of Him. Belief in the goodness and power of God is greatly facilitated by understanding His plan of salvation with its crucial allowance for mankind's moral agency, real moral agency—with real mistakes and with real consequences! His plan includes real tests, real dilemmas, real anguish, and real joy.

Even though he knew he had been called personally by a personal God, Enoch wrestled with feelings of personal inadequacy (see Moses 6:31). Enoch also wept over the human condition, but he was told, "Lift up your heart, and be glad; and look" (Moses 7:44). If Enoch had not looked and been spiritually informed, he would have seen the human condition in isolation from the grand reality. If God were not there, Enoch's "Why?" would have become an unanswered scream of despair!

At first, Enoch refused "to be comforted" (Moses 7:44). Finally, he saw God's plan, the later coming of the Messiah in the meridian of time, and the eventual triumph of God's pur-

poses. Enoch saw how the throne of God features justice and mercy (see Moses 7:31).

Significantly, the consequences of misused human agency were explained to Enoch: mortals had been given a commandment to "love one another," yet those then had become a people "without affection" who "hate their own blood" (Moses 7:33).

We, too, can "refuse to be comforted." We can wrongly charge God with that large portion of human misery which is actually caused by mortals' failure to keep His commandments. Or, like Enoch, we can be intellectually meek enough to look and to accept the truths about God's being there and about His personality and plans.

God may reveal himself directly

Alas, when the Lord gives us "line upon line" and "precept upon precept" about Himself and His plans, many ignore these great gifts. Instead of lines, some demand paragraphs and even pages. When God provides "here a little, and there a little" (Isaiah 28:10), some want a lot—now!

Even so, the pages of scripture rustle with reassurances, such as were tenderly given to Abraham:

"And he said unto me: My son, my son (and his hand was stretched out), behold I will show you all these. And he put his hand upon mine eyes, and I saw those things which his hands had made, which were many; and they multiplied before mine eyes, and I could not see the end thereof" (Abraham 3:12).

Whatever the scale of things, the Lord is there! Whether in speaking of how sun, moon, and stars show "God moving in his majesty and power" (D&C 88:47) or in describing the lilies of the field as being better arrayed than Solomon in all his finery, who is better qualified than the Creator to make such descriptions of the heaven and such comparisons between raiment and flowers? (see Matthew 6:28–29).

A solitary Samaritan woman was one of the very first to learn from His lips that Jesus was in fact the Messiah. She marveled how Jesus "told me all things that ever I did" (John 4:29). Jesus had been there in her life for a long time. To hasten recognition, the resurrected Jesus told Peter where to lower his fishing nets to harvest a particular school of fish (see John 21:6-8). Deity called Samuel, Mary Magdalene, Saul, and Joseph Smith by their first names (see 1 Samuel 3:4, John 20:16, Acts 9:4, Joseph Smith—History 1:17).

Macrolove with such micromanifestations!

God may reveal himself by chastening us

God is not only there in the mildest expressions of His presence, but also in those seemingly harsh expressions. For example, when truth "cutteth . . . to the very center" (1 Nephi 16:2), this may signal that spiritual surgery is underway, painfully severing pride from the soul.

God is there also when true but hard words break open the chained door of a mind taken over by a single obsession. Sometimes, brothers and sisters, instead of the mind's wrapping itself around an idea, an idea wraps itself tightly around the mind—another way in which "pride compasseth . . . about as [with] a chain" (Psalm 73:6).

The Lord is truly there to chastise those whom He loves, including the spiritually preeminent. The brother of Jared for too long had failed to pray (see Ether 2:14). Even the good can become careless without the Lord's being there to chasten. Later, the chastened brother of Jared saw Christ! (see Ether 3:13-16).

God has foreseen all things

What we mortals encounter as the unforeseen, God has already seen, such as how the oil deposits of this earth would shape the latter-day conflicts

among nations. God's "is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations" (Isaiah 4:26). He likewise foresaw all the awful famines, some resulting from the unwise, unnecessary erosions of precious topsoil. He surely foresaw the terrible persecutions of the Jews. Having created the earth, He has anticipated the impact of continental drifts on the frequency and intensity of latter-day earthquakes. He who analogized that "the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest" (Isaiah 57:20) also knows where and when, in latter days, the seas' tidal waves will heave themselves savagely "beyond their bounds" (D&C 88:90).

Without the revelations, however, the answers as to the why of our existence and the why of human suffering would elude even the best intellectual excursions:

"Behold, great and marvelous are the works of the Lord. How unsearchable are the depths of the mysteries of him; and it is impossible that man should find out all his ways. And no man knoweth of his ways save it be revealed unto him; wherefore, brethren, despise not the revelations of God" (Jacob 4:8).

The gospel helps us understand life's purpose

The ultimate human questions are really the "why" questions! The gospel is positively "brim" with answers to the "why" queries concerning human purpose. Gospel truths are the vital integrating and ordering truths, not only telling us of "things as they really are" but also "as they really will be" (Jacob 4:13).

"All things denote there is a God"

No wonder we should "live in thanksgiving daily" (Alma 34:38) because "all things denote there is a God; yea, even the earth, and all things that are upon the face of it, yea, and its motion, yea, and also all the planets which move in their regular form do

witness that there is a Supreme Creator" (Alma 30:44).

Furthermore, "all things which have been given of God from the beginning of the world, unto man, are the typifying of [Christ]" (2 Nephi 11:4).

Providing adequate oxygen for us on this planet is a form of God's "lending [us] breath," as in King Benjamin's litany (Mosiah 2:21). God keeps this planet habitable, "preserving [us] from day to day" (v. 21). Given all He has done, no wonder we are, comparatively, "unprofitable servants" (v. 21).

Jesus' continual service to us

Even given our unprofitability, our Redeemer is still there. In fact, Jesus' transcending service to us stretches back to premortal days. When God brought before us His plan of salvation, Jesus was there, volunteering meekly and humbly, "Here am I, send me" (Abraham 3:27), saying, "Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever" (Moses 4:2). The Father, ever anxious that all be free to choose, gave Lucifer opportunity to campaign:

"Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor" (Moses 4:1; see also Abraham 3:27, Isaiah 6:8).

Note the ego dripping from only three lines: two *me*'s and four *I*'s. Those vertical pronouns are usually accompanied by unbending knees, because the proud, as in Jesus' parable, trust "in themselves that they [are] righteous, and [despise] others" (Luke 18:9).

Long ago, it was also meek, loving, and redeeming Jesus who anticipated the need to take the gospel to those in the spirit prison, including the wicked of Noah's time when the "chosen hath pled before [God's] face" (Moses 7:39). Jesus has been there as our long-suffering Shepherd for ages.

Mild expressions of God's presence

We need not be atop high mountains or in sacred groves for God to be there. God is also there even in the mildest expressions of His presence.

Conscience permits the Lord to be there, whether in early warnings or final warnings. He gives us a flash of insight or a twinge of remembrance, pulling us back from a precipice or prompting us to do good. Conscience can warn that we are only falling further behind by insisting on getting even. Conscience warns us not to sink our cleats too deeply in mortal turf, which is so dangerously artificial.

"Yet thou art there!"

In a hundred ways, Deity will always be there, just as Enoch testified, including in our suffering.

Some among us, desperately ill, know the loneliness of a hospital room by night when loved ones have departed or are "sleeping for sorrow" (Luke 22:45), unable to "watch" another "hour" (Matthew 26:40). The night magnifies the stillness of the hospital corridors, as these individuals brush against the veil of death. Even so, whether or not "appointed unto death" (D&C 42:48), these faithful are in His hands. They can and do know of God, "Yet thou art there!"

Widows and widowers whose deprivation stretches into years, when the caress of dimmed memories is insufficient, sometimes sob to see purpose in it all. However, they will later know moments when the Lord shall "wipe away tears from off all faces" (Isaiah 25:8). Meanwhile, they can truly testify, "Yet thou art there!"

Wives and husbands whose lives are shattered by the betrayal of a deserting spouse may feel forsaken or drenched by injustice. Yet they, too, can know, "Thou art there," by responding to Jesus' invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that . . . are heavy laden" (Matthew 11:28).

Parents, striving to reach and to rescue the truculent teenager, experiencing disappointment after disappointment and wondering when it all will end, can be assured, "Yet thou art there!"

To those of you who so suffer and who, nevertheless, so endure and so testify by the eloquence of your examples, we salute you in Christ! Please forgive those of us who clumsily try to comfort you. We know from whence your true comfort comes. God's "bosom" is there to be leaned upon.

Jesus' promised peace is a special form of rest amid unrest. Even when other things are in commotion, His disciples can still stand (see D&C 45:26, 32). His disciples know the Lord is there in latter-days. "I am he who led the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; and my arm is stretched out in the last days, to save my people Israel" (D&C 136:22).

We can confidently cast our cares upon the Lord because, through the agonizing events of Gethsemane and Calvary, atoning Jesus is already familiar with our sins, sicknesses, and sorrows (see 1 Peter 5:7, 2 Nephi 9:21, Alma 7:11-12). He can carry them now because He has successfully carried them before! (see 2 Nephi 9:8).

God loves us perfectly

Yes, God's creations are "stretched out," but so is his redeeming arm (see Exodus 6:6, Psalm 136:6).

He who is ever there is perfect in His love. Moreover, "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9; see also Isaiah 64:4).

The Restoration's assurances

The Restoration is thus filled with such abundant assurances about God,

about life, about the universe, and about us.

As you and I dash about the wonder-filled landscape of the Restoration, exclaiming and observing, it should not surprise us that our first impressions are less than definitive. Little wonder that some of us mistake a cluster of trees for the whole forest or that, in some of our joyful exclamations, there are some unintended exaggerations.

As we rove amid the tall timber of truth, the pervasive scent of pine is inevitably upon us. Our pockets are bulging with souvenir rocks and cones. And we are filled with childish glee. There is no way to survey it all—in one tour or several. Besides, further familiarization will only increase our wonder. After all, One not given to hyperbole used the word *marvelous* to describe the Restoration!

Further reconnoitering, in fact, produces a hushed expectancy because, one day, the faithful will have it all. "The day cometh that . . . all things shall be revealed unto the children of men which ever have been . . . and which ever will be even unto the end of the earth" (2 Nephi 27:11).

Like Moses, Nephi was atop "exceedingly high mountains" and "beheld great things . . . too great for man" (2 Nephi 4:25). Like Enoch, Nephi cited the attributes of God, who is there amid worlds without number, declaring:

"O how great the goodness of our God!" (2 Nephi 9:10).

"O the greatness of the mercy of our God!" (2 Nephi 9:19).

"O how great the plan of our God!" (2 Nephi 9:13).

Gladly and firmly, I add my small voice of witness to these wonderful declarations of adoration, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen!

The choir sang "Faith" without announcement.

President Monson

We have just heard from Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Council of the

Twelve Apostles, followed by the choir singing "Faith."

Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now be our concluding speaker for this session.

Elder James E. Faust

You may have heard the story, and it is a story, of the disruptive, noisy boys in a Sunday School class who were asked by their exasperated teacher why they bothered to attend Sunday School. One of the more impudent boys replied, "We came to see you perform a miracle."

The teacher walked slowly over to the boy and menacingly responded, "We don't perform miracles here, but we do cast out devils!"

Satan is the great imitator

For some reason I feel impressed to speak today against the devil and his angels—the source and mainspring of all evil. I do so prayerfully, because Satan is not an enlightening subject. I consider him to be the great imitator.

I think we will witness increasing evidence of Satan's power as the kingdom of God grows stronger. I believe Satan's ever-expanding efforts are some proof of the truthfulness of this work. In the future the opposition will be both more subtle and more open. It will be masked in greater sophistication and cunning, but it will also be more blatant. We will need greater spirituality to perceive all of the forms of evil and greater strength to resist it. But the disappointments and setbacks to the work of God will be temporary, for the work will go forward (see D&C 65:2).

Avoid evil; study its consequences

It is not good practice to become intrigued by Satan and his mysteries. No good can come from getting close to evil. Like playing with fire, it is too

easy to get burned: "The knowledge of sin tempteth to its commission" (in Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939], p. 373). The only safe course is to keep well distanced from him and any of his wicked activities or nefarious practices. The mischief of devil worship, sorcery, casting spells, witchcraft, voodooism, black magic, and all other forms of demonism should be avoided like the plague.

However, Brigham Young said that it is important to "study . . . evil, and its consequences" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, comp. John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1941], p. 257). Since Satan is the author of all evil in the world, it would therefore be essential to realize that he is the influence behind the opposition to the work of God. Alma stated the issue succinctly: "For I say unto you that whatsoever is good cometh from God, and whatsoever is evil cometh from the devil" (Alma 5:40).

Know Satan's methods

My principal reason for choosing this subject is to help young people by warning them, as Paul said, "lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices" (2 Corinthians 2:11). We hope that young people, unfamiliar with the sophistries of the world, can keep themselves free of Satan's enticements and deceitful ways. I personally claim no special insight into Satan's methods, but I have at times been able to identify his influence and his actions in my life and in the lives of others. When I

was on my first mission, Satan sought to divert me from my future path and, if possible, to destroy my usefulness in the Lord's work. That was almost fifty years ago, and I still remember how reasonable his entreaties seemed.

Satan is the master deceiver

Who has not heard and felt the enticings of the devil? His voice often sounds so reasonable and his message so easy to justify. It is an enticing, intriguing voice with dulcet tones. It is neither hard nor discordant. No one would listen to Satan's voice if it sounded harsh or mean. If the devil's voice were unpleasant, it would not entice people to listen to it.

Shakespeare wrote, "The prince of darkness is a gentleman" (*King Lear*, act 3, scene 4, line 143), and "the devil can cite Scripture for his purpose" (*The Merchant of Venice*, act 1, scene 3, line 95). As the great deceiver, Lucifer has marvelous powers of deception. As Paul said to the Corinthians, "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14; see also 2 Nephi 9:9).

Some of Satan's most appealing lines are "Everyone does it"; "If it doesn't hurt anybody else, it's all right"; "If you feel all right about it, it's OK"; or "It's the 'in' thing to do." These subtle entreaties make Satan the great imitator, the master deceiver, the arch counterfeiter, and the great forger.

We all have an inner braking system that will stop us before we follow Satan too far down the wrong road. It is the still, small voice which is within us. But once we have succumbed, the braking system begins to leak brake fluid and our stopping mechanism becomes weak and ineffective.

Satan's pervasiveness

The prince of darkness can be found everywhere. He is often in very good company. Job said, "Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before

the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord" (Job 2:1). His influence is everywhere: "And the Lord said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it" (Job 2:2).

Satan tries to pacify and flatter us

Nephi has given to us the pattern or formula by which Satan operates:

"And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well—and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell.

"And behold, others he flattereth away, and telleth them there is no hell; and he saith unto them: I am no devil, for there is none—and thus he whispereth in their ears, until he grasps them with his awful chains, from whence there is no deliverance" (2 Nephi 28:21–22).

The First Presidency described Satan: "He is working under such perfect disguise that many do not recognize either him or his methods. There is no crime he would not commit, no debauchery he would not set up, no plague he would not send, no heart he would not break, no life he would not take, no soul he would not destroy. He comes as a thief in the night; he is a wolf in sheep's clothing" (James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965–75], 6:179).

Satan is the world's master in the use of flattery, and he knows the great power of speech (see Jacob 7:4). He has always been one of the great forces of the world.

How Lucifer became the devil

We just recently heard President Ernest LeRoy Hatch of the Guatemala City Temple say, "The devil is not smart because he is the devil; he is

smart because he is old." Indeed, the devil is old, and he was not always the devil. Initially, he was not the perpetrator of evil. He was with the hosts of heaven in the beginning. He was "an angel of God who was in authority in the presence of God" (D&C 76:25). He came before Christ and proposed to God the Father, "Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor" (Moses 4:1). This he proposed to do by force, destroying the free agency of man. Does his statement "Give me thine honor" mean that he wanted to mount an insurrection to supplant even God the Father?

Satan became the devil by seeking glory, power, and dominion by force (see Moses 4:3-4). But Jesus, chosen "from the beginning" (Moses 4:2), said unto God, "Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever" (Moses 4:2). What a contrast in approaches! Wrong as his plan was, Satan was persuasive enough to entice one-third of the hosts of heaven to follow him (see D&C 29:36, Revelation 12:4). He practiced a great deception by saying, "I am also a son of God" (Moses 5:13).

Free agency, given us through the plan of our Father, is the great alternative to Satan's plan of force. With this sublime gift, we can grow, improve, progress, and seek perfection. Without agency, none of us could grow and develop by learning from our mistakes and errors and those of others.

Because of his rebellion, Lucifer was cast out and became Satan, the devil, "the father of all lies, to deceive and to blind men, and to lead them captive at his will, even as many as would not hearken unto my voice" (Moses 4:4). And so this personage who was an angel of God and in authority, even in the presence of God, was removed from the presence of God and his Son (see D&C 76:25). This caused great sadness in the heavens, "for the

heavens wept over him—he was Lucifer, a son of the morning" (D&C 76:26). Does this not place some responsibility on the followers of Christ to show concern for loved ones who have lost their way and "are shut out from the presence of God"? (Moses 6:49). I know of no better help than to show unconditional love and help lost souls seek another path.

An important negative function

Satan does, however, perform an important negative function. In the book of 2 Nephi we are told, "For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things" (2:11). However, Peter warns, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

Satan misdirects our good motives

Let us not become so intense in our zeal to do good by winning arguments or by our pure intention in disputing doctrine that we go beyond good sense and manners, thereby promoting contention, or say and do imprudent things, invoke cynicism, or ridicule with flippancy. In this manner, our good motives become so misdirected that we lose friends and, even more serious, we come under the influence of the devil. I recently heard in a special place, "Your criticism may be worse than the conduct you are trying to correct."

C. S. Lewis gave us a keen insight into devilish tactics. In a fictional letter, the master devil, Screwtape, instructs the apprentice devil Wormwood, who is in training to become a more experienced devil:

"You will say that these are very small sins; and doubtless, like all young tempters, you are anxious to be able to report spectacular wickedness. . . . It does not matter how small the sins are,

provided that their cumulative effect is to edge the man away from the Light and out into the Nothing. . . . Indeed the safest road to Hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without mile-stones, without signposts” (*The Screw-tape Letters* [New York: Macmillan, 1961], pp. 64–65).

The strength of Satan’s power

C. S. Lewis also wrote: “A silly idea is current that good people do not know what temptation means. This is an obvious lie. Only those who try to resist temptation know how strong it is. . . . You find out the strength of a wind by trying to walk against it, not by lying down” (*Mere Christianity* [New York: Macmillan, 1960], p. 124).

The Prophet Joseph Smith related from his own experience, “The nearer a person approaches the Lord, a greater power will be manifested by the adversary to prevent the accomplishment of His purposes” (in Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1945], p. 132).

We can withstand Satan’s power

However, we need not become paralyzed with fear of Satan’s power. He can have no power over us unless we permit it. He is really a coward, and if we stand firm, he will retreat. The Apostle James counseled: “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). He cannot know our thoughts unless we speak them. And Nephi states that “he hath no power over the hearts” of people who are righteous (see 1 Nephi 22:26).

We have heard comedians and others justify or explain their misdeeds by saying, “The devil made me do it.” I do not really think the devil can make us do anything. Certainly he can tempt and he can deceive, but he has no authority over us which we do not give him.

The power to resist Satan may be stronger than we realize. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “All beings who have bodies have power over those who have not. The devil has no power over us only as we permit him. The moment we revolt at anything which comes from God, the devil takes power” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 181).

We can be forgiven

He also stated, “Wicked spirits have their bounds, limits, and laws by which they are governed” (*History of the Church*, 4:576). So Satan and his angels are not all-powerful. One of Satan’s approaches is to persuade a person who has transgressed that there is no hope of forgiveness. But there is always hope. Most sins, no matter how grievous, may be repented of if the desire is sincere enough.

A shield against Satan

Satan has had great success with this gullible generation. As a consequence, literally hosts of people have been victimized by him and his angels. There is, however, an ample shield against the power of Lucifer and his hosts. This protection lies in the spirit of discernment through the gift of the Holy Ghost. This gift comes undeviatingly by personal revelation to those who strive to obey the commandments of the Lord and to follow the counsel of the living prophets.

This personal revelation will surely come to all whose eyes are single to the glory of God, for it is promised that their bodies will be “filled with light, and there shall be no darkness” in them (D&C 88:67). Satan’s efforts can be thwarted by all who come unto Christ by obedience to the covenants and ordinances of the gospel. The humble followers of the divine Master need not be deceived by the devil if they

will be honest and true to their fellow men and women, go to the house of the Lord, receive the sacrament worthily, observe the Sabbath day, pay their tithes and offerings, offer contrite prayers, engage in the Lord's work, and follow those who preside over them.

I wish to testify that there are forces which will save us from the ever-increasing lying, disorder, violence, chaos, destruction, misery, and deceit that are upon the earth. Those saving forces are the everlasting principles, covenants, and ordinances of the eternal gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. These same principles, covenants, and ordinances are coupled with the rights and powers of the priesthood of Almighty God. We of this church are the possessors and custodians of these commanding powers which can and do roll back much of the power of Satan on the earth. We believe that we hold these mighty forces in trust for all who have died, for all who are now living, and for the yet unborn.

I pray that, through the spreading of righteousness, the evil hands of the destroyer might be stayed and that he may not be permitted to curse the whole world. I also pray that God will overlook our weaknesses, our frailties, and our many shortcomings and generously forgive us of our misdeeds. I further

pray that He will bring solace to the suffering, comfort to those who grieve, and peace to the brokenhearted, in the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder James E. Faust, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We remind the brethren of the general priesthood meeting which will convene in the Tabernacle this evening at 6:00 P.M.

The nationwide CBS Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those desiring to attend this broadcast must be in their seats no later than 9:15 A.M.

We express gratitude today to the Primary children's choir from the Sandy Utah Region for the inspirational music we have heard this afternoon. I might add that their very appearance is an inspiration as well.

The choir will now sing in closing, "Beautiful Savior." Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder Francis M. Gibbons of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Beautiful Savior."
Elder Francis M. Gibbons offered the benediction.

GENERAL PRIESTHOOD SESSION

The general priesthood session, the third session of the 157th Semi-annual General Conference, convened in the Tabernacle at 6:00 P.M. on Saturday, October 3, 1987. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for this session was provided by a combined men's choir from the Tabernacle Choir and the Mormon Youth Chorus. The choir was under the direction of Jerold Ottley

and Robert C. Bowden, with Robert Cundick at the organ.

President Hinckley opened the meeting with the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Brethren, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked that I conduct this general priesthood session.

These services are being relayed by closed-circuit and satellite transmission

to holders of the priesthood gathered in the Assembly Hall, the BYU Marriott Center, and in locations in many countries around the world.

Elders Hartman Rector, Jr., and Keith W. Wilcox are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall, and Elders F. Burton Howard and John Sonnenberg are seated on the stand in the BYU Marriott Center.

The singing during this session will be furnished by a combined men's choir from the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth Chorus under the direction of Brothers Jerold Ottley and Robert C. Bowden with Brother Robert Cundick at the organ.

We shall begin by the choir singing "The Spirit of God." The congregation is invited to sing with the choir the first verse as directed by Brother Ottley. Following the singing, Elder

Ted E. Brewerton, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "The Spirit of God."

Elder Ted E. Brewerton offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

The choir will now favor us with the hymn, "For the Strength of the Hills We Bless Thee." Following this, Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will speak to us.

The choir sang "For the Strength of the Hills."

Elder Russell M. Nelson

Keys of the priesthood

You all know how valuable keys can be. Many, if not most, of us carry keys in our pockets at this very moment.

But the keys about which I shall speak are far more important. They are precious, powerful, and invisible! Some can lock and unlock in heaven as well as on earth. I speak of keys of the priesthood.

You boys hold what is sometimes referred to as the preparatory priesthood. Preparation, priesthood service, and keys are all related, but different. Service of any type requires preparation. But proper authorization to give that service requires keys. May I illustrate?

Prior to my call to the Twelve, I served as a medical doctor and surgeon. I had earned two doctor's degrees. I had been certified by two specialty boards. That long preparation had consumed many years, yet it carried no legal

permission. Keys were required. They were held by authorities of the state government and the hospitals in which I desired to work. Once those holding proper authority exercised those keys by granting me a license and permission, then I could perform operations. In return, I was obligated to obey the law, to be loyal, and to understand and not abuse the power of a surgeon's knife. The important steps of preparation, permission, and obligation likewise pertain to other occupations.

Why is the power to act in the name of God more important? Because it is of eternal significance. We should understand the source of our authority and something of the keys that control its power. They may benefit every man, woman, and child who now lives, who has lived, and who yet will live upon the earth.

Let us consider keys of the priesthood through three scenes of history: in ancient days, during the Lord's mortal ministry, and in modern times.

Scene one: ancient days

Scene one pertains to keys of the priesthood in ancient days, even before creation of the earth. We then existed as spirit children of God. Abraham was one of us. He was told that he was among rulers chosen—even before he was born (see Abraham 3:23). Scriptures also relate that the Lord God fore-ordained priests prepared from the foundation of the world according to his foreknowledge. Thus, our calling to the holy priesthood was foreseen before we were born (see Alma 13:1–5).

We know that Adam received priesthood authority before the world was formed (see *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], pp. 157, 167–68; see also D&C 78:16).

The potential of the priesthood is so vast that our comprehension of it is a challenge. The Prophet Joseph Smith declared, “The Priesthood is an everlasting principle, and existed with God from eternity, and will to eternity” (*Teachings*, p. 157).

President Brigham Young added that the priesthood is “the law by which the worlds are, were, and will continue for ever and ever” (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1941], p. 130).

Priesthood is the authority of God delegated to man to minister for the salvation of men. “The power of directing these labors constitutes the keys of the Priesthood” (Joseph F. Smith, “Editor’s Table,” *Improvement Era*, Jan. 1901, p. 230).

Many in scene one held those keys, such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Elias, and Elijah.

Scene two: the Lord’s mortal ministry

Scene two pertains to keys of the priesthood during the mortal ministry of the Lord. Jesus revealed the extent of priesthood authority. To his Apostles,

the Savior said, “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:19; see also D&C 128:10).

Within a week of that promise, Jesus took Peter, James, and John to a high mountain. Keys of the priesthood were bestowed upon them by Moses and Elijah (Elias) under divine direction (see Matthew 17:1–5).

The Master then reminded his disciples of their sacred calls to the holy apostleship, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you” (John 15:16; see also D&C 7:7).

Jesus not only called and ordained men, but he taught them their duties.

After Christ was crucified, and even before the early Apostles completed their labors, the Apostasy began. This occurred as prophesied when priesthood authority was abused and sacred ordinances were defiled.

Scene three: modern times

With scenes one and two as background, let us consider scene three—the modern times in which we live. After centuries of apostasy, keys of the priesthood have again been restored. Under that authority, we have had hands laid upon our heads.

Obligations pertain to those who *give* and to those who *receive* ordinations or calls.

Perhaps that can be explained by example. I hold a set of keys to an automobile. In your mind, let them represent keys to something of value in your life—a tractor, an implement, or a powerful instrument. If I give keys to you, I have certain obligations, and you have certain obligations.

For me as the giver, I have a duty toward your success. Should you fail, in a measure I have failed. So I must teach and train adequately to ensure your personal safety and, at the same time, safeguard precious property you are to use.

For you as the receiver, obligations accompany the keys. You must know applicable laws and obey them. Loyalty is expected. And you should understand the power of your instrument. Obedience, loyalty, and understanding are implicit with your acceptance of those keys.

Now apply the same principles to keys of the priesthood. Your stake president, quorum president, and bishop hold keys of presidency. Their keys control the power of their unit of the Church. Those leaders not only may call and release, but they must train and bear sacred responsibility that the mission of the Church be accomplished.

They who *receive* ordinations or callings have obligations of obedience, loyalty, and understanding.

Obedience to law first and foremost means keeping the commandments of God. By so doing, one becomes worthy to receive personal revelation! Those who receive the Melchizedek Priesthood are under solemn oath and covenant to "live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God" (D&C 84:44).

Loyalty is vital. Loyalty to him who has keys to call and to release you, even though he is an imperfect human being, will develop unity essential to success (see D&C 124:45-46). The Lord defined this reality when he said, "Israel shall be saved in mine own due time; and by the keys which I have given shall they be led" (D&C 35:25).

To *understand* the power of the priesthood, we must know its limitations. If an automobile is used recklessly, future permission from parents is likely to be denied. So, if priesthood power be abused, "the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man" (D&C 121:37).

To *understand* the power of the priesthood, we must know the divinity of its restoration in these latter days. In 1820, our Heavenly Father and his Son Jesus Christ appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith. In 1829, John the Baptist conferred the Aaronic Priesthood upon

Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery (see D&C 13, 27:8; Joseph Smith—History 1:69, 72). Shortly thereafter they received the Melchizedek Priesthood under the hands of Peter, James, and John (see D&C 27:11-12).

Later, the Lord spoke to Joseph and Oliver of others to whom specific keys of the priesthood had been committed. Each, in turn, did confer these keys:

Moroni: Keys of the Book of Mormon (see D&C 27:5).

Moses: Keys of the gathering of Israel and the leading of the ten tribes (see D&C 110:11).

Elias: Keys of the restoration of all things (see D&C 27:6), including the Abrahamic covenant (see D&C 110:12; Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954-56], 3:126-27).

Elijah: Keys of the sealing power (see D&C 27:9, 110:13-16; see also 128:21).

Joseph Smith conferred all keys on all of the Twelve (see *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:154-56). In turn, keys have been transferred to present leaders.

Today, President Ezra Taft Benson actively holds every restored key held by "all those who have received a dispensation at any time *from the beginning of the creation*" (D&C 112:31; italics added; see also D&C 128:18).

Surely a sacred moment of my life occurred April 12, 1984, when the First Presidency and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles laid their hands upon my head. As had been done for others before me, all the keys of the priesthood were conferred. As it is with each member of the Quorum of the Twelve, some keys are not used until called upon by the Lord, or as directed by his senior Apostle.

I feel the weight of responsibility and the burden of timeless trust. I know those keys have been restored "for the last days and for the last time" (D&C 112:30).

I am deeply grateful that we bear the priesthood—each of us foreordained from the foundation of the world for that responsibility (see Alma 13:1–5).

As a symbol of gratitude, I have penned a few lines to be sung as the concluding portion of my message. A verse for each of three scenes of history may summarize my remarks. This song will be new to you. The words have been written to music from Wales.¹ For the gracious support of Brother Jerold D. Ottley and our male chorus I express my appreciation. To this song I have assigned an ancient title, “Hosanna,” the prayerful shout of fervent praise.

*Through time's immortal endless
stay
In love he guides our way.
Beyond the realms of heaven's
beam,
Our great God, Elohim.
Hosanna to his holy name—
Our fathers' God is still the same.*

*That holy night in Bethlehem
His Son was born among men.
To ransom from a timeless grave,
Each child of God to save.
Hosanna to his holy name—
Our fathers' God is still the same.*

*His priesthood power restored to
earth*

*To bless each soul given birth.
Our song of prayer to him we
raise
Proclaiming joy and praise.
Hosanna to his holy name—
Our fathers' God is still the same.
Amen, amen, amen, amen.*

May we be true to the trust he has given to us who bear the holy priesthood and hold its sacred keys, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

¹Lyrics by Russell M. Nelson, copyright 1987; “Tydi A Roddaist,” by Arwell Hughes, copyright 1938. Gratitude is expressed to Mr. Hughes for permission to use his music with these words, and to Barry D. R. Whittaker, president of the Cardiff Wales Stake, for his assistance.

President Hinckley

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has spoken to us, and the combined choruses have sung his words in an old Welsh hymn setting.

We shall now be pleased to listen to Bishop Glenn L. Pace, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric.

Bishop Glenn L. Pace

What makes us happy?

It is my desire to have a heart-to-heart chat with you young men of the Aaronic Priesthood—especially those among you who came to this meeting reluctantly, or perhaps would not have come at all, were it not for a mild threat or a small bribe from your father or priesthood leaders.

When our children were younger and we would be on our way to Sunday Church meetings, occasionally we would pass a car pulling a boat. My children would become silent and press their noses against the windows and

ask, “Dad, why can’t we go waterskiing today instead of to church?”

Sometimes I would take the easy but cowardly way out and answer, “It’s simple; we don’t have a boat.” However, on my more conscientious days, I would muster up all the logic and spirituality available to a patriarch of a family and try to explain how much happier our family was because of our Church activity.

I first realized I wasn’t getting through when on a subsequent Sunday we saw a family laughing and excited as they loaded their snow skis onto their

car. One of my teenage sons said with a sly grin, "They're not really happy, huh, Dad?" That statement has become a family joke whenever we see someone doing something we cannot do. When I see a teenager driving a beautiful, expensive sports car, I say to my sons, "Now there's one miserable guy."

You young men are growing up in a most challenging and confusing world. Activities always forbidden by the Lord and for many years frowned upon by society are now accepted and promoted by that same society. The media serves up these activities in such a fashion as to make them look very desirable. Add to acceptability and desirability the power of peer pressure, and you have an extremely explosive situation.

Avoid the world's temptations

Lehi's vision of the tree of life is appropriate for our day. In that vision, he saw a great and spacious building, which represents the pride and temptations of the world:

"And I . . . beheld . . . a great and spacious building; . . .

"And it was filled with people, both old and young, . . . and their manner of dress was exceedingly fine; and they were in the attitude of mocking and pointing their fingers towards those who . . . were partaking of the fruit" (1 Nephi 8:26-27).

Even though you have a testimony and want to do what is right, it is difficult not to be drawn to the great and spacious building. From all appearances, the people in the building seem to be having a great time. The music and laughter are deafening. You would say to me what my children have said, "They're not really happy, huh, Dad?" as you watch them party.

They look happy and free, but don't mistake celestial pleasure for celestial happiness and joy. Don't mistake lack of self-control for freedom. Complete freedom without appropriate

restraint makes us slaves to our appetites. Don't envy a lesser and lower life.

When I was in junior high school, I would get out of bed on cold winter mornings and head for the heat vent to get warm. The family cat would always beat me there, so I would gently shoo her away and sit down. Soon my mother would tell me it was time to leave for school. I would look out at the icicles on the house and dread going out into the cold, let alone begin another day of school.

As I kissed my mother good-bye and went out the door, I would look longingly at my comfortable spot in front of the heat vent and find that the cat had repossessed it. How I envied that cat! If that weren't enough, she would look up at me with heavy eyelids and an expression as if to laugh at me and say, "Have fun in school, Glenn. I'm sure glad I'm not a human!" I hated it when she did that!

However, an interesting thing would happen as the day went on. I would come home after experiencing the joys and sorrows of the school day and see that lazy cat still curled up in front of the vent, and I would smile and say to her, "I'm sure glad I'm not a cat."

Obey commandments to be happy

To those of you who are inching your way closer and closer to that great and spacious building, let me make it completely clear that the people in that building have absolutely nothing to offer except instant, short-term gratification inescapably connected to long-term sorrow and suffering. The commandments you observe were not given by a dispassionate God to prevent you from having fun, but by a loving Father in Heaven who wants you to be happy while you are living on this earth as well as in the hereafter.

Compare the blessings of living the Word of Wisdom to those available to you if you choose to party with those

in the great and spacious building. Compare the joy of intelligent humor and wit to drunken, silly, crude, loud laughter. Compare our faithful young women who still have a blush in their cheeks with those who, having long lost their blush, try to persuade you to join them in their loss. Compare lifting people up to putting people down. Compare the ability to receive personal revelation and direction in your life to being tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine. Compare holding the priesthood of God with anything you see going on in that great and spacious building.

We cannot change absolute truths

The members of many churches in the world have been putting pressure on their leaders to change doctrine to fit the changing life-style of the members. Many have been successful, and more and more we see churches made up of the doctrines of men. There are absolute truths of eternity. They do not change as a society drifts from them. No popular vote can change an absolute, eternal truth. Legalizing an act does not make it moral. Don't be fooled by the argument "Everybody's doing it." Your spirit should be offended and your intelligence insulted by such reasoning.

When all of the evidence is in, the world's graduate school of hard knocks will teach what you young men were taught in the kindergarten of your spiritual training, "Wickedness never was happiness" (Alma 41:10). Why wait for finite man to prove what his infinite Creator has already revealed to his prophets?

Fighting for truth is exciting

I know how much you like thrills, adventure, and excitement. Do you want excitement? I'll give you excitement. Do you realize you are outnumbered in the world 1,000 to 1? The sons of Helaman didn't face those odds. As the winds of popular opinion

intensify and the mocking increases from those who are trying to justify their own unrighteous actions, you will be required to put on the full armor of God. You will need to fight with all of your strength to keep unspotted from the world. We plead with you to stay true—not for us, but for you.

With odds of 1,000 to 1, shall the youth of Zion falter? I give a firm testimony. No! Never! The youth of the kingdom will emerge victorious. Now that's exciting! What adventure in that great and spacious building would you trade for the thrill and excitement of building the very kingdom the Savior will come to the earth to govern?

Repentance offers hope

We love you, the youth of the Church, and we know you will collectively succeed. However, we have great anxiety for individuals we may lose along the way. Speaking as a father, I can tell you the loss of one of you is too many. We want each and every one of you to succeed, not just the majority.

To those of you who are struggling and losing ground, you who have been lured into that building through one of its many doors and now find no doors going out, you who feel trapped and defeated, we assure you there is hope, and all is not lost. Through his atonement, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has provided a way for you to escape that awful place. He knows you intimately. He knows your name, and he knows your pain. If you will approach your Father in Heaven with a broken heart and contrite spirit, you will find yourself miraculously lifted out of that great and spacious building and into the loving and comforting arms of the Savior of mankind.

At your earthly home, you will find your father's arms have always been open for you and that during your absence your mother never stopped setting your place at the table in front of your empty chair. You will see clearly the difference between telestial happiness and celestial happiness, and you

will experience and savor celestial joy through this life and throughout all eternity. I so testify and promise, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

He who has just spoken to us is Bishop Glenn L. Pace, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric.

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will now address us.

President Thomas S. Monson

The joy of missionary work

What an inspiring sight to see this historic tabernacle filled to capacity, then to realize that chapels and halls throughout the world are similarly filled by those who hold the priesthood of God. I pray for the inspiration of heaven to attend me and to direct the remarks I make.

My mind goes back in memory to a general priesthood meeting held in 1956. At that time I was serving in the stake presidency of the Temple View Stake here in Salt Lake City. Percy K. Fetzer, John R. Burt, and I, the stake presidency, had come to the Tabernacle early, that hopefully we might find a place to sit. We were among the first to enter the Tabernacle and had almost two hours to wait before the meeting would begin.

President Fetzer related to President Burt and me an experience from his missionary days in Germany. He described how one rainy night he and his companion were to present a gospel message to a group assembled in a school house. A protester had broadcast falsehoods concerning the Church, and a number of people threatened violence against the two missionaries. At a critical moment, a woman who was a widow stepped between the elders and the angry group and said, "These young men are my guests and are coming to my home now. Please make way for us to leave."

The crowd parted, and the missionaries walked through the rainy night with their benefactress, arriving

at length at her modest home. She placed their wet coats over the kitchen chairs and invited the missionaries to sit at the table while she prepared food for them. After eating, the elders presented a message to the kind lady who had befriended them. A young son of the woman was invited to come to the table, but he refused, preferring his position of solitude and warmth directly behind the kitchen stove.

President Fetzer concluded the account with the comment, "While I don't know if that woman ever joined the Church, I'll forever be grateful to her for her kindness that rain-drenched night thirty-three years ago."

The brethren sitting in front of us here in the Tabernacle had been speaking to one another also. After a while, we began listening to their conversation. One asked the friend sitting next to him, "Tell me how you came to be a member of the Church."

The brother responded, "One rainy night in Germany, my mother brought to our house two drenched missionaries whom she had rescued from a mob. Mother fed the elders, and they presented to her a message concerning the work of the Lord. They invited me to join the discussion, but I was shy and fearful, so I remained secure in my seat behind the stove. Later, when I once more heard about the Church, I remembered the courage and faith, as well as the message, of those two humble missionaries, and this led to my conversion. I suppose I'll never meet those two missionaries here in mortality, but I'll be forever grateful to them. I know

not where they were from. I think one was named Fetzer."

At this point, President Burt and I looked at President Fetzer and noticed the great tears which coursed down his cheeks. Without saying a word to us, President Fetzer tapped on the shoulder of the man in front of us who had just related his conversion experience. To him he then said, "I'm Bruder Fetzer. I was one of the two missionaries whom you befriended that night. I'm grateful to meet the boy who sat behind the stove—the lad who listened and who learned."

I do not remember the messages delivered during the priesthood meeting that night, but I shall never forget the faith-filled conversation which preceded the commencement of the meeting.

A missionary-minded people

The words of the Lord seemed so appropriate then. They are equally appropriate now: "And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!" (D&C 18:15).

We are a missionary-minded people. We have a divine mandate to proclaim the message of the Restoration. You young men here this night are on the threshold of your missionary opportunity. That energetic missionary from the Book of Mormon, even Alma, provides for us a blueprint for missionary conduct: "This is my glory, that perhaps I may be an instrument in the hands of God to bring some soul to repentance; and this is my joy" (Alma 29:9).

I add my personal witness: Our missionaries are not salesmen with wares to peddle; rather, they are servants of the Most High God, with testimonies to bear, truths to teach, and souls to save.

The Lord's promise to missionaries

Each missionary who goes forth in response to a sacred call becomes a servant of the Lord whose work this truly is. Do not fear, young men, for He will be with you. He never fails. He has promised: "I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up" (D&C 84:88).

"And ye shall go forth in the power of my Spirit, preaching my gospel, two by two, in my name, lifting up your voices as with the sound of a trumpet, declaring my word like unto angels of God" (D&C 42:6).

Preparing missionaries

Fathers, bishops, quorum advisers, yours is the responsibility to prepare this generation of missionaries, to quicken in the hearts of these deacons, teachers, and priests not only an awareness of their obligation to serve, but also a vision of the opportunities and blessings which await them through a missionary call. The work is demanding, the impact everlasting. This is no time for "summer soldiers" in the army of the Lord.

The missionary recommendations that arrive daily at Church headquarters present a spectrum of preparedness. Let me share with you just one or two comments gleaned from the period I served on the Missionary Committee. One recommendation form contained this comment written by the bishop: "John is very close to his mother. She would be happy if he were assigned to a mission close to their home so she could phone weekly and visit him on occasion." As I read this comment to President Spencer W. Kimball, who assigned the missionaries then, I wondered what his reaction would be. Would he assign the young man to California or Washington, that he might be near his Oregon home? Without raising his eyes from the assignment sheet, President Kimball said, "Please assign this young man to Johannesburg, South Africa."

Another missionary recommendation contained the comment from the stake president: "This young man was instrumental in bringing his stepfather into the Church about a year ago. His stepfather told me it was because of Jerry getting up each Sunday morning and going to church that caused him to wonder what kind of church could have that much influence on a boy."

Value of missionary letters

In many respects, a mission is a family calling. The letters which a missionary sends to Mother and Father are packed with power—spiritual power. They are filled with faith—abiding faith. I've always maintained that such letters seem to pass through a heavenly post office before being delivered to home and family. Mother treasures every word. Father fills with pride. The letters are read over and over again—and are never discarded.

I trust parents will remember that their letters to a missionary son or daughter bring home and heaven close to him or to her and provide a renewal of commitment to the sacred calling of missionary. God will inspire you as you take pen in hand to express to one you love the feelings of your soul and the love of your heart.

At the funeral service for the mother of Elder Marion G. Romney, held in Provo, Utah, her son-in-law, Brother John K. Edmunds, gave the following account: "In their early married life, Brother and Sister Romney lived in Mexico. Brother Romney [like the father of President Benson] was called on a mission. There was no feasible means of support, yet he went and his wife sustained him. One day she grieved because she wanted to write her husband a letter but did not have sufficient money to buy a postage stamp. She prayed and then took a walk through the orchard that autumn day, kicking the leaves as she walked along and thinking of her husband. She noticed a shiny object on the ground and

discovered it to be a coin—just the right amount for several postage stamps."

Her letter had been written. Now, through the intervention of God, it could be mailed.

Missionaries' families are blessed

Brethren, think of the family blessings received by the Romney and Benson families, which blessings followed the commitment to missionary service.

I think of my own grandfather, Nels Monson, who waited seven years for his sweetheart to become his bride. The first entry in his missionary journal expressed eloquently his gratitude: "Today, in the Salt Lake Temple, Maria Mace became my eternal wife." The entry written three days later was more somber: "Tonight the bishop came to our house. I have been called to serve a two-year mission to Scandinavia. My dear wife will remain at home and sustain me." I treasure such faith. I cherish such commitment.

I commend the many couples who now go forth to serve. Leaving the comforts of home, the companionship of family, they walk hand in hand as eternal companions, but also hand in hand with God as His representatives to a faith-starved world.

To the many who contribute of their means for missionary service, I express the thanks of the Church and the sentiments of my soul. The gratitude of God may come soon. Then again, it may come as it did to Brother Fetzer—after thirty-three years. This I know: It will come. It will bless. It will comfort. It will sanctify.

Sudbury family blessed by missionary service

Last month the Salt Lake City newspapers carried an obituary notice for Fred Sudbury. It indicated that he was survived by his wife, Pearl, and a son, Craig; that he was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-

day Saints; and that his marriage had been solemnized in the Salt Lake Temple. What the obituary notice could not adequately convey was the inspiring human drama which preceded Fred's passing.

Some years ago, Craig Sudbury and his mother came to my office prior to Craig's departure for the Australia Melbourne Mission. Fred Sudbury, Craig's father, was noticeably absent. Twenty-five years earlier, Craig's mother had married Fred, who did not share her love for the Church and, indeed, was not a member.

Craig confided to me his deep and abiding love for his parents and his hope that somehow, in some way, his father would be touched by the Spirit and open his heart to the gospel of Jesus Christ. I prayed for inspiration concerning how such a desire might be fulfilled. Such inspiration came, and I said to Craig, "Serve the Lord with all your heart. Be obedient to your sacred calling. Each week write a letter to your parents; and on occasion, write to Dad personally and let him know that you love him, and tell him why you're grateful to be his son." He thanked me and, with his mother, departed the office.

I was not to see Craig's mother for over eighteen months. She came to the office and, in sentences punctuated by tears, said to me, "It has been almost two years since Craig departed for his mission. He has never failed in writing a letter to us each week. Recently, my husband, Fred, stood for the first time in a testimony meeting and said, 'All of you know that I am not a member of the Church, but something has happened to me since Craig left for his mission. His letters have touched my soul. May I share one with you?'"

" "Dear Dad,

" "Today we taught a choice family about the plan of salvation and blessings of exaltation in the celestial kingdom. For me it just wouldn't be a celestial kingdom if you were not there. I'm grateful to be your son, Dad, and want you to know that I love you.

" "Your missionary son,

" "Craig"

"After twenty-six years of marriage, I have made my decision to become a member of the Church, for I know the gospel message is the word of God. My son's mission has moved me to action. I have made arrangements for my wife and me to meet Craig when he completes his mission. I will be his final baptism as a full-time missionary of the Lord." He heard the message, he saw the light, he embraced the truth.

A young missionary with unwavering faith had participated with God in a modern-day miracle. His challenge to communicate with one whom he loved had been made more difficult by the barrier of the thousands of miles that lay between him and home. But the spirit of love spanned the vast expanse of the blue Pacific, and heart spoke to heart in divine dialogue.

No missionary stood so tall as did Craig Sudbury when, in far-off Australia, he helped his father into water waist-deep and, raising his right arm to the square, repeated those sacred words: "Fred Sudbury, having been commissioned of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (see D&C 20:73).

The prayer of a mother, the faith of a father, the service of a son brought forth the miracle of God.

"How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Romans 10:15).

God bless us, my brethren, with missionary memories of stalwart service in the cause of Christ, I pray in His holy name, amen.

President Hinckley

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Redeemer of Israel."

The choir and congregation sang
"Redeemer of Israel."

President Hinckley spoke without
announcement.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Brethren, President Benson has asked that I now speak to you.

It is always an inspiration to look into the faces of this vast body of priesthood assembled in the Tabernacle and to think of many times this number gathered in Church buildings across this continent and in other areas of the world. Your presence at these Saturday night meetings is an indication of your faith and of your great dedication to the work of the Lord. I commend you and thank you and express my love for you.

Your sustaining prayers mean a very great deal. I know, as I am sure my brethren know, that your prayers ascend to the Lord in behalf of the General Authorities of the Church. It is a great and sacred trust which has been placed upon us, and we have a sense of duty to the Lord and to you, our fellow workers in this His great cause.

The problem of profane language

I should like to address my remarks to the boys who are here, the young men of the Aaronic Priesthood. I have in hand a letter sent me by a public official. He wrote:

"Would you please consider dealing with the problem of the use of profanity, swearing, and vulgar language?"

"From my high school days years ago I can only recall one student who indulged in such, and most students shunned his association. Today, if I am correctly informed, its use has

reached epidemic proportions among our high school youth."

He goes on: "One evening I was watching a TV movie with my sixteen-year-old son. When some crude language was used, I suggested that we turn off the TV. My son said, 'All right, Dad, but that's nothing compared to what I hear at school all the time.' In visiting with some of the youth in our community I receive the same report. One boy commented, 'Everybody, nearly, talks that way. The girls are just as bad or worse than the boys.'

"What I fear from these reports is that the prevalent use of foul language has become an acceptable pattern in the schools, probably due in large part to the influence of TV and the general permissiveness in our society. Whatever the cause, I hope that some additional emphasis might be made to curb it, to help our youth appreciate the importance of proper language."

Profanity becoming more prevalent

I believe the suggestion is timely. I clipped from the *Wall Street Journal* a recent column by Hodding Carter. In it he states:

"If it was once rare to hear sailors' language in mixed company, it is now difficult to avoid it. For whatever reason, the enduring contribution to America left by the 1960s has been the debasement of public discourse and behavior" ("Our Public Manners, Sir, Are Execrable," *Wall Street Journal*, 4 June 1987, p.31).

Mr. Carter writes as a former Marine and as a newspaper reporter, both groups known for their use of salty language. This he admits, and confesses his guilt. But he decries the growing public practice. He continues:

"Such behavior is not confined to the big cities or the two coasts. . . . While what was once labeled ghetto language is, of course, prevalent in the ghetto, it is also commonplace at Harvard and Tulane, at Davenport, Iowa, and Destin, Florida, to name a few . . . places."

He goes on: "Beyond language is the larger problem, which is the decline of civility in general. . . .

"And so we are assaulted on all sides by the ethos of the slob, with few having the courage or desire to confront it head on." Says he: "I rarely challenge the foulmouth who embarrasses my mother in a public place. . . . I, like most of you, simply wince and turn away" (Hodding Carter, "Public Manners," p. 31).

Conversations I have had with school principals and students lead me to the same conclusion—that even among *our* young people, there is an evil and growing habit of profanity and the use of foul and filthy language.

A serious violation

I do not hesitate to say that it is wrong, seriously wrong, for any young man ordained to the priesthood of God to be guilty of such.

The taking of the Lord's name in vain is a most serious matter.

When Moses was leading the children of Israel out of Egypt to the land of promise, he went up into the mountain to commune with the Lord, and the finger of the Lord wrote the Decalogue on tablets of stone. These ten commandments became the basis of the Judeo-Christian code governing human behavior. Every one of the ten is important, and among them is this statement: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will

not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (Exodus 20:7).

So serious was violation of this law considered in ancient Israel that blasphemy of the name of the Lord was regarded as a capital crime. There is an interesting account in the book of Leviticus:

The son of an Israelitish woman "blasphemed the name of the Lord, and cursed. And they brought him unto Moses. . . .

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,

"Bring forth him that hath cursed . . . and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him.

"And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin.

"And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him" (Leviticus 24:11, 13-16).

While that most serious of penalties has long since ceased to be inflicted, the gravity of the sin has not changed.

The Lord has spoken again in our time concerning this serious matter. In the revelation given to President Brigham Young on January 14, 1847, while the Saints were preparing to leave Winter Quarters for these valleys in the West, the Lord said to them, "Keep yourselves from evil to take the name of the Lord in vain, for I am the Lord your God, even the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob" (D&C 136:21).

In a general epistle to the entire Church issued by the First Presidency on April 8, 1887, a hundred years ago, they said concerning this problem, which evidently was serious then as it is now, "The habit, . . . which some young people fall into, of using vulgarity and profanity, . . . is not only offensive to all well-bred persons, but it is a gross sin in the sight of God, and should not exist among the children of

the Latter-day Saints" (James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-75], 3:112-13).

Profanity destroyed respect

I once worked with a group of railroad men who seemed to pride themselves on the use of profanity. They tried to make an art of it. I recall handing a written instruction to a switchman. It was his job to take care of the matter as instructed, but he thought it inconvenient that he should have to do so at that time. On reading the order, he flew into a tantrum. He was a fifty-year-old man, but he acted like a spoiled child. He threw his cap on the ground and jumped on it and let forth such a string of expletives as to seem to cause the air to turn blue around him. Every third or fourth word was the name of Deity spoken in vain.

I thought, how childish can a grown man be? The very idea of a man acting and speaking like that was totally repugnant. I could never again give him my full respect.

An important lesson

When I was a small boy in the first grade, I experienced what I thought was a rather tough day at school. I came home, walked in the house, threw my book on the kitchen table, and let forth an expletive that included the name of the Lord.

My mother was shocked. She told me quietly, but firmly, how wrong I was. She told me that I could not have words of that kind coming out of my mouth. She led me by the hand into the bathroom, where she took from the shelf a clean washcloth, put it under the faucet, and then generously coated it with soap. She said, "We'll have to wash out your mouth." She told me to open it, and I did so reluctantly. Then she rubbed the soapy washcloth around my tongue and teeth. I sputtered and

fumed and felt like swearing again, but I didn't. I rinsed and rinsed my mouth, but it was a long while before the soapy taste was gone. In fact, whenever I think of that experience, I can still taste the soap. The lesson was worthwhile. I think I can say that I have tried to avoid using the name of the Lord in vain since that day. I am grateful for that lesson.

Consequences of profane language

On one occasion, Jesus said to the multitude, "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man" (Matthew 15:11.)

I have believed that as I have heard men and women, and boys and girls, profane.

President George Q. Cannon, who served long and faithfully as a Counselor in the First Presidency, said on one occasion:

"Do angels take the Lord's name in vain? The idea is so ridiculous that we scarcely like to ask the question. . . . How dare we do that which angels dare not do? Is it possible for us to argue that that which is forbidden in heaven is praiseworthy on earth? . . .

"Though we are sure no boy can tell us any advantage that can arise from the abuse of God's holy name, yet we can tell him many evils that arise therefrom. To begin," Brother Cannon said, "it is unnecessary and consequently foolish; it lessens our respect for holy things and leads us into the society of the wicked; it brings upon us the disrespect of the good who avoid us; it leads us to other sins, for he who is willing to abuse his Creator is not ashamed to defraud his fellow creature; and also by so doing we directly and knowingly break one of the most direct of God's commandments" ("Editorial Thoughts," *Juvenile Instructor*, 27 Sept. 1873, p. 156).

Brethren, stay out of the gutter in your conversation. Foul talk defiles the man who speaks it.

How to break the habit

If you have the habit, how do you break it? You begin by making a decision to change. The next time you are prone to use words you know to be wrong, simply stop. Keep quiet or say what you have to say in a different way. As you practice such restraint, it will become easy. President Heber J. Grant was wont to say, "That which we persist in doing becomes easier for us to do; not that the nature of the thing itself is changed, but that our power to do is increased" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1901, p. 63).

We begin with self-discipline. Shakespeare put these words in the mouth of Hamlet:

*Refrain tonight,
And that shall lend a kind of
easiness
To the next abstinence: the next
more easy;
For use almost can change the
stamp of nature,
And either master the devil, or
throw him out
With wondrous potency.
(Hamlet, act 3, scene 4, lines
165-70)*

"Be thou an example in word"

Can you think of a missionary in this church using the kind of language heard on many high school campuses? Of course not. Such would be totally out of character with his calling as an ambassador of the Lord.

Most of you boys who are here tonight are prospective missionaries. It is as wrong for you to use foul language as it would be for a missionary because you also hold the priesthood. You have authority to act in the name of God. Remember that it is the same voice which prays to the Lord on the one hand and which, on the other hand, when in the company of friends, may be inclined so to speak language foul and filthy. The two kinds of voices are incompatible.

Paul, perhaps the greatest missionary of all time, wrote to Timothy, his young associate in the ministry. "Let no man despise thy youth," he said, "but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12).

Note what he says: "Be thou an example *in word*." He is speaking here of language. I think he is speaking of the things of which I have been speaking. He is saying that coarse and lewd words are incompatible with one's calling as a believer in Christ.

"In conversation"—he is saying again that in our dialogues with others we must be an example of the believer. Conversation is the substance of friendly social activity. It can be happy. It can be light. It can be earnest. It can be funny. But it must not be salty, or uncouth, or foul if one is in sincerity a believer in Christ.

Profane language a tragedy

Perhaps you feel I have belabored the point unduly. If I have done so, it is because I feel it is so very important. It is a tragic and unnecessary thing that boys and girls use foul language. It is inexcusable for a girl so to speak. It is likewise serious for the boy who holds the priesthood. This practice is totally unacceptable for one authorized to speak in the name of God. To blaspheme His holy name or to speak in language that is debauched is offensive to God and man.

The man or the boy who must resort to such language immediately says that he is poverty-ridden in his vocabulary. He does not enjoy sufficient richness of expression to be able to speak effectively without swearing or using foul words.

Blessings of virtuous language

I have so spoken to you tonight because I think some of you may have been indulging in this practice, at least

walls of your own home. Home teaching, bishopric's work, and other Church duties are all important, but the most important work is within the walls of your home" (*Strengthening the Home* [pamphlet, 1973], p. 7).

What, then, is a father's specific responsibility within the sacred walls of his home? May I suggest two basic responsibilities of every father in Israel.

Provide for material needs

First, you have a sacred responsibility to provide for the material needs of your family.

The Lord clearly defined the roles of providing for and rearing a righteous posterity. In the beginning, Adam, not Eve, was instructed to earn the bread by the sweat of his brow.

The Apostle Paul counsels husbands and fathers, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (1 Timothy 5:8).

Early in the history of the restored Church, the Lord specifically charged men with the obligation to provide for their wives and family. In January of 1832 He said, "Verily I say unto you, that every man who is obliged to provide for his own family, let him provide, and he shall in nowise lose his crown" (D&C 75:28). Three months later the Lord said again, "Women have claim on their husbands for their maintenance, until their husbands are taken" (D&C 83:2). This is the divine right of a wife and mother. While she cares for and nourishes her children at home, her husband earns the living for the family, which makes this nourishing possible.

In a home where there is an able-bodied husband, he is expected to be the breadwinner. Sometimes we hear of husbands who, because of economic conditions, have lost their jobs and expect the wives to go out of the home and work, even though the husband is still capable of providing for his family. In these cases, we urge the husband to do all in his power to allow his wife to

remain in the home caring for the children while he continues to provide for his family the best he can, even though the job he is able to secure may not be ideal and family budgeting may have to be tighter.

Also, the need for education or material things does not justify the postponing of children in order to keep the wife working as the breadwinner of the family.

Counsel of President Kimball

I remember the counsel of our beloved prophet Spencer W. Kimball to married students. He said: "I have told tens of thousands of young folks that when they marry they should not wait for children until they have finished their schooling and financial desires. . . . They should live together normally and let the children come. . . .

" . . . I know of no scriptures," President Kimball continued, "where an authorization is given to young wives to withhold their families and go to work to put their husbands through school. There are thousands of husbands who have worked their own way through school and have reared families at the same time" ("Marriage Is Honorable," in *Speeches of the Year, 1973* [Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1974], p. 263).

A mother's role in the home

Brethren of the priesthood, I continue to emphasize the importance of mothers staying home to nurture, care for, and train their children in the principles of righteousness.

As I travel throughout the Church, I feel that the great majority of Latter-day Saint mothers earnestly want to follow this counsel. But we know that sometimes the mother works outside of the home at the encouragement, or even insistence, of her husband. It is he who wants the items of convenience that the extra income can buy. Not only will the family suffer in such instances,

in a measure. I hope that you will accept what I have said in the spirit intended. If you have been using such language and your friends are with you in this priesthood meeting, then unitedly resolve to help one another. Should there be a slip of the tongue, then remind one another. I hope you will do so. By so doing, you will honor your Heavenly Father. You will honor His Beloved Son. You will honor the priesthood which you hold. You will bring credit to the homes from which you come. You will honor yourself and be proud of your capacity to discipline your language.

I say this to the boys. I say it also to any of you older men who have a similar problem. I do so with love. I know that the Lord is pleased when we use clean and virtuous language, for He has set an example for us. His revelations are couched in words that are affirmative, that are uplifting, that encourage us to do what is right and to go forward in truth and goodness.

Don't swear. Don't profane. Avoid so-called dirty jokes. Stay away from conversation that is sprinkled with foul and filthy words. You will be happier if you do so, and your example will give strength to others. May you be

blessed so to do, I humbly pray, my beloved brethren, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We shall now be privileged to hear the counsel of President Ezra Taft Benson, our beloved prophet and leader. He will be our concluding speaker.

Before President Benson speaks, we note that the nationwide CBS Tabernacle Choir broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 Sunday morning. Those desiring to attend must be in their seats in the Tabernacle before 9:15 A.M.

As you leave this priesthood meeting tonight, we ask you to obey traffic rules, to use caution, and to be courteous in driving.

We are grateful to you brethren from the Tabernacle Choir and the Mormon Youth Chorus for your inspiring participation this evening. We express sincere appreciation.

Following President Benson's closing remarks, the choir will sing "Rise Up, O Men of God." The benediction will be offered by Elder Philip T. Sonntag of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

President Ezra Taft Benson

My dear brethren, I am grateful to be here with you in this glorious assembly of the priesthood of God. I pray that the Spirit of the Lord will be with me and with you as I address you on a most vital subject. This evening I would like to speak to the fathers assembled here and throughout the Church about their sacred callings.

I hope you young men will also listen carefully, inasmuch as you are now preparing to become the future fathers of the Church.

An eternal calling

Fathers, yours is an eternal calling from which you are never released. Callings in the Church, as important as they are, by their very nature are only for a period of time, and then an appropriate release takes place. But a father's calling is eternal, and its importance transcends time. It is a calling for both time and eternity.

President Harold B. Lee truly stated that "the most important of the Lord's work that you [fathers] will ever do will be the work you do within the

brethren, but your own spiritual growth and progression will be hampered. I say to all of you, the Lord has charged men with the responsibility to provide for their families in such a way that the wife is allowed to fulfill her role as mother in the home.

Family preparedness more urgent today

Fathers, another vital aspect of providing for the material needs of your family is the provision you should be making for your family in case of an emergency. Family preparedness has been a long-established welfare principle. It is even more urgent today.

I ask you earnestly, have you provided for your family a year's supply of food, clothing, and, where possible, fuel? The revelation to produce and store food may be as essential to our temporal welfare today as boarding the ark was to the people in the days of Noah.

Also, are you living within your income and saving a little?

Are you honest with the Lord in the payment of your tithes? Living this divine law will bring both spiritual and material blessings.

Yes, brethren, as fathers in Israel you have a great responsibility to provide for the material needs of your family and to have the necessary provisions in case of emergency.

Provide spiritual leadership

Second, you have a sacred responsibility to provide spiritual leadership in your family.

In a pamphlet published some years ago by the Council of the Twelve, we said the following: "Fatherhood is leadership, the most important kind of leadership. It has always been so; it always will be so. Father, with the assistance and counsel and encouragement of your eternal companion, you preside in the home" (*Father,*

Consider Your Ways [pamphlet, 1973], pp. 4-5).

However, along with that presiding position come important obligations. We sometimes hear accounts of men, even in the Church, who think that being head of the home somehow puts them in a superior role and allows them to dictate and make demands upon their family.

The Apostle Paul points out that "the husband is the head of the wife, *even as Christ is the head of the church*" (Ephesians 5:23; italics added). That is the model we are to follow in our role of presiding in the home. We do not find the Savior leading the Church with a harsh or unkind hand. We do not find the Savior treating His Church with disrespect or neglect. We do not find the Savior using force or coercion to accomplish His purposes. Nowhere do we find the Savior doing anything but that which edifies, uplifts, comforts, and exalts the Church. Brethren, I say to you with all soberness, He is the model we must follow as we take the spiritual lead in our families.

Particularly is this true in your relationship with your wife.

Love your wives

Here again the counsel from the Apostle Paul is most beautiful and to the point. He said simply, "Husbands, love your wives, *even as Christ also loved the church*" (Ephesians 5:25).

In latter-day revelation the Lord speaks again of this obligation. He said, "Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else" (D&C 42:22). To my knowledge there is only one other thing in all scripture that we are commanded to love with all our hearts, and that is God Himself. Think what that means!

This kind of love can be shown for your wives in so many ways. First and foremost, nothing except God Himself takes priority over your wife in your life—not work, not recreation, not hobbies. Your wife is your precious, eternal helpmate—your companion.

What does it mean to love someone with all your heart? It means to love with all your emotional feelings and with all your devotion. Surely when you love your wife with all your heart, you cannot demean her, criticize her, find fault with her, or abuse her by words, sullen behavior, or actions.

What does it mean to "cleave unto her"? It means to stay close to her, to be loyal and faithful to her, to communicate with her, and to express your love for her.

Love means being sensitive to her feelings and needs. She wants to be noticed and treasured. She wants to be told that you view her as lovely and attractive and important to you. Love means putting her welfare and self-esteem as a high priority in your life.

You should be grateful that she is the mother of your children and the queen of your home, grateful that she has chosen homemaking and motherhood—to bear, to nourish, to love, and to train your children—as the noblest calling of all.

Husbands, recognize your wife's intelligence and her ability to counsel with you as a real partner regarding family plans, family activities, and family budgeting. Don't be stingy with your time or with your means.

Give her the opportunity to grow intellectually, emotionally, and socially as well as spiritually.

Remember, brethren, love can be nurtured and nourished by little tokens. Flowers on special occasions are wonderful, but so is your willingness to help with the dishes, change diapers, get up with a crying child in the night, and leave the television or the newspaper to help with the dinner. Those are the quiet ways we say "I love you" with our actions. They bring rich dividends for such little effort.

This kind of loving priesthood leadership applies to your children as well as to your wife.

A father's role in the home

Mothers play an important role as the heart of the home, but this in no way lessens the equally important role fathers should play, as head of the home, in nurturing, training, and loving their children.

As the patriarch in your home, you have a serious responsibility to assume leadership in working with your children. You must help create a home where the Spirit of the Lord can abide. Your place is to give direction to all family life. You should take an active part in establishing family rules and discipline.

Your homes should be havens of peace and joy for your family. Surely no child should fear his own father—especially a priesthood father. A father's duty is to make his home a place of happiness and joy. He cannot do this when there is bickering, quarreling, contention, or unrighteous behavior. The powerful effect of righteous fathers in setting an example, disciplining and training, nurturing and loving is vital to the spiritual welfare of his children.

Give spiritual leadership

With love in my heart for the fathers in Israel, may I suggest ten specific ways that fathers can give spiritual leadership to their children:

1. Give father's blessings to your children. Baptize and confirm your children. Ordain your sons to the priesthood. These will become spiritual highlights in the lives of your children.

2. Personally direct family prayers, daily scripture reading, and weekly family home evenings. Your personal involvement will show your children how important these activities really are.

3. Whenever possible, attend Church meetings together as a family. Family worship under your leadership is vital to your children's spiritual welfare.

4. Go on daddy-daughter dates and father-and-sons' outings with your children. As a family, go on campouts and picnics, to ball games and recitals, to school programs, and so forth. Having Dad there makes all the difference.

5. Build traditions of family vacations and trips and outings. These memories will never be forgotten by your children.

6. Have regular one-on-one visits with your children. Let them talk about what they would like to. Teach them gospel principles. Teach them true values. Tell them you love them. Personal time with your children tells them where Dad puts his priorities.

7. Teach your children to work, and show them the value of working toward a worthy goal. Establishing mission funds and education funds for your children shows them what Dad considers to be important.

8. Encourage good music and art and literature in your homes. Homes that have a spirit of refinement and beauty will bless the lives of your children forever.

9. As distances allow, regularly attend the temple with your wife. Your children will then better understand the importance of temple marriage and

temple vows and the eternal family unit.

10. Have your children see your joy and satisfaction in service to the Church. This can become contagious to them, so they, too, will want to serve in the Church and will love the kingdom.

Your most important calling

Oh, husbands and fathers in Israel, you can do so much for the salvation and exaltation of your families! Your responsibilities are so important.

Remember your sacred calling as a father in Israel—your most important calling in time and eternity—a calling from which you will never be released.

May you always provide for the material needs of your family and, with your eternal companion at your side, may you fulfill your sacred responsibility to provide the spiritual leadership in your home.

To this end I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Rise Up, O Men of God."

Elder Philip T. Sonntag offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY MORNING SESSION

The fourth session of the 157th Semiannual General Conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, October 4, 1987. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music, with Brothers Jerold Otley and Donald Ripplinger conducting and Brother Robert Cundick at the organ.

Before the session, the choir sang "The Morning Breaks" without announcement.

President Monson made the following remarks:

President Thomas S. Monson

We welcome you this morning from the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, Utah, in this, the fourth general session of the 157th semiannual conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Our beloved prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this and all sessions of the conference, has asked me to conduct.

We welcome you who are participating in the large audience assembled in the Tabernacle and in the overflow gathering in the nearby Assembly Hall, where Elders Gene R. Cook and H. Burke Peterson are seated on the stand. We also extend our greetings to those of you who are participating by radio, television, cable, or satellite transmission. We are grateful to the owners and operators of the stations who are broadcasting this conference.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders, and officers and members of the Church from many lands who have assembled to worship and to counsel together in this conference.

The Tabernacle Choir is providing the music for this session under the direction of Brothers Jerold Ottley and

Donald Ripplinger, with Brother Robert Cundick at the organ.

The choir opened these services by singing "The Morning Breaks," and will now sing "The Lord My Pasture Will Prepare," following which Elder Theodore M. Burton, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "The Lord My Pasture Will Prepare."

Elder Theodore M. Burton offered the invocation.

The choir sang "I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes" without announcement.

President Monson

The Tabernacle Choir has just sung "I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes." President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, will now be our first speaker.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

I add my word of welcome to all who are gathered in this great conference. It has veritably become a world conference. We now speak to congregations throughout North America and instantaneously reach to some across the seas. Hundreds of thousands are gathered this morning to hear the word of the Lord. I thank you for your faith and your desires, and seek the direction of the Holy Spirit.

"Lord, Increase our faith"

Let me tell you of an experience I had with one of our Area Presidents. We were in a land where, to our knowledge, there was not a member of the Church among the millions of that nation.

There was a man who knew of the Church and desired baptism. He had been a longtime student of the Bible.

He belonged to a Christian church but was not satisfied. The thought came into his mind that he should belong to a church that carried the name of the Savior. In an old encyclopedia in a public library, he found listed The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints with headquarters in Salt Lake City. He wrote a letter of inquiry and received a response with literature. Other literature followed as he requested it.

When we met him he had read the Book of Mormon again and again. He had read the Doctrine and Covenants and other Church writings. With enthusiasm he had told his friends of his treasured find. He asked to be baptized.

We questioned him. He knew of the priesthood, its orders and its offices. He knew of the various ordinances and the procedures of our meetings.

Did he believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God? Oh, yes, he knew it to be true. He had read it. He had prayed about it and pondered. He had no doubt of its truth.

Did he believe Joseph Smith to be a prophet of God? Most assuredly. Again, he had studied and prayed. He was convinced of the reality of that glorious vision when God the Eternal Father and His Beloved Son, the resurrected Lord, appeared to the boy Joseph to usher in a new and final dispensation of gospel truth.

The priesthood had been restored with all its gifts and powers. He knew that. Our friend asked for baptism and hoped for the priesthood that he might teach and act with proper authority.

"But," we said, "if we baptize you and then leave, you will be left alone. While there are many Christians in your nation, and freedom of religion is guaranteed under its laws, there are severe restrictions concerning foreigners. There will be no one to teach you and help you. There will be no one on whom you can lean."

He responded, "God will teach me and help me, and He will be my friend and support."

I looked into the eyes of that good man and saw the light of faith. We baptized him under the authority of the holy priesthood. We confirmed him a member of the Church and bestowed upon him the Holy Ghost. We baptized his wife. We conferred upon him the Aaronic Priesthood and ordained him to the office of priest so that under proper direction they might have the sacrament.

We held a sacrament and testimony meeting with them. We embraced them and said good-bye to one another, and tears were in our eyes. They left to return to their home, and we left for responsibilities in other nations.

I shall never forget him. He is poor in the things of the world. But he is educated—a teacher by profession. I know little of his circumstances. But

this I know—when we talked with him, the fire of faith burned in his heart, and our own faith was quickened also.

As we traveled from that scene and there was time to meditate, I wished that faith of his kind was found more widely, both among us and among others. His example has provided a text for me. It is found in the fifth verse of the seventeenth chapter of Luke. Jesus had been teaching his disciples by precept and parable. "And the apostles said unto the Lord, *Increase our faith*" (italics added).

Forged letters

This is my prayer for all of us—"Lord, Increase our faith." Increase our faith to bridge the chasms of uncertainty and doubt. As most of you know, in the last four or five years we have passed through an interesting episode in the history of the Church. There came into our hands two letters that were seized upon by the media when we announced them. They were trumpeted across much of the world as documents that would challenge the authenticity of the Church. In announcing them we stated that they really had nothing to do with the essentials of our history. But some few of little faith, who seemingly are always quick to believe the negative, accepted as fact the pronouncements and predictions of the media. I recall a letter from an individual who asked that his name be taken from the records of the Church because he could no longer believe in a church that had to do with an experience with a salamander.

Now, as you know, these letters, together with other documents, have been acknowledged by their forger to be total frauds and part of an evil and devious design which culminated in the murder of two individuals.

I have wondered what those whose faith was shaken have thought since the forger confessed to his evil work.

However, I hasten to add, the vast majority of Church members, all but a very few, paid little attention and went forward with their faithful service, living by a conviction firmly grounded in that knowledge which comes by the power of the Holy Ghost. They knew then and they know now that God watches over this work, that Jesus Christ is the head of this Church, that it is true, and that happiness and growth come of following its precepts and teachings.

The Church's origin is divine

Out of this earlier episode has now arisen another phenomenon. It is described as the writing of a "new history" of the Church as distinguished from the "old history." It represents, among other things, an effort to ferret out every element of folk magic and the occult in the environment in which Joseph Smith lived to explain what he did and why.

I have no doubt there was folk magic practiced in those days. Without question there were superstitions and the superstitious. I suppose there was some of this in the days when the Savior walked the earth. There is even some in this age of so-called enlightenment. For instance, some hotels and business buildings skip the numbering of floor thirteen. Does this mean there is something wrong with the building? Of course not. Or with the builders? No.

Similarly, the fact that there were superstitions among the people in the days of Joseph Smith is no evidence whatever that the Church came of such superstition.

Seek the truth in faith

Joseph Smith himself wrote or dictated his history. It is his testimony of what occurred, and he sealed that testimony with his life. It is written in language clear and plain and unmistakable. From an ancient record he translated the Book of Mormon by the gift and power of God. It is here for all to

see and handle and read. Those who have read with faith and inquired in prayer have come to a certain knowledge that it is true. The present effort of trying to find some other explanation for the organization of the Church, for the origin of the Book of Mormon, and for the priesthood with its keys and powers will be similar to other anti-Mormon fads which have come and blossomed and faded. Truth will prevail. A knowledge of that truth comes by effort and study, yes. But it comes primarily as a gift from God to those who seek in faith.

Church expansion a consequence of increased faith

My constant prayer in behalf of the entire Church is this: Lord, increase our faith to rise above the feeble detractors of this Thy great and holy work. Strengthen our will. Help us to build and expand Thy kingdom according to Thy great mandate, that this gospel may be preached in all the world as a witness unto all nations.

I have seen answers to that prayer. I have seen the miracle of the expansion of this cause and kingdom and can testify of it.

The fruits of faith in Asia

In 1960, only twenty-seven years ago, I was given an assignment by the First Presidency to work with the mission presidents, the missionaries, and the Saints in Asia. The Church was weak and small in that part of the earth. The seed had been planted in Japan, Taiwan, and Korea by faithful Latter-day Saints in military service. But it was tiny and unstable. We had no buildings of our own. We met as small groups in rented houses. In winter they were cold and uncomfortable. Converts came into the Church. But some, lacking faith, soon left. However, there remained a residual of strong and wonderful men and women who looked beyond the adversity of the moment. They found their strength in the

message, not in the facilities. They have remained faithful to this day, and their numbers have been added to by the tens and tens of thousands.

A few Sundays back we held a regional conference in Tokyo. The spacious hall was filled to capacity. There were almost as many present on that occasion as there are assembled in the Salt Lake Tabernacle this morning. The Spirit of the Lord was there. An attitude of faith filled that vast congregation. For me, who had known those days when we were weak and few in number, it was a miracle to behold, for which I give thanks to the Lord.

We had a similar experience in Hong Kong, where there are now four stakes of Zion.

Then in Seoul, Korea, my heart was touched as we entered the largest hall in that great city to find every seat taken by members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and their invited guests. A magnificent choir of 320 voices opened with the strains "Oh, how lovely was the morning" ("Joseph Smith's First Prayer," *Hymns* [1985], no. 26). It was a moving expression of the first vision of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

I had known South Korea in its days of poverty and reconstruction following the terrible war. When first I went there, we had six missionaries in Seoul and two in Pusan. Some were ill with hepatitis. Today there are four thriving missions in that land, with some six hundred missionaries. Many of the missionaries are sons and daughters of Korea. They include bright and beautiful young women in whose hearts burns the light of faith. They include young men who leave schooling for a season in order to serve missions. These young men are under tremendous pressures because of military requirements as well as educational demands, but they have faith in their hearts.

When first I went to South Korea, there were two or three tiny branches. Today there are one hundred fifty local units of the Church, both wards and branches. Then it was a small, isolated

district of the Northern Far East Mission. We had no chapels. Today there are fourteen stakes with forty-seven chapels built and owned and another fifty-two under lease, with others under construction.

I felt a spirit in that congregation three weeks ago that touched me to the depths of my soul. I saw the sweet fruits of faith. I knew of the early struggles in establishing an unknown church. I knew of the poverty of the people. Now there is strength. There is an undreamed-of measure of prosperity. There is a warm spirit of fellowship. There are families of devoted husbands and wives and good and beautiful children.

These are people I love, and I love them because of their faith. They are intelligent and well educated. They are hardworking and progressive. They are humble and prayerful. They are an example to others across the world.

The power of faith

I say again, as did the Apostles to Jesus, "Lord, Increase our faith." Grant us faith to look beyond the problems of the moment to the miracles of the future. Give us faith to pay our tithes and offerings and put our trust in Thee, the Almighty, to open the windows of heaven as Thou hast promised. Give us faith to do what is right and let the consequence follow.

Grant us faith when storms of adversity beat us down and drive us to the ground. In seasons of sickness may our confidence wax strong in the powers of the priesthood. May we follow the counsel of James:

"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

"And the *prayer of faith* shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up" (James 5:14-15; italics added).

He who will follow me in speaking, President Howard W. Hunter, is a shining example of the efficacy of such faith.

Lord, when we walk in the valley of the shadow of death, give us faith to smile through our tears, knowing that it is all part of the eternal plan of a loving Father, that as we cross the threshold from this life we enter another more glorious, and that through the atonement of the Son of God all shall rise from the grave and the faithful shall go on to exaltation.

Give us faith to pursue the work of redemption of the dead that Thine eternal purposes may be fulfilled in behalf of Thy sons and daughters of all generations.

Father, grant us faith to follow counsel in the little things that can mean so very much. Our President, he whom we sustain as prophet, has repeatedly, since he was called to this responsibility, asked us to read that other great witness for the Lord Jesus Christ, the Book of Mormon. Tens of thousands have now done so to their great blessing. They could testify, Sweet are the rewards of simple faith.

Lord, increase our faith in one another, and in ourselves, and in our capacity to do good and great things.

This, my brothers and sisters, is my prayer.

Elijah's faithful obedience

There is a simple and moving story in the book of 1 Kings. Permit me to read you a few lines:

"And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be

dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

"And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying,

"Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.

"And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

"So he [Elijah] *went and did* according unto the word of the Lord" (1 Kings 17:1-5; italics added).

There was no argument. There was no discussion. There was no rationalizing on the part of Elijah. He simply "*went and did*."

Our greatest need

Father, increase our faith. Of all our needs, I think the greatest is an increase in faith. And so, dear Father, increase our faith in Thee, and in Thy Beloved Son, in Thy great eternal work, in ourselves as Thy children, and in our capacity to go and do according to Thy will, and Thy precepts, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has addressed us.

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "Lovely Appear," following which President Howard W. Hunter, Acting President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will address us.

The choir sang "Lovely Appear."

President Howard W. Hunter

Forgive me if I remain seated while I present these few remarks. It is not by choice that I speak from a wheel-

chair. I notice that the rest of you seem to enjoy the conference sitting down, so I will follow your example.

Where one door closes, another opens

With reference to both standing and sitting, I have observed that life—every life—has a full share of ups and downs. Indeed, we see many joys and sorrows in the world, many changed plans and new directions, many blessings that do not always look or feel like blessings, and much that humbles us and improves our patience and our faith. We have all had those experiences from time to time, and I suppose we always will.

A passage from one of the greatest prophetic sermons ever given—King Benjamin's masterful discourse to the people of Zarahemla in the Book of Mormon—reads this way:

"Men drink damnation to their own souls except they humble themselves and become as little children. . . .

"For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father" (Mosiah 3:18–19).

Being childlike and submitting to our Father's will is not always easy. President Spencer W. Kimball, who knew a good deal about suffering, disappointment, and circumstances beyond his control, once wrote:

"Being human, we would expel from our lives physical pain and mental anguish and assure ourselves of continual ease and comfort, but if we were to close the doors upon sorrow and distress, we might be excluding our greatest friends and benefactors. Suffering can make saints of people as they learn patience, long-suffering, and self-mastery" (*Faith Precedes the Miracle*

[Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1972], p. 98).

In that statement, President Kimball refers to closing doors upon certain experiences in life. That image brings to mind a line from Cervantes' great classic, *Don Quixote*, that has given me comfort over the years. In that masterpiece, we find the short but very important reminder that where one door closes, another opens. Doors close regularly in our lives, and some of those closings cause genuine pain and heartache. But I *do* believe that where one such door closes, another opens (and perhaps more than one), with hope and blessings in other areas of our lives that we might not have discovered otherwise.

Adversity proves and prepares us

Our beloved quorum president, Marion G. Romney, is not able to be with us here today. My, how we miss his companionship and his wit, his experience and his leadership! President Romney has had some doors swing closed for him even in the work of his ministry. He has known considerable pain and discouragement and has seen his plans changed during these past few years. But it was he who, from this very pulpit a few years ago, said that all men and women, including the most faithful and loyal, would find adversity and affliction in their lives because, in the words of Joseph Smith, "Men have to suffer that they may come upon Mount Zion and be exalted above the heavens" (*History of the Church*, 5:556; see Conference Report, Oct. 1969, p. 57; or *Improvement Era*, Dec. 1969, p. 66).

President Romney then said:

"This does not mean that we crave suffering. We avoid all we can. However, we now know, and we all knew when we elected to come into mortality, that we would here be proved in the crucible of adversity and affliction. . . .

"[Furthermore,] the Father's plan for proving [and refining] his children

did not exempt the Savior himself. The suffering he undertook to endure, and which he did endure, equaled the combined suffering of all men [and women everywhere. Trembling and bleeding and wishing to shrink from the cup, he said,] 'I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men.' (D&C 19:18-19.)" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1969, p. 57; or *Improvement Era*, Dec. 1969, pp. 66-67).

All of us must finish our "preparations unto the children of men." Christ's preparations were quite different from our own, but we all have preparations to make, doors to open. To make such important preparations often will require some pain, some unexpected changes in life's path, and some submitting, "even as a child doth submit to his father." Finishing divine preparations and opening celestial doors may take us—indeed, undoubtedly will take us—right up to the concluding hours of our mortal lives.

Adversity comes to all

We all miss our beloved brother Elder A. Theodore Tuttle, who recently opened a new door to return to his heavenly home. His preparations in mortality had been fully completed for such a journey. He, too, like President Romney, stood in this tabernacle and spoke of adversity, adversity that he knew would come to each of us but that he may not then have known would come to him as early as it did.

He said:

"Adversity, in one form or another, is the universal experience of man. It is the common lot of all . . . to experience misfortune, suffering, sickness, or other adversities. Ofttimes our work is arduous and unnecessarily demanding. Our faith is tried in various ways—sometimes unjustly tried [it seems]. At times it seems that even God is punishing us and ours. One of the things that makes all this so hard to bear is that we ourselves appear to be chosen for this affliction while others presumably escape these adversities. . . .

"[But] we cannot indulge ourselves the luxury of self-pity" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1967, pp. 14-15; or *Improvement Era*, Dec. 1967, p. 47).

Elder Tuttle then left us these lines from Robert Browning Hamilton titled "Along the Road," which teach a lesson on pleasure and a lesson on sorrow:

*I walked a mile with Pleasure.
She chattered all the way,
But left me none the wiser
For all she had to say.
I walked a mile with Sorrow,
And ne'er a word said she;
But, oh, the things I learned from
her
When Sorrow walked with me!*

And now this mortal portion of Elder Tuttle's journey is over. He closed that door and opened another. Now he walks and talks with the angels. And so, someday, will we close and open those same doors.

Opposition in all things

I have mentioned the lives of two of our contemporary brethren. Obviously, prophets of an earlier day have known adversity and difficulty as well. They were not spared these challenges any more than our generation has been spared. The great Book of Mormon patriarch, Lehi, spoke encouragingly to his son Jacob, a son born in the wilderness in a time of travail and opposition. Jacob's life was not as he might have expected it to be and not as the ideal course of experience might have outlined. He had suffered afflictions and setbacks, but Lehi promised that such afflictions would be consecrated for his son's gain (see 2 Nephi 2:2).

Then Lehi added these words that have become classic:

"For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things. If not so, . . . righteousness could not be brought to pass, neither wickedness, neither holiness nor misery, neither good nor bad" (2 Nephi 2:11).

Trials help us learn and grow

I have taken great comfort over the years in this explanation of some of life's pain and disappointment. I take even greater comfort that the greatest of men and women, including the Son of God, have faced such opposition in order to better understand the contrast between righteousness and wickedness, holiness and misery, good and bad. From out of the dark, damp confinement of Liberty Jail, the Prophet Joseph Smith learned that if we are called to pass through tribulation, it is for our growth and experience and will ultimately be counted for our good (see D&C 122:5-8).

Where one door shuts, another opens, even for a prophet in prison. We are not always wise enough nor experienced enough to judge adequately all of the possible entries and exits. The mansion that God prepares for each of his beloved children may have only certain hallways and banisters, special carpets and curtains that he would have us pass on our way to possess it.

I share the view expressed by Orson F. Whitney in these words:

"No pain that we suffer, no trial that we experience is wasted. It ministers to our education, to the development of such qualities as patience, faith, fortitude and humility. All that we suffer and all that we endure, especially when we endure it patiently, builds up our characters, purifies our hearts, expands our souls, and makes us more tender and charitable, more worthy to be called the children of God . . . and it is through sorrow and suffering, toil and tribulation, that we gain the education that we come here to acquire and which will make us more like our Father and Mother in heaven" (as quoted in *Faith Precedes the Miracle*, p. 98).

At various times in our lives, probably at repeated times in our lives, we do have to acknowledge that God knows what we do not know and sees what we do not see. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are

your ways my ways, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 55:8).

May peace be unto your soul

If you have troubles at home with children who stray, if you suffer financial reverses and emotional strain that threaten your homes and your happiness, if you must face the loss of life or health, may peace be unto your soul. We will not be tempted beyond our ability to withstand. Our detours and disappointments are the straight and narrow path to Him, as we sing in one of our favorite hymns:

*When through fiery trials thy
pathway shall lie,
My grace, all sufficient, shall be
thy supply.
The flame shall not hurt thee;
I only design
Thy dress to consume and thy gold
to refine.
("How Firm a Foundation," Hymns
[1985], no. 85)*

May God bless us in the ups and downs of life, in the opening and closing of doors, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Jehovah, Lord of Heaven and Earth" without announcement.

President Monson

We have just heard from President Howard W. Hunter, Acting President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, a man intimately acquainted with the subject which he addressed so beautifully. Then the choir sang "Jehovah, Lord of Heaven and Earth."

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "High on the Mountain Top," following which we shall hear from Elder Robert L. Backman, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation sang
 "High on the Mountain Top."

Elder Robert L. Backman

Preparing for missions

This summer, our first grandson was called on a mission. We watched with anticipation and excitement as he prepared for that great adventure. We saw a transformation take place as he experienced his farewell, his temple endowment, and his entrance into the Missionary Training Center. It was a literal miracle to see a typical selfish teenage boy become a selfless servant of God. He became a man overnight. We thrilled at his letters from the Training Center in which he told his friends to get with it—that "this" is where it's at. We saw a new boldness as he became immersed in his mission. That boldness and spirit have been increased now that he is in the mission field teaching what he believes.

Let me share a portion of a letter he wrote to a nonmember friend who is investigating the Church:

"It's great to hear you've taken the discussions. They are really cool. Let me tell you something about commitment. You have just got to make it. Get committed! Read the Book of Mormon. I did it in nine days, and I only read for one and a half hours a day. Get committed to attend church every week. It is a commandment of God, and it's necessary for baptism. Get committed to pray. If you would read the Book of Mormon and pray about it, you would know that it is true. Finally, get committed to baptism. Christ did it, and you have to, too. I suspect that you know the gospel is true, or you wouldn't put up with it. Remember, God knows you know it; and if you don't make the commitment, he will still hold you ac-

countable because you know the truth. Being lukewarm in the gospel doesn't do anyone any good—especially you!"

As a grandfather, I exult when I see my own flesh and blood entering the Lord's service so well prepared and pray that my other grandchildren will respond as readily to the call as he has done.

In pondering what they could do to prepare to serve missions, I believe the best formula I could give them, and all the youth of the Church, is found in a single verse in the second chapter of Luke: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (v. 52).

That one verse gives us an insight into what our Savior did to prepare for his ministry.

It tells us that Jesus Christ grew physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually!

As his disciples, can we do less?

Let us consider how we can prepare in the same manner so we can truly represent him.

Physical preparation

Missionary work is demanding. It imposes heavy physical and mental stress. It is not for weaklings. It requires good health, stamina, strength, and self-control.

A missionary gets a lot of exercise—he walks long distances, rides bicycles up hills, and has to survive his companion's cooking. He rises early, and he works hard until late at night.

Who does your cooking, sewing, ironing? Who makes your bed; who

sweeps the floor; who does the dishes; who presses your pants, launders your shirts, shines your shoes? Who reminds you to get up or to go to bed?

You would do well to become self-sufficient in these matters before you go on your mission. It is much easier to learn now from a loving mother, from sisters and the young women of the ward than to wait until you are forced to learn to survive.

In your youth, remember the importance of living the Word of Wisdom and the glorious promise that the Lord gives us when we do.

As part of your physical preparation, consider how your mission will be financed.

If you have not started a mission savings account, there is no better time than right now.

Do you know how to budget? Shop for groceries? Do without? Make do? If you don't, where and when are you going to learn?

Mental preparation

Before I could even practice law, I had to get through elementary school, high school, college, and graduate school. That required many years of study and education. And yet some of us seem to feel that we can understand the gospel of Jesus Christ, which embraces all truth, simply by attending church, making little effort to learn and practice its vital teachings.

As you prepare for your mission, remember the counsel of the old sage: "You can't teach what you don't know any more than you can come back from a place you ain't been."

How is your educational preparation? Do you love to learn? Do you know how to listen? To read? To study? To ponder? To memorize?

Are you reading the scriptures regularly, and understanding them? They were written to you and to me, not only to those who lived at the time they were penned.

President Ezra Taft Benson encouraged you to participate in a pro-

gram of daily reading and pondering of the scriptures, particularly the Book of Mormon. Think on his words:

"Young men, the Book of Mormon will change your life. It will fortify you against the evils of our day. It will bring a spirituality into your life that no other book will. It will be the most important book you will read in preparation for a mission and for life. A young man who knows and loves the Book of Mormon, who has read it several times, who has an abiding testimony of its truthfulness, and who applies its teachings will be able to stand against the wiles of the devil and will be a mighty tool in the hands of the Lord" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1986, p. 56; or *Ensign*, May 1986, p. 43).

What a promise from a prophet of God!

From the Missionary Training Center, my grandson wrote to a friend: "Read the Book of Mormon. . . . It is the best book I have ever read, and I am not just saying that."

You will be surprised how often you will draw on the scriptures to enrich your discussions, resolve concerns, and relate principles to real-life experiences.

I urge you to study a foreign language. That will open doors and provide opportunities that will serve you well, not only on your mission, but throughout your life.

Seminary provides a great opportunity to mentally prepare for your mission.

Social preparation

How do you like yourself?

A mission requires faith in self, and that comes from practice. It comes from understanding who you are as a child of God and what you can become.

A missionary soon discovers that whether he thinks he can or thinks he can't, he is right.

Do you honor and sustain the law? Are you dependable—a person of your word? There will not be another time in

your life when more trust and confidence will be exhibited in you.

Can you obey rules? Missions are run by rules.

Are you honest in your relationship with others? Do you like people?

Can you imagine living with another missionary twenty-four hours a day—and enjoying it?

What great lessons you will learn about the brotherhood of man in this microcosm of society!

One of the missionaries who served with me had a difficult time getting along with companions. I was required to transfer them frequently because they could not take it. Finally, I asked one of my finest missionaries to become his companion, urging him to do all he could to help his fellow missionary love his work. As I approached a conference in the city where they were laboring, I feared he, like his predecessors, would ask for a transfer. To my surprise, when I asked how he was getting along with his companion, he responded: "We are doing great! We discovered we had something in common. Neither of us has been to Africa!"

I promise you that you will make some of the most enduring friendships of your life. I look back on my own mission and the men I associated with there. They have had a powerful, positive effect on my life. They are among my closest friends.

Why is this so? Someone said, "A mission is like being dipped in a big pot of love!"

Recently, I attended a stake conference where a beautiful teenage girl told of her experience of working with a companionship of lady missionaries. With deep emotion she spoke of the love they exhibited toward everyone, friendly or unfriendly, responsive or abusive. They recognized that each person they met was truly a child of God, dearly loved by him. Could they do less? That love rubbed off on everyone they contacted, even warming their relationship with each other.

Spiritual preparation

God's truth can only be known through the Spirit of the Lord.

A missionary must be in tune with that Holy Spirit. He must recognize its guidance and inspiration. His life must be pure so he can count on that Spirit in all that he does.

How can you prepare to enjoy the Holy Spirit?

1. Keep your life clean—in thought and action. Immorality is Satan's most potent tool against us and leads to more unhappiness, grief, regret, and self-degradation than any other sin. It is deadly to our eternal progress. Avoid it like a plague.

2. Pray from your heart—then listen for God's answer.

3. Develop a testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ by practicing its teachings in your daily activities.

4. Stand up for what you believe. Set the standards for your life and don't be swayed by lower standards of others. You are in charge of your life!

5. Honor your priesthood, which has come to you from God and will serve as an armor for you throughout life as you respect its mighty power.

6. Set long-range goals. Determine in advance your course of action. Map out where you want to go and how you are going to get there. This will help you resist the temptations of Satan when they come—as they surely will.

7. Keep the commandments. That will lead to happiness and fulfillment.

8. We have discovered that the best way to prepare for a mission is to have the spiritual experience of teaching the gospel to others before you are called. We urge you to reach out to your friends, help teach them the gospel by teaming with the full-time or the stake missionaries, bearing your testimonies in that atmosphere. You will then become acquainted with how the Holy Spirit works to guide others to the truth, and you will recognize its sweet influence in your own experience.

You will understand, as Elisha's young servant came to understand when he discovered the city surrounded by the Syrian army. Running to Elisha in panic he asked, "Alas, my master! how shall we do?"

Elisha answered: "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them."

"And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha" (2 Kings 6:15-17).

When you are in tune with that Holy Spirit, you will be well armed to be the Lord's representative, prepared to teach and to testify, bringing souls to our Savior, Jesus Christ.

In last April's Regional Representatives' seminar, President Gordon B. Hinckley said: "In missionary work, as in all else, preparation precedes power. Encouragement to prepare while still very young can make a tremendous difference" (3 April 1987).

To my grandchildren, and to the youth of the Church wherever you are, I invite you to make the commitment to serve a mission. I invite you to become a part of the royal army of the Lord, to prepare yourselves physically, mentally, socially, spiritually—beginning right now.

President Benson has reminded you that you can do "nothing more important. School can wait. Scholarships can be deferred. Occupational goals can be postponed. Yes, even temple marriage should wait" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1986, p. 57; or *Ensign*, May 1986, p. 44).

With President Benson, I invite you to show your love and commitment

to the Lord by responding to His call to serve and joining your voice with thirty-four thousand other missionaries in singing:

*Called to serve Him, heav'nly
King of glory,
Chosen e'er to witness for his
name,
Far and wide we tell the Father's
story,
Far and wide his love proclaim.
Called to know the richness of his
blessing—
Sons and daughters, children of a
King—
Glad of heart, his holy name
confessing,
Praises unto him we bring.
Onward, ever onward, as we glory
in his name;
Onward, ever onward, as we glory
in his name;
Forward, pressing forward, as a
triumph song we sing.
God our strength will be; Press
forward ever,
Called to serve our King.
("Called to Serve," Hymns [1985],
no. 249)*

"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52).

O youth of the Church, go and do likewise—be prepared to serve!

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Robert L. Backman, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks

My dear brothers and sisters, I rejoice with you in the privilege of coming together on this beautiful Sabbath

day to worship our Father in Heaven and his Son Jesus Christ and to be instructed by their servants.

The Book of Mormon tells of the resurrected Lord visiting some of the people of the Americas. Clothed in a white robe, he descended out of heaven. Standing in the midst of a multitude, he stretched forth his hand and said:

"Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world.

"And behold, I am the light and the life of the world" (3 Nephi 11:10-11).

He has repeated this declaration in many modern revelations (see D&C 12:9, 39:2, 45:7). In harmony with his words, we solemnly affirm that Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God the Eternal Father, is the light and life of the world.

Jesus Christ is the light and life of the world because all things were made by him. Under the direction and according to the plan of God the Father, Jesus Christ is the Creator, the source of the light and life of all things. Through modern revelation we have the testimony of John, who bore record that Jesus Christ is "the light and the Redeemer of the world; the Spirit of truth, who came into the world, because the world was made by him, and in him was the life of men and the light of men.

"The worlds were made by him; men were made by him; all things were made by him, and through him, and of him" (D&C 93:9-10).

The light of the world

Jesus Christ is the *light* of the world because he is the source of the light which "proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space" (D&C 88:12). His light is "the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (D&C 93:2; see also D&C 84:46). The scriptures call this universal light "the light of truth" (D&C 88:6), "the light of Christ" (D&C 88:7, Moroni 7:18), and the "Spirit of Christ" (Moroni 7:16). This is the light that quickens our understanding (see D&C 88:11). It is "the

light by which [we] may judge" (Moroni 7:18). It "is given to every man, that he may know good from evil" (Moroni 7:16).

Jesus Christ is also the light of the world because his example and his teachings illuminate the path we should walk to return to the presence of our Father in Heaven. Before Jesus was born, Zacharias prophesied that the Lord God of Israel would visit his people "to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide [their] feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:79).

During his ministry Jesus taught, "Behold I am the light; I have set an example for you" (3 Nephi 18:16). Later, he told his Apostles, "Hold up your light that it may shine unto the world," adding, "Behold, I am the light which ye shall hold up—that which ye have seen me do" (3 Nephi 18:24). He taught the Nephite multitude, "Ye know the things that ye must do in my church; for the works which ye have seen me do that shall ye also do" (3 Nephi 27:21).

The Savior emphasized the close relationship between his light and his commandments when he taught the Nephites, "Behold I am the law, and the light" (3 Nephi 15:9).

The Psalmist expressed that relationship: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105).

As the Lord led Lehi and his people out of Jerusalem, he said, "I will also be your light in the wilderness; and I will prepare the way before you, if it so be that ye shall keep my commandments" (1 Nephi 17:13).

As we keep the Lord's commandments, we see his light ever brighter on our path and we realize the fulfillment of Isaiah's promise, "And the Lord shall guide thee continually" (Isaiah 58:11).

Jesus Christ is also the light of the world because his power persuades us to do good. The prophet Mormon taught: "All things which are good cometh of God; . . .

"Wherefore, every thing which inviteth and enticeth to do good, and to love God, and to serve him, is inspired of God" (Moroni 7:12-13). Mormon's words anticipate what the Lord later told Moroni while he was compiling the Book of Mormon: "He that believeth these things which I have spoken . . . shall know that these things are true; for it persuadeth men to do good."

"And whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do good is of me; for good cometh of none save it be of me. . . . I am the light, and the life, and the truth of the world" (Ether 4:11-12; see also D&C 11:12).

And so we see that Jesus Christ is the *light* of the world because he is the source of the light that quickens our understanding, because his teachings and his example illuminate our path, and because his power persuades us to do good.

The life of the world

Jesus Christ is the *life* of the world because of his unique position in what the scriptures call "the great and eternal plan of deliverance from death" (2 Nephi 11:5).

Jesus taught: "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved. . . .

" . . . I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:9-10).

Later, Jesus explained to his Apostles, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

We come to the Father through the life-giving mission of the Son in two ways. In each of these ways, Jesus Christ is the life of the world, our Savior and our Redeemer.

Through the power and example of the infinite atonement of Jesus Christ, all mankind will be resurrected (see 2 Nephi 9:7, 12). Our mortal life came into being because of his creative act. Our immortal life has now been assured because the Resurrected Lord

has redeemed us from death. According to the plan of the Father, the Son was "the firstborn from the dead" (Colossians 1:18). "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22).

Jesus Christ is also the life of the world because he has atoned for the sins of the world. By yielding to temptation, Adam and Eve were "cut off from the presence of the Lord" (Helaman 14:16). In the scriptures this separation is called spiritual death (see Helaman 14:16, D&C 29:41).

The atonement of our Savior overcame this spiritual death. The scriptures say, "The Son of God hath atoned for original guilt" (Moses 6:54). As Paul taught the Saints in Rome: "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life" (Romans 5:18). As a result of this atonement, "men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression" (Articles of Faith 1:2).

Our Savior has redeemed us from the sin of Adam, but what about the effects of our own sins? Since "all have sinned" (Romans 3:23), we are all spiritually dead. Again, our only hope for life is our Savior, who, the prophet Lehi taught, "offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law" (2 Nephi 2:7).

In order to lay claim upon our Savior's life-giving triumph over the spiritual death we suffer because of our own sins, we must follow the conditions he has prescribed. As he has told us in modern revelation, "I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

"But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I" (D&C 19:16-17).

Our third article of faith describes the Savior's conditions in these words: "We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel."

In the words of our Savior, recorded in the Book of Mormon as he taught the people on this continent, "And whosoever will hearken unto my words and repenteth and is baptized, the same shall be saved" (3 Nephi 23:5).

In summary, the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior and our Redeemer, is the *life* of the world because his resurrection and his atonement save us from both physical and spiritual death. Jacob rejoiced in this gift of life: "O how great the goodness of our God, who prepareth a way for our escape from the grasp of this awful monster; yea, that monster, death and hell, which I call the death of the body, and also the death of the spirit" (2 Nephi 9:10).

I wish that everyone could understand our belief and hear our testimony that Jesus Christ, our Savior and our Redeemer, is the light and life of the world.

Our Savior and our Redeemer

Some who profess to be followers of Christ insist that members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are not Christians. Indeed, there are those who make their living attacking our church and its doctrines. I wish all of them could have the experience I shared recently.

A friend who was making his first visit to Salt Lake City, called on me in my office. He is a well-educated man and a devout and sincere Christian. Although we have not discussed this with each other, we both know that some leaders of his denomination have taught that members of our church are not Christians.

After a short discussion on a matter of common interest, I told my friend I had something I would like him to see. We walked over to Temple Square and into the North Visitors' Center. We viewed the pictures of Bible and Book of Mormon Apostles and prophets. Then we turned our steps up the inclined walkway to the second level. Here Thorvaldsen's great statue of the

risen Christ dominates a setting suggestive of the immensity of space and the grandeur of the creations of God.

As we emerged and beheld this majestic likeness of the Christus, arms outstretched and hands showing the wounds of his crucifixion, my friend drew a sharp breath. We stood quietly for a few minutes, enjoying a reverent communion of worshipful thoughts about our Savior. Then, without further conversation, we made our way down to the street level. On the way we walked past the small diorama showing the Prophet Joseph Smith kneeling in the Sacred Grove.

As we left Temple Square and took our leave of one another, my friend took me by the hand. "Thank you for showing me that," he said. "Now I understand something about your faith that I have never understood before." I hope that every person who has ever had doubts about whether we are Christians can achieve that same understanding.

We love the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Messiah, our Savior and our Redeemer. His is the only name by which we can be saved (see Mosiah 3:17, 5:8; D&C 18:23). We seek to serve him. We belong to his church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Our missionaries and members testify of Jesus Christ in many nations of the world. As the prophet Nephi wrote in the Book of Mormon, "We talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins" (2 Nephi 25:26).

As we state in our first article of faith, "We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost." God the Father, the great Elohim, the Almighty God, is the Father of our spirits, the framer of heaven and earth, and the author of the plan of our salvation (see Moses 1:31-33, 2:1-2;

D&C 20:17–21). Jesus Christ is his Only Begotten Son, Jehovah, the Holy One and God of Israel, the Messiah, “the God of the whole earth” (3 Nephi 11:14). As the Book of Mormon declares, “Salvation was, and is, and is to come, in and through the atoning blood of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent” (Mosiah 3:18; see also Moses 6:52, 59). The scriptures proclaim and we reverently affirm that Jesus Christ is the light and life of the world.

What does this knowledge mean to Latter-day Saints? (We call ourselves “Saints” because this is the scriptural term for those who have sought to make their lives holy by entering into covenants to follow Christ.)

Our Savior is the light of the world. We should live so that we can be enlightened by his Spirit, and so that we may hear and heed the ratifying seal of the Holy Ghost, which testifies of the Father and the Son (see D&C 20:26). We should study the principles of his gospel and receive its ordinances. We should keep his commandments, including his two great commandments to love God and to love and serve our neighbors (see Matthew 22:36–40). We should be faithful to the covenants we have made in the name of Jesus Christ.

Our Savior is also the *life* of the world. We should give thanks for his absolute gift of immortality. We should receive the ordinances and keep the covenants necessary to receive his con-

ditional gift of life eternal, the greatest of all the gifts of God (see D&C 14:7).

Come unto Christ

In short, Latter-day Saints invite each other and all men and women everywhere to “come unto Christ.” As a prophet has told us in the Book of Mormon: “I would that ye should come unto Christ, who is the Holy One of Israel, and partake of his salvation, and the power of his redemption. Yea, come unto him, and offer your whole souls as an offering unto him, and continue in fasting and praying, and endure to the end; and as the Lord liveth ye will be saved” (Omni 1:26).

May God bless all of us to come unto Christ. I testify that he is our Savior and our Redeemer, the light and the life of the world, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang “Truth Eternal” without announcement.

President Monson

Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just addressed us, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing “Truth Eternal.”

President Benson has asked that I serve as concluding speaker at this session of our conference.

President Thomas S. Monson

We live in a wicked world

Recently there moved over the wires of Associated Press a catalog of crime as the daily happenings around the world were relayed to the media and thence to the homes on every continent.

The headlines were brief. They highlighted murder, rape, robbery, molestation, fraud, deceit, and corruption. I made note of several: “Man Slays

Wife and Children, Then Turns Gun on Self”; “Child Identifies Molester”; “Hundreds Lose All As Multimillion-Dollar Scam Is Exposed.” The sordid list continued. Shades of Sodom, glimpses of Gomorrah.

President Ezra Taft Benson has often stated, “We live in a wicked world.” The Apostle Paul warned, “Men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud,

blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (2 Timothy 3:2-4).

"The doorway of love"

Must we suffer the same fate as those who lived in the cities of the plain? Can we not learn the lesson taught in the time of Noah? "Is there no balm in Gilead?" (Jeremiah 8:22). Or is there a doorway that leads us from the morass of worldliness onward and upward to the high ground of righteousness? There echoes ever so gently to the honest mind that personal invitation of the Lord: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him" (Revelation 3:20). Does that doorway have a name? It surely does. I have chosen to call it "the doorway of love."

Love is the catalyst that causes change. Love is the balm that brings healing to the soul. But love doesn't grow like weeds or fall like rain. Love has its price. "God so loved the world, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). That Son, even the Lord Jesus Christ, gave His life that we might have eternal life, so great was His love for His Father and for us.

This same Jesus was approached by a lawyer who asked, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?"

"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

"This is the first and great commandment.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

"On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:36-40).

In that tender and touching farewell, as He counseled His beloved

disciples, Jesus taught: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me" (John 14:21). Particularly far-reaching was the instruction, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you" (John 13:34).

Love at home

Little children can learn the lesson of love. Profound instruction from holy writ oftentimes is not understood by them. However, they respond readily to a favorite verse:

*"I love you, Mother," said little John;
Then, forgetting his work, his cap went on,
And he was off to the garden swing,
And left her the water and wood to bring.*
*"I love you, Mother," said rosy Nell—
"I love you better than tongue can tell";
Then she teased and pouted full half the day,
Till her mother rejoiced when she went to play.*
*"I love you, Mother," said little Fan;
"Today I'll help you all I can;
How glad I am that school doesn't keep!"
So she rocked the babe till it fell asleep.*
*Then, stepping softly, she fetched the broom,
And swept the floor and tidied the room;
Busy and happy all day was she,
Helpful and happy as child could be.*
*"I love you, Mother," again they said,
Three little children going to bed;
How do you think that mother guessed
Which of them really loved her best?"*
(Joy Allison, in *The World's Best*)

Loved Poems, comp. James Gilchrist Lawson [New York: Harper and Row, 1955], pp. 243-44)

Home should be a haven of love. Honor, courtesy, and respect symbolize love and characterize the righteous family. Fathers in such homes will not hear the denunciation of the Lord as recorded in the book of Jacob: "Ye have broken the hearts of your tender wives, and lost the confidence of your children, because of your bad examples before them; and the sobbings of their hearts ascend up to God against you" (Jacob 2:35).

Let peace on earth begin with me

In 3 Nephi the Master instructed: "There shall be no disputations among you. . . .

"For verily, verily I say unto you, he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another.

"Behold, this is not my doctrine, to stir up the hearts of men with anger, one against another; but this is my doctrine, that such things should be done away" (3 Nephi 11:28-30).

Where love is, there is no disputation. Where love is, there is no contention. Where love is, there God will be also. Each of us has the responsibility to keep His commandments. The lessons found in scripture find fulfillment in our lives. Joseph Smith taught that "happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it; and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], pp. 255-56).

In the classic musical production *Camelot*, there is a line with words of warning for all. After the familiar triangle began to deepen regarding King

Arthur, Lancelot, and Guenevere, King Arthur said, "We must not let our passions destroy our dreams."

From that same production came another truth also spoken by Arthur as he envisioned a better world: "Violence is not strength, and compassion is not weakness."

In this world in which we live, there is a tendency for us to describe needed change, required help, and desired relief with the familiar phrase, "They ought to do something about this." We fail to define the word *they*. I love the message, "Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me."

Tears came to my eyes when I read of a mere boy in one of our eastern cities who noticed a vagrant asleep on a sidewalk and who then went to his own bedroom, retrieved his own pillow, and placed it beneath the head of that one whom he knew not. Perhaps there came from the precious past the welcome words: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40).

I extol those who, with loving care and compassionate concern, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and house the homeless. He who notes the sparrow's fall will not be unmindful of such service.

*A bell is no bell till you ring it,
A song is no song till you sing it;
And love in your heart wasn't put
there to stay.*

*Love isn't love till you give it
away.*

("Sixteen Going on Seventeen,"
from *The Sound of Music*, Rodgers
and Hammerstein)

Lift, help, and give

From the Holy Bible we read: "And it came to pass . . . that [Jesus] went into a city called Nain. . . .

"When he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. . . .

"And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

"And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still."

In the majesty of his messianic ministry, He declared: "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.

"And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother" (Luke 7:11-15).

The desire to lift, the willingness to help, and the graciousness to give come from a heart filled with love.

Show your love

The poet wrote, "Love is the most noble attribute of the human soul." And William Shakespeare cautioned, "They do not love that do not show their love" (*Two Gentlemen of Verona*, act 1, scene 2, line 31).

A school teacher showed her love with her guiding philosophy: "No one fails in my class. I have the responsibility to help each student succeed."

A priesthood quorum leader in Salt Lake City—a retired executive—said to me: "This year I have helped twelve of my brethren who were out of work to obtain permanent employment. I have never been happier in my entire life." Short in stature, "Little Ed," as we affectionately called him, stood tall that day as his eyes glistened and his voice quavered. He showed his love by helping those in need.

A large and tough businessman, a wholesale vendor of poultry, showed his love with a single comment made when one attempted to pay for twenty-four roasting chickens. "The chickens are going to the widows, aren't they? There will be no charge." As he placed them in the car trunk, he said in a faltering voice: "And there are more where these came from."

Robert Woodruff, an executive in a former generation, traversed America with a message which he delivered to civic and business groups. The outline was simple, the message brief:

The five most important words are these: *I am proud of you.*

The four most important words are these: *What is your opinion?*

The three most important words are these: *If you please.*

The two most important words are these: *Thank you.*

To Mr. Woodruff's list I would add, The single most important word is *love.*

A few years ago Morgan High School played Millard High for the state football championship. From his wheelchair, to which Morgan coach Jan Smith was confined, he said to his team: "This is the most important game of your lives. You lose and you will regret it forever. You win, and you will remember it forever. Make every play as though it were all-important."

Behind the door, his wife, whom he tenderly referred to as his chief assistant, overheard her husband say, "I love you guys. I don't care about the ball game. I love you and want the game victory for you." Underdog Morgan High won the football game and the state championship.

True love is a reflection of Christ's love. In December of each year we call it the Christmas spirit. You can hear it. You can see it. You can feel it. But never alone.

The wondrous gift of love

One winter day, I thought back to an experience from my boyhood. I was just eleven. Our Primary president, Melissa, was an older and loving gray-haired lady. One day at Primary, Melissa asked me to stay behind and visit with her. There the two of us sat in the otherwise-empty chapel. She placed her arm about my shoulder and began to cry.

Surprised, I asked her why she was crying.

She replied, "I don't seem to be able to encourage the Trail Builder boys to be reverent during the opening exercises of Primary. Would you be willing to help me, Tommy?"

I promised Melissa that I would. Strangely to me, but not to Melissa,

that ended any problem of reverence in that Primary. She had gone to the source of the problem—me. The solution was love.

The years flew by. Marvelous Melissa, now in her nineties, lived in a nursing facility in the northwest part of Salt Lake City. Just before Christmas I determined to visit my beloved Primary president. Over the car radio, I heard the song, "Hark! the herald angels sing; Glory to the newborn King!" (*Hymns* [1985], no. 209). I reflected on the visit made by wise men those long years ago. They brought gifts of gold, of frankincense, and of myrrh. I brought only the gift of love and a desire to say thank you.

I found Melissa in the lunchroom. She was staring at her plate of food, teasing it with the fork she held in her aged hand. Not a bite did she eat. As I spoke to her, my words were met by a benign but blank stare. I took the fork in hand and began to feed Melissa, talking all the time I did so about her service to boys and girls as a Primary worker. There wasn't so much as a glimmer of recognition, far less a spoken word. Two other residents of the nursing home gazed at me with puzzled expressions. At last they spoke, saying, "Don't talk to her. She doesn't know anyone—even her own family. She hasn't said a word in all the years she's been here."

Luncheon ended. My one-sided conversation wound down. I stood to leave. I held her frail hand in mine, gazed into her wrinkled but beautiful countenance, and said, "God bless you, Melissa. Merry Christmas."

Without warning, she spoke the words, "I know you. You're Tommy Monson, my Primary boy. How I love you." She pressed my hand to her lips and bestowed on it the kiss of love. Tears coursed down her cheeks and bathed our clasped hands. Those

hands, that day, were hallowed by heaven and graced by God. The herald angels did sing. The words of the Master seemed to have a personal meaning never before fully felt: "Woman, behold thy son!" And to his disciple, "Behold thy mother!" (see John 19:26-27).

Outside the sky was blue—azure blue. The air was cool—crispy cool. The snow was white—crystal white.

From Bethlehem there seemed to echo the words:

*How silently, how silently
The wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming;
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive
him, still
The dear Christ enters in.
("O Little Town of Bethlehem,"
Hymns [1985], no. 208)*

The wondrous gift was given, the heavenly blessing was received, the dear Christ had entered in—all through the doorway called love. I declare this solemn truth in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

The Tabernacle Choir will sing in closing "Each Life That Touches Ours for Good." The benediction will be offered by Bishop Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, and this conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The choir sang "Each Life That Touches Ours for Good."

Bishop Henry B. Eyring offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY AFTERNOON SESSION

The fifth session of the 157th Semiannual General Conference commenced at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, October 4, 1987. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

Music was provided by the Tabernacle Choir, with Brothers Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducting and Brother John Longhurst at the organ.

President Hinckley made the following remarks at the outset of the meeting.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

President Ezra Taft Benson, who has presided at all sessions of this conference, has asked that I conduct this fifth and concluding session of the 157th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We extend a sincere welcome to all assembled in the Tabernacle and to those seated in the Assembly Hall, where Elders Robert B. Harbertson and Hans B. Ringger are seated on the stand. We send also our greetings and

blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere who are participating in these proceedings by radio, television, cable, or by means of satellite transmission.

The Tabernacle Choir, with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger directing and John Longhurst at the organ, will begin this service by singing "Rejoice, A Glorious Sound Is Heard." The invocation will be offered by Elder John H. Groberg of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Rejoice, A Glorious Sound Is Heard."

Elder John H. Groberg offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

The choir will now sing "Our Savior's Love." Following the singing, Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our first speaker.

The choir sang "Our Savior's Love."

Elder L. Tom Perry

Purposes of celebrations

We have just completed a summer in which we have commemorated several events of great historical significance. On the twenty-fourth of July, we celebrated the 140th anniversary of the arrival of the Mormon pioneers in the Salt Lake Valley. At the same time we were commemorating the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the first LDS missionaries in Great Britain. Finally, citizens of these great United States,

members of the Church and non-members alike, recently celebrated the 200th birthday of their Constitution.

Each of these events has had a marked and lasting impact on the history of the Church. As I participated in many of the festivities dotting this historic summer, I pondered the purpose of celebrations.

Celebrating events of the past focuses our thoughts on our history. We take the opportunity to review the past. We glean from the experiences of the

past as we anticipate the future. Cicero wrote this of history:

"Not to know what has been transacted in former times is to be always a child. If no use is made of the labors of past ages, the world must remain always in the infancy of knowledge" (in *The International Dictionary of Thoughts*, comp. John P. Bradley, et. al. [Chicago: J. G. Ferguson Publishing Co., 1969], p. 362).

Ancient Israel's celebrations

This summer has rekindled in me an interest in our heritage and history. I have been intrigued by the similarities found there and am especially fascinated with the parallelism between the Hebrew nation and our own Church history.

The man prepared by our Heavenly Father to be the leader of the Hebrew nation was Moses. His illustrious name adorns the pages of ancient history. The Lord revealed through Moses the feasts and events that the Israelites should hold as perpetual reminders of their deliverance from slavery and the birth of their new nation. These celebrations took two forms. First they were celebrations of the actual historical events, such as the Passover, to remind the people of Israel of the Lord's hand in delivering them. Then there were traditions tied to periods of time determined by various multiples of the number seven.

Of course, the seventh day was the Sabbath, a day of rest, the seventh month a time of harvest. Then, as we read in the twenty-fifth chapter of Leviticus, there were special instructions pertaining to the seventh year and the fiftieth year:

"Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof;

"But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the Lord: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard. . . .

"And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven

times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years.

"Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land.

"And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family" (Leviticus 25:3-4, 8-10).

Every fiftieth year, the land was to be returned to the original owners or their descendants; all Israelites sold into slavery for debt were to be freed; and the land, as in the seventh or sabbatical year, was to lie fallow. Even in our day, the tradition of sabbatical years is perpetuated by universities, which encourage faculty members to go on sabbaticals, roughly every seventh year. The word *jubilee*, generally interpreted, means "ram" or "ram's horn" and refers to the horn used to proclaim the beginning of the Jubilee Year, or the fiftieth year.

There seem to be four purposes for celebrations and traditions of ancient Israel, each of which could be applied as a guide and an influence to the way we celebrate and the meanings we give to our celebrations.

Traditions that strengthen faith

First, the traditions preserved the religious faith and strengthened the spiritual fiber of the people of Israel. As an example, let us review the messages implicit in the celebration of the Jubilee Year. An excerpt from *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* tells us that "the fiftieth year was to be a time of proclaiming liberty to all the inhabitants of the land. God had redeemed His people from bondage in Egypt (Lev. 25:42); and none of them was again to be reduced to the status of . . . slave. . . . God's chosen child

was not to be oppressed. . . . Indeed, as citizens of the theocratic kingdom, masters and servants had become brothers together. . . . Thus, as seen in its widest application, only through its loyalty to God could Israel as a nation ever hope to be free and independent of other masters.

"A second feature of the Jubilee was that of the restitution of all real property. The purpose was to demonstrate that the earth is subject basically to God's law, and not to man's desires. . . . God's specific legislation concerned the inalienability of Israel's land titles. It required the reversion of all hereditary property to the family that originally possessed it and the reestablishment of the initial arrangement regarding God's division of the land. It did not teach either the socialistic economic theory that a person is entitled to ownership of goods on the basis of his need . . . or the free-enterprise system that allows an unlimited expansion of private property. On the contrary, it established a fixed title to the property assigned by God" (Geoffrey W. Bromley, ed., 4 vols. [Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968], 2:1142).

What powerful messages these are—that the Israelites were God's chosen children, and that all they possessed was God's, and that only He could permanently grant title to the land. Truly, these messages, couched in the tradition of the Jubilee Year, reminded the people of Israel of their spiritual genealogy and their indebtedness to the Lord.

Celebrations of Christmas and Easter, our annual Pioneer Day observance, events commemorating the restoration of the Aaronic and the Melchizedek priesthoods, the Relief Society birthday parties, and pageants—all cause us to remember our spiritual heritage and increase our gratitude to the Lord for all He does for us.

Political component of traditions

Second, Israel's celebrations and traditions had a political component.

These were times of uniting the tribes to form a closer union.

Celebrations that commemorate important events in our native lands should receive our support and attention. I was impressed with how vigorously and appropriately members of the Church residing in the United States celebrated the 200th year of the Constitution.

After all, we declare in the twelfth article of faith, "We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law." We find that this counsel is continually needed in the Church today. All members of the Church should be committed to obeying and honoring the laws of the land in which they live. We should be exemplary in our obedience to the governments that govern us. The Church, to be of service to the nations of the world, must be a wholesome influence in the lives of individuals who embrace it, in temporal as well as spiritual affairs.

In Matthew, the twenty-second chapter, we recall the account of the Pharisees attempting to entangle the Savior in the conflict they perceived in His teachings between Church and state:

"Tell us therefore, what thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?"

"But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?"

"Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny."

"And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription?"

"They said unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:17-21).

Continuing after the Savior's ministry, the Apostles urged the Saints to be orderly and law-abiding. Writing to Titus, Paul declared, "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work" (Titus 3:1).

As Church members, we live under the banner of many different flags. How important it is that we understand our place and our position in the lands in which we live! We should be familiar with the history, heritage, and laws of the lands that govern us. In those countries that allow us the right to participate in the affairs of government, we should use our free agency and be actively engaged in supporting and defending the principles of truth, right, and freedom.

Cultural impact of traditions

Third, Israel's celebrations and traditions had a cultural impact. Their festivals and feasts were times of sharing talents and accomplishments. They were a time of sharing practical knowledge associated with advancements in the arts and sciences.

An important part of our pioneer heritage is an appreciation of all the cultural arts. Our pioneer forebears literally danced and sang their way across the plains. It was a way they kept their spirits high in the face of tremendous hardships.

As the pioneers settled communities, they built theaters, organized bands and choruses, and sent artists on missions to gain the experience and training necessary to develop their talents fully. Certainly, we honor our pioneer heritage by making beauty and culture one of the centerpieces of our commemorations. And by so doing, are we not also offering praise to the Lord through the beautiful creations of our hands and our minds?

Social significance of traditions

Finally, the celebrations and traditions of ancient Israel had a deep social significance. They were times of building a sense of community, a time of reaffirming a brotherhood and sisterhood shared by everyone, a time of bonding families together.

In the general conference of 1880, President John Taylor announced a

Jubilee Year of the Church. He proposed to the body of the Church several ways to celebrate the Jubilee Year—ways that drew the community of Saints more closely together. President Taylor said:

"It occurred to me that we ought to do something, as they did in former times, to relieve those that are oppressed with debt, to assist those that are needy, to break the yoke off those that may feel themselves crowded upon, and to make it a time of general rejoicing" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1880, p. 61).

President Taylor then proposed that—

First, one-half of the debt of the members to the Perpetual Emigration Fund would be released.

Second, the poor would be released from the back tithing they had committed for.

Third, the Church would raise a herd of a thousand milk cows, to be distributed to the poor and needy. The Church would contribute three hundred cows, and the rest would be gathered from the stakes of the Church.

And finally, the Relief Society would gather bushels of wheat to be loaned to the poor to be used as seed. Then, after the harvest, the loan could be repaid, thus establishing a permanent store of seed wheat. (Someone asked President Taylor if the wheat was to be loaned without interest. He replied, "Of course it is; we do not want any nonsense of that kind; it is the time of jubilee") (in Conference Report, Apr. 1880, p. 64; see also pp. 62–63).

What a marvelous effect President Taylor's proposal must have had on the Church's social structure! By recasting the traditions of ancient Israel in a way to respond to present-day needs, President Taylor showed the members how to be true Latter-day Saints.

Praise God through celebrations

Celebrating important historical events perpetuates traditions, but it does not replace the study of history.

Rather, it encourages study. We build bridges between the present and the past and bring relevance and interest to our study of history. When we celebrate, we remember. Sometimes we reenact that which has gone on before. When we honor tradition, we actually do what our ancestors did.

I hope as we continue to commemorate historical events and reclaim our traditions that we always celebrate with a purpose. I pray that we will make our celebrations more meaningful by reaffirming our spiritual, political, cultural, and social values. As members of this glorious church, we share a rich heritage. We literally stand on the shoulders of the giants of faith, vision, and spirit who preceded us.

When we honor them and their many sacrifices, we preserve their achievements and the principles and values for which they stood. And it provides us a wonderful way in which to praise God!

We learn from ancient Israel that there is a place for commemorative events. Let us build in our families,

communities, and nations, traditions of a lasting nature that will consistently remind us of the Lord's eternal truths and of our forebears who preserved them for our day.

God grant that we may ever keep alive the rich heritage which is ours, especially by building family traditions as constant reminders of our standards and our values.

This is the Lord's work in which we are engaged. I bear witness of that. He lives. Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world. That we may be engaged in His work is my humble prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder L. Aldin Porter, who was sustained at the April conference as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder L. Aldin Porter

The Brethren will never lead us astray

Shortly after this call came to me, I was traveling by plane from Baton Rouge, Louisiana, to Salt Lake City. A young businessman stepped to my seat in the plane and introduced himself as a Latter-day Saint. He asked if I was traveling to attend meetings, and I answered, "Yes."

"Will you see President Benson?"

"I think that is unlikely in view of the nature of the meetings."

"When you see him, will you tell him that though we have never met, I have a deep love for him?"

He returned to his seat.

It was late in the day; soon the lights were dimmed, giving me ample opportunity to think about that experience.

Brothers and sisters, there is great safety in having a love for the Brethren. As we traveled through the night, I remembered an experience that had come to me in this tabernacle some years ago. It was, I believe, the last time that President Joseph Fielding Smith spoke in a general priesthood meeting. He said:

"Now, brethren, I think there is one thing which we should have exceedingly clear in our minds. Neither the President of the Church, nor the First Presidency, nor the united voice of the First Presidency and the Twelve will ever lead the Saints astray or send forth counsel to the world that is contrary to the mind and will of the Lord" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1972, p. 99; or *Ensign*, July 1972, p. 88).

When President Smith made that statement, the Spirit bore witness to me that it was true. That same Spirit bears witness anew today.

President Spencer W. Kimball told the experience of a man who "rebelled against the call of Brigham Young to go to southern valleys, saying: 'Nobody is going to tell me where to go and what to do.' Through his personal rebellion, he took his entire family out of the Church. How little he retarded the colonization program! The valleys were settled in spite of him. How little his disaffection injured the Church! It has grown steadily without him. But how *he* has suffered in *his* eternal progression! In contrast, there were many who pulled up stakes, moved to new worlds, and reared families of faith and devotion" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1955, p. 94).

What can we do to help develop a love for the prophets, seers, and revelators? Permit me to make three suggestions.

Read the scriptures

First, read the scriptures, especially the Book of Mormon. Speaking of the scriptures, the Prophet Joseph Smith said, "He who reads it oftenest will like it best, and he who is acquainted with it, will know the hand wherever he can see it" (*History of the Church*, 2:14).

Let us read the scriptures, and we "will know the hand."

The same spirit that is felt while we read the word of the Lord in the scriptures accompanies the pronouncements of the Lord's prophets. As we learn to love the word of the Lord as written in the scriptures, we will love the word of the Lord as given through his prophets.

Obeys the prophets

Second, let us do as the prophets request. Note the words of the Savior:

"And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"

"Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John 7:15-17).

President Benson, in April Conference, 1986, said, "The Book of Mormon has not been, nor is it yet, the center of our personal study, family teaching, preaching, and missionary work. Of this we must repent" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1986, p. 4; or *Ensign*, May 1986, pp. 5-6).

Brothers and sisters, let us do as the prophet asks, and in a little time we will know that he speaks the word of the Lord.

Pray for the prophets

Third, pray for them. Call down the blessings of heaven upon the heads of the prophets, seers, and revelators. Know that the Lord responds to the sustaining prayers of the Saints. In addition, as our hearts go out to the Brethren in sincere prayer, our hearts will be filled with love for them.

Love and follow the Brethren

There is safety in loving the Brethren. What kind of safety? The Master concluded the Sermon on the Mount as recorded in both Matthew and 3 Nephi with the following statement:

"Whoso heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock—

"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock.

"And every one that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand—

"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell, and great was the fall of it" (3 Nephi 14:24-27).

Did you note, brothers and sisters, that the rain descended and the floods came and the winds blew upon *both* houses? Just because we follow the word of the Lord does not mean we will suffer no ill winds; it does mean that we will spiritually survive them!

The prophet Mormon counseled us in great power on the subject of prophets when he said, "Wo unto him that shall deny the revelations of the Lord, and that shall say the Lord no longer worketh by revelation, or by prophecy, or by gifts, or by tongues, or by healings, or by the power of the Holy Ghost!" (3 Nephi 29:6).

Priesthood leaders, do you want to raise the spiritual level of your stewardship? Follow the Brethren.

Husbands, do you want your wives to have more confidence in you and your leadership? Follow the Brethren.

Parents, do you want your children to feel your love and more

willingly accept your direction? Love the Brethren.

We have in this conference heard what the Lord would have us know. What has been said and what will yet be said should be studied and pondered and prayed over and followed. Leave no question in anyone's mind where you stand. Declare in quiet tones that you love the Brethren and that you are going to follow them. Add exclamation marks to your words as you quietly and faithfully follow the Brethren.

You will find that you will "enjoy the words of eternal life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come" (Moses 6:59). I am a witness that this is the work of God. There is a prophet in our midst, even President Ezra Taft Benson, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder L. Aldin Porter of the First Quorum of the Seventy has just addressed us.

It will now be our privilege to listen to Elder William R. Bradford, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder William R. Bradford

Some things are interesting; other things are important

The young people of a certain ward had worked to earn the large sum of money needed to go on an adventure trip.

I had had some acquaintance with their bishop. He called and asked if I would help him get some news publicity so these young people would be recognized for the fine things they were doing.

I said I would not help him. He was surprised and asked why. I answered that although it was commendable that the young people had worked hard to earn this money, some things are interesting while other things are

important, and that there may be a higher purpose for the funds they had obtained from all the energy they had expended.

He was even more surprised and asked what I meant. I explained that my ministry takes me into countries where the people are less privileged than where he lives. I know of their challenges and sacrifices. I told him of the struggles of young people in those areas to obtain the needed funds to support themselves on missions. For the family to have enough food is often a challenge. Clothing is shared and worn out. Fashion is whatever is available, and in many cases that is not much. I explained that the amount of money these

fine young people had earned would keep several of these missionaries in the field for their entire missions. We talked about the relative value of an adventure trip as compared to that of missionary service.

He said, "Are you asking me to have these young people donate these funds to the general missionary fund of the Church?" I said, "No, I have not asked you to do that. I have just said that there are finer things to do." I explained that I was not against the kind of project they were planning, but there must be a balance, and, by comparison, some things are interesting and enticing while other things are important.

A higher law of recognition

Later, the bishop said he had talked to the young people and they had caught the vision and spirit of our previous conversation. They wanted to sacrifice their adventure trip and donate all the money to the general missionary fund. They asked if they could come and bring the check and have their picture taken with me as they made the donation, and could they have the picture and an article put into the news?

I surprised him again. I said no. Then I said, "You might consider helping your young people learn a higher law of recognition. Recognition from on high is silent. It is carefully and quietly recorded there. Let them feel the joy and gain the treasure in their heart and soul that come from silent, selfless service."

They did this, and now, as a reward, each has a memory and a pride which they recognize as one of the finer and more important things that they have ever done.

The nature of selfless service

In a refugee camp in Bataan, Philippines, I watched as one of our lovely lady missionaries sat down on the dirty floor beside an old woman who was weeping and confused and afraid. She gently pulled this woman's head over

onto her shoulder and smoothed her hair with one hand as she put her other arm around her to comfort her.

I learned that this woman had been driven from her home. Some of her family members had been killed. She had been abused and driven through the forests and jungles and finally out of her own country. She could not even speak the language of her present benefactors.

Later, as we talked of the work she was doing, the lady missionary said, with tears running down her face, "This is the finest thing I have ever done." Many things are only interesting and enticing, while other things are important.

Sometimes, because of the pressures of the world around us, our service projects become *self* service projects rather than *selfless* service projects.

Selfless service projects are the projects of the gospel. They have continuity. They are not one-time special events based on entertainment and fun and games. They need not be regimented nor regulated. Selfless service projects are people-to-people projects. They are face-to-face, eye-to-eye, voice-to-ear, heart-to-heart, spirit-to-spirit, and hand-in-hand, people-to-people projects.

The desire to be recognized

We must remember that we are social beings. Our eternal destiny is welded to the destiny of our fellows. Within this social system, there is always a desire for recognition, and this is as it should be, if that desire is kept within its bounds.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton once related that during a meeting a woman seated behind him passed him a note. It simply said, "Would you please turn around and look at me?" Then he said, "Everyone needs to be looked at."

Within each of us there is an intense need to feel that we belong. This feeling of unity and togetherness comes through the warmth of a smile, a hand-

shake, or a hug, through laughter and unspoken demonstrations of love. It comes in the quiet, reverent moments of soft conversation, and in listening. It comes from a still, small voice reminding us that we are brothers and sisters, the children of a Heavenly Father.

Dangers of the praise of men

To get recognition and the praise of men can become an obsessive goal in one's life. It can lead from one act to another until life is filled with egotism and selfishness. The momentary pleasure that recognition and the praise of men bring almost always causes people to want more. If they can't get it in one way, they will try another. If it can't be obtained by being one's natural self, they will try to get it acting out a life that is unnatural. The longing to be popular, to be praised by one's peers, and to receive the recognition of men is a very powerful force.

It is vain to seek the praise or recognition of men. This vanity comes of evil because it springs forth out of selfishness. Christ clearly taught this as he spoke of those who "set themselves up for a light unto the world, that they may get gain and praise of the world; but they seek not the welfare of Zion.

"Behold, the Lord hath forbidden this thing; wherefore, the Lord God hath given a commandment that all men should have charity, which charity is love. And except they should have charity they were nothing. Wherefore, if they should have charity they would not suffer the laborer in Zion to perish.

"But the laborer in Zion shall labor for Zion" (2 Nephi 26:29-31).

Selfless service sanctifies

Selflessness is righteousness. It embraces the true spirit of companionship. It is the very essence of friendship. It is the portrayer of true love and oneness in humanity. Its reward is the freeing of the soul, a nearness to divinity, a worthiness for the companionship

of the Spirit. Every requirement that God's plan for our salvation places upon us is based on the giving of one's self.

The only way under the heavens whereby a person can be sanctified is in selfless service.

Selfishness

Where the proper focus on gospel-centered, selfless service is not developed, selfishness takes over. Of all influences that cause men to choose wrong, selfishness is undoubtedly the strongest. Where it is, the Spirit is not. Talents go unshared, the needs of the poor unrequited, the weak unstrengthened, the ignorant untaught, and the lost unrecovered.

Selfishness, viewed in its true sense, is the absence of empathy and compassion, the abandonment of brotherhood, the rejection of God's plan, the isolation of one's soul.

Guidelines for setting priorities

As I have said, many things, in fact most, are interesting, and many are enticing. But some things are important. The limits of time dictate that we must prioritize what we do. The divinely given and heaven-protected gift of agency allows us to determine to what degree we will serve others and allow them to serve us. The depth of involvement in that which is important, rather than just interesting, is our own choice.

As we make these choices, we might consider that the glitter and excitement of festive, fun-filled projects are interesting, but the shut-ins, the lonely, the handicapped, the homeless, the latchkey kids, and the abandoned aged are important.

Worldly magazines, tabloids, and much of the multi-mass media mess of fast-track information we are receiving is interesting and enticing, but the scriptures are important.

The RVs and the TVs and retirement ease make it interesting to wander and play, but people's needs for selfless deeds are important. There is concern that "wander and play" have replaced "ponder and pray."

A focus on fashion and getting and spending and the accumulation of things for our enjoyment and comfort is interesting and enticing, but a focus on devoting one's means and time and one's very self to the cause of proclaiming the gospel is important.

The meetings and materials and planning are all interesting, but the doing is important.

Come unto Christ through service

With the constant exhortation to come unto Christ is the promise that we can be perfected in him. If we do all that we can do by loving and serving God with all of our might, mind, and strength, then is his grace sufficient for us. By his grace, after all that we can do, we may become perfect in Christ.

Shall we not then strive for the recognition of that Almighty God who is our Father, through our selfless service?

"And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.

"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

"Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:34-37).

In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder William R. Bradford has just spoken to us, and Elder Lynn A. Sorensen of the First Quorum of the Seventy will now speak to us.

Elder Lynn A. Sorensen

Memory of conference

I can remember as if it were yesterday the first time that I attended general conference. I was just a young boy, and my wonderful parents brought me to the Tabernacle so that I could have a special, spiritual experience early in my life. We sat in the balcony here at the left of the podium, where I could look down directly at the General Authorities.

It was a great thrill for me to see President Heber J. Grant for the first time. I particularly remember how President Grant joined in the congregational singing with such fervor and how uncomfortable the hard, wooden benches seemed to me even at that young age. I remember looking at the upholstered, individual seats occupied by the Tabernacle Choir and deciding that someday I would sing in the choir and have a comfortable, reserved seat for

conference. Well, somehow the lines of communication got mixed up. This was not what I had in mind at all.

The Lord prepares a way

I have been so humbled by this unexpected calling, and I do not have the vocabulary to express how I felt when President Thomas S. Monson issued my call. Certainly the words of Nephi took on a significance for me that I had never before felt:

"I, Nephi, said unto my father: I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them" (1 Nephi 3:7).

I feel that scripture has great significance for everyone in the Church, no

matter what his calling might be. Experience has taught me that the Lord does prepare the way if we are diligent and faithful in doing our part.

The wisdom of Elder Russell M. Nelson has also been helpful, for he taught that we are not called to positions of leadership for what we are but for what we may become. I have a lot of "becoming" to do to be able to serve the Lord as he would have me do.

I pledged to the Lord the day that I was sustained that I would serve him with all my heart, might, mind, and strength; I reaffirm this now to the First Presidency, my Brethren, and all of you. Whatever is needed in this sacred service, I will be willing to do. But I need your faith and prayers, and I hope that I may always be worthy of them.

Expression of gratitude

I want to publicly express my love and heartfelt gratitude to my wonderful wife, the mother of our nine children, who has been at my side for almost forty-five years. She has been such a source of strength and has always sustained me in my Church callings, even though her load has been very heavy with her own callings and the responsibility of motherhood and the home.

I feel great appreciation for the wholehearted support which I have always had from my parents and extended family. To my own dear children, their wives and husbands, and our twenty-seven (as of 8:25 this morning) beautiful grandchildren, I express my love and appreciation for their tremendous support, for their faith and prayers in our behalf, and for all the joy and happiness that they have brought into our lives.

I am grateful for my assignment in the Brazil Area Presidency with Elder Gibbons and Elder Camargo and the opportunity to serve once again with the warm, wonderful people of Brazil. I have been especially blessed in being involved in various ways in the growth of the Church there over the last forty-

eight years and have seen that growth go from fewer than 200 members in 1940 to more than 250,000 members today.

The Lord blesses the faithful

As we attend the various stake conferences, it is thrilling to meet the young leaders whom the Lord has raised up—men such as President Eraldo dos Santos. He embraced the gospel as a young boy of seventeen. When he elected to accept a mission call, he was disowned by his family and put out on the street with his meager belongings. He served faithfully, however, and later was led to a beautiful young convert girl. They were sealed in the temple and are rearing their family under the covenant. Still under thirty years of age, he is successful in his business and is a great leader in the stake. How the Lord blesses the faithful members of the Church!

Love for the gospel

Sister Sorensen and I recently had the opportunity to tour the new Fortaleza Mission. It took us back to our own missionary experiences. During his presidency, a mission president receives hundreds of weekly letters from his missionaries concerning many different subjects. Most of those I received were very spiritual, expressing the missionary's gratitude for the opportunity to serve the Lord and his testimony of the importance and truthfulness of the work. I have saved most of them. They are precious to me. One touched my heart profoundly. Elder Costa, a native Brazilian missionary, wrote in his last letter to me before we left the mission field:

"President, perhaps with the passing of time, I will forget your appearance or how you walked or things like that, but your love for the gospel and your testimony I will never forget."

If I am to be remembered at all by the membership of the Church, I hope

it will be in this manner, for I do have a great love for the gospel and for all the members of the Church everywhere. I do not feel at ease sitting in these red, upholstered chairs, but I have a sincere, burning testimony of this work. May the Lord bless me that I may touch the lives of those he loves throughout the Church. May I be guided and directed by him always, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Lynn A. Sorensen of the First Quorum of the Seventy has spoken to us. The choir and congregation will now join in singing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet," following which Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will speak to us.

The choir and congregation sang "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

Elder M. Russell Ballard

This has been a wonderful conference, brothers and sisters. I pray that my few remarks will not detract from the spirit we have enjoyed.

Becoming self-sufficient requires sacrifice

During this past year, the Area Presidencies in South America became concerned with the dependency of the Church there upon financial resources from Church headquarters. Wisely, these Brethren could see that future needs would require more funds than Church headquarters could provide.

The Area Presidencies met with their Regional Representatives and stake presidents to counsel together on steps that would help the Church in South America become more self-sufficient. They studied ways to decrease costs and, at the same time, increase the participation of their people.

They agreed that greatly simplified buildings would fully meet the needs of the Church. They found ways for their members to donate more labor, decreasing the amount of cash required for construction. In seeking to become more self-sufficient, the people have incorporated the principle of sacrifice into their lives and have increased their faith.

The Prophet Joseph Smith said:

"A religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation; for, from the first existence of man, the faith necessary unto the enjoyment of life and salvation never could be obtained without the sacrifice of all earthly things" (*Lectures on Faith*, 6:7).

Blessings of becoming self-reliant

As the Saints work to become completely self-sufficient, something very special happens that goes far beyond decreasing costs. For example, when the Church leaders in South America turned their attention to decreasing the cost of missionary service, the Lord blessed them with a simple but marvelous idea: the members could provide the noon meal each day for the full-time missionaries. This was a task the Saints in South America could do, and one that would strengthen both the members and missionaries. It proved to be the means for the members in this part of the world to perfect the Saints and to proclaim the gospel—two parts of the mission of the Church.

Reporting on the results of putting this idea into action, one stake president said:

"I had a meeting with the mission president, and we discussed the idea that our members could provide the

noon meal for the missionaries. I asked my bishops for time in their sacrament meetings to explain the basic idea. I explained the blessings that they, their children, their neighborhood, and the stake would receive.

"In my own ward, we saw an unexpected result of our members' sacrifice. Attendance at sacrament meetings climbed from eighty to ninety people a week to nearly one hundred fifty now. The number of baptisms has increased from one or two a month to nearly twelve a month. General activity has increased in our stake, and we feel a sweeter spirit in every ward.

"My bishop told of an experience two young children had who are members of the Church but whose parents are not. These children raised their hands in support of the program, and then went home to tell their parents that they had incurred an obligation to feed the missionaries. As a result, the parents are now hearing the missionary discussions and attending Church meetings. We expect them to be baptized very soon."

One bishop reported to his stake president that he did not have enough active members to provide lunch for the missionaries every day. The wise stake president suggested that the bishop invite less-active members of the ward to participate. Much to the surprise of the bishop, many of the less-active members were pleased to have the missionaries come to their homes for a noon meal. In fact, many of these less-active members were anxious to share with the missionaries the stories of their conversions. More often than not, they would get out photographs of the missionaries who baptized them. This simple idea is bringing many unexpected blessings to the Church.

As the members share their food with the missionaries, the missionaries bring into homes the special spirit that only they carry, blessing both the members and the missionaries. Many less-active members are returning to full fellowship, and many more members are becoming involved in missionary

work because of this simple expression of love and service. How often, brothers and sisters, we can solve seemingly large problems through relatively simple means!

Let me share a few experiences that have resulted from members and missionaries working together. An elder wrote:

"Because we were able to have lunch with an inactive family, they are now back into full activity in the Church. When we ate with them, they recognized the importance of prayer before each meal. A wonderful spirit prevails in their home now. They are not only active again, but we baptized a member of the family and later baptized their neighbors as well—all because they invited us to share their food."

Another missionary wrote:

"The mother of a poor family came to me and my companion and asked us when we were going to eat at her home. Knowing of the family's humble circumstances, I talked to the branch president. He said, 'Elders, this family has taught us a lot by their example of humility. It is a great privilege to have them in our branch. They are poor, but they really want to participate. We want you to go. If their food isn't enough, come by my house afterwards and eat with us.'"

In Bolivia, a young mother with four small children expressed her testimony, saying:

"I am so grateful for the privilege of having the missionaries come into our home. It is a pleasure to feed them, even though I fear that sometimes we do not have enough for them." (I need to add here that members everywhere in the world have the same fear.) She continues: "However, I am so thankful for this opportunity, for, you see, my four little ones wait anxiously for the day to come when the missionaries eat with us. When it is our turn, two handsome young men dressed in white shirts, wearing ties, their hair cut neatly, come into our home. They are full of the gospel light. They play with the

children. They tell us about their wonderful missionary experiences. They are gentlemen, courteous and kind. After about an hour with us, they leave to do the work of the Lord."

What parents would not rejoice to have sons like the two missionaries for whom an older widow volunteered to provide lunch. After a few visits, they stopped on the way to her home and bought a bouquet of flowers to give to her as a token of thanks for the lunches. When they gave the flowers to her, the sister looked shocked and then began to cry. The elders thought they had done something wrong and began to apologize. The widow stopped them and said that no one had ever given her flowers during her entire life, not even her husband when he was alive. She beamed with delight during the lunch and then asked the elders to wait one more minute. She presented them with the name and address of one of her best friends and asked them to please teach the friend's family. The family accepted the gospel wholeheartedly and proved to be the best family baptism those two missionaries had.

Perhaps these words of one of our faithful mission presidents sum it all up:

"The self-sufficiency effort has been a blessing to our mission, not only because we have decreased the average missionary cost by forty-eight dollars per month, but because of the relationships our elders and sisters have been able to develop with the members and nonmembers. Many experiences have lead to member reactivations and to nonmember baptisms. The members are fed spiritually and have greater love for the missionaries. Up to this point, not one single problem has developed."

The president continues, "I have wondered if Alma's experience is any different from what we see happening between the Peruvian Saints and the missionaries."

From Alma, we read:

"And as [Alma] entered the city he was an hungered, and he said to a man:

Will ye give to an humble servant of God something to eat?"

"And the man said unto him: I am a Nephite, and I know that thou art a holy prophet of God, for thou art the man whom an angel said in a vision: Thou shalt receive. Therefore, go with me into my house and I will impart unto thee of my food; and I know that thou wilt be a blessing unto me and my house.

"And it came to pass that the man received him into his house; and the man was called Amulek; and he brought forth bread and meat and set before Alma" (Alma 8:19-21).

Something special happens to an individual or to a Church unit when the people become more independent and self-reliant. They feel more confident, positive, and assured, and they reflect these feelings in their actions.

Saints in Peru assist each other

Last March, as you remember, devastating rock and mud slides engulfed six small towns in the mountains east of Lima, Peru. All of these towns were within the Lima Peru San Luis Stake. The slide left 25,000 people homeless. Eighteen LDS families lost their homes completely, and 198 other families were left in dire need of food, clothing, and medical supplies.

The day after the slides, one member of the stake presidency and two other Church members waded through waist-high mud and debris for five kilometers to assess the damage. They found that more than three hundred people, members and nonmembers, had taken refuge in the Chosica chapel.

The following day, the stake presidency called a meeting of their eleven bishops and branch presidents. They made many assignments to furnish needed supplies. They asked each ward and branch to furnish work teams to go to the homes of members and help them clean up.

The stake presidency resolved to handle the problem without seeking

help from outside stakes. They soon found that they could not handle it all alone. They went to their Regional Representative and asked him to coordinate economic help from other stakes in the region. The Saints of Peru rallied together.

As an example, the Iquitos stake sent thirteen crates of clothing, each weighing thirty kilos (about sixty-six pounds). Other stakes and wards donated food, bedding, and mattresses.

Selling quilts and refreshments, young women raised more than three hundred dollars. One young priest, a senior at his high school in Lima, led a group of twenty-eight of his classmates, all nonmembers, to Chosica to help with the cleanup.

The stake Relief Society presidency visited the area frequently and instructed the sisters in classes on hygiene, sanitation, nutrition, and "how to organize family living in a tent."

The stakes did not intend to seek assistance from the general welfare funds of the Church. Stake leaders called in all fast-offering reserves from their wards and branches. They asked stake members to participate in a special fast on 29 March 1987 to raise funds that would help cover the expenses.

Some bore tender testimonies. Let me share just two. Sister Guadalupe, a nonmember, lost everything. Then in the shelter of a little room in our chapel, she gave birth to a baby boy. She stated that the Lord had helped her escape. She learned that everything of the world is temporary and can be lost. She thanked the branch and the Church for opening its doors to her and for the assistance she received.

Sister Leonora de Contreras, a Relief Society president, said she knew the gospel was true. She expressed thanks for her husband, who holds the priesthood and is a pillar of strength. The catastrophe destroyed the fruits of their lifetime of labor in less than thirty minutes. She recalled the words of their son who is serving in the Peru Trujillo Mission. As he left home, he said to her, "Mami, whatever happens,

if you need help, ask the Lord, and stay close to the Brethren." She expressed appreciation to stake leaders for their assistance.

Gratitude for sacrifices

Brothers and sisters, I realize that similar reports could come from other parts of the world. The principles of sacrifice, self-reliance, and pure love in action apply the same everywhere. I refer to South America only because my present assignment takes me there and gives me firsthand experience in that land. We have a long way to go in South America to become fully self-sufficient, but we are on the way, and the Lord is blessing our efforts.

I am so grateful to the Lord for the leaders and other members in the Church, both men and women, who are filled with a faith that makes them willing to sacrifice for the building up of the kingdom of God. Such Saints truly feel and live the principle that King Benjamin taught to the Nephites: "When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God" (Mosiah 2:17).

Pay tithes and offerings

Brothers and sisters, how can every member enjoy the thrill and the blessing that comes from making a sacrifice to help the work? The answer is very simple, as are most answers in the Church. Every member of the Church can pay a full, honest tithing and can attend tithing settlement. The Lord said, "Verily [now] is a day of sacrifice, and a day for the tithing of my people" (D&C 64:23).

Let me remind you of President Spencer W. Kimball's statement on fast offerings:

"Sometimes," he said, "we have been a bit penurious and figured that we had for breakfast one egg and that cost so many cents and then we give that to the Lord. I think that when we are affluent, as many of us are, that we ought to be very, very generous. . . .

" . . . I think we should . . . give, instead of the amount we saved by our two meals of fasting, perhaps much, much more—ten times more where we are in a position to do it" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1974, p. 184).

Every member can give a generous fast offering.

Brothers and sisters, the Church needs your contributions to the general missionary fund. This fund makes possible the service of thousands of missionaries. Those who can should feel free to contribute generously. The Lord provides an equal opportunity for every member everywhere in the world to receive the blessings that come from paying tithes and offerings.

Where much is given, much is required

Every member can give his time and talents freely to the building up of the kingdom of God upon the earth. No member of the Church should miss this opportunity to exercise his faith and feel the spirit that comes from humble sacrifice. Seeing the great good that the Saints in South America do with their meager means helps me realize how much more many of us in other parts of the world could do. We should never forget the Savior's teaching: "Unto whomsoever much is given, of

him shall be much required" (Luke 12:48). He has blessed us abundantly. I think of the teaching words of one of our hymns:

*Because I have been given much,
I too must give;
Because of thy great bounty, Lord,
each day I live
I shall divide my gifts from thee
With ev'ry brother that I see
Who has the need of help from me.
("Because I Have Been Given
Much," Hymns [1985], no. 219)*

I pray that as we leave this conference, each one of us will take from the messages of the Brethren those principles that will help us to become more self-sufficient as Saints.

I testify that we have been taught the truth during this conference, that God lives, that Jesus Christ is his Son, and that the gospel has been restored in these latter days. All of which I do in his sacred name, even the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder M. Russell Ballard has just spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to hear an expression from Elder Franklin D. Richards of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Franklin D. Richards

Sacrifice and service

My dear brothers and sisters, as I have listened to the words of the Brethren this afternoon, much has been said about sacrifice. I couldn't help but think of the words of that great hymn, "Sacrifice brings forth the blessings of heaven" ("Praise to the Man," *Hymns* [1985], no. 25).

I have always felt, however, that, really, it is impossible for us to sacrifice in building the kingdom of God. I

would much rather consider it, instead of a sacrifice, a great opportunity to serve God.

Sister Richards and I lived in Washington, D.C., for fifteen years. When we returned to Salt Lake City, we moved into the Mount Olympus area. Within a year or so, the East Millcreek Stake was divided, as I remember, and President Gordon B. Hinckley was called to be the president of the stake. I was called to be the stake mission president, and for three and a half

years I had the opportunity of serving under President Hinckley.

Service as a General Authority

I was later called to be a full-time mission president, and then, twenty-seven years ago this conference, President N. Eldon Tanner, Elder Theodore M. Burton, and I were called to be General Authorities.

My first assignment was supervising the nine missions on the East Coast from Canada to Florida for five years. That was a great experience. My next assignment was with President Spencer W. Kimball, who was then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, supervising South America.

We organized the first stake in South America in São Paulo, Brazil, in May of 1966. As Elder Lynn A. Sorensen mentioned, the growth there has been tremendous. I remember that President Kimball said, "We're not going to call any North Americans to the major leadership positions." And there were many Latter-day Saints living in São Paulo at that time working in businesses associated with the United States. He said, "We're going to call the local people." And so our policy was to call local men and women to those positions and to be missionaries. At that time, in 1966, there were no stakes in South America, whereas now there are nearly two hundred stakes.

I then had the opportunity to spend three years with Elder Delbert L. Stapley supervising the missions in Central America and Mexico. As I recall, there were two stakes in Mexico then, one in the Colonies and one in Mexico City. Now there are nearly a hundred stakes.

The Church has grown and developed with their local leadership and local missionaries. If I had time, I could relate some tremendous experiences that I have had with young men and women and older men and women involved in missionary service there. I would just like to stress again what Elder M. Russell Ballard said about

how important it is to make contributions to the general missionary fund of the Church.

Every member a missionary

You know, every member is a missionary. I think President David O. McKay first emphasized that duty. I was up in Montana some time ago visiting a stake conference. After the morning session, I was wandering around outside. I saw this young boy standing there all dressed up in his Sunday clothes. I went over to him and said, "Son, you're a fine-looking boy. What's your name?"

He said, "Joseph Smith Curdy."

I said, "Joseph Smith Curdy! That's a fine name. You're going to be a great missionary."

He said, "I'm already a great missionary. Down the street a couple of blocks from where we live there's a family with a couple of boys about my age, and over a period of three or four months, I have been bringing them to church with me. A month or so ago, I said to them, 'How would you like to have the missionaries give you the discussions?'"

"They said, 'Oh, we'd have to talk to our parents.'"

"So we talked to the parents, and the parents said, 'Well, if you will let us listen in, why we'll be glad to have the missionaries teach them.'"

There wasn't any problem with that, so the missionaries gave the family the discussions. Joseph Smith Curdy told me, "That whole family is going to be baptized next Saturday. I'm already a great missionary."

I couldn't help but agree with him.

Brothers and sisters, it is wonderful to have the opportunities we have in this Church, not only in the missionary program but also in the areas of temple work and genealogy.

Testimony

I'm grateful that I was reserved to be born at this particular time in the

history of the world when the gospel has been restored in its fulness. I'm convinced that the Spirit of the Lord is being poured out upon the face of the earth more today than ever before in the history of the world through the restoration of the gospel in its fulness. Because of the Restoration, you and I can bear witness that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, and that Joseph Smith was a great prophet of God. We're told that Joseph Smith has done more for the salvation of mankind than any other man who has ever lived on the earth, save Jesus Christ himself. I bear that witness to you. The Church has been reestablished, the power to act in the name of God has been restored, and we have a great prophet standing at the head of this church today.

May the Lord bless him. And may the choice blessings of our Father in Heaven go with you as you leave this conference, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Brother Richards, for your stirring testimony.

Before hearing President Benson's concluding remarks, we take a moment

to express our sincere appreciation to all who have provided of their services and talents and time in presenting this great conference. We thank the musicians—the Mormon Youth Chorus, the Sandy Primary children's choir, and this great Tabernacle Choir, their conductors and organists.

To our city officials we express appreciation, as we do to the Relief Society and Church Health Unit nurses who have been on hand to render services, and to the ushers and interpreters, who have done so magnificent a work.

We thank the press representatives for the coverage given the conference and the owners and managers of the many radio and television stations and cable systems, who have given their facilities to provide coverage of this great gathering.

It will now be our pleasure and opportunity and privilege to listen to President Ezra Taft Benson, our beloved prophet, after which the Tabernacle Choir will sing "I Believe in Christ."

The benediction will then be offered by Elder Royden G. Derrick of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and this conference will then stand adjourned for six months.

President Ezra Taft Benson

Book of Mormon testifies of Christ

My beloved brethren and sisters, this has been another glorious conference, for which I thank the Lord and commend my brethren for their inspired counsel and the choirs for their uplifting music.

The major mission of the Book of Mormon, as recorded on its title page, is "to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations."

The honest seeker after truth can gain the testimony that Jesus is the

Christ as he prayerfully ponders the inspired words of the Book of Mormon.

Over one-half of all the verses in the Book of Mormon refer to our Lord. Some form of Christ's name is mentioned more frequently per verse in the Book of Mormon than even in the New Testament.

He is given over one hundred different names in the Book of Mormon. Those names have a particular significance in describing His divine nature.

Let us consider some of the attributes of our Lord, as found in the Book of Mormon, that show that Jesus is the Christ. Then let us confirm each

of those attributes about Him with a brief quote from the Book of Mormon.

He is *Alive*: "The life of the world, . . . a life which is endless" (Mosiah 16:9).

He is *Constant*: "The same yesterday, today, and forever" (2 Nephi 27:23).

He is the *Creator*: "He created all things, both in heaven and in earth" (Mosiah 4:9).

He is the *Exemplar*: He "set the example. . . . He said unto the children of men: Follow thou me" (2 Nephi 31:9,10).

He is *Generous*: "He commandeth none that they shall not partake of his salvation" (2 Nephi 26:24).

He is *Godly*: He is God (see 2 Nephi 27:23).

He is *Good*: "All things which are good cometh of God" (Moroni 7:12).

He is *Gracious*: "He is full of grace" (2 Nephi 2:6).

He is the *Healer*: The "sick, and . . . afflicted with all manner of diseases . . . devils and unclean spirits . . . were healed by the power of the Lamb of God" (1 Nephi 11:31).

He is *Holy*: "O how great the holiness of our God!" (2 Nephi 9:20).

He is *Humble*: "He humbleth himself before the Father" (2 Nephi 31:7).

He is *Joyful*: "The Father hath given" Him a "fulness of joy" (3 Nephi 28:10).

He is our *Judge*: We "shall be brought to stand before the bar of God, to be judged of him" (Mosiah 16:10).

He is *Just*: "The judgments of God are always just" (Mosiah 29:12).

He is *Kind*: He has "loving kindness . . . towards the children of men" (1 Nephi 19:9).

He is the *Lawgiver*: He "gave the law" (3 Nephi 15:5).

He is the *Liberator*: "There is no other head whereby ye can be made free" (Mosiah 5:8).

He is the *Light*: "The light . . . of the world; yea, a light that is endless, that can never be darkened" (Mosiah 16:9).

He is *Loving*: "He loveth the world, even that he layeth down his own life" (2 Nephi 26:24).

He is the *Mediator*: "The great Mediator of all men" (2 Nephi 2:27).

He is *Merciful*: There is a "multitude of his tender mercies" (1 Nephi 8:8).

He is *Mighty*: "Mightier than all the earth" (1 Nephi 4:1).

He is *Miraculous*: A "God of miracles" (2 Nephi 27:23).

He is *Obedient*: Obedient unto the Father "in keeping his commandments" (2 Nephi 31:7).

He is *Omnipotent*: He has "all power, both in heaven and in earth" (Mosiah 4:9).

He is *Omniscient*: "The Lord knoweth all things from the beginning" (1 Nephi 9:6).

He is our *Redeemer*: "All mankind were in a lost and in a fallen state, and ever would be save they should rely on this Redeemer" (1 Nephi 10:6).

He is the *Resurrection*: He brought to pass "the resurrection of the dead, being the first that should rise" (2 Nephi 2:8).

He is *Righteous*: "His ways are righteousness forever" (2 Nephi 1:19).

He is the *Ruler*: He rules "in the heavens above and in the earth beneath" (2 Nephi 29:7).

He is our *Savior*: "There is none other name given under heaven save it be this Jesus Christ . . . whereby man can be saved" (2 Nephi 25:20).

He is *Sinless*: He "suffereth temptation, and yieldeth not to the temptation" (Mosiah 15:5).

He is *Truthful*: "A God of truth, and canst not lie" (Ether 3:12).

He is *Wise*: "He has all wisdom" (Mosiah 4:9).

As I reflect on these and many other marks of our Lord's divinity, as found in the Book of Mormon, my heart cries out with the hymnist:

*O Lord my God, when I in
awesome wonder
Consider all the worlds thy hands
have made,*

*I see the stars, I hear the rolling
thunder,
Thy pow'r thru-out the universe
displayed;
Then sings my soul, my Savior
God, to thee,
How great thou art! How great
thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Savior
God, to thee,
How great thou art! How great
thou art!
("How Great Thou Art," Hymns
[1985], no. 86).*

Come unto Christ

Once one is convinced, through the Book of Mormon, that Jesus is the Christ, then he must take the next step; he must come unto Christ. Learning the precepts found in what the Prophet Joseph Smith called the most correct book on earth, the Book of Mormon, is but the first step. Abiding by those precepts found in the "keystone" of our religion gets a man nearer to God than through any other book (see *History of the Church*, 4:461). Can we not see why we should be reading this book daily and practicing its precepts at all times?

We have an increasing number who have been convinced, through the Book of Mormon, that Jesus is the Christ. Now we need an increasing number who will use the Book of Mormon to become committed to Christ. We need to be convinced and committed.

Let us turn again to the Book of Mormon, this time to learn some principles about coming unto Christ, being committed to Him, centered in Him, and consumed in Him. We will quote but a few of the numerous passages on the matter.

Christ's invitation to us

First we need to know that Christ invites us to come unto Him. "Behold, he sendeth an invitation unto all men, for the arms of mercy are extended

towards them. . . . Yea, he saith: Come unto me and ye shall partake of the fruit of the tree of life" (Alma 5:33-34).

Come, for he stands "with open arms to receive you" (Mormon 6:17).

Come, for "he will console you in your afflictions, and he will plead your cause" (Jacob 3:1).

"Come unto him, and offer your whole souls as an offering unto him" (Omni 26).

As Moroni closed the record of the Jaredite civilization, he wrote, "I would commend you to seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written" (Ether 12:41).

In Moroni's closing words written toward the end of the Nephite civilization, he said, "Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, . . . and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you" (Moroni 10:32).

A Christ-centered life

Those who are committed to Christ "stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places" that they may be in "even until death" (Mosiah 18:9). They "retain the name" of Christ "written always" in their hearts (Mosiah 5:12). They take upon themselves "the name of Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end" (Moroni 6:3).

When we live a Christ-centered life, "we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ" (2 Nephi 25:26). We "receive the pleasing word of God, and feast upon his love" (Jacob 3:2). Even when Nephi's soul was grieved because of his iniquities, he said, "I know in whom I have trusted. My God hath been my support" (2 Nephi 4:19-20).

We remember Alma's counsel: "Let all thy doings be unto the Lord, and whithersoever thou goest let it be in the Lord; yea, let all thy thoughts be directed unto the Lord; yea, let the affections of thy heart be placed upon the

Lord forever. Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings" (Alma 37:36-37).

"Remember, remember," said Helaman, "that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, . . . that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, . . . [they] shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery" (Helaman 5:12).

Nephi said, the Lord "hath filled me with his love, even unto the consuming of my flesh" (2 Nephi 4:21). Those who are consumed in Christ "are made alive in Christ" (2 Nephi 25:25). They "suffer no manner of afflictions, save it were swallowed up in the joy of Christ" (Alma 31:38). They are "clasped in the arms of Jesus" (Mormon 5:11). Nephi said, "I glory in my Jesus, for he hath redeemed my soul" (2 Nephi 33:6). Lehi said, "I am encircled about eternally in the arms of his love" (2 Nephi 1:15).

Now, my beloved brethren and sisters, let us read the Book of Mormon and be convinced that Jesus is the Christ. Let us continually reread the Book of Mormon so that we might more fully come to Christ, be committed to Him, centered in Him, and consumed in Him.

We are meeting the adversary every day. The challenges of this era will rival any of the past, and these challenges will increase both spiritually and temporally. We must be close to Christ, we must daily take His name upon us, always remember Him, and keep His commandments.

Be faithful in Christ

In the final letter recorded in the Book of Mormon from Mormon to his son Moroni, he gave counsel that applies to our day. Both father and son were seeing a whole Christian civiliza-

tion fall because its people would not serve the God of the land, even Jesus Christ. Mormon wrote, "And now, my beloved son, notwithstanding their hardness, let us labor diligently; for if we should cease to labor, we should be brought under condemnation; for we have a labor to perform whilst in this tabernacle of clay, that we may conquer the enemy of all righteousness, and rest our souls in the kingdom of God" (Moroni 9:6). You and I have a similar labor to perform now—to conquer the enemy and rest our souls in the kingdom.

Then that great soul Mormon closes his letter to his beloved son, Moroni, with these words.

"My son, be faithful in Christ; and may not the things which I have written grieve thee, to weigh thee down unto death; but may Christ lift thee up, and may his sufferings and death, and the showing his body unto our fathers, and his mercy and long-suffering, and the hope of his glory and of eternal life, rest in your mind forever.

"And may the grace of God the Father, whose throne is high in the heavens, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who sitteth on the right hand of his power, until all things shall become subject unto him, be, and abide with you forever" (Moroni 9:25-26).

My prayer for each of us is that we too will follow that inspired counsel: "Be faithful in Christ." Then He will lift us up and His grace will be and abide with us forever. That this may be so, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "I Believe in Christ." Elder Royden G. Derrick offered the benediction.

SALT LAKE TABERNACLE CHOIR AND ORGAN BROADCAST

The following broadcast, announced by J. Spencer Kinard and originating with KSL Radio and Television, Salt Lake City, Utah, was presented from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, October 4, 1987, through the courtesy of the Columbia Broadcasting System's network throughout the United States and parts of Canada, and through other facilities to several points overseas:

Announcer: Once more we welcome you within these walls with a program of inspirational Music and Spoken Word from the crossroads of the West.

CBS and its affiliated stations bring you at this hour the Mormon Tabernacle Choir from Temple Square in Salt Lake City, with Jerold Ottley conducting the choir, Robert Cundick, Tabernacle organist, and the Spoken Word given by Spencer Kinard.

(Choir: "Oh Say, What Is Truth?"—Melling)

Announcer: It was Horace Mann who said, "If any man seeks for greatness, let him forget greatness and ask for truth, and he will find both." The Tabernacle Choir opened today's broadcast on a stirring text of John Jaques, with music by Ellen Knowles Melling: "Oh Say, What Is Truth?"

The search for truth leads inexorably to the knowledge that God is the author of all truth, and thus the words of César Franck's anthem, "O Lord most holy, . . . grant us thy truth and love."

(Choir: "O Lord Most Holy"—Franck; arr. Robertson and Schreiner)

Announcer: From Zephaniah and the Psalms comes the text of Mark Hayes' anthem, "And the Father will dance over you in joy! . . . My soul will make its boast in God, for He has answered all my cries. His faithfulness to me is as sure as the dawn of a new day."

(Choir: "And the Father Will Dance"—Hayes)

Announcer: The recent passing of Alexander Schreiner has brought an end to a rich and exemplary life. For more than fifty years, Dr. Schreiner served with distinction as organist at the Tabernacle here on Temple Square. In whatever capacity—recitalist, composer, accompanist—he brought to his music an intense personal devotion born of reverence for art and the divine origins of all beauty and truth. We, his friends in the Tabernacle Choir, pause to remember a great friend, as Tabernacle organist Robert Cundick plays, in memoriam, the "Sinfonia in F," from Cantata 156 by Dr. Schreiner's beloved Johann Sebastian Bach.

(Organ: "Sinfonia in F"—J. S. Bach; tr. Grace)

Announcer: To enjoy the gift of freedom—the gift of free agency God has given us, we must learn to understand this simple gift of life.

Much has been said and done in this world regarding man's philosophies and theories about our politics and religions; but, after twenty centuries of trial and error, of war and contention, we return again to the wisest, most practical and simple system of all. We turn to the gospel of Jesus Christ—to the simplicity of the Sermon on the Mount, to the beauty of the Beatitudes, to the freedom of righteousness. In a very simple way, without money or worldly power, He showed us the path to happiness and eternal life. In His few words, and in the sublime gentleness of His life, He offered us a better, clearer, and more intelligent system for individual happiness and social prosperity. While others talked of governments and laws, of money and influence, Jesus spoke the simple language of the heart. He spoke of loving one's neighbor, of taking care of widows and orphans, of visiting the sick. He said it is hate which makes life difficult and greed which makes the day hard; He taught of the need to be beautiful

within—to have a loving heart, to forgive those who have wronged us, to practice virtue and patience.

To this divine philosophy of life, He added this brief postscript: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; . . . for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:29–30).

And, so it is. Accepting and living the gospel of Jesus Christ is easy—easy if we are Christians in the sense that He wanted us to be; easy if we seek internal refinement over external fashion and wealth; easy if worthiness is more important to us than fame; and easy if we love, without condition or reward.

Taking upon ourselves His yoke, or accepting His gospel, may not change the whole world, but it may change our hearts: not that there be no suffering, but that suffering might be endured; not that there be no tears, but that our tears be mixed with the tears of those who share our hurt or joy; not that there be no mortal death, but that the promise of eternal life might live within us.

And thus, we take upon us His name and live a life of gentle meekness and charity. It is then we learn of the gift to be simple, the gift to be free. It is then we learn to our joy that His promise is true and His yoke is easy.

(Choir: "Simple Gifts"—arr. Lyon)

Announcer: The choir has sung Laurence Lyon's arrangement of an old Shaker melody, "Tis the gift to be simple, tis the gift to be free."

And now, again in memory of Alexander Schreiner, we close with the anthem "Sine Nomine," by Ralph Vaughan Williams, on the hymn of William W. How, "For all the saints who from their labors rest."

(Choir: "Sine Nomine"—Vaughan Williams)

Announcer: Again we leave you from within the shadows of the everlasting hills. May peace be with you this day . . . and always.

Announcer (on radio): This concludes the 3,033rd performance continuing the 59th year of this traditional broadcast from the Mormon Tabernacle on Temple Square, brought to you by CBS and its affiliated stations, originating with station KSL in Salt Lake City.

Jerold Ottley conducted the choir, Robert Cundick was at the organ, and the Spoken Word was given by Spencer Kinard.

In another seven days at this same hour, Music and the Spoken Word will be heard again from the crossroads of the West.

This is the CBS Radio Network.

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE MUSIC

The Mormon Youth Chorus, conducted by Robert C. Bowden, furnished the choral numbers for the Saturday morning session of the conference.

Music for the Saturday afternoon session was provided by a Primary children's choir from the Sandy Utah Region, conducted by Sister Patricia Swanson.

At the general priesthood session, music was furnished by a combined men's choir from the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth Chorus. Brothers Jerold Ottley and Robert C. Bowden conducted the combined choirs.

The Tabernacle Choir, conducted by Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger, provided music for the Sunday morning and Sunday afternoon sessions.

Throughout the conference sessions, prelude, postlude, and interlude music and accompaniments on the Tabernacle organ were played by Robert Cundick, John Longhurst, and Clay Christiansen, Tabernacle organists.

F. Michael Watson
Clerk of the conference

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THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY
SAINTS

Official Report of the
One Hundred Fifty-eighth
Annual General

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of Latter-day Saints

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THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The 158th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 2, 1988, at 10:00 A.M.

The general sessions of the conference were held at 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday, April 2 and 3, 1988. The general priesthood session was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, April 2, 1988, at 6:00 P.M.

President Ezra Taft Benson presided at all sessions of the conference. President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday morning, general priesthood, and Sunday afternoon sessions. President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning sessions.

Television and radio stations carried portions or all of some of the conference sessions to large audiences throughout the world. In addition, the general sessions and priesthood session were carried via satellite transmission to more than one thousand stake centers. The general priesthood session was also carried by closed-circuit transmission to approximately nine hundred locations in many countries.

General Authorities present

The following General Authorities of the Church attended one or more of the general sessions:

The First Presidency: Ezra Taft Benson, Gordon B. Hinckley, and Thomas S. Monson.

The Council of the Twelve: ¹Howard W. Hunter, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks,

M. Russell Ballard, and Joseph B. Wirthlin.

The Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy: Dean L. Larsen, Richard G. Scott, Marion D. Hanks, Wm. Grant Bangarter, Robert L. Backman, Hugh W. Pinnock, and James M. Paramore.

Additional Members of the First Quorum of the Seventy: Theodore M. Burton, Paul H. Dunn, Hartman Rector, Jr., Loren C. Dunn, Robert L. Simpson, Rex D. Pinegar, J. Thomas Fyans, Adney Y. Komatsu, Gene R. Cook, Charles Didier, William R. Bradford, George P. Lee, Carlos E. Asay, John H. Groberg, Jacob de Jager, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Royden G. Derrick, Robert E. Wells, F. Enzo Busche, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Ronald E. Poelman, Derek A. Cuthbert, Rex C. Reeve, Sr., F. Burton Howard, Ted E. Brewerton, Jack H. Goasland, Angel Abrea, John K. Carmack, Russell C. Taylor, Robert B. Harbertson, Devere Harris, Spencer H. Osborn, Philip T. Sonntag, John Sonnenberg, F. Arthur Kay, Keith W. Wilcox, Victor L. Brown, H. Burke Peterson, J. Richard Clarke, Hans B. Ringger, Waldo P. Call, Helio da Rocha Camargo, H. Verlan Andersen, George I. Cannon, Francis M. Gibbons, Gardner H. Russell, George R. Hill III, John R. Lasater, Douglas J. Martin, Alexander B. Morrison, L. Aldin Porter, Glen L. Rudd, Douglas H. Smith, Lynn A. Sorensen, Robert E. Sackley, and L. Lionel Kendrick.

The Presiding Bishopric: Robert D. Hales, Henry B. Eyring, and Glenn L. Pace.

General Authorities Emeritus: Eldred G. Smith, Sterling W. Sill, Bernard P. Brockbank, and Joseph Anderson.¹

¹President Marion G. Romney and Elder John H. Vandenberg were excused due to ill health.

Other authorities present

Other Church authorities in attendance included Regional Representatives, presidents of stakes and their counselors, presidents of temples, bishops of wards,

and presidencies and members of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood quorums.

Many general, stake, and ward auxiliary officers also attended.

FIRST DAY MORNING SESSION

The first general session of the 158th Annual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 2, 1988, at 10:00 A.M. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The music for the opening session was provided by the Mormon Youth Chorus with Robert C. Bowden conducting and Clay Christiansen at the organ.

Before the meeting, the Mormon Youth Chorus sang "Hark, All Ye Nations!" without announcement.

President Monson made the following remarks:

President Thomas S. Monson

We welcome you this morning from the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City in this, the first general session of the 158th annual conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Our beloved prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked me, Brother Monson, to conduct this session.

We welcome all who are participating in the large audience assembled in the Tabernacle and the overflow gathering in the nearby Assembly Hall, where Elders Carlos E. Asay and Helio da Rocha Camargo are seated on the stand. We welcome also the many others who are

receiving these conference proceedings by satellite transmission, radio, cable, and television.

We acknowledge the General Authorities of the Church, all of whom are in attendance except President Marion G. Romney and Elder John H. Vandenberg, who are excused. We also acknowledge the Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary general presidencies, who are seated on the stand. We extend a special welcome to government, education, and civic leaders who are present.

The Mormon Youth Chorus, under the direction of Brother Robert C. Bowden, with Brother Clay Christiansen at the organ, opened this session by singing "Hark, All Ye Nations!" The chorus will now sing the beautiful number, "O My Father." Following the singing, the invocation will be offered by Bishop Robert D. Hales, Presiding Bishop of the Church.

The chorus sang "O My Father."
Bishop Robert D. Hales offered the invocation.

President Monson

We will now be privileged to listen to President Ezra Taft Benson, President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

President Ezra Taft Benson

My dear brethren and sisters, I thank the Lord that He in His kindness has per-

mitted me to join with you in another glorious general conference of the Church.

How I have been blessed as a result of your faith and prayers during the past few months.

My heart has been touched as I have learned of the many children, youth, and adults of the Church whose lives are being changed by the study of the Book of Mormon. You are helping to cleanse the inner vessel. God bless you for it.

Love and obey the Lord

The great test of life is obedience to God. "We will prove them herewith," said the Lord, "to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them" (Abraham 3:25).

The great task of life is to learn the will of the Lord and then do it.

The great commandment of life is to love the Lord.

"Come unto Christ," exhorts Moroni in his closing testimony, "... and love God with all your might, mind and strength" (Moroni 10:32).

This, then, is the first and great commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (Mark 12:30; see also Matthew 22:37, Deuteronomy 6:5, Luke 10:27, Moroni 10:32, D&C 59:5).

It is the pure love of Christ, called charity, that the Book of Mormon testifies is the greatest of all—that never faileth, that endureth forever, that all men should have, and that without which they are nothing (see Moroni 7:44–47, 2 Nephi 26:30).

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren," pleads Moroni, "pray unto the Father with all the energy of [your] heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him" (Moroni 7:48).

In the closing accounts of both the Jaredites and the Nephites, Moroni records that except men shall have this pure love of Christ, called charity, they

cannot inherit that place which Christ has prepared in the mansions of His Father nor can they be saved in the kingdom of God (see Ether 12:34, Moroni 10:21).

The fruit that Lehi partook of in his vision and that filled his soul with exceeding great joy and that was most desirable above all things was the love of God.

Loving God requires total commitment

To love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength is all-consuming and all-encompassing. It is no lukewarm endeavor. It is total commitment of our very being—physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually—to a love of the Lord.

The breadth, depth, and height of this love of God extend into every facet of one's life. Our desires, be they spiritual or temporal, should be rooted in a love of the Lord. Our thoughts and affections should be centered on the Lord. "Let all thy thoughts be directed unto the Lord," said Alma, "yea, let the affections of thy heart be placed upon the Lord forever" (Alma 37:36).

Put God first

Why did God put the first commandment first? Because He knew that if we truly loved Him we would want to keep all of His other commandments. "For this is the love of God," says John, "that we keep his commandments" (1 John 5:3; see also 2 John 1:6).

We must put God in the forefront of everything else in our lives. He must come first, just as He declares in the first of His Ten Commandments: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3).

When we put God first, all other things fall into their proper place or drop out of our lives. Our love of the Lord will govern the claims for our affection, the demands on our time, the interests we pursue, and the order of our priorities.

We should put God ahead of *every-one else* in our lives.

Joseph, Nephi, and Job put God first

When Joseph was in Egypt, what came first in his life—God, his job, or Potiphar's wife? When she tried to seduce him, he responded by saying, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9).

Joseph was put in prison because he put God first. If we were faced with a similar choice, where would we place our first loyalty? Can we put God ahead of security, peace, passions, wealth, and the honors of men?

When Joseph was forced to choose, he was more anxious to please God than to please his employer's wife. When we are required to choose, are we more anxious to please God than our boss, our teacher, our neighbor, or our date?

The Lord said, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10:37). One of the most difficult tests of all is when you have to choose between pleasing God or pleasing someone you love or respect—particularly a family member.

Nephi faced that test and handled it well when his good father temporarily murmured against the Lord (see 1 Nephi 16:18–25). Job maintained his integrity with the Lord even though his wife told him to curse God and die (see Job 2:9–10).

The scripture says, "Honour thy father and thy mother" (Exodus 20:12; see also Mosiah 13:20). Sometimes one must choose to honor Heavenly Father over a mortal father.

God's concern for our eternal welfare

We should give God, the Father of our spirits, an exclusive preeminence in our lives. He has a prior parental claim on our eternal welfare, ahead of all other ties that may bind us here or hereafter.

God, our Father, Jesus, our Elder Brother and our Redeemer, and the Holy Ghost, the Testator, are perfect. They know us best and love us most and will

not leave one thing undone for our eternal welfare. Should we not love them for it and honor them first?

There are faithful members who joined the Church in spite of the objections of their mortal relatives. By putting God first, many later became the instruments to lead those loved ones into the kingdom of God.

Jesus said, "I do always those things that please [God]" (John 8:29).

Putting God first in our homes

What is the condition in our homes? Are we striving to put the Lord first and to please Him?

Fathers, would it please the Lord if there were daily family prayer and scripture reading in your home? And what about the holding of weekly home evenings and periodically having individual time with your wife and each child? And if your child went temporarily astray, do you think it would please the Lord and He would honor your efforts if you continued to live an exemplary life, consistently prayed and frequently fasted for that child, and kept the name of that son or daughter on the temple prayer roll?

You mothers, who are especially charged with the righteous rearing of the youth of Zion, are you not putting God first when you honor your divine calling by not leaving the homefront to follow the ways of the world? Our mothers put God first when they fill their highest mission within the walls of their own homes.

Children, do you pray for your parents? Do you try to support them in their noble endeavors? They will make mistakes like you, but they have a divine mission to accomplish in your life. Will you help them do so? Will you add honor to their name and bring comfort and support to them in their older years?

Temple marriage pleases God

If someone wants to marry you outside the temple, whom will you strive to please—God or a mortal? If you insist on a temple marriage, you will be pleasing

the Lord and blessing the other party. Why? Because that person will either become worthy to go to the temple—which would be a blessing—or will leave—which could also be a blessing—because neither of you should want to be unequally yoked (see 2 Corinthians 6:14).

You should qualify for the temple. Then you will know that there is no one good enough for you to marry outside the temple. If such individuals are that good, they will get themselves in a condition so that they too can be married in the temple.

Bless others by putting God first

We bless our fellowmen the most when we put the first commandment first.

"Whatever God requires is right," said the Prophet Joseph Smith (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 256)—and so Nephi slew Laban. And God asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac.

Had Abraham loved Isaac more than God, would he have consented? As the Lord indicates in the Doctrine and Covenants, both Abraham and Isaac now sit as gods (see D&C 132:37). They were willing to offer or to be offered up as God required. They have a deeper love and respect for each other because both were willing to put God first.

Choosing to obey brings happiness

The Book of Mormon teaches that "it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things" (2 Nephi 2:11)—and so there is. Opposition provides choices, and choices bring consequences—good or bad.

The Book of Mormon explains that men "are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil" (2 Nephi 2:27).

God loves us; the devil hates us. God wants us to have a fulness of joy as He has. The devil wants us to be miserable as he is. God gives us commandments to

bless us. The devil would have us break these commandments to curse us.

Daily, constantly, we choose by our desires, our thoughts, and our actions whether we want to be blessed or cursed, happy or miserable. One of the trials of life is that we do not usually receive immediately the full blessing for righteousness or the full cursing for wickedness. That it will come is certain, but oftentimes there is a waiting period that occurs, as was the case with Job and Joseph.

In the meantime the wicked think they are getting away with something. The Book of Mormon teaches that the wicked "have joy in their works for a season, [but] by and by the end cometh, and they are hewn down and cast into the fire, from whence there is no return" (3 Nephi 27:11).

Be patient and trust God's promises

During this testing time the righteous must continue to love God, trust in His promises, be patient, and be assured, as the poet said, that—

Who does God's work will get God's pay,
However long may seem the day,
However weary be the way.
No mortal hand, God's hand can stay,
He may not pay as others pay,
In gold, or lands, or raiments gay,
In goods that perish and decay;
But God's high wisdom knows a way,
And this is sure, let come what may—
Who does God's work will get God's pay.
(Anonymous)

I testify to you that God's pay is the best pay that this world or any other world knows anything about. And it comes in full abundance only to those who love the Lord and put Him first.

The great test of life is obedience to God.

The great task of life is to learn the will of the Lord and then do it.

The great commandment of life is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (Mark 12:30).

May God bless us to put the first commandment first and, as a result, reap peace in this life and eternal life with a fulness of joy in the life to come, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The chorus sang "The Morning Breaks" without announcement.

President Monson

It has been our privilege to listen to the opening address of our beloved prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson.

Following his remarks, the Mormon Youth Chorus sang for us the beautiful hymn of the Restoration, "The Morning Breaks."

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now speak to us.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

Thank you, President Benson, for that sermon on the first commandment, and even more, for the way in which you implement it by your expressions of your love for all of us.

Keep prophecies in perspective

Brothers and sisters, over the sweep of Christian history, some believers have, by focusing on a few prophecies while neglecting others, prematurely expected the Second Coming. Today, while we are obviously closer to that great moment, we are in the same danger.

On the other hand, smugness is also a real danger. Of Jesus' first advent, the smug said, "It is not reasonable that such a being as a Christ shall come" (Helaman 16:18). Declared Jesus of His second coming, "Take heed . . . lest . . . that day come upon you unawares" (Luke 21:34; see also Matthew 24:37–38, Luke 21:35, Revelation 3:3, D&C 45:26).

Peter wrote of the smug skeptics who would say, "Where is the promise of his coming," for do not "all things continue as they were from the beginning" (2 Peter 3:4)?

Some prophecies, such as the return of Jewish people to Israel, were decades in their fulfillment (see Ezekiel 39:27). Other prophecies can be fulfilled in a compressed period of time. Taking the

restored gospel "for a witness" to all the nations of the world involves generations (Matthew 24:14), but a "desolating scourge" can cover the land quickly (D&C 5:19). Sadly, more than one qualifying possibility already exists for such scourges (see Mark 13:10, D&C 5:19). The blossoming of the desert "as the rose" involved substantial time, yet significant moral decay can happen within a single generation—whether in a nation or in a family (see Isaiah 35:1; Helaman 6:32, 11:36, 12:4).

The Middle East has been at the intersection of human history so many times! Yet in our time the words of Zechariah are especially descriptive, saying that Jerusalem is to be "a cup of trembling" for "all the people round about" and "a burdensome stone for all people" (Zechariah 12:2–3).

Hence the need to keep our eyes on more than a few leaves of the fig tree in order to know when "summer is nigh" (Matthew 24:32). By analogy, it is one thing to notice strong ocean breakers crashing against the shore, heralding another oncoming storm, and quite another to discern the powerful movements on the ocean's quake-jarred floor foretelling a terrible tidal wave.

In the context of such cautions, I have no hesitancy in saying that there are some signs—but certainly not all—suggesting that "summer is nigh"

(Matthew 24:32). We would do well to notice and to ponder but without either becoming preoccupied or ignoring any sprouting leaves because of being "overcharged" with the "cares of this life" (Luke 21:34).

Wickedness in the last days

We are told, by way of example, that some conditions preceding the second coming of the Savior will be as in the days of Noah (see Matthew 24:37-39) and "also as it was in the days of Lot" (Luke 17:28). Noah's time was one of disobedience and wickedness. People were uncomprehending and "knew not until the flood came" (Matthew 24:39; see also Genesis 6:5, 1 Peter 3:20). The choking cares and pleasures of this life led to the general rejection of Noah's prophetic message. Two especially interesting words are used in the Bible to describe Noah's time: *violence* and *corruption* (see Genesis 6:11). Violence and corruption, seldom strangers to the human scene, appear to be increasing today.

Some of the coarseness and cruelty present at the time of Noah will be replicated, for "the love of many shall wax cold" (Matthew 24:12). Also, peace will have been "taken from the earth" (D&C 1:35).

Peter wrote of how "the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah" until, as other scriptures advise, the wickedness exceeded that among all God's creations (1 Peter 3:20; see also Moses 7:36). A very cruel society existed, one "without affection" in which people hated "their own blood" (Moses 7:33). Given the abuses by humans of other humans, in His longsuffering, God waited as long as even He could.

Those in Lot's day ate, drank, bought, sold, planted, and builded amid gross wickedness (see Luke 17:28), vexing Lot with their "filthy conversation," or, as it says in the Greek, they "oppressed [him] by [their] outrageous behavior" (2 Peter 2:7^b). In their grossness, there was also gross neglect of the poor (see Ezekiel 16:49).

Our time already reflects yet another prophecy: "Distress of nations, with perplexity" (Luke 21:25). Before modern times, global perplexity simply was not possible. Now there is a quick transmission of some crises and problems from one nation to others—the consequences of debt-ridden economies, the spreading of diseases, the abuse of narcotics, and, perhaps most of all, a shared sense of near-helplessness in the face of such perplexities. Today, the assembled agonies of the world pass in reminding review on the nightly news.

The Church's growth and a great division

In the last days, happily, the Church will grow extensively, with its membership being "scattered upon all the face of the earth" (1 Nephi 14:14). Nevertheless, its dominions will still be comparatively "small" because of "wickedness," which will close the ears of many to the gospel message (1 Nephi 14:12).

There will also be "a great division among the people" (2 Nephi 30:10; see also D&C 63:54). This stressful polarization will, ironically, help in the final shaking of that strange confederacy, the "kingdom of the devil," in order that the honest in heart, even therein, may receive the truth (2 Nephi 28:19).

This "great division" is what President Brigham Young also saw, saying, "It was revealed to me in the commencement of this Church, that the Church would spread, prosper, grow and extend, and that in proportion to the spread of the Gospel among the nations of the earth, so would the power of Satan rise" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 13:280).

Prophecies should help us prepare, not weigh us down

Happily, even though the world worsens around us, there will be many, many fine and wonderful men and women of all races and creeds—and of no religious creeds at all—who will continue to lead decent and useful lives. Besides, as

Mormon said, scriptural commentary on declining conditions is not communicated "to weigh thee down," but, instead, to help us live so that Christ may "lift thee up" (Moroni 9:25).

Thus, what I have said is not said in alarm at all, but, rather, so that we might be noticing and preparing. Prophecies are given, in part, that we "might know and remember" that these things "had been made known . . . beforehand, to the intent that [we] might believe" (Helaman 16:5). Today's inattentive people will be like an earlier, desensitized people who "began to forget those signs and wonders which they had heard, and began to be less and less astonished, . . . and began to disbelieve all which they had heard and seen" (3 Nephi 2:1; see also 1 Peter 3:17). If faithful, brothers and sisters, we lose nothing, even if, happily, like the ancient Ninevites, today's mortals were to repent.

Honor covenants

So let us look at ourselves. For the Church, the scriptures suggest both an accelerated sifting and accelerated spiritual and numerical growth—with all this preceding the time when the people of God will be "armed with righteousness"—not weapons—and when the Lord's glory will be poured out upon them (1 Nephi 14:14; see also 1 Peter 4:17, D&C 112:25). The Lord is determined to have a tried, pure, and proven people (see D&C 100:16, 101:4, 136:31), and "there is nothing that the Lord thy God shall take in his heart to do but what he will do it" (Abraham 3:17).

How can we, as individual members of the Church, survive spiritually if we do not honor our covenants? How can we survive spiritually if we break outright the covenants made at the time of baptism or in the holy temples? How can we be on the Lord's side during the "great division" if we mirror the world's materialism and selfishness (2 Nephi 30:10)?

The righteous need not fear

Members of the Church need not and should not be alarmists. They need not be deflected from quietly and righteously pursuing their daily lives, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7).

In 1836, the Prophet Joseph pled with the Lord "to confound, and astonish, and to bring to shame and confusion, all those who have spread lying reports abroad, over the world" (D&C 109:29). As a people, we were so blessed recently, and we will be again.

True, the enemies and the critics of the Lord's work will not relent; they only regroup. Even among the flock, here and there and from time to time, are a few wolves, wearing various styles of sheep's clothing—ironically, just before the shearing season! A few defectors and "highminded" traitors (2 Timothy 3:4) even go directly to the "great and spacious building" to hire on (1 Nephi 8:26). There recruits are celebrated and feted until—like their predecessors—they have faded into the dark swamps of history. As President Heber C. Kimball said, divine justice will eventually require that they "pay all the debt of [all] the trouble that they have brought upon the innocent" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 5:94).

Thus, there is no need to be surprised, nor to fear, when certain conditions come upon mankind. Furthermore, the Lord has given to us some remarkable assurances about the Restoration's lead Prophet and the restored Church:

"Behold, that seer will the Lord bless; and they that seek to destroy him shall be confounded" (2 Nephi 3:14) "in mine own due time" (D&C 71:10).

"And the righteous need not fear, for they are those who shall not be confounded. But it is the kingdom of the devil . . . who need fear, and tremble, and quake" (1 Nephi 22:22, 23).

Rewards for the faithful

If we are faithful and obedient while in this good and beautiful world, we will

later inherit "a far better land of promise" (Alma 37:45), "a city . . . whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10), a city within which are "many mansions" (John 14:2; see also John 14:3).

Paul wrote, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man [meaning we cannot even imagine], the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9).

The spiritually submissive will make it through. The word of God will lead the man and the woman of Christ "in a strait and narrow course across that everlasting gulf of misery" (Helaman 3:29) and land their souls at the right hand of God in the kingdom of heaven, "to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the holy prophets who have been ever since the world began" (Alma 7:25; see also Ether 12:4).

Those who have overcome the world will themselves then be overcome by the generosity of the Father, as the Father shares "all that [the] Father hath" (D&C 84:38). The faithful will hear those special words, "Enter into the joy of [your] Lord" (D&C 51:19), for "they who have endured the crosses of the world, and despised the shame of it, they shall inherit the kingdom of God, . . . and their joy shall be full forever" (2 Nephi 9:18).

The light that Lamoni received "infused such joy into his soul" (Alma 19:6). Yet, incomparable incandescence lies ahead, for "the day cometh . . . [when] all things shall be revealed . . . which ever have been . . . and which ever will be" (2 Nephi 27:11).

Here in mortality we already know moments when, "because of the great goodness of God," there is a "gushing out of many tears" (3 Nephi 4:33). Our joy is brim (see Alma 26:11). Yet this is but a foretaste of the ultimate homecoming, when our cups will not only be brim, but will run over without ceasing!

The gospel's sure samplings tell us even now, in Jacob's words, of "things as they really will be" (Jacob 4:13), like beautiful, beckoning postcards from that "far better land"! (Alma 37:45).

The Lord leads us

Meanwhile, perhaps "summer is nigh" (Matthew 24:32; D&C 35:16, 45:37). We are here in mortality, and the only way to go is through; there isn't any around! Yet our Deliverer assures us: "be of good cheer, for I will lead you along. The kingdom is yours and the blessings thereof are yours, and the riches of eternity are yours" (D&C 78:18).

Brothers and sisters, it is my testimony to the Church that the Lord will lead us along, just as promised. He balances giving to the Church and its people the needed, specific directions, with providing the relevant learning experiences, including having our faith and patience tried in order to be strengthened. Thus He leads us along, but He desires that during that process we take His yoke upon us in order to learn of Him by our personal experiences. We surely feel the weight of that yoke at times, but the path is clear.

Jesus, our Shepherd, has "marked the path and led the way, And ev'ry point defines" ("How Great the Wisdom and the Love," *Hymns* [1985], no. 195). His clearly defined footprints are easy to see. They are pressed distinctly and deeply into the soil of the second estate, deeply and distinctly because of the enormous weight which pressed down upon Him, including the awful burden of all of our individual sins.

Only He could have carried it all.

I thank the Savior personally for bearing all which I added to His hemorrhaging at every pore for all of humanity in Gethsemane. I thank Him for bearing what I added to the decibels of His piercing soul-cry atop Calvary, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

The chorus and congregation will now join in singing "Put Your Shoulder to the Wheel," following which Elder

James M. Paramore, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will address us.

The chorus and congregation sang
 "Put Your Shoulder to the Wheel."

Elder James M. Paramore

Seek the blessings of the Church

My beloved brothers and sisters, I love you very much. A few days ago, I attended a program celebrating the 146th anniversary of the Relief Society established by the Prophet Joseph Smith, Jr. Until then, I did not have a feeling or inspiration about what I wanted to say at conference. As I sat in that meeting attended by over three hundred sisters and saw the outstanding presentation—the choir of mothers and children singing and the testimonies of half a dozen of those sisters about the joys and goodness that had come into their lives because of Relief Society—I knew what I wanted to say to you today. And that is to seek the blessings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Listen to some of their comments in that meeting about the Church and its organization.

One sister said: "I will never forget the first time the missionaries took me to church in the little branch in my home town of Santa Rosa, Philippines. I had never heard of Relief Society before, but those dear sisters encircled me in the arms of love."

Another sister said: "Sisterhood has taken on a whole new meaning for me. Several years ago my husband died suddenly, and I felt as if my world had collapsed around me. But just as suddenly, I was surrounded by a wonderful circle of sisters who helped bear my burden. They are always there. Our weekly trips to the temple bring such peace and comfort into my life. I rejoice in this sweet sisterhood."

Truly, they were no more strangers, but fellow citizens with the Saints (see Ephesians 2:19). They were members of

His church—the kingdom of God on earth.

As I sat in that meeting, I thought about what the Church had done for me, my wife, my family, the people in wards I had lived in, the poor and the needy among us, and the whole human race. Those few minutes that day touched my spirit, and I felt like a child who had discovered a treasure. There were feelings within me that I cannot fully explain, but I recognized what the Church had done to bless my life and everyone around me who had truly accepted it and become involved in it.

The Church helps us become "new creatures"

Central to everything that Christ would have us understand and receive is the great power that comes to us when we draw close to Him through our acts, our compassion, and our personal change in becoming like Him. Our passage here on this earth is a proving ground, a period of growth and choice, and a time "to prepare to meet God" (Alma 12:24). He has given us His Spirit to guide us and His truth and His church to influence us to recognize these powers and use them. One great man in Book of Mormon days who fought against these principles and teachings of the Church was Alma the Younger, who was struck dumb and, after the Church spent days of fasting and prayer, was revived and spoke these words:

"For, said he, I have repented of my sins, and have been redeemed of the Lord; behold I am born of the Spirit.

"And the Lord said unto me: Marvel not that all mankind, yea, men and

women, all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, must be born again; yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters;

“And thus they become new creatures; and unless they do this, they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God” (Mosiah 27:24–26).

Alma had become a new creature, born of the spirit. He then went forth with conviction to build the kingdom of God upon the earth through the teachings of Christ and the establishment of His church—the very Church of Christ that he had condemned and ridiculed. The Church is necessary to help us to change our lives, to become new creatures.

Memories of blessings of the Church

As I contemplate the blessings of the Church in the lives of the sons and daughters of God, a hundred memories flood through my mind, memories such as—

- The times I personally spent in Primary, Sunday School, priesthood, MIA, and seminary with young men and women growing up where activities were always within the bounds the Lord had established and where eternal truths were taught and retaught to strengthen and to truly provide us with a means to measure truth and error.

- The time, years ago, when we lived in a large ward with many young families—an area called Morningside Heights. (We actually renamed it Morning Sickness Heights because there were so many young families.) As bishop, I had the blessing of interviewing between sixty and seventy eight-year-old children for baptism. I don't remember one child who didn't love the Savior or who didn't understand and live the law of tithing. This was one of the blessings bestowed by faithful parents and wonderful teachers from Primary and Sunday School in the Church.

- The time I heard about an LDS police chief who was honored as the outstanding police officer in California, who said, “All I know about organization is

what I've learned in the Church. I've organized my police force just like my stake. I have a high council and bishops organized all over the city. I don't call them by that name, but they are there just the same.”

- The experiences in the Church when I saw my wife and daughter and dozens of other women go into a home on a regularly scheduled basis to help an autistic child learn how to crawl.

- The time I saw a weeping father, who had been activated, stand in our stake conference with his arms around two sons and say, “Where would we be without the Church?”

The Church is essential to salvation

On and on and on it goes. The Church of Jesus Christ is the organization that the Savior established when He personally walked upon the earth in Palestine and later in America and in 1830 when He reestablished it upon the earth to perfect and exalt all mankind. The Church and its functions are indispensable to the plan of God.

- The Church provides all of the teachings of the Savior.

- The Church exercises the authority from heaven, beginning with a prophet of God and extending down to every family.

- The Church provides the saving ordinances of the gospel, including holy, eternal endowments and sealings in the house of God, a fulness of all that the Father has.

- The Church provides brotherhood and sisterhood with others, wherever they are upon this earth. A member of the Church is immediately a part of a community of God with friends. It is a refuge from the world, with watchcare and accountability for every member.

- The Church helps us to overcome selfishness and uncertainty by serving others in dozens of ways over a lifetime. Some of our fondest memories go back to those associations we have had in service together.

- The Church is a way of life and has established organizations and cultural and

developmental opportunities for ourselves and our children that are the envy of this world. Loving leaders and teachers provide warmth, security, activities, music, theater, and athletics, as well as the teachings of the Savior to help us learn how to love Him, to try to be like Him, and to serve others. Our seven-year-old grandson has, through the Primary and the example of his father, found the wonder and blessing of the New Testament and now carries his little edition around, reading it often.

- Our young women are trying to put faith, prayer, individual worth, knowledge, choice, accountability, integrity, the divine nature, and good works into their lives to get understanding about their future roles in this world and forever. Through many service projects they share their lives, their testimonies, and their influence to help others come unto Christ.

A young man in Michigan several years ago fell in love with an LDS girl. He was told forthrightly and with great love that she wanted the power of the priesthood in her home and the blessings of an eternal family, and she would only marry someone who could give her those blessings. The teachings she had received had taken root, and the seeds of faith, knowledge, and choice had grown, and she knew that they were true. The young man felt her spirit and agreed to be taught the gospel.

And after he had learned that the gospel was true, his father would not approve his baptism. A great shepherd, a bishop of the young girl, went to the father and helped him to see the value of that young woman, her standards, the Church, and the really truly important things in life. The father was touched that day as he attended the baptism and saw about twenty young men and women of the Church. Following the service, he asked that the missionaries come teach him. A young woman had taken on the divine nature and was able to share the priceless truths with others.

- And what about our young men, all men actually, as they learn how to exercise the priesthood of God? George Romney, former governor of Michigan

and former president of American Motors, once said this to young men in a stake conference:

"Boys, I want to tell you something. I have never had a degree in business administration from any business school. What success I have had in the business world I owe to the training I have received in this church."

Recently, we learned a very valuable lesson from our President, Ezra Taft Benson, about the value of the Church in his own life and in the lives of boys. He spent many years early in his married life teaching our young boys as a Scoutmaster, learning and sharing with them in a hundred ways. And we saw the results a few months ago as nearly all of those Scouts he had led assembled and stood in this Tabernacle—a witness of what had been done for them in this church. Yes, the Church is the instrumentality of God. It is essential to the salvation of mankind.

An anchor for the soul

Listen to what President David O. McKay said about the Church: "Every phase of [the Church] seems to me applicable to the welfare of the human family. When I consider the quorums of priesthood, I see in them an opportunity for developing that fraternity and brotherly love which is essential to the happiness of mankind. In these quorums and in the auxiliaries of the Church I see opportunities for intellectual development, for social efficiency. In the judicial phase of the Church I see ample means of settling difficulties, of establishing harmony in society, of administering justice, and of perpetuating peace among individuals and groups. In the ecclesiastical organization, I see an opportunity for social welfare such as cannot be found in any other organization in the world.

"Thus does Christ and his Church become my ideal, my inspiration in life. I think it is the highest ideal for which man can strive. . . .

" . . . I know of nothing else in the world that can even approach Christ's Church as an anchor for the soul" (*Treasures of Life*, comp. Clare Middlemiss

[Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1962], pp. 3-4).

Church service sanctifies the soul

Now, may I invite all within the sound of my voice to seek the blessings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—its important, eternal blessings, its programs and activities, its opportunities to serve and to be of one heart and one mind—and to seek the peace the Savior promised. The First Presidency has extended a special invitation to all who, for whatever reason, may have gone astray from the Church, to come back, to come home, for you are needed and we love you. The Lord and His church will bless you and your families—even into eternity.

Let us all seize every opportunity to serve in His church, with full intent and with great desire, for that is what expands and perfects and sanctifies the soul. The words of the Lord given in February 1829 capture the spirit and heart of how to serve in the Church:

"Therefore, O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with

all your heart, might, mind and strength, that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day" (D&C 4:2).

Beloved brothers and sisters, this is the Lord's church, to which we are highly privileged to belong. We are part of it. It blesses our lives. May we capture the true spirit intended by the Lord and be anxiously engaged with others in seeking the blessings of the Church. I know with all the strength of my soul that it is true, that it is God's instrument to help us to become like His Son, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The chorus sang "Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me" without announcement.

President Monson

Elder James M. Paramore, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has addressed us, followed by the Mormon Youth Chorus singing "Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me."

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our next speaker.

Elder L. Tom Perry

"To be in the world"

"If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but . . . ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world" (John 15:19).

From the teachings of the Savior we have adopted the common saying in the Church, "to be in the world, but not of the world." Normally, when this saying is used, we are emphasizing our need to stay free from sin and materialism which are so prevalent in the world in which we live. Of course, this is important—we should continually remind ourselves to keep our lives in harmony with the Lord's laws. For today, however, I would like to address the first part of the expression: "to be in the world."

It is "in the world" where we have the privilege of coming and enjoying a mortal experience. It is "in the world" where we are tested and tried. It is "in the world" where we have opportunities to participate in sacred, saving ordinances which will determine our postmortal life. It is "in the world" where we have opportunity to serve and make our contribution to mankind. It is to this world the Savior must come.

Obligations while in the world

Our prophets of this day have encouraged us to be mindful of our obligations while we are here "in the world." President David O. McKay has said:

"The responsibility of showing to the world that the gospel of Jesus Christ will solve its problems rests upon the men who make the claim. . . . I believe, too, that every world problem may be solved by obedience to the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. . . ."

"The solution of the great world problems is here in the Church of Jesus Christ. Ample provision is made not only for the needs of individuals, but also for the nation and groups of nations. I realize that it is a great claim. . . . It is simply the application of God's plan to the world problems. You who hold the priesthood have greater responsibility today, now that you live in this creative moment in the world's history, than ever the Church has had before. I repeat it. If we make the claim to hold the truth, it is obligatory upon every Latter-day Saint so to live, that when the people of the world come, in answer to the call, to test the fruit of the tree, they will find it wholesome and good.

"The Lord help us to be able to prove to the world that we possess just what the world today is longing for, and when they see it, may they know, as you know, as I know, that the everlasting gospel is a light to the world" (*Gospel Ideals* [Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1953], p. 5).

Daniel's example

I found a classic example in the Old Testament of one who lived "in the world" and influenced it through his righteous living. The birth of this young man came at a time in history when it was improbable that anyone from Israel could make much of a contribution in the world.

After the death of King Solomon in 975 B.C., the Ten Tribes revolted and separated themselves from the Tribe of Judah. A divided Israel was not able to hold its own against the other powers of that region. Egypt and Assyria would take turns overrunning the land of Israel. In the year 607 B.C., Assyria proper and the northern provinces fell into the hands of the Medes, while Syria lay open to be seized by the Babylonians.

While this struggle was going on, it seemed an appropriate time for Egypt to attack Palestine. The king of the Babylonians sent his son, Nebuchadnezzar, to drive the Egyptians back. While the battle raged against the Egyptians, the king passed away and Nebuchadnezzar became the ruler of Babylon. He was successful against the Egyptians and became ruler over all of Syria to the Egyptian border. He ruled by terror, crushing his enemies by fire and sword, and weakening them with deportations to other parts of his empire.

It was in the midst of this battle-torn era that Daniel was born. As a youth, he and certain other Hebrews were taken into the court of Nebuchadnezzar for service. They were chosen because of their wisdom and knowledge and ability to learn. Thus, Daniel was brought into a strange land with strange customs, a strange environment, and a very different religious heritage. (See Daniel 1.)

Daniel's first test in being "in the world" came when the servant of Nebuchadnezzar ordered him to drink of his wine and eat of the "king's meat." Daniel "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank" (Daniel 1:8).

The servant argued that the king had made him responsible for training these young men, and had commanded they should eat and drink the same as the others. If they did not, the king would see that they were growing weak and thin, and would surely have the servant killed. Then Daniel begged that he and his friends be allowed to follow the health habits that had been given to them. His request was that they be proved for ten days; for ten days they would feed upon grains and drink water, to see if they were not healthier than all the rest.

Daniel's strategy was most interesting. He did not challenge the beliefs of the Babylonians. Instead, he volunteered to conduct a test as to which way was best. The servant agreed to the test. For the next ten days, Daniel and those who were with him ate and drank only of the

things that they knew they should. At the end of the tenth day, Daniel and his friends were found to be healthier and stronger than all the rest. Daniel soon found that he did not have to adopt a different standard of values when he was "in the world."

The Lord blesses the obedient

I remember that as a young executive many years ago, part of my job involved attending dinners sponsored by different business groups. Each dinner was always preceded by a social hour. I felt very uncomfortable in these settings. After the first one or two dinners, I started coming late to miss the social hour. My boss thought this was not a good practice because I was missing valuable time associating with business leaders. Still, I felt awkward visiting in groups where I was the only one without a drink in my hand. I kept wondering what to do with my hands. You can always put one hand in your pocket, but you look a little foolish with both of them there. I tried holding a glass of 7-Up, but it had the appearance of an alcoholic beverage.

Finally I went over to the bartender and asked him if he had any drink that was distinctively different in appearance from an alcoholic beverage. He went into the kitchen and came back with a half gallon of milk and poured me a glass. Pouring a glass of milk at a cocktail hour was a unique event. It seemed to attract the attention of everyone, and I became the target of a lot of jesting. It embarrassed me at first, until I discovered that I was meeting more business leaders than I had at any previous gathering. I found that I did not have to violate Church standards to become a viable, contributing member of my chosen profession. It was more the case that success came because I *did* adhere to my values.

It soon became a practice at the social hours in that community to always have a carton of milk on the bar. I was amazed, as time passed, by how many of my associates were joining me for a glass of milk during the hour that we spent

together. I found, just as Daniel did, that being different in the world brought some interesting reactions, but obedience to the Lord's law is always associated with His blessings. Isn't that the message of the revelation contained in the Doctrine and Covenants?

"There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—

"And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated" (D&C 130:20–21).

Reach out to share the gospel

In addition to being obedient to the word of the Lord, we have been instructed in our responsibilities to declare the gospel to *all* of our Father in Heaven's children. Again in the Doctrine and Covenants we read:

"The worth of souls is great in the sight of God; . . .

"And how great is his joy in the soul that repenteth!

"Wherefore, you are called to cry repentance unto this people.

"And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!

"And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!" (D&C 18:10, 13–16).

I don't know how we can experience this joy if we are not willing to reach out beyond our own circle of church friends. We live "in the world" during our mortal experience. The Christian principles, which the gospel teaches, are needed in all we do and among all peoples.

Extend influence outward

The spheres of influence we can radiate from our associations can make

worthwhile contributions in the world. A righteous example can attract others to living a standard which has been established by the Lord for the conduct of His children here in mortality. It can be a source of bringing souls to the light of the gospel, causing some to join the Church, while others do not. Embracing the gospel is a personal decision, and we always respect and understand the rights of individuals, but how can we ever expect the world to embrace the righteous principles the Lord has declared to govern His children here if we do not extend our influence outward?

How our governments need standards of integrity! How our communities need yardsticks to measure decency! How our neighborhoods need models of beauty and cleanliness! How our schools need continued encouragement and assistance to maintain high educational standards! Rather than spend time complaining about the direction in which these institutions are going, we need to exert our influence in shaping the right direction. A small effort by a few can result in so much good for all of mankind.

Meet opposition with faith and courage

Sometimes I think we fear participation because of the opposition we may face. We find again in the example of Daniel someone who met the opposition of being "in the world" head-on and was able to influence those around him for good. As Daniel's talents were recognized by the king, he became a trusted counselor. Many were jealous of the position this outsider had obtained, and they sought to do away with him. They devised a new law that would prevent Daniel from praying to God, the Eternal Father. The penalty for breaking the law was to be cast into the lion's den. Daniel was discovered praying, and the penalty was executed. But because of Daniel's faith in God, the lions inflicted no harm on him.

Even with the challenges that were continually before Daniel to live his

religion, he was able to rise above the conflicts that came before him. The Lord blessed and protected him in his service.

Not only did Daniel's service benefit the king, but because of the faith that Daniel had in the Lord, it affected an entire land. The king sent forth a proclamation that all the people of the kingdom should worship the true and living God, the God that Daniel worshiped. How mighty was the power of the service of one righteous man, affecting so many, as he served "in the world" in which he lived! How effective will be the results of our service if we will continue to serve in our own personal way "in the world" in which we live!

May we have the necessary faith to place our trust in the Lord and not worry about the forces that will surely oppose righteousness. May we have the courage to move forward in the cause of truth.

Make the world a better place

As we live "in the world," may we contribute by making it a better place because of our righteous living, our service in causes that are just, and our faith that good will ultimately triumph over evil.

This is the Lord's work in which we are engaged, I witness to you in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The chorus sang "Lord, Accept Our True Devotion" without announcement.

President Monson

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has spoken to us, following which the Mormon Youth Chorus sang "Lord, Accept Our True Devotion."

President Howard W. Hunter, Acting President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our concluding speaker for this session.

President Howard W. Hunter

Importance of the Resurrection

On this beautiful and sacred Easter weekend, surely no doctrine will be the subject of more sermons nor the object of more praise than that of the atoning sacrifice and the literal resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so it should be at Easter and at every other season of the year, for no doctrine in the Christian canon is more important to all mankind than the doctrine of the resurrection of the Son of God. Through him came the resurrection of all men, women, and children who have ever been—or ever will be—born into the world.

In spite of the great importance we place upon the Resurrection in our doctrine, perhaps many of us may not yet have fully glimpsed its spiritual significance and eternal grandeur. If we had, we would marvel at its beauty as did Jacob, the brother of Nephi, and we would shudder at the alternative we would have faced had we not received this divine gift. Jacob wrote:

“O the wisdom of God, his mercy and grace! For behold, if the flesh should rise no more our spirits must become subject to that angel who fell from before the presence of the Eternal God, and became the devil, to rise no more” (2 Nephi 9:8).

Surely the Resurrection is the center of every Christian’s faith; it is the greatest of all of the miracles performed by the Savior of the world. Without it, we are indeed left hopeless. Let me borrow the words of Paul: “If there be no resurrection of the dead, . . . then is our preaching vain, . . . and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ. . . . If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins” (1 Corinthians 15:13–15, 17).

Christ’s last teachings

Go with me back in time to those final scenes in the Holy Land. The end of our Lord’s mortal life was near. He had healed the sick, raised the dead, and

expounded the scriptures, including those prophecies of his own death and resurrection. He said to his disciples:

“Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death,

“And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again” (Matthew 20:18–19).

There in Jerusalem, the Sadducees accosted him and questioned him concerning the Resurrection. They had conspired to trap him, but he taught them the simple truths of the living gospel.

“Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God?” he asked.

“I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

“And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine” (Matthew 22:31–33).

Later, as they met to celebrate the Passover, Jesus and his Apostles partook of the sacramental emblems that he initiated in this last supper together, and then walked to the Mount of Olives.

Always the teacher to the very end, he continued his discourse on the theme of the sacrificial lamb. He told them he would be smitten, and that they would be scattered as sheep without a shepherd (see Matthew 26:31). “But after I am risen again,” he said, “I will go before you into Galilee” (Matthew 26:32).

Jesus’ sufferings for us

In the hours that followed, he sweat drops of blood, was scourged by the very leaders who claimed to be custodians of his law, and was crucified in the company of thieves. It was as King Benjamin in the Book of Mormon prophesied: “He shall suffer temptations, and pain of body, hunger, thirst, and fatigue, even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death; for behold, blood cometh

from every pore, so great shall be his anguish for the wickedness and the abominations of his people. . . .

" . . . He cometh unto his own, that salvation might come unto the children of men; . . . and even after all this they shall consider him a man, and say that he hath a devil, and shall scourge him, and shall crucify him" (Mosiah 3:7, 9).

We are indebted to the prophet Alma for our knowledge of the full measure of His suffering: "He shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and this that the word might be fulfilled which saith he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people.

"And he will take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people; and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities" (Alma 7:11-12).

Think of it! When his body was taken from the cross and hastily placed in a borrowed tomb, he, the sinless Son of God, had already taken upon him not only the sins and temptations of every human soul who will repent, but all of our sickness and grief and pain of every kind. He suffered these afflictions as we suffer them, according to the flesh. He suffered them all. He did this to perfect his mercy and his ability to lift us above every earthly trial.

Prophecies of the Resurrection

But there remained one more set of chains to be broken before the Atonement could be complete: the bands of death. The prophets of the Old Testament had taught that the Resurrection would be certain and would be universal. Also, the Book of Mormon prophets taught the doctrine of the Resurrection with great plainness. Nephi wrote:

"Behold, they will crucify him; and after he is laid in a sepulchre for the space of three days he shall rise from the dead, with healing in his wings; and all

those who shall believe on his name shall be saved in the kingdom of God" (2 Nephi 25:13).

And Samuel the Lamanite prophesied to the Nephites:

"For behold, he surely must die that salvation may come; yea, it behooveth him and cometh expedient that he dieth, to bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, that thereby men may be brought into the presence of the Lord" (Helaman 14:15).

Enoch was shown in a vision the day of the coming of the Son of Man:

"And the Lord said unto Enoch: Look, and he looked and beheld the Son of Man lifted up on the cross, after the manner of men;

"And he heard a loud voice; and the heavens were veiled; and all the creations of God mourned; and the earth groaned; and the rocks were rent; and the saints arose, and were crowned at the right hand of the Son of Man, with crowns of glory;

"And as many of the spirits as were in prison came forth, and stood on the right hand of God; and the remainder were reserved in chains of darkness until the judgment of the great day" (Moses 7:55-57).

The day of Christ's resurrection

As the dawn of that third day was beginning, Mary Magdalene and "the other Mary" had come to the sepulchre in which his lifeless body had been laid. Earlier, the chief priests and the Pharisees had gone to Pilate and persuaded him to place a guard at the door of the sepulchre, "lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead" (Matthew 27:64). But two mighty angels had rolled the stone from the door of the tomb, and the would-be guards had fled in terror at the sight.

When the women came to the tomb, they found it open and empty. The angels had tarried to tell them the greatest news ever to fall on human ears: "He is not here: for he is risen, as he said" (Matthew 28:6).

The resurrection of Jesus was followed immediately by the resurrection of other righteous souls. Matthew records that "the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,

"And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many" (Matthew 27:52-53).

The Lord's appearances after his resurrection

In the days that followed his resurrection, the Lord appeared unto many. He displayed his five special wounds to them. He walked and talked and ate with them, as if to prove beyond a doubt that a resurrected body is indeed a physical body of tangible flesh and bones. Later he ministered to the Nephites, whom he commanded to "arise and come forth unto me, that ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet, that ye may know that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world.

"And . . . the multitude went forth, and thrust their hands into his side, and did feel the prints of the nails in his hands and in his feet; and this they did do, going forth one by one until they had all gone forth, and did see with their eyes and did feel with their hands, and did know of a surety and did bear record, that it was he, of whom it was written by the prophets, that should come" (3 Nephi 11:14-15).

"Seek this Jesus"

It is the responsibility and joy of all men and women everywhere to "seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have [testified]" (Ether 12:41) and to have the spiritual witness of his divinity. It is the right and blessing of all who humbly seek, to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit,

bearing witness of the Father and his resurrected Son.

Testimony

As one called and ordained to bear witness of the name of Jesus Christ to all the world, I testify at this Easter season that he lives. He has a glorified, immortal body of flesh and bones. He is the Only Begotten Son of the Father in the flesh. He is the Savior, the Light and Life of the world. Following his crucifixion and death, he appeared as a resurrected being to Mary, to Peter, to Paul, and to many others. He showed himself to the Nephites. He has shown himself to Joseph Smith, the boy prophet, and to many others in our dispensation. This is his church; he leads it today through his prophet, Ezra Taft Benson. Of this I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

President Howard W. Hunter of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us. We are very proud of him.

We are grateful to the managers and operators of the many television and radio stations and cable systems for offering their facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this conference to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

The Mormon Youth Chorus will now sing "Jesus, Lover of My Soul."

The benediction will be given by Elder J. Thomas Fyans of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and then this conference will be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The chorus sang "Jesus, Lover of My Soul."

Elder J. Thomas Fyans offered the benediction.

FIRST DAY AFTERNOON SESSION

The second general session of the 158th Annual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 2, 1988, at 2:00 P.M. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

Music for this session was provided by the Ricks College Centennial Choir. Florence Bowman conducted, and Robert Cundick was at the organ.

At the beginning of the meeting, President Hinckley made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My brethren and sisters, President Benson has asked that I conduct this meeting, the second general session of the 158th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We welcome all who are in attendance or who are participating by means of the broadcast resources available to us, including those in stake centers throughout the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico. We express our appreciation to the owners of the broadcast facilities who have offered their services and for their cooperation in making these proceedings available to members and friends of the Church in many countries.

We note that Elders Paul H. Dunn and Rex C. Reeve are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall.

The music for this session will be provided by the Ricks College Centennial Choir, under the direction of Sister Florence Bowman, with Brother Robert Cundick at the organ. The choir's presentation will begin the centennial celebration for Ricks College.

The choir will open this session by singing "Sing Praise to Him." The invocation will then be offered by Elder Wm. Grant Bangerter, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Sing Praise to Him."

Elder Wm. Grant Bangerter offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

The Ricks College Centennial Choir will now sing "A Song of Praise." Following that, President Thomas S. Monson will present to you the General Authorities and general officers of the Church for your sustaining vote.

The choir sang "A Song of Praise."

Sustaining of Church Authorities and Officers

President Thomas S. Monson

My brothers and sisters, I shall now present to you the General Authorities and general officers of the Church for your sustaining vote.

It is proposed that we sustain President Ezra Taft Benson as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church

of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Gordon B. Hinckley as First Counselor in the First Presidency; and Thomas S. Monson as Second Counselor in the First Presidency. Those in favor may manifest it. Those opposed may manifest it.

It is proposed that we sustain Marion G. Romney as President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, Howard W. Hunter

as Acting President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, and the following as members of that council: Marion G. Romney, Howard W. Hunter, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, and Joseph B. Wirthlin. Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed.

It is proposed that we sustain the Counselors in the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

It is proposed that we sustain Robert Edward Sackley and Larry Lionel Kendrick as additional members of the First Quorum of the Seventy to serve for a period of five years and sustain all other General Authorities as at present constituted. All in favor, please signify. Those opposed may manifest it.

Sister Dwan J. Young has accepted a call to accompany her husband to his assignment as president of the Canada Calgary Mission. It is therefore necessary to release her as general president of the Primary Association. We also release her counselors, Virginia B. Cannon and Michaelene P. Grassli, and all members of the Primary General Board. All who

wish to join in an expression of appreciation to these sisters for their dedicated, effective service may now do so by the uplifted hand.

It is proposed that we sustain Sister Michaelene P. Grassli as general president of the Primary Association with Betty Jo Nelson Jepsen as first counselor and Ruth Broadbent Wright as second counselor. Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed, by the same sign.

It is proposed that we sustain all of the other General Authorities and general officers of the Church as at present constituted. Those in favor, please manifest it. Those opposed, by the same sign.

President Benson, it appears that the voting has been unanimous in the affirmative. We invite the newly sustained General Authorities and General Primary Presidency to take their places on the stand.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Brother Wilford G. Edling, who has served long and faithfully as the head of the Auditing Committee of the Church, will make the report of that committee, following which Brother F. Michael Watson, secretary to the First Presidency, will present the statistical report of the Church for the year 1987.

The Church Audit Committee Report for 1987

Wilford G. Edling

For the purpose of evaluating the adequacy of controls over receipts and expenditures of the general funds of the Church and its controlled organizations, we have reviewed the system of budgeting, accounting, and auditing, and the related financial statements of the Church for the year ended December 31, 1987, and the manner in which funds are received and expenditures are controlled.

Expenditures of general Church funds for the year were authorized by the First Presidency and were made in compliance with budgetary procedures. The

budget is authorized by the Council on Disposition of Tithes composed of the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, and the Presiding Bishopric. The Appropriations Committee, in weekly meetings, administers major expenditures under the budget.

The general fund accounts of the Church are maintained by its Finance and Records Department, which uses modern accounting technology and equipment to keep abreast of the rapidly expanding and varied activities of the Church.

The Auditing Department, which comprises a staff of certified public

accountants and similarly qualified auditors, and which is independent of all other departments, performs financial audits, operational audits, and audits of computer systems employed by the Church. These auditing services are performed on a continuing basis for Church departments and other Church-controlled organizations engaged in worldwide operations, including missions, schools, administrative offices, and departmental activities. The extent and scope of the Auditing Department services in safeguarding the resources of the Church are expanding to encompass the growth and widening activities of the Church.

The audits of local funds of wards and stakes are performed by stake auditors. The audit procedures are established and the audit reports are reviewed by the Church Auditing Department. Incorporated businesses owned or controlled by the Church for which accounts are not maintained in the Finance and Records Department are audited by the Church's

internal auditors, independent professional auditing firms, or government regulatory agencies.

Based on our review of the system of financial controls within the Church, together with continuing discussions with personnel of the Finance and Records and Auditing departments, we are of the opinion that budgeting, accounting, and auditing controls are adequate for Church needs and purposes, and that in all material respects the general funds of the Church received and expended during the year ended December 31, 1987, have been controlled and accounted for in accordance with established Church policy and procedures.

Respectfully submitted,

Church Audit Committee

Wilford G. Edling

David M. Kennedy

Warren E. Pugh

Merrill J. Bateman

Ted E. Davis

The Church Statistical Report for 1987

F. Michael Watson

For the information of the members of the Church, the First Presidency has issued the following statistical report concerning the growth and status of the Church as of December 31, 1987. (Membership figures include estimates based on 1987 reports available prior to conference.)

Church units

Number of stakes	1,666
Number of districts	379
Number of missions	205
Number of wards	10,907
Number of branches in stakes	2,812
Number of branches in missions..	2,287
Number of sovereign countries with organized wards or branches	97

Number of territories, colonies,
and possessions with
organized wards or branches.... 25
(These statistics reflect an increase of 44
stakes and 617 wards and branches during
1987.)

Church membership

Total membership at the
close of 1987..... 6,440,000

Church growth during 1987

Increase in children of record	99,000
Children of record baptized	75,000
Converts baptized	227,284

Missionaries

Full-time missionaries 34,750

Prominent members who have passed away since last April

Elder Franklin D. Richards, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy; Camilla Eyring Kimball, widow of President Spencer W. Kimball; Elva Taylor Cowley, widow of Matthew Cowley, former member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles; Alexander Schreiner, Tabernacle organist for fifty-three years; Louise W. Madsen, former counselor in the General Relief Society Presidency.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Brother Edling and Brother Watson. I should just like to say that the Audit Committee, which is chaired by Brother Edling, comprises independent, nonemployed Church members who are men of wide business experience and familiar with financial operations.

Elder David B. Haight of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now be our first speaker.

Elder David B. Haight

The Church brings forth good fruit

I have prayed for the blessings of heaven to be upon my efforts in speaking to you today.

Matthew's New Testament account includes these words of the Savior: "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit" (Matthew 7:17), and "by their fruits ye shall know them"—whether they be good or evil (Matthew 7:20).

As Michael Watson was reading the annual report confirming the continued growth and expansion of the Church throughout the world, with an increasing number of new converts making possible more stakes and more wards with their increasing numbers of priesthood holders and women in their organizations, and with our growing numbers of missionaries making possible more new missions, I felt a burning in my soul—a feeling of divine affirmation and direction of this work as it comes "forth out of obscurity" (D&C 1:30).

This is the church of our Lord Jesus Christ, and it does indeed bring forth fruit worthy of him. Its growth will continue unabated because of the faith of its members and because more men and women are discovering the golden threads of truth, hope, and salvation as they learn gospel principles and are "nourished by the good word of God, to keep them in the right way, . . . relying . . . upon

the merits of Christ, who [is] the author . . . of their faith" (Moroni 6:4).

Outside of our church, many watch in amazement at this consistent expansion in spite of popular secularism. We hope they may one day know of the joy and happiness available to the Saints who hold fast to the iron rod of gospel truth (see 1 Nephi 11:25), which they treasure as dearly as life itself and which they maintain by their abiding faith.

We see the light of the gospel continuing to dawn like a gentle new day upon previous intolerable darkness. It continues to spread out into new frontiers, confirming the revelation to Joseph the Prophet that "the voice of the Lord is unto all men, and there is none to escape" (D&C 1:2) and all hearts shall be penetrated.

The gospel breathes a new life and a new hope and a new and unknown holiness into a troubled world. This we see, and we see the work grow and increase and become more and more irresistible as it spreads like the gentleness of a sea that refreshes the shore upon which it flows.

Fearless preaching of early Apostles

Witnessing this miracle continuing to unfold today, I liken it to the account in Acts where Peter and other Apostles were preaching of Jesus, and the high priests'

council and the Sadducees tried to restrain them from speaking and teaching of Christ by putting them in prison. But an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors, and again they went to the temple to teach the people. Gamaliel, a Pharisee and doctor of the law, halted the council when they would again cast the Apostles in prison, saying:

"Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought:

"But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

"And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak . . . the name of Jesus, and let them go.

"And they departed, . . . rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer . . . for his name" (Acts 5:38-41).

And—true to their callings as special witnesses of Christ—the Apostles went "daily in the temple, and in every house, they [continued] to teach and preach Jesus Christ" and him crucified (Acts 5:42).

The early Apostles fearlessly continued to preach the principles of the gospel, as we do today, calling upon mankind to believe in the Son of God, our Savior, and to repent—to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins, and to receive the Holy Ghost in preparation to have administered unto them even higher ordinances of the gospel. Those early disciples declared to those seeking truth, in plainness, that as the Holy Ghost rested upon them, filling their hearts with joy, they would know of the doctrine for themselves, whether it be of God or man.

Develop spirituality

The Spirit of truth leads men to righteousness, but we must have a desire to seek truth and to take the time to form spiritual habits and respond to spiritual impressions if we are to keep our souls alive—and is not now the time to begin?

A person who has developed spirituality may suffer deeply and know

frustration; but yet he is able to continue in showing forth kindness and love because of a power that rises up from his spiritual base that governs his actions and urges him to "speak with a new tongue" (2 Nephi 31:14), as Nephi said, and to be his best despite obstacles and setbacks.

Testimony of Christ

My desire is to aid the cause of truth and righteousness and, like the Apostles of old, to add my witness of the divinity of Jesus the Christ.

Tomorrow is Easter! Christians everywhere will commemorate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though the anniversary date may not be accurate, the Easter season should inspire us to study and reflect upon the infinite and eternal atonement of Christ—"the first-fruits of them that slept" (1 Corinthians 15:20). The resurrection of Jesus from the tomb is the most glorious of all messages to mankind.

I believe in Christ. As a Latter-day Saint, I believe in Christ with all my heart. We invite all to "come unto Christ, and be perfected in him," as Moroni declared, "and deny yourselves of all ungodliness" (Moroni 10:32). Without reservation, we declare he is the Son of God and the Savior of the world.

Joseph Smith, the first prophet of this dispensation, wrote:

"We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.

"We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel" (Articles of Faith 1:1, 3).

We believe that Christ came into the world to ransom mankind from the temporal and spiritual death brought into the world by the fall of Adam, that through the shedding of His innocent blood all mankind are raised in immortality and that those who believe and obey His laws are raised unto eternal life.

Salvation is administered on the same terms and conditions in all ages. Men must have faith in him, repent of

their sins, be baptized in his name, receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, and remain steadfast to gain life eternal.

King Benjamin's vision of Christ

The Lord God has sent his holy prophets among all men in all ages to declare these things, even as he does today (see Mosiah 3:13).

King Benjamin, a Book of Mormon prophet, was instructed by an angel sent by the Lord to declare unto his people the coming of the Messiah more than one hundred years before Christ's birth, "that they may also be filled with joy" (Mosiah 3:4). This holy prophet declared:

"For behold, the time cometh, . . . that . . . the Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, who was, and is from all eternity, . . . shall come down from heaven among the children of men. . . .

"And . . . he shall suffer temptations, and pain of body, . . . even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death; . . . blood cometh from every pore, so great shall be his anguish for the wickedness and the abominations of his people.

"And he shall be called Jesus Christ, the Son of God, . . . the Creator of all things from the beginning; . . .

"And lo, he cometh . . . that salvation might come . . . through faith on his name; . . . [but] they shall consider him a man, . . . and shall scourge him, and . . . crucify him.

"And he shall rise the third day from the dead" (Mosiah 3:5, 7-10).

New Testament witnesses of the Resurrection

King Benjamin had learned in a vision that Christ would atone for the sins of mankind and judge the world. New Testament narrators, who were actual witnesses, confirmed King Benjamin's prophetic declarations with this brief account:

Before daylight the second morning following Christ's crucifixion, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, having prepared fresh spices and

ointments, went to the tomb of Jesus and found that the stone had been rolled away. Looking in and not finding the body, they hurried to find Peter and the Apostles and told them what they had found. Peter and John hastened at once to the tomb. John outran his older companion. Stooping down, he gazed in silent wonder into the empty tomb. Entering, Peter saw the burial clothes lying where the body of Jesus once lay. John followed him. And in spite of fear, there dawned upon them the hope, which later would become an absolute knowledge, that Christ had indeed risen; but as yet no one had seen him. The two wondering Apostles returned to their brethren.

Mary had stayed at the tomb and was grieving at the entrance when someone approached. Thinking it was the keeper of the garden, she asked where he had laid her Lord. Jesus said to her, "Mary" (John 20:16).

Jesus himself was standing before her, but he did not appear as she had known him, for he was now risen and glorified. She then recognized our Lord and must have attempted to embrace him, for he said, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:17).

Filled with amazement, she hastened to obey, and repeated that glorious message which would give hope through all future ages and to which she added her personal declaration that she had seen the risen Lord. (See John 20:1-18.)

Other testimonies of Christ

"The debt is paid, the redemption made, the covenant fulfilled, justice satisfied, the will of God done," wrote President John Taylor, "and all power is now given into the hands of the Son of God—the power of the resurrection, the power of the redemption, [and] the power of salvation" (*The Mediation and Atonement* [Salt Lake City: Deseret News Co., 1882], p. 171).

Hundreds of years before Christ's earthly ministry, the prophet Isaiah,

foretelling of the establishment of Zion and speaking of Jehovah, the true God, wrote:

"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: . . .

"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: . . . and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:4-5).

These thoughtful words from a favorite Mormon sacrament hymn express our heartfelt gratitude for our Savior:

There was no other good enough
To pay the price of sin.
He only could unlock the gate
Of heav'n and let us in.

Oh, dearly, dearly has he loved!
And we must love him too,
And trust in his redeeming blood,
And try his works to do.
("There Is a Green Hill Far Away,"
Hymns [1985], no. 194)

God blesses those who obey him

I repeat our Lord's ageless admonition, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

Innumerable blessings have been promised to those who are faithful and obedient to God's laws. Once a person is true and obedient to the light and knowledge received, he not only develops the ability to use that which has been given, but the capacity to receive more knowledge increases, for he now understands and appreciates the gift.

People learn obedience by being obedient. We see its fruits. Halfhearted obedience is without reward. The gospel invites vigorous participation in living its principles. God commands that we serve him with all our heart, with all our might, with all our strength, and with the very best of our intelligence.

Our Savior instructs us, "Thy vows shall be offered up in righteousness on all days and at all times" (D&C 59:11).

Know God through obedience

If we could feel or were sensitive even in the slightest to the matchless love of our Savior and his willingness to suffer for our individual sins, we would cease procrastination and "clean the slate," and repent of all our transgressions.

This would mean keeping God's commandments and setting our lives in order, searching our souls, and repenting of our sins, large or small. It means loving our neighbor, living an exemplary life, and—high on the list—being good husbands and good wives. It means teaching our children, by example and precept, to walk in the ways of truth and soberness. It means being honest in our affairs, and serving others, which includes sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ to all the world, and—with love—to succor those in need.

It is my hope that we will all come to know and love our Lord through obedience to his Word sufficiently to qualify for inclusion in the blessed circle of those who have heard of and believed his precious words uttered in the Garden of Gethsemane, his last night in mortality: "And this is life eternal," he said, "that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3), to which I add my witness in his holy name, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder David B. Haight of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Angel Abrea, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Angel Abrea

The false security of doing nothing

The story is told that on one occasion a traveler asked a farmer who was seated in the doorway of his humble cabin, "How's the cotton crop going to be this year?"

The farmer replied, "There won't be any. I didn't bother to plant it because I was afraid of the boll weevil."

Upon hearing this, the traveler asked further, "Well, are you going to harvest a big corn crop?"

"It's the same," came the response. "I was afraid we wouldn't get enough rain for the kernels to mature."

The traveler pursued, "At least you will have a good potato harvest!"

"Nope. Not any; I didn't dare plant them because I was afraid of insects."

With frustration, and somewhat impatiently, the traveler then asked, "Well, what is it that you have planted?"

"Nothing, my good man," came the answer. "I'd rather be safe than sorry."

The response from the farmer is a good example of a false security arising from fear and lack of conviction. It is an illusion of security resulting from uncertainty and confusion, an imaginary safe route definitely confused and distorted.

Certainly this is one of the evils which afflicts this generation—the security of not doing, the security of not being. It is the same type of evil that the Savior referred to when he pointed out the uselessness of the unprofitable servant (see Matthew 25:30), of the fig tree that didn't bear fruit (see Matthew 21:19–22), of the light that did not shine (see Luke 11:33–36), and of the salt that had lost its savor (see Luke 14:34–35).

Jesus Christ did not alter concepts in order to make incorrect actions compatible with a false sense of reality; he always clarified them in order to eliminate neutrality and ambiguity and to expose hypocrisy and deviant actions, thereby setting the standard by which the children of God will be judged.

He described things as they were and lived his life as a clear example to us all

of how to live and how to act, even saying, "For I have given you an example" (John 13:15).

Mental scarecrows

Today there are many people, just as the farmer in our story, who, out of fear, create within themselves mental scarecrows and eventually end up believing that these scarecrows are real. In this manner they base their lives on false principles. It is unimportant to them that their ideas are not true; these ideas are the trenches they dig to defend themselves from fear, the commotion they make to drive away the truth. For example, the "scarecrow" of security is a confused and distorted imitation of true security. It provides these people with the illusion they need to weigh different situations and act as they want, using as their yardstick precepts totally apart from reality.

In the face of this distorted understanding of the truth, Latter-day Saints who have received the assignment through revelation to "take upon you the name of Christ, and speak the truth in soberness" (D&C 18:21) could appear to be proud and lacking humility to those who hold to incorrect concepts. This is because faithful members of the Church are filled with a deep assurance that comes from a firm testimony of the gospel, a sure knowledge of the divinity of the work in which we have embarked, received through revelation from the Holy Ghost.

This assurance and firm commitment "to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death" (Mosiah 18:9) could appear as boastful pride before those accustomed to using mental scarecrows.

But it is not that way. To confuse pride with safety, and vanity with testimony, shows lack of understanding by those who have not allowed the tempering of the Spirit to enter their hearts, who have not had the experience Nephi did when he said, "I did cry unto the Lord;

and behold he did visit me, and did soften my heart that I did believe all the words which had been spoken by my father" (1 Nephi 2:16).

So in most cases the problem is not with the sower, but with the soil where the seed is planted, and very often those who are insecure challenge the self-confident person, not necessarily because of his self-confidence but because, by comparison, their own insecurity becomes evident.

Joseph Smith's assurance

The important point is not to look for causes of insecurity, but rather to look for reasons why faithful members of the Church of Jesus Christ have such a deep assurance in their lives.

A powerful example of this is the Prophet Joseph Smith, who searched for an explanation for the persecution he endured, yet at the same time testified to the truthfulness of his vision:

"I had actually seen a light, and in the midst of that light I saw two Personages, and they did in reality speak to me; and though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true; and while they were persecuting me, reviling me, and speaking all manner of evil against me falsely for so saying, I was led to say in my heart: Why persecute me for telling the truth? I have actually seen a vision; and who am I that I can withstand God, or why does the world think to make me deny what I have actually seen? For I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it; at least I knew that by so doing I would offend God, and come under condemnation.

"I had now got my mind satisfied so far as the sectarian world was concerned" (Joseph Smith—History 1:25–26).

What better way could he express the reality of his vision than to say, "I knew it, and I knew that God knew it"?

From this powerful and firm testimony, this knowledge from on high, came the assurance as portrayed by the

words of the Prophet. How could it be otherwise since Joseph Smith had the sure knowledge that he knew that God knew what he knew?

Assurance that comes by knowing

Is this pride? Definitely not. This is assurance that comes from knowing. This is a sure knowledge which, through the Holy Ghost, "shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart" (D&C 8:2).

This is the assurance found in the lives of faithful Latter-day Saints, coming from a change brought about by the power of the Spirit, that prompts them to bear testimony of the divinity of the work. It is that same conversion, that same power, that same Spirit which Alma experienced when he called the people to repentance. In his search to remove scarecrows from the people he said, "Do ye not suppose that I know of these things myself? Behold, I testify unto you that I do know that these things whereof I have spoken are true. And how do ye suppose that I know of their surety?"

"Behold, I say unto you they are made known unto me by the Holy Spirit of God. Behold, I have fasted and prayed many days that I might know these things of myself. And now I do know of myself that they are true; for the Lord God hath made them manifest unto me by his Holy Spirit; and this is the spirit of revelation which is in me" (Alma 5:45–46).

The world may claim that this is pride, but members of the Lord's kingdom, those who do not live by borrowed light, those who have gained a testimony for themselves that this work is true, call it assurance.

It is the testimony, it is the true knowledge that "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7). This gives us the courage, the strength, and the commitment to testify of Christ and his gospel regardless of circumstances or external factors. But for the weak, the unsure, or those who question that the Latter-day Saints are Christians,

these circumstances and external factors prove to be more important than learning of Christ and gaining a testimony.

Assurance comes from obeying God

The assurance seen in faithful members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the result of being "doers of the word, and not hearers only" (James 1:22); it is the result of striving to "live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God" (D&C 84:44) instead of talking of God yet not conforming actions to His word, as do those who are insecure. It is this assurance, the firm testimony of thousands of missionaries who are "occupied" with all their "heart, might, mind and strength" (D&C 4:2) in serving their fellowmen, as contrasted with millions who are "preoccupied" with worldly involvements and give only lip service.

It is important, then, in our determination to proclaim the gospel, in our desire to clarify the thinking of confused and insecure people, in our decision to be part of that great work of our Father in Heaven "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39), that we should remember, as King Benjamin admonished his people, to "always retain in remembrance, the greatness of God, and your own nothingness, . . . and humble yourselves even in the depths of humility, calling on the name of the Lord daily, and standing steadfastly in the faith" (Mosiah 4:11). "No one can assist in this work except he shall be humble" (D&C 12:8).

There is no guarantee of a great reward for anyone; there is no way that any of God's children can be assured of blessings from the Most High without worthy actions in their lives. The Lord's blessings are the fruits of obedience to the laws on which they are predicated.

Therefore, since we do have the truth, it is fundamental that we do not be boastful about it. Our pride, if it should exist at all, along with our eternal gratitude, should arise from how we make use of that truth and the manner in which we apply it in our lives.

We can pass through this mortal existence listening attentively and patiently to the best of instructions, or we can be spectators watching the expounding of great and profound principles without allowing these principles to crystallize within us by applying them in daily living.

Seek and apply wisdom

We are saved only in direct proportion to the knowledge we gain, but the simple accumulation of facts will in no way save us if we do not possess wisdom.

Wisdom is not to be proclaimed or exhibited, but rather, it is to be sought, to be treasured; we need to pray for it and then express it by living a worthy life, according to the knowledge we have obtained. Change and the development of talents and hidden qualities in each of us are produced by putting into practice the knowledge we have obtained.

What is most important, then, is what we do with our lives. For faithful members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the truth is not an end in itself. Our lives are a constant quest and example of a dynamic relationship between truth and knowledge, between living and being.

As President Joseph F. Smith said, "Pure intelligence comprises not only knowledge, but also the power to properly apply that knowledge" (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939], p. 58).

In majestic clarity the Savior declared concerning this subject, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me."

"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John 7:16-17).

It is from this principle that Latter-day Saints receive the strength of their testimonies, the assurance of their convictions, as they practice what they preach in their daily lives.

To all those faithful Latter-day Saints who share their testimonies concerning the truthfulness of this work in

the four corners of the earth, I wish to add mine, with the assurance that I know that God knows I know that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has the power to administer the saving ordinances that crown the efforts of all those who, through an obedient and faithful life, come unto Christ. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Love at Home" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Elder Angel Abrea of the First Quorum of the Seventy addressed us, and the Ricks College Centennial Choir sang "Love at Home."

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "How Firm a Foundation," following which we shall be pleased to hear from Elders Douglas H. Smith and Glen L. Rudd, who were sustained at the last April conference as members of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation sang "How Firm a Foundation."

Elder Douglas H. Smith

My beloved brothers and sisters, I rejoice in the privilege of being with you this afternoon in another general conference session. We have unitedly come here to worship the Lord and to receive instruction and counsel from our leaders. We have much for which to be thankful, and my heart is filled with appreciation and gratitude for the rich blessings from the Lord which are mine in serving with the wonderful missionaries and members of the Church in Asia. His work is growing and prospering there as well as throughout the world.

What think ye of Christ?

As Jesus approached that fateful hour when he would give himself as the supreme sacrifice for all mankind, he asked those who challenged him, "What think ye of Christ?" (Matthew 22:42). I have pondered many times that searching inquiry as it applies to my life and to all of us in this time of history. I wonder, as the register of our lives is indelibly written, and from which we will be judged, what that heavenly record will say of us in this generation of time. Do we fully accept him as the only begotten Son of God sent to earth to redeem the world?

King Benjamin, as Nephi recorded, so testified. We read from Helaman:

"O remember, remember, my sons, the words which king Benjamin spake unto his people; yea, remember that there is no other way nor means whereby man can be saved, only through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, who shall come; yea, remember that he cometh to redeem the world" (Helaman 5:9).

Jesus' teachings and sacrifice

The Lamb of God came to earth to redeem and to teach. He taught the blessed law of love:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. . . .

" . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37, 39).

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (John 13:34).

The Holy One of Israel sought no earthly personal gain or glory. He strove only to serve his Father and to show forth eternal love to the children of God on earth.

The Messiah caused the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the diseased to be healed, the hungry to be fed. Every act of his life was one of deep inner love, compassion, kindness, and forgiveness. The poor and downtrodden continuously had his benevolence, and, as he came to the end of his mortal life, his heart was full of sympathy for those who had caused his crucifixion. He prayed to the Father, "Forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

As the dark and dreadful days in the world's history came to pass, Jesus was betrayed, apprehended, bound, and led away captive to answer the trumped-up charges against him. They taunted him with false witnesses who came forth to challenge him. They smote him, ridiculed him, tormented him. Finally, blindfolded and scourged, he was mocked in brutish manner.

His adversaries sought to take his life. No other judgmental decree would satisfy them. They accepted full responsibility for his blood on them and their children. They led him bound before Pilate, who found in him no fault at all. Then he was taken before Herod, who likewise found nothing of which to condemn him. With envy and malice, they once again brought him before Pilate. For the third time, Pilate found no justifiable reason to declare him guilty. He offered a substitute and to set Jesus free. The hideous cries from those who feared the Son of God called forth to crucify him.

The sacrifice of the Lamb of God, so prophesied by the prophets for centuries, had come. Quietly, and without further

utterance in his own defense, he gave his life as a ransom for us, that through him and by him we might have blessed immortality—to be resurrected, body and spirit united forever. He further provided the way that through obedience to his commandments and reception of the sacred ordinances, we might have eternal life. His life was evidence of his consciousness for all of his father's children.

Testimony and admonition

Again, I ask the question, "What think ye of Christ?" I bear you my solemn testimony and stand by the side of the disciple Peter who, when asked the direct and pointed question, "But whom say ye that I am?" answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:15–16; italics added). I witness it unto you, that he is the divine Savior of the world, the promised Messiah. I reiterate the bold utterance of the disciple, "Thou art [truly] the Christ, the Son of . . . God"; and I beckon to all to come unto Christ and receive the blessings of heaven which await those who will keep his commandments and endure to the end.

I certify to you that we are led by living prophets today who receive inspiration and revelation from the Lord. I further clasp hands with Joshua, who said, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, amen.

Elder Glen L. Rudd

Importance of service

When I was a young man in the Aaronic Priesthood, we boys used to stand in our quorum meetings and repeat in unison, "Priesthood means service. Bearing the priesthood, I will serve." This was our weekly pledge. It was part of every quorum meeting. Most of us began to understand that honoring the

priesthood required our being active and serving in the Church.

In those days we played a lot of tennis. We knew that in tennis, if we didn't serve well, we usually didn't win. Our priesthood leaders taught us the same concept insofar as the Church was concerned. They helped us learn to serve at the proper time and in the proper way.

No boy or man fully possesses the priesthood until he learns to serve others and the Lord. It is true that someone with authority may bestow the priesthood by the laying on of hands, but until we do something by way of service to others, the priesthood lies dormant within us and is of little value. We must not fail to magnify the callings we receive.

Keep simple doctrines simple

During the past few months, I have felt that I might best serve by encouraging and helping all members to feel the necessity of keeping the simple doctrines of the gospel simple. I strongly feel that the gospel was given to us in a simple, plain, and clear manner. My mission president taught us that the gospel of Jesus Christ is beautifully simple and simply beautiful. The tendency of many is to complicate these lovely, simple requirements that the Lord has given to us.

Power in simple prayer

Nothing is more simple than prayer. The Savior, while upon the earth, gave the example and commanded all to follow in His footsteps. If we have faith that our Heavenly Father lives and that we can commune with Him in a very direct way, then prayer becomes one of the most beautiful, lovely, simple acts that we can do.

I have a strong testimony that the Lord does hear and answer prayers. We are obligated to thank Him. We are obligated to converse with Him in such a way that there are no obstacles between us and our Father in Heaven. From the very beginning the Lord has instructed His earthly children to remember Him in prayer.

Prayers of a Primary boy

One morning a good many years ago, a member of the Council of the Twelve came to my office and told me of a beautiful, touching experience that had happened to him that day. He had gone to the old Desert Gym to enjoy the steam

bath for a while. As he sat there in the heavy steam, he heard the door open and looked upward toward the door to see who was entering. He could not see anyone, but he had a feeling someone else was there in the room with him. After a few minutes, he saw a young Primary-age boy about eight or nine years old who had seated himself two or three feet away. The boy gradually slid closer to the Apostle, and they finally said "hello" to each other. Then the boy moved even closer until he could look up into the face of the Church leader. The little boy said, "Mister, I think I know who you are." The Apostle said, "Who am I?" The boy said, "I think you are one of the Apostles of the Church. I think you are the one who travels all over the ocean on big boats and little boats and all kinds of airplanes—and you are the one who never gets sick or hurt in any wrecks." The Apostle acknowledged that he was the one who was having those great experiences. The boy then said to him, "Do you know why it is you don't ever get killed or get hurt?" The Apostle said, "No, why is that?" The little Primary boy said, "*That's because I pray for you.*"

What a touching, lovely expression of faith in a simple, wonderful way! This experience happened forty years ago, but I think of it frequently. There is far more power in simple prayer than many of us think possible.

The Lord hears our prayers

My brothers and sisters, thousands and even hundreds of thousands of people pray for their loved ones each and every day. Great numbers pray for the leaders of the Church, particularly for our prophet, President Benson. I am convinced that the Lord hears the simple prayers of all people. I am sure He hears the prayer of the aged widow as well as the little child who prays with simple, plain, and understandable faith. I am also certain that a loving Heavenly Father appreciates the sincere, regular prayers of the faithful much more than the hurried, urgent appeals given only in times of crisis.

The blessing of prayer

May the Lord bless and help us all to have the courage to pray with our families. Nothing is more wonderful than for parents to gather their children around them and enjoy the special, tender moments of communing with our Heavenly Father in family prayer. Nothing binds a family together more; and nothing puts us in a position to receive His blessings more than compliance with that wonderful commandment and privilege. Even for those of us who no longer have children at home, the blessing of praying together as companions is wonderful. The faithful person living alone is also lifted up and richly rewarded through humble, secret prayer.

Jesus said, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3).

May the Lord bless us and help us all to serve Him with simple, childlike faith, simple forgiveness and repentance, and especially with simple prayer, that we may enjoy the strength, power, and beauty that come from the plain and simple things of the gospel, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elders Douglas H. Smith and Glen L. Ruddle have just spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks

Always remember Him

In April 1830 the Lord commanded the members of his newly restored church to "meet together often to partake of bread and wine in the remembrance of the Lord Jesus" (D&C 20:75). This was the same instruction he gave when he introduced this ordinance nearly two thousand years ago. Luke writes:

"And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19).

When we partake of the sacrament, we witness unto God the Eternal Father that we "do always remember" his Son (D&C 20:77, 79; 3 Nephi 18:7, 11). Each Sabbath day millions of Latter-day Saints make this promise. What does it mean to "always remember" our Savior?

To remember means to keep in memory. In the scriptures, it often means to keep a person in memory, together with associated emotions like love, loyalty, or gratitude. The stronger the

emotion, the more vivid and influential the memory. Here are some examples:

1. Most of us have the clearest memories of our mortal parents, who gave us birth and nurtured us through childhood. This kind of memory does not dim with the passing years, but with wisdom and perspective becomes ever more meaningful. As I grow older, I think more frequently of my father and my mother. I will always remember them.

2. Shortly before my wife was to give birth to our first child, we learned that the baby must be born by cesarean section. I was then a student at Brigham Young University, going to school full time and working almost full time. From my meager earnings, a little over \$1.00 an hour, we had saved enough money for the hospital and doctor bills, but nothing in our plans or emotions had prepared us for this shocking announcement. We scarcely knew what a cesarean birth was, and we feared the worst.

A few days later we faced our ordeal. After what seemed an eternity, I stood at a window in the hospital hallway, looking into a basket containing our

firstborn. The joy of seeing her and knowing that my beloved companion had survived the operation was inexpressible. As I experienced that moment, I became aware of a stranger standing beside me. He introduced himself as Dr. N. Frederick Hicken, the surgeon who had come from Salt Lake City to perform the operation. His presence reminded me that a surgeon's fee had not been in our plans, and I began to ask him if I could pay his fee over a period of time. "Don't worry about that, young man," he said in a kindly way. "This is one from the Hickens to the Oakses." Before I could stammer a thank-you, he was gone.

I was filled with wonder at this unexpected gift. Our benefactor must have known my father, a young medical doctor who died when I was a boy. He must have given us this gift because of something my father had done. I marveled at the goodness of this man who had come to us in our crisis and had, without recompense, used his powers to preserve the lives of those I loved. The emotion of that moment made the memory indelible. The name of that doctor is precious to me. I will always remember him.

3. Some time ago, someone praised me for something I had done. Even as I received that compliment I knew I did not deserve it. The credit belonged to wise and wonderful teachers who had taught me what to do and how to do it. My teachers were memorable. I shudder to think what I would have lost if teachers had not helped me want to learn and then taught me what I needed to know. I will always be grateful to my teachers. I will always remember them.

By now you must surely realize that I have given these three examples because the reasons why I will always remember these persons are related to the reasons why we should always remember Jesus Christ: He is our Creator, our Redeemer, and our Teacher.

Our Creator, our Redeemer, our Teacher

Under the direction and according to the plan of God the Father, his Son

Jehovah "created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are" (3 Nephi 9:15). He gave us life in the beginning of this world, and through the power of his resurrection he will give each of us life again after we have died in mortality. Jesus Christ is the life of the world.

He is our Redeemer. According to the Father's plan, he provided the atoning sacrifice that can rescue us from the extremity of spiritual death. As a free-will offering, the Only Begotten Son of God came to earth and shed his blood for the remission of our sins (see D&C 27:2).

Our Creator and our Redeemer is also our Teacher. He taught us how to live. He gave us commandments, and if we follow them, we will receive blessings and happiness in this world and eternal life in the world to come.

And so we see that He whom we should always remember is He who gave us mortal life, He who showed us the way to a happy life, and He who redeems us so we can have immortality and eternal life.

If we keep our covenant that we will always remember him, we can always have his Spirit to be with us (see D&C 20:77, 79). That Spirit will testify of him, and it will guide us into truth.

His teachings and his example will guide and strengthen us in the way we should live. The effect was described in the words of the once popular song, "Try to remember, and if you remember, then follow" ("Try to Remember," words by Tom Jones).

I will now refer to some of these teachings we should remember and follow.

Serve as called

Follow is the word the Savior used when he called his helpers to the ministry. As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two fishermen, Simon Peter and his brother Andrew, at work in their vocation. "And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). "And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him" (Mark 1:18).

Here the Savior established a pattern for those he calls to do his work. Acting through his servants, for he has said that "by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same" (D&C 1:38), he calls us to take time from our daily activities to follow him and serve our fellowmen. Even the greatest among us should be the servant of all (see Mark 10:43-44). Those who always remember him will straightway assume and faithfully fulfill the responsibilities to which they are called by his servants.

Forgive others

Among the things we should remember about the Savior is that there are things we should forget about our fellowmen—the wrongs they have done us. "Lord," the Apostle Peter asked the Master, "how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" (Matthew 18:21). In response, Jesus taught the parable of the unforgiving servant. This man owed a large debt to his king. When he begged for mercy, the king was moved with compassion and forgave the debt. But when a fellow servant owed him a debt, this man took his debtor by the throat and cast him into prison until he should pay it. When the unforgiving servant was brought to judgment, the king said:

"Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?"

"And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

"So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you," Jesus concluded (Matthew 18:33-35; see also Matthew 6:14-15, 3 Nephi 13:14-15).

As the Lord has told us in modern revelation, "He that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin" (D&C 64:9). If we always remember our Savior, we will forgive and forget grievances against those who have wronged us.

Receive ordinances

At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus sought out John the Baptist, who was preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins (see Mark 1:4).

"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

"But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?"

"And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:13-15).

Those who seek to follow the Savior will understand the importance of the ordinance of baptism. The Lamb without Blemish saw fit to submit himself to baptism by one holding the authority of the priesthood in order to "fulfill all righteousness." How much more each of us has need of the cleansing and saving power of this ordinance and the other ordinances of the gospel.

As we always remember him, we should strive to assure that we and our family members and, indeed, all the sons and daughters of God everywhere follow our Savior into the waters of baptism. This reminds each of us of our duties to proclaim the gospel, perfect the Saints, and redeem the dead.

Endure afflictions

Remembering the Savior can also help us understand and endure the inevitable afflictions of this life. The Savior taught:

"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

"Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matthew 5:11-12).

Minister to the sick and the afflicted

When the Risen Lord appeared to the people on this continent, he taught them

and called leaders and gave them the authority of his priesthood. Next he healed the sick, the lame, the blind, and all others who were afflicted in any manner. Then "he commanded that their little children should be brought" (3 Nephi 17:11). And he "blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them" (v. 21).

As I remember this inspiring example, I also remember visits and letters I have had from persons caring for loved ones who are sick or who are afflicted with the infirmities of old age. I also remember loved ones grieving over little children with life-shortening or crippling physical or emotional disabilities. How their hearts ache for their little ones! How they need our love and support! I also remember the words, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40). Here our Savior gives an assurance of blessings for those who carry such burdens and a challenge for others who can lend them support.

Love neighbors

We should always remember how the Savior taught us to love and do good to one another. Loving and serving one another can solve so many problems!

I recently received a letter from a sister in another country. She wrote about the plight of single adult members of the Church. "Where do I fit in?" she asked. She longed to join in church social activities, but she said they were always designed for couples. She felt herself the "odd one out," forced by circumstances rather than choice to forgo these wholesome associations "rather than risk breaking up even numbers."

She wrote of the trauma of being single, especially when this resulted from a companion's desertion, divorce, or death. When she was a married woman, she said, "I never once gave much thought to the plight of the single sisters, except experiencing a kind of helpless pity for them." Now in that circumstance herself, she felt that the married sisters of her acquaintance tended to shun the sisters who were single. She asked me

what could be done to help the single adult members of the Church with what she described as their "feelings of rejection, nonacceptance, and noncaring by their fellow Church members." Judging from the letters we receive, I believe there are many thousands of single adult members, our brothers and sisters, with similar feelings.

Our Savior gave us the parable of the good shepherd who left the multitude and went out in search of a single sheep who was lost (see Luke 15:3-6). Doesn't that same principle require couples who enjoy loving companionship to go out of their way to include in their social circles brothers and sisters who have been deprived of that companionship? "Try to remember, and if you remember, then follow."

A few years ago I spoke by assignment to a chamber of commerce group in Salt Lake City. During a question-answer period, I listened to a fine woman who was not of our faith. She spoke movingly of the pain her children had experienced when they were shunned by LDS youth in school and social activities. More recently, a Utah convert to the Church has written of his concern at the way some non-LDS adults with good basic values come to Utah with high expectations for a life among good neighbors and then, as he wrote, "find themselves excluded at best and ostracized at worst."

Of course, there will be differences in the personal standards and social activities of faithful Latter-day Saints and members of other groups. But these differences are no excuse for ostracism, arrogance, or unkindness by LDS people. As my convert friend wrote, "I personally believe that Satan is as active among the Saints in turning them away from their neighbors as he is in turning disaffected persons against the Church."

As we covenant that we will always remember our Savior, we must not forget Jehovah's command to Israel:

"But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself" (Leviticus 19:34; see also Exodus 22:21, Deuteronomy 10:19).

We should always remember how Jesus commanded us to love our neighbor as ourselves. He illustrated that great teaching with the example of the Good Samaritan, who crossed the social barriers of his day to perform acts of kindness and mercy. Then the Savior said, "Go, and do thou likewise" (Luke 10:37).

A decade ago President Spencer W. Kimball said, "Let us fellowship the students from all nations as they come to our land, so that we, above all other people, treat them as brothers and sisters in true friendship, whether or not they are interested in the gospel" (Regional Representatives' seminar, 29 Sept. 1978).

That prophetic instruction should guide our relationships with all of our neighbors.

Much given, much required

As we remember our Lord and Savior, we should contemplate the great blessings we have as members of The

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We have been taught by the Lord Jesus Christ. We have been led by his prophets. We have received the sealing ordinances of his gospel. He has blessed us bounteously.

As we remember all of this, we should also remember the divine caution: "For of him unto whom much is given much is required" (D&C 82:3; see also Luke 12:48). That eternal principle of law and justice is a measure of what God expects of us.

May we always remember, as we covenant to do, is my humble prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us, and Elder Russell M. Nelson of this same council will be our concluding speaker.

Elder Russell M. Nelson

I echo the testimony of our beloved associate, Elder Dallin H. Oaks. With him and the other Brethren, I applaud the efforts of Latter-day Saints throughout the world who willingly serve in building the kingdom of God. Likewise, I respect those who quietly do their duty though deepening trials come their way. And I admire those who strive to be more worthy by overcoming a personal fault or who work to achieve a difficult goal.

"Impossible" challenges

I feel impressed to counsel those engaged in personal challenges to do right. In particular, my heart reaches out to those who feel discouraged by the magnitude of their struggle. Many shoulder heavy burdens of righteous responsibility which, on occasion, seem so difficult to bear. I have heard those challenges termed *impossible*.

As a medical doctor, I have known the face of adversity. I have seen much of death and dying, suffering and sorrow. I also remember the plight of students overwhelmed by their studies and of those striving to learn a foreign language. And I recall the fatigue and frustration felt by young parents with children in need. Amidst circumstances seemingly impossible, I have also experienced the joyous relief that comes when one's understanding is deepened by scriptural insight.

To teach His people, the Lord employs the unlikely

The Lord has often chosen to instruct His people in their times of trial. Scriptures show that some of His lasting lessons have been taught with examples terrible as war, commonplace as child-bearing, or obvious as hazards of deep water. His teachings are frequently based

on common understanding, but with uncommon results. Indeed, one might say that to teach His people, the Lord employs the unlikely.

Warfare, for example, has been known since time began. Even in that ugly circumstance, the Lord has helped those obedient to His counsel. Going into battle, all would assume the obvious advantage of outnumbering an enemy. But when God's disciple Gideon was leading an army against the Midianites, "the Lord said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many, . . . lest Israel vaunt themselves, . . . saying, Mine own hand hath saved me" (Judges 7:2).

So the Lord directed Gideon to reduce his numbers. He first decreased the troops from twenty-two thousand to ten thousand.

Then the Lord said to Gideon, "The people are yet too many" (Judges 7:4). So another reduction was made. Finally, only three hundred remained. Then the Lord delivered the victory to the outnumbered few (see Judges 7:5-25).

Even more widely known than war is an understanding of childbearing. Everyone "knows" that *old* women do not bear children. So upon whom did the Lord call to bear Abraham's birthright son? Sarah, at age ninety! When told this was to be, she asked a logical question: "Shall I [which am old] of a surety bear a child?" (Genesis 18:13). From heaven came this reply: "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" (Genesis 18:14).

So decreed, she gave birth to Isaac, to carry the crucial Abrahamic covenant into the second generation (see Genesis 26:1-4, 24).

Later, for one of the most important events ever to occur, the other extreme was chosen. As all knew that an elderly woman could not bear children, it was just as obvious that a virgin could not have children. But Isaiah had made this prophetic utterance:

"The Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).

When Mary was notified of her sacred responsibility, the announcing

angel reassured, "For with God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1:37).

The expression *deep water* means danger! That very hazard challenged the Israelites led by Moses at the Red Sea (see Exodus 14). Later, they were led by Joshua to the river Jordan at flood time (see Joshua 3). In each instance, deep water was divinely divided to allow the faithful to reach their destination safely. To teach His people, the Lord employs the unlikely.

Challenges of the Restoration

Turning to our day, have you ever wondered why the Master waited so long to inaugurate the promised "restitution of all things" (Acts 3:21)? Any competitor knows the disadvantage of allowing an opponent to get too far ahead. Wouldn't the work of the restoration of the Church have been easier if begun earlier?

Suppose for a moment you are a member of a team. The coach beckons you from the bench and says: "You are to enter this contest. I not only want you to win; you shall win. But the going will be tough. The score at this moment is 1,143,000,000 to six, and you are to play on the team with the six points!"

That large number was the approximate population of the earth in the year 1830 when the restored church of Jesus Christ was officially organized with six members (see James Avery Joyce, sel., *World Population Basic Documents*, 4 vols. [Dobbs Ferry, New York: Oceana Publications, Inc., 1976], 4:2214). The setting was remote and rural. By standards of the world, its leaders were deemed to be unlearned. Their followers seemed so ordinary. But with them, the work was begun. Assignments had been revealed:

- The gospel was to be preached to every kindred, nation, tongue, and people.
- Ordinary folk were to become Saints.
- Redemptive work was to be done for all who had ever lived.

The great dispensation of the latter days had commenced, and they were the ones to usher it forth!

Furthermore, the Prophet Joseph Smith was unjustly held in the unspeakable isolation of a distant prison. In such obscurity, then and there, he was told by the Lord that “the ends of the earth shall inquire after thy name” (D&C 122:1).

If any tasks ever deserved the label *impossible*, those would seem to qualify. But, in fact, our Lord had spoken: “With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26; see also Mark 10:27, Luke 18:27). To teach His people, the Lord employs the unlikely.

A century and a half later, the burdening baton of that opportunity has now been passed to us. We are children of the noble birthright, who must carry on in spite of our foredetermined status to be broadly outnumbered and widely opposed. Challenges lie ahead for the Church and for each member divinely charged toward self-improvement and service.

How is it possible to achieve the “impossible”? Learn and obey the teachings of God. From the holy scriptures, heaven-sent lift will be found for heaven-sent duties. To so achieve, at least three basic scriptural themes loom repeatedly as requirements.

Faith helps us achieve the “impossible”

The foremost requisite is *faith*. It is the first principle of the gospel (see Articles of Faith 1:4). In his epistle to the Hebrews, Paul so taught. He concluded that by faith the great deeds of Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, and others were accomplished (see Hebrews 11:4–34).

Prophets on the American hemisphere similarly taught the fundamental importance of faith. Moroni said it included things “hoped for and not seen” and then warned his skeptics, “Dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith” (Ether 12:6). Then he spoke of leaders whose faith preceded their miraculous deeds, including Alma, Amulek, Nephi, Lehi, Ammon, the brother of

Jared, and the three who were promised that they should not taste of death (see Ether 12:13–20).

The Lord personally taught this truth to his disciples: “If ye have faith,” He said, “nothing shall be impossible unto you” (Matthew 17:20).

Faith is nurtured through knowledge of God. It comes from prayer and feasting upon the words of Christ through diligent study of the scriptures.

Focus helps us achieve the “impossible”

The second requisite I have classified as *focus*. Imagine, if you will, a pair of powerful binoculars. Two separate optical systems are joined together with a gear to focus two independent images into one three-dimensional view. To apply this analogy, let the scene on the left side of your binoculars represent *your perception* of your task. Let the picture on the right side represent the *Lord's perspective* of your task—the portion of His plan He has entrusted to you. Now, connect your system to His. By mental adjustment, fuse your focus. Something wonderful happens. Your vision and His are now the same. You have developed an “eye single to the glory of God” (D&C 4:5; see also Mormon 8:15). With that perspective, look upward—above and beyond mundane things about you. The Lord said, “Look unto me in every thought” (D&C 6:36). That special vision will also help clarify your wishes when they may be a bit fuzzy and out of focus with God's hopes for your divine destiny. Indeed, the precise challenge you regard now as “impossible” may be the very refinement you need, in His eye.

Recently I visited the home of a man terminally ill. The stake president introduced me to the man's family. His wife demonstrated such focus when she asked for a blessing for her dying husband—not for healing, but for peace, not for a miracle, but for ability to abide to the end. She could see from an eternal viewpoint, not merely from the perspective of one weighted with the responsibilities of her husband's day-to-day care.

Elsewhere, a mother with focus nurtures her son, crippled for the whole of this life. Daily she thanks her Heavenly Father for the privilege of laboring in love with a child for whom mortality's vale of tears will be mercifully brief. Her focus is fixed on eternity. With celestial sight, trials impossible to change become possible to endure.

Strength and courage help us achieve the "impossible"

A third theme in the scriptures requisite for significant accomplishment is difficult to summarize in one word, so I shall link two to describe it—*strength* and *courage*. Repeatedly, scriptures yoke these attributes of character together, especially when difficult challenges are to be conquered (see Deuteronomy 31:6, 7, 23; Joshua 1:6, 7, 9, 18; 10:25; 1 Chronicles 22:13, 28:20; 2 Chronicles 32:7; Psalms 27:14, 31:24; Alma 43:43, 53:20).

Perhaps this is more easily illustrated than defined. Our pioneer forefathers are good examples. They sang, "Gird up your loins; fresh courage take" ("Come, Come, Ye Saints," *Hymns* [1985], no. 30). They feared no toil and no labor. Among them were Johan Andreas Jensen and his wife, Petra, who left their native Norway in 1863. Their family included six-week-old tiny twin daughters. As handcarts were pulled in their rugged journey, one of those little girls died along the way. The child who survived grew up to become my Grandmother Nelson!

There are pioneers in the Church today just as strong and courageous. Recently, I interviewed a married couple three days after their release as full-time missionaries in a large metropolis. "We are converts," they said. "We joined the Church ten years ago. Even though we just completed a mission, we want to go again! But this time, we would like to volunteer for a more difficult assignment. We want to teach and serve children of God who live in remote areas of the world!"

As I countered with the grim realities of their request, they continued their expression of commitment. "Our three children and their spouses will assist with our expenses. Two of those couples have joined the Church already, and the third is equally supportive. Please send us among humble people who love the Lord and desire to know that His church has again been restored to the earth." Needless to say, their petition was gratefully heard, and now they have received their second call to missionary service.

Strength and courage also characterize another couple. As faithful members of the Church, they had always upheld its doctrines, including the twelfth article of faith. When their country went to war, military conscription called the dutiful husband away from his wife before either had learned she was to bear their child. He was captured by enemy troops and taken as a prisoner of war. Months elapsed. Their baby came. Still no word to know whether the new father was alive. A year after his capture, he was permitted to write to his wife.

Meanwhile, though countries apart, they each remained faithful to covenants made at baptism. Even though clothed in prisoner's stripes and able to speak the language of his captors' country only in a limited way, he became Sunday School superintendent of the branch. He baptized four fellow prisoners during their confinement. Three years after the war ended, he returned home to his wife and a son he had never seen. Later, he served for ten years as the first stake president of his country. Now he is a member of the presidency of one of our temples! His wife stands faithfully beside him in the privilege of that sacred assignment.

With God all things are possible

You who may be momentarily disheartened, remember, life is not meant to be easy. Trials must be borne and grief endured along the way. As you remember that "with God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1:37), know that He is your Father. You are a son or daughter created

in His image, entitled through your worthiness to receive revelation to help with your righteous endeavors. You may take upon you the holy name of the Lord. You can qualify to speak in the sacred name of God (see D&C 1:20). It matters not that giants of tribulation torment you. Your prayerful access to help is just as real as when David battled his Goliath (see 1 Samuel 17).

Foster your faith. Fuse your focus with an eye single to the glory of God. "Be strong and courageous" (2 Chronicles 32:7), and you will be given power and protection from on high. "For I will go before your face," the Lord declared. "I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up" (D&C 84:88).

The great latter-day work of which we are a part shall be accomplished. Prophecies of the ages shall be fulfilled. "For with God all things are possible" (Mark 10:27), I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

We remind the brethren of the general priesthood meeting which will convene here in the Tabernacle this evening at 6:00 P.M.

The nationwide CBS Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those desiring to attend this broadcast must be in their seats no later than 9:15 A.M.

We call your attention to the fact that tomorrow morning at 2:00 A.M. we change from mountain standard time to mountain daylight saving time. Please move your clocks ahead one hour before you retire so that you will be here on time tomorrow.

We express gratitude to the Ricks College Centennial Choir for the beautiful music which we have heard this afternoon.

The choir will now sing in closing, "Where Can I Turn for Peace?" Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder H. Verlan Andersen of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Where Can I Turn for Peace?"

Elder H. Verlan Andersen offered the benediction.

GENERAL PRIESTHOOD SESSION

The general priesthood session, the third session of the 158th Annual General Conference, convened in the Tabernacle at 6:00 P.M. on Saturday, April 2, 1988. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for this session was provided by a men's choir from the Ogden and Mount Ogden regions. The choir was directed by Jerry F. Simon, and Clay Christiansen was at the organ.

President Monson opened the meeting with the following remarks:

President Thomas S. Monson

Brethren, good evening. President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked that I conduct this general priesthood session. We extend our love and best wishes to all of the brethren participating in this session.

These services are being relayed by closed-circuit and satellite transmission to holders of the priesthood gathered in the

Assembly Hall, the BYU Marriott Center, and locations in many countries around the world. We note that Elders Derek A. Cuthbert and Devere Harris are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall, and Elders Robert E. Wells and Jack H. Goaslind are seated on the stand in the BYU Marriott Center.

For the information of the brethren in outlying areas, we announce that at the session this afternoon, Robert Edward Sackley and Larry Lionel Kendrick were sustained as members of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and that Sister Michaelene P. Grassli was sustained as president of the General Primary, with Betty Jo Nelson Jepsen as her first counselor and Ruth Broadbent Wright as her second counselor. Sister Dwan J. Young was released as general Primary president to accompany her husband, who has been called to serve as president of the Canada Calgary Mission.

All of you are special guests tonight, but we are pleased to have in attendance in the Tabernacle Brother Michael Smith, a member of the All-American Academic basketball team, and Brother Brian Taylor, who was a teammate of his on the BYU WAC championship team.

The singing during this session will be furnished by a men's choir from the Ogden and Mount Ogden regions under the direction of Brother Jerry F. Simon with Brother Clay Christiansen at the organ.

We shall begin by the choir singing "The Iron Rod." Following the singing, Elder Hugh W. Pinnock, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "The Iron Rod."
Elder Hugh W. Pinnock offered the invocation.

President Monson

The choir will now favor us with that beautiful number, the favorite of President Benson's, "How Great Thou Art." Following the choir number, Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will speak to us.

The choir sang "How Great Thou Art."

Elder James E. Faust

Responsibility to the sisters

It is an awesome and humbling responsibility to address the priesthood of the Church. I feel impressed, brethren, to speak to the men and the boys who hold the priesthood of Almighty God concerning our responsibility to the faithful sisters of the Church. You might wonder why I would want to address this subject. I wonder myself, but I am prompted to, and feel there is a need. I believe that we as members of the Church, and as the holders of the priesthood, will never achieve our potential without having in our lives the blessings of the unique quali-

ties of our mothers, wives, sisters, daughters, and all of the good women of the Church.

Perhaps you have all heard the story, and it is just a story, of the insensitive man who held two season tickets to the basketball games at the local university. His wife died, and a day or two later he went to the game. The seat previously occupied by his wife was empty. Someone said, "Those seats of yours must be very expensive. Couldn't you find a member of the family to come and sit in your wife's seat?" The man answered, "No, they couldn't come. They've all gone to her funeral."

I fear that we brethren often get far too engrossed in the apparent importance of our own activities and relegate the less visible contributions of the sisters to a lesser role. They serve very quietly and effectively, often unnoticed, unrecognized, and unappreciated.

Husbands, love your wives

The priesthood places upon the fathers the responsibility of being the head of the family and the home. What does being the head of the family mean? It is a priesthood power, and the Doctrine and Covenants, section 121, makes it clear that all priesthood responsibilities must be exercised "only by persuasion, . . . by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned" (D&C 121:41). Holding the priesthood does not mean that a man is a power-broker, or that he sits on a throne, dictating in macho terms, or that he is superior in any way. Rather, he is a leader by authority of example. Paul's counsel to the Ephesians included, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25). As Christ lifts us all, so must we, rather than put down women or anyone.

Nowhere does the doctrine of this church declare that men are superior to women. Paul said to the Corinthians, "Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 11:11). Each brings his or her own separate and unique strengths to the family and the Church. Women are not just cooks, stewards of our homes, or servants. They are much more. They are the enrichment of humanity.

Young men, learn to appreciate women

It is most important that you Aaronic Priesthood holders learn what strengths you have as men. Possibly you were foreordained to great priesthood callings. You need to learn that these masculine strengths are great, noble, and God-given; however, they also have some

limitations. Because of these limitations, it is equally important to learn how the influence of good women in our lives can complement these strengths and overcome these limitations. As you walk on the way to eternity, it is important to gain some understanding and appreciation for the wonderful endowments and callings God has given uniquely to women.

The highest place of honor

I wonder if we really understand the fulness of these queenly endowments. If we could recognize the true greatness of these women, we would not treat them as we sometimes do. The world often uses and abuses women. We holders of the priesthood should honor good women in and out of the Church as true sisters, not as objects and sources of service or pleasure. Our consideration for women should spring from esteem for the daughters of Zion and an awareness of their true identity more than from a concern with their functions and roles.

President Ezra Taft Benson has stated, "Man is at his best when complemented by a good woman's natural influence" (in *Woman* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1979], p. 69).

In 1935 the First Presidency stated, "The true spirit of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints gives to woman the highest place of honor in human life" (James R. Clark, comp., *Messengers of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-75], 6:5). This has been confirmed by President Heber J. Grant: "Without the wonderful work of the women I realize that the Church would have been a failure" (*Gospel Standards*, comp. G. Homer Durham [Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1941], p. 150).

Influence of good women

You young men who hold the Aaronic Priesthood need to know that you cannot achieve your potential without the influence of good women, particularly your mother and, in a few years, a good

wife. But it is too soon for you deacons and teachers to think seriously about dating. Dating, along with temple marriage, will come at the appropriate season in your life. You have to be elders to go to the temple.

In preparation for that surpassing experience, it is important for you to learn now to appreciate the special gifts of the good sisters of the Church, whom God has so abundantly endowed with talents. Your eternal helpmate will gently hold you to your potential. She will give loving and thoughtful encouragement, as well as comfort and discipline. She will also lift you up when you are down and bring you back to earth when you are puffed up. She will bless your life in countless ways. As President Kimball said, "Brethren, we cannot be exalted without our wives. There can be no heaven without righteous women" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1979, p. 7; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, p. 5).

Creation's masterpiece

In recent years a debate has raged about the equality of the sexes. Women are not in any sense lesser creations than men. In fact, they lose something when they are compared to men. President David O. McKay stated, "A beautiful, modest, gracious woman is creation's masterpiece" (*Gospel Ideals* [Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1953], p. 449). Daniel Defoe, the great English writer, stated, "A woman of sense and manners is the finest and most delicate part of God's creation, the glory of her Maker. . . . He gave the best gift either God could bestow or man receive" ("The Education of Women," in *England in Literature*, ed. Robert C. Pooley [Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1963], pp. 261-62).

Surely the secret citadel of women's inner strength is their spirituality. In this they equal and even surpass men, as they do in faith, morality, and commitment when truly converted to the gospel. They have "more trust in the Lord [and] more hope in his word" ("More Holiness Give Me," *Hymns* [1985], no. 131). This inner

spiritual sense seems to give them a certain resilience to cope with sorrow, trouble, and uncertainty.

Respect women

Any form of physical or mental abuse to any woman is not worthy of any priesthood holder. President Gordon B. Hinckley has stated, "I feel likewise that it ill becomes any man who holds the priesthood of God to abuse his wife in any way, to demean or injure or take undue advantage of the woman who is the mother of his children, the companion of his life, and his companion for eternity if he has received that greater blessing" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1982, p. 112; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, p. 77). This, of course, means verbal as well as physical abuse.

A husband should always try to treat his wife with the greatest courtesy and respect, holding her in the highest esteem. He should speak to her in a kind and a soft manner, showing his love by word and deed. As she feels this love and tenderness she will mirror it and return it tenfold.

I believe that of the two parties in a male-female relationship, the bearer of the priesthood has the greater duty to see that the commandments of God, the standards of the Church, and parental authority are honored. Likewise, when male and female violate these commandments, I believe the priesthood holder is generally more blameworthy because he has been entrusted with the great, righteous power to act in the name of God. One who violates this trust demeans both this ultimate power and himself and seriously injures the woman who has his confidence.

Responsibilities while dating

When you boys become priests and elders and begin to date, you need to know that the best place to date is at church and church-related activities. As you date, you will be entrusted by a girl's parents with their most cherished blessing. You will have the responsibility to protect not only her well-being, but also

her honor, even above your own safety. One of the duties of manhood is to safeguard womanhood. When you become a parent, you cannot shirk this responsibility to be concerned for the dating of your own children.

Before my first mission, when I was attending the university, I invited a lovely young lady to attend the university's junior prom dinner dance. I had dated this fine girl a few times before. Every time we came home from a date, her father would be in his big leather chair, fully dressed, waiting for us.

As I went to pick her up the evening of the dance at the university, her father said, "What time will you be home?" I responded, "Sir, as you know, this is a special dinner-dance at the university; the dinner is scheduled to be served after the dance, so we would like to stay out later than usual." I added, "You may not wish to wait up for us that late." He simply said, "I will be waiting for you." The dance was special, but the dinner service was terribly slow. I soon developed indigestion. The longer it went, the worse I felt. When we got back to her home, I found the father had kept his promise. There in his big leather chair was this wonderful, concerned family patriarch waiting for one of his fine daughters to be safely back under his own roof. He said something like this, "What keeps you out so late, James?"

The covenant of marriage

It is a grave responsibility and a transcendent blessing when a man and a woman make vows and covenants and receive the ordinances of marriage. When within the covenant of marriage a man and a woman invoke the great powers of creation, they literally become partners with God in creating new human life. Thereafter a man has a sacred obligation of support, care, and protection for his helpmate and the children he has fathered.

Women's roles

In my lifetime the women's role in administering care and mercy has changed. They seem to have less time to magnify the feelings of charity and benevolence that the Prophet Joseph said come naturally to them (see *History of The Church*, 4:605). Life has become harder and more complex; in some ways, it demands more of all of us. It has become more difficult for mothers and wives to meet all of the challenges and expectations that are placed upon them. Our seemingly insatiable appetites for material things suggest that probably these demands could very well increase in the future.

If our good women are to continue in their primary roles as nurturers, teachers, homemakers, and managers, they will need more support and help in order for them to find time to give compassionate service to their families and others. If this help is withheld, our lives, our homes, the Church, and the world will be the poorer, for so much love, gentleness, and understanding will be lost.

You young men have had your mothers to lovingly nurse you when you were ill, wash your clothes, cook your meals, transport you, wait on you, and generally respond to your needs. All my life, a good woman, either my mother or my wife, has prepared most of my nourishment, kept my clothes clean, and provided a loving atmosphere at home. They did this willingly because of their great desire to show their love through service. But marriage and mothering is more than the routine of washing socks, making beds, and putting food on the table. It is also not being taken for granted; it is being appreciated and being appropriately thanked. It also means being helped.

A married woman often has many roles, which may include wife, grandmother, mother, daughter, nurturer, executive, caretaker, friend, sister, and so forth. Even with the additional demands placed upon women in our day, men generally have not responded with commensurate helpfulness. Recent

research indicates that men have increased their helping in the home only twenty-seven additional minutes per week. The conclusion is, "Women are still the primary caretakers and managers" (Mary Lou Simms, "Women Learning to Let Go of Roles—And Guilt, Too," *Deseret News*, 25 Feb. 1988, sec. C, p. 3). They also carry so much of the burdens of the kingdom.

President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., referring to the faithful women of the early Church, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children, stated: "From that time until now woman has comforted and nursed the Church. She has borne more than half the burdens, she has made more than half the sacrifices, she has suffered the most of the heartaches and sorrows" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1940, p. 21).

The highest, holiest service

The First Presidency of this church has said: "Motherhood is near to divinity. It is the highest, holiest service to be assumed by mankind" (*Messages of the First Presidency*, 6:178). The priesthood cannot work out its destiny, nor can God's purposes be fulfilled, without our

helpmates. Mothers perform a labor the priesthood cannot do. For this supernal gift of life the priesthood should have love unbounded for the mothers of their children. Men should give them honor, gratitude, reverence, respect, and praise. A man who fails to gratefully acknowledge his debt to his own mother who gave him life is insensitive to the Holy Spirit. I wish to acknowledge to both my mother and my wife a debt which is so great I shall never be able to repay it.

In conclusion, I wish to repeat that I do not believe that God's purposes on earth will ever be achieved without the influence, strength, love, support, and special gifts of the elect women of God. They are entitled to our deepest veneration, our fullest appreciation, and our most profound respect. I believe angels attend them in their motherly ministry. That we may so honor them I pray humbly in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to listen to Bishop Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric.

Bishop Henry B. Eyring

Value of consistent effort

From the islands of the Pacific to the highlands of South America, I've seen boys working to turn dreams into reality. In fact, I've seen it so often that it merges into one image, one picture. It's of a small boy, maybe nine or ten, in shorts, barefoot, and with a torn shirt. He's on a patch of dirt, alone, and he's looking down at a white-and-black-checkered ball. He takes a step toward it, his leg swings through, and the ball shoots off, about seven feet above the ground, where it might zip past a goalie into the net—except there's no goalie and no net;

there's just the boy and the ball. And then he runs to the ball, puts it in place with his foot, and kicks it. And he does it over and over again.

You don't know where he lives, but you know that he'll take the ball home with him and that more than likely he keeps it near the place he sleeps. He sees it when he gets up and when he goes to bed. He may even dream about that ball shooting toward the goal.

You know that because you've done something like it yourself. It may have been a basketball. I can remember looking down at the ball in my hands on one freezing winter day and seeing my bloody

fingerprints on the ball. I'd been outside so long that the cold had cracked the skin on my fingertips, but my mind and my eye were on the orange rim. I can still remember it, including the chipped paint on the front edge of the rim where you'd lock your eye and know the ball would fall just past that spot into the dirt-stained net. I can still remember the mark on the driveway I'd dribble to and know I was at the top of the key. I'd spin and jump for that last second shot, with the score tied. And I'd do it again and again, sometimes for hours, feeling neither time nor the cold.

You may have learned endurance playing a trumpet, or throwing a football, or riding a bucking horse, or drawing a picture. But you learned what we all did. Effort only "now and then" didn't take you far. The dreams that turned into reality stuck with you nearly all the time. You worked at them, either in fact or in your thoughts, every day and almost every hour.

"Watch over the church always"

It shouldn't surprise us, then, that the Lord has said to you and to me, "Watch over the church always, and be with and strengthen them" (D&C 20:53). God loves us, and he intends for us to become like him. He doesn't ask us now to worry about all his children in all the world, as he does. Instead, he begins with a call to watch over just a few families, just a few people. But he knows that to visit thirty minutes every month with the same lesson for every family would never produce the progress he wants for us.

And so he commands, "Watch over [them] always, and be with and strengthen them." You can't be with them twenty-four hours a day. That would be "always," wouldn't it? But they can be in your heart always. If you'll think about the families you visit, those of you who are blessed to be called home teachers, you know the help they need is beyond your casual effort.

In my experience, I've been assigned to watch over people who struggled with divorce, with financial

ruin, with children who would not respond to all that parents had done, or with disease that would not respond to all that faith and medicine could do. I've gone to a home where little twin girls were sent to the screen door to tell us that Mommy and Daddy were sleeping and couldn't we come another time.

I knew in my heart that effort "now and then" wasn't enough, that "going out home teaching" or even "giving a good lesson" wouldn't do it. God called us to watch over and help people in all their struggles for physical and spiritual well-being. He called us to help by the Spirit. He called us to teach by the Spirit. He called us to live what we teach. He called us to bear testimony. He called us to love them.

Now, he didn't make it that hard just to test you. He gave you so high a calling because he loves you. He wants you home again, and to get there you have to become like him. So he gives you a calling that can only be done with persistence and endurance.

Prepare to go home teaching

Let's talk tonight as if you and I were companions. I know we may not have gotten together often to prepare, but let's do it tonight. Let's imagine that you and I are at my house. You've come over for a few minutes, and we're sitting at my kitchen table.

We won't talk about home teaching visits or lessons first. We'll talk about our families for a while. We'll find that some of them are struggling. And that will humble us, knowing that the Lord is counting on us. We might talk about what we know the bishop and the Relief Society and some neighbors are doing to help. And we might talk about some things we have done and could do.

Then, we'll get around to talking about one family and what we might teach them. I'll push the April *Ensign* across the table to you, opened to the First Presidency message from President Benson. You look down and see the title, "Seek the Spirit of the Lord." That looks like the perfect lesson, doesn't it? There's only the mom and dad at home. They

worry about her health problems, wondering if they're doing all they can and should. On top of that, they probably aren't sleeping much because of their son. He's still in the same town, but he's living with his friends. He won't be there when we call, but he'll be in their minds, and what he's doing and not doing will be tearing at their hearts. They'll be wondering what they can do for him. If people ever wanted and needed the Spirit of the Lord, these folks do.

Let's agree that we'll both prepare the lesson. But I think they have such respect for you that you ought to take the lead. We can't do them any good unless the Holy Ghost is with us, so I guess we'd better do more than prepare the lesson. We'd better prepare ourselves.

Be worthy to receive the Holy Ghost

First, the Holy Ghost can't be with us unless we're clean. I admire the way you try to watch what you say and do, even what you think. I guess when the Lord tells us to watch over the Church, that means watching over ourselves too. Let's read this quotation from President George Q. Cannon I keep handy. And let's agree that we'll try to follow it:

"Some people have an idea that because they have entered the waters of baptism and repented of their sins then that is an end of it. What a mistake! We need to have this spirit of repentance continually; we need to pray to God to show us our conduct every day. Every night before we retire to rest we should review the thoughts, words and acts of the day and then repent of everything we have done that is wrong or that has grieved the Holy Spirit. Live this way every day and endeavor to progress every day" (*Gospel Truth*, comp. Jerreld L. Newquist, 2 vols. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1957], 1:164).

Pray about the family's needs

Second, let's pray both for forgiveness and to get answers about what to do for the family. It would help if, when we go, we tell them that the Holy Ghost can

guide them; it has already guided us to do something for them. If we pray and then feel that prompting and act on it, what we do may be more important than anything we say. Maybe our finding out how to help them will lead them to find out what more they can do for their son.

Let's agree that we'll include both the parents and their children in our personal prayers, and we'll plead for the Holy Ghost to help us teach. You remember the promise, "And the Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith; and if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach" (D&C 42:14). That really fits us, doesn't it?

Study the scriptures

Third, we're going to be teaching a gospel principle, so we'd better study and ponder the scriptures. You remember that the Lord said, "Teach the principles of my gospel, which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon, in the which is the fullness of the gospel" (D&C 42:12). I know you've been reading the Book of Mormon regularly. So have I. Why don't we think about our family and the gifts of the Spirit while we read? If we do, I'm sure that we'll understand and feel some things that are new to us. And we'll teach and bear testimony in their home with more power.

It won't hurt to bear testimony from our own experience that we felt the Spirit while we read the scriptures. Then they may try reading and pondering. If they do, they'll get the prompting of the Holy Ghost for themselves. And that will help them more than just feeling it when we're there.

Then we'll have a prayer together before you leave. In the next day or two we may stop by the house to do something for the family before we get there for a lesson.

Help others taste the gospel fruit

The night we teach them, things will seem about as they have before, with a few exceptions. An idea and a scripture will come into your mind as you teach. You'll bear testimony of the Savior with

more feeling. Perhaps we will both find our hearts drawn out to the people more. And they may linger at the door a little longer than usual as we go.

Maybe only some of that will happen. But that won't discourage us. We thought it would take repeated, steady effort. The desire of our hearts is to help others taste the fruit of the gospel. We know it won't come quickly or easily after a single effort, for them or for us. But in that visit, or in one that will come later, you will feel a warmth in your heart and truth will come into your mind. And that will bring you joy. It may go away, but you will remember it. Then you will be able to imagine what it would be like to have the Holy Ghost for your constant companion in this life and to feel the love and approval of the Savior and your Father in Heaven for eternity.

Alma knew what having that desire in our hearts and visualizing it with faith would mean to us. It would keep us going when the going was hard. Here's what he said: "And thus, if ye will not nourish the word, looking forward with an eye of faith to the fruit thereof, ye can never pluck of the fruit of the tree of life.

"But if ye will nourish the word, yea, nourish the tree as it beginneth to grow, by your faith with great diligence, and with patience, looking forward to the fruit thereof, it shall take root; and behold it shall be a tree springing up unto everlasting life" (Alma 32:40-41).

By the power of the Holy Ghost and with the eye of faith, we have glimpsed and we can look forward to the fruit of the gospel. That is the desire of our hearts. And wanting it will give us the power to keep going, with great diligence and patience.

The little boy in my memory keeps kicking that ball, over and over again. I can't see a goalpost or a goalie. I can't hear the roar of the crowd. But in his mind, he can. And so he kicks the ball, over and over again.

Home teaching requires whole hearts

I pray that we will take the great opportunity God has given us to prepare ourselves. He has trusted us as watchmen of the souls of his children. He has given us a way to look forward to the fruit of the gospel by giving us a calling that requires our whole hearts. As the boy's dreams of kicking the winning goal draw him back to persistent practice with that ball, so our vision of the fruits of the gospel will draw us back to persistent repentance and prayer and study and service.

I pray that the Lord may say of us, as Alma said of his son Shiblon: "And now, my son, I trust that I shall have great joy in you, because of your steadiness and your faithfulness unto God; for as you have commenced in your youth to look to the Lord your God, even so I hope that you will continue in keeping his commandments; for blessed is he that endureth to the end" (Alma 38:2).

I bear testimony that in time and in eternity God will bless our steadiness as we invite his children to come unto Christ. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

He who has just spoken to us is Bishop Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric. President Benson has suggested that I next speak to you.

President Thomas S. Monson

A royal priesthood

David declares in one of his beautiful and moving psalms, "O Lord our

Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! . . .

"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" (Psalm 8:1, 3-4).

Job, that righteous man of old, joined in the question when he asked, "What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him?" (Job 7:17).

One need not grope for answers to these penetrating questions when in your presence here in the historic Tabernacle or with you in the many meeting places throughout the world where you have assembled. "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation" (1 Peter 2:9). "Ye . . . are . . . a spiritual house, an holy priesthood" (1 Peter 2:5).

We can make a difference

As bearers of the priesthood, we have been placed on earth in troubled times. We live in a complex world with currents of conflict everywhere to be found. Political machinations ruin the stability of nations, despots grasp for power, and segments of society seem forever downtrodden, deprived of opportunity and left with a feeling of failure.

We who have been ordained to the priesthood of God can make a difference. When we qualify for the help of the Lord, we can build boys, we can mend men, we can accomplish miracles in His holy service. Our opportunities are without limit.

Be worthy to obtain heavenly help

Though the task looms large, we are strengthened by the truth: "The greatest force in this world today is the power of God as it works through man." If we are on the Lord's errand, we are entitled to the Lord's help. That divine help, however, is predicated upon our worthiness. To sail safely the seas of mortality, to perform a human rescue mission, we need the guidance of that eternal mariner—even the great Jehovah. We reach out, we reach up, to obtain heavenly help.

Are our reaching hands clean? Are our yearning hearts pure? Looking backward in time through the pages of history,

we glean a lesson on worthiness from the words of the dying King Darius.

"Darius . . . through the proper rites had been recognized as legitimate King of Egypt; his rival Alexander had been declared the legitimate Son of Amon—he too was Pharaoh. . . . Alexander found the defeated Darius on the point of death in his tent, and . . . laid his hands upon his head to heal him, commanding him to arise and resume his kingly power, and concluding his blessing: 'I swear unto thee, Darius, by all the gods that I do these things truly and without faking.' [Darius] replied with a gentle rebuke: 'Alexander my boy . . . do you think you can touch heaven with those hands of yours?'" (in Hugh Nibley, *Abraham in Egypt* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981], p. 192).

The harbor of forgiveness

An inspiring lesson is learned from a "Viewpoint" article which appeared recently in the *Church News* section of the *Deseret News*. May I quote:

"To some it may seem strange to see ships of many nations loading and unloading cargo along the docks at Portland, Ore. That city is 100 miles from the ocean. Getting there involves a difficult, often turbulent passage over the bar guarding the Columbia River and a long trip up the Columbia and Willamette rivers.

"But ship captains like to tie up at Portland. They know that as their ships travel the seas, a curious saltwater shellfish called a barnacle fastens itself to the hull and stays there for the rest of its life, surrounding itself with a rocklike shell. As more and more barnacles attach themselves, they increase the ship's drag, slow its progress, decrease its efficiency.

"Periodically, the ship must go into dry dock, where with great effort the barnacles are chiseled or scraped off. It's a difficult, expensive process that ties up the ship for days.

"But not if the captain can get his ship to Portland. Barnacles can't live in fresh water. There, in the sweet, fresh water

of the Willamette or Columbia, the barnacles loosen and fall away, and the ship returns to its task lightened and renewed.

"Sins are like those barnacles. Hardly anyone goes through life without picking up some. They increase the drag, slow our progress, decrease our efficiency. Unrepented, building up one on another, they can eventually sink us.

"In His infinite love and mercy, our Lord has provided a harbor where, through repentance, our barnacles fall away and are forgotten. With our souls lightened and renewed, we can go efficiently about our work and His" ("Harbor of Forgiveness," 30 Jan. 1988, p. 16).

Pioneers: models to follow

A loving Heavenly Father has provided for our guidance models to follow, men who made a difference in their own times. I choose to call these noble souls "pioneers." Webster defines a pioneer: "One who goes before, showing others the way to follow."

With faith as their moving power, they sailed upstream against the currents of doubt which surrounded them. We cannot help but be inspired in our efforts as we remember their examples.

From Nephi: "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded" (1 Nephi 3:7).

From Samuel: "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15:22).

From Paul: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16).

From Job: "I know that my redeemer liveth" (Job 19:25).

From Joseph: "I am calm as a summer's morning; I have a conscience void of offense towards God, and towards all men" (D&C 135:4).

Pioneers of today

These noble leaders made a difference in their own times. What about today? How about me?

The world felt the quickening pace of activity when President Spencer W.

Kimball declared, "We must lengthen our stride." He stepped forward and the Church followed.

When President Ezra Taft Benson warned that we had neglected the Book of Mormon and urged every member to read and study this sacred volume, new printing presses were required to produce more and more copies of the book, as boys and girls and men and women followed the prophet in his own reading and in his inspired declaration. Every day letters arrive at the President's office which testify to the enrichment of lives which comes from reading the Book of Mormon. They tell of families united, goals attained, and souls saved. Such is the power of a prophet.

We do not have a monopoly on goodness. There are God-fearing men and women in all nations who influence for good those with whom they associate. I think of the founder of Scouting, even Lord Baden-Powell, and those who teach and live the principles he advocated. Who can measure the far-reaching effect on human lives of the Scout Oath:

"On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight."

Impossible of calculation is the result for good when men and boys observe the Scout Law: trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.

Influence of personal testimonies

The influence of your personal testimonies is ever so far reaching. The Lord instructed, "The testimony which ye have borne is recorded in heaven for the angels to look upon; and they rejoice over you, and your sins are forgiven you" (D&C 62:3).

He also cautioned us, "With some I am not well pleased, for they will not open their mouths, but they hide the talent which I have given unto them, because of the fear of man" (D&C 60:2).

You never know when your turn will come to comply with the admonition of Peter to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15).

Some years ago I had the opportunity to address a business convention in Dallas, Texas, sometimes called "the city of churches." After the convention, I took a sightseeing bus ride about the city's suburbs. Our driver would comment, "On the left you see the Methodist church," or "There on the right is the Catholic cathedral."

As we passed a beautiful red brick building situated upon a hill, the driver exclaimed, "That building is where the Mormons meet." A lady from the rear of the bus asked, "Driver, can you tell us something more about the Mormons?" The driver steered the bus to the side of the road, turned about in his seat, and replied, "Lady, all I know about the Mormons is that they meet in that red brick building. Is there anyone on this bus who knows anything about the Mormons?"

I gazed at the expression on each person's face for some sign of recognition, some desire to comment. I found nothing—not a sign. Then I realized the truth of the statement, "When the time for decision arrives, the time for preparation is past." For the next fifteen minutes I had the privilege of sharing with others my testimony concerning The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The seeds of testimony frequently do not at once take root and flower. Bread cast upon the water returns, at times, only after many days.

I answered the ring of my telephone one evening to hear a voice ask, "Are you related to an Elder Monson who years ago served in the New England Mission?" I answered that such was not the case. The caller introduced himself as a Brother Leonardo Gambardella and then mentioned that an Elder Monson and an Elder Bonner called at his home long ago and bore their personal testimonies to him. He had listened but had done nothing further to apply their teachings. Subsequently he

moved to California where, after thirteen years, he again found the truth and was converted and baptized. Brother Gambardella then asked if there were a way he could reach these elders who had first visited with him, that he might express to them his profound gratitude for their testimonies, which had remained with him.

I checked the records. I located the elders. Can you imagine their surprise when, now married with families of their own, I telephoned them and told them the good news—even the culmination of their early efforts. They remembered Brother Gambardella and, at my suggestion, telephoned him to extend their congratulations and welcome him into the Church.

We can work miracles

You can make a difference. Whom the Lord calls, the Lord qualifies. This promise extends not only to missionaries, but also to home teachers, quorum leaders, presidents of branches, and bishops of wards. When we qualify ourselves by our worthiness, when we strive with faith nothing wavering to fulfill the duties appointed to us, when we seek the inspiration of the Almighty in the performance of our responsibilities, we can achieve the miraculous.

Brethren, let us hearken to the hymn "Improve the Shining Moments":

Time flies on wings of lightning;
We cannot call it back.
It comes, then passes forward
Along its onward track.

And if we are not mindful,
The chance will fade away,
For life is quick in passing.
'Tis as a single day.

(*Hymns* [1985], no. 226)

As we leave this general priesthood meeting, let us all determine to shed any barnacles of sin, to prepare for our time of opportunity, and to honor the priesthood we bear through the service we render, the lives we bless, and the souls we are privileged to help save. You are "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation" (1 Peter 2:9), and you can

make a difference. To these truths I testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet," following which President

Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, will speak to us.

The choir and congregation sang "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

President Gordon B. Hinckley

There are thousands of boys here in the Tabernacle tonight, and I think I would like to talk to you. Some of you are twelve years of age.

When I was twelve, two things of great significance occurred in my life.

Becoming a Boy Scout

I became a Boy Scout. We did not have the Cub Scout program then, and a boy had to be twelve to be a Scout. This was 1922, only nine years after the Church adopted the Scout program. I lived in a very large ward by today's standards. There were more than eleven hundred people in that ward. We had a large troop, and we met in the cultural hall of the old First Ward. We made a lot of noise. The floors were of hardwood; the walls were hard and smooth, and the sound bounced around them. Our Scoutmaster had a whistle which he blew frequently to get order.

I filled out an application and paid the fifty-cent registration fee, which seemed like a lot of money at the time. I learned the Scout motto: "Be Prepared." I learned the Scout slogan: "Do a Good Turn Daily." I learned the Scout Oath: "On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight."

I learned the Scout Law: "A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, reverent." (We said it just about that fast.) And when we recited the law, one of the boys always added, "A Scout is hungry." I think it was literally true. He came from a very large

family, and getting enough to eat was always a challenge.

Becoming a deacon

When I was twelve, I also became a deacon in the Aaronic Priesthood. My name was presented to the entire congregation of our ward. Everyone was asked to sustain me if they felt me worthy of the office. All hands in the large congregation went up. I was honored to think that all of the members of my ward raised their hands in my behalf.

Then two men, good and true and faithful—one of them my father—placed their hands upon my head and conferred upon me the Aaronic Priesthood and ordained me to the office of deacon. I did not have any oath, slogan, motto, or law to memorize in connection with this. But I did memorize section 13 of the Doctrine and Covenants, and I have remembered it ever since. These are the words of an angel. They are the words of John the Baptist when he conferred the Aaronic Priesthood upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery on May 15, 1829:

"Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken again from the earth, until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness."

Unlike Scouting, we did not have one large deacons quorum that met in the cultural hall. Rather, we were divided into four quorums, with up to twelve boys in each. I thought it was a good arrangement because there were fewer of

us in a group, with less noise and a more intimate relationship between us and our priesthood leader. I later learned that this number had been wisely designated by the Lord in revelation. He said, "And again, verily I say unto you, the duty of a president over the office of a deacon is to preside over twelve deacons, to sit in council with them, and to teach them their duty, edifying one another" (D&C 107:85).

Aaronic Priesthood a gift from God

Now I am not in any way disparaging Scouting. It is a wonderful program. It is the Church's activity program for boys in many areas of the world.

But I feel that the most important program for boys in the Church is that of the Aaronic Priesthood.

Scouting is an excellent and wonderful program that has come of the wisdom of men. The Aaronic Priesthood is a gift from God.

John the Baptist restored the Aaronic Priesthood

Now, as a boy I knew from what I had learned in Sunday School that John the Baptist had been killed by a wicked ruler, that he had been beheaded to satisfy the lustful desire of an evil woman. And in 1829 it was this same John who had come and given the priesthood to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. He spoke to them. He placed his hands upon their heads. They heard his voice and they felt his hands. This meant that he had to have been resurrected. That was a wonderful thing and a very impressive thing to me. Here was living evidence of the reality of the Resurrection, which had come through the divine power of the Lord Jesus Christ—the same who earlier had been baptized by John in the river Jordan.

John told Joseph and Oliver that he was acting under the direction of Peter, James, and John, the Apostles who had been ordained by the Lord and who held what we call the Melchizedek, or the higher, Priesthood, as distinguished from the Aaronic, or the lesser, Priesthood.

Joseph Smith was then twenty-three years of age. Oliver Cowdery was about the same. They were young men, and I thought when I was ordained a deacon what a wonderful thing it was that John the Baptist, who was a great man in the New Testament and who lived nearly two thousand years earlier, had come as a resurrected being and that he should address Joseph and Oliver as "my fellow servants."

Even though he came as a servant of God and acted under the direction of Peter, James, and John, he did not place himself above Joseph and Oliver. He put them on his same level when he addressed them as "my fellow servants." If they were his fellow servants, then perhaps I, as a twelve-year-old boy, could also be his fellow servant.

He spoke in the name of Messiah, or, as we would say it, "in the name of Jesus Christ." He set the pattern, and since then, the ordinances which we perform are administered in the name of Jesus Christ. This is something we should never forget, and never overlook, for in the exercise of our priesthood, we are acting in behalf of God our Eternal Father and Jesus Christ, His Son.

The name of the Aaronic Priesthood

In the authority that was John's, he conferred the Priesthood of Aaron. Why did he use that expression? Who was Aaron?

Aaron was the brother of Moses. He was three years older than Moses. When the Lord called Moses as the leader of the children of Israel while they were in Egypt, Moses protested that he had a stammering tongue and that he was not capable of leadership. The Lord did not accept his excuse, but, rather, He told Moses that he should be the leader and that his brother Aaron should be his voice.

Moses and Aaron went together to ask Pharaoh to let the children of Israel leave Egypt. Pharaoh was angry each time they went. Aaron had a rod, and when he dropped it on the floor before the ruler, it became a serpent.

When the children of Israel eventually fled Egypt under Moses' leadership, Aaron was his assistant. He was of the tribe of Levi and was given the holy priesthood, with the promise that certain elements of that priesthood should be given to and be exercised by those of his tribe through all of the generations to come. This priesthood, or this lesser portion of the higher priesthood, came to be known as the Aaronic or Levitical Priesthood.

Aaron lived to the good age of 123, and his authority was passed to his son to be passed down through those generations who would be worthy of it.

Keys of the ministering of angels

Now what are the elements of this priesthood which were restored to the earth by John the Baptist?

He said that this priesthood of Aaron "holds the keys of the ministering of angels" (D&C 13:1). It is a tremendous thing to have the right to the ministering of angels.

When President Wilford Woodruff was an elderly man, he said to the young men of the Church:

"I desire to impress upon you the fact that it does not make any difference whether a man is a Priest or an Apostle, if he magnifies his calling. A Priest holds the keys of the ministering of angels. Never in my life, as an Apostle, as a Seventy, or as an Elder, have I ever had more of the protection of the Lord than while holding the office of a Priest. The Lord revealed to me by visions, by revelations, and by the Holy Spirit, many things that lay before me" (*Millennial Star*, 5 Oct. 1891, p. 629).

On Sunday, February 28, 1897, ninety-one years ago, a great meeting was held here in this Salt Lake Tabernacle. It was to honor President Woodruff on his ninetieth birthday. The Tabernacle was beautifully decorated. There was appropriate music with talks of tribute. Then President Woodruff, old and somewhat crippled, stood to speak, and he said to the young men:

"I have passed through the periods of boyhood, early manhood and old age. I cannot expect to tarry a great while longer with you, but I want to give to you a few words of counsel. You occupy a position in the Church and Kingdom of God and have received the power of the holy priesthood. The God of heaven has appointed you and called you forth in this day and generation. I want you to look at this. Young men listen to the counsel of your brethren. Live near to God; pray while young; learn to pray; learn to cultivate the Holy Spirit of God; link it to you and it will become a spirit of revelation unto you, inasmuch as you nourish it" (in Matthias Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff*, 2nd ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1916], pp. 602-3).

President Woodruff had an inspired view of this remarkable and wonderful blessing which may be enjoyed by every boy who holds the Aaronic Priesthood and lives worthy of it. That key is the gift of the ministering of angels. I am convinced that the Lord would not have given it to us had he not desired that we have it so that we might enjoy the wonderful gifts, guidance, and protection which come therefrom.

Keys of the gospel of repentance

John the Baptist went on to say to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery that this priesthood, which he bestowed upon them, included the keys of the gospel of repentance. What a marvelous and wonderful thing this is! It is our privilege, yours and mine, as those who hold this priesthood, to repent of evil with the expectation that we will be forgiven if we live worthy of the forgiveness of the Lord. Furthermore, it is our privilege to preach repentance, as the Lord has made clear in section 20 of the Doctrine and Covenants. He there sets forth the duties of deacons, teachers, and priests. It is their responsibility to watch over the Church and see that there is no iniquity and to invite all to come unto Christ. That involves repentance from sin and obedience to the principles and laws of the gospel.

Keys of baptism

This Aaronic Priesthood, bestowed by John the Baptist, also includes the keys of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins. It is one thing to repent. It is another to have our sins remitted or forgiven. The power to bring this about is found in the Aaronic Priesthood.

Baptism is the primary ordinance of the gospel. It is the gate through which all come into the Church. It is so important that it is performed not only for the living but also for the dead, because those who are beyond the veil of death cannot move forward on the way to eternal life without this ordinance having been administered in their behalf.

Importance of the Aaronic Priesthood

I want to emphasize, boys, that the holding of the Aaronic Priesthood, and the exercise of its power, is not a small or unimportant thing. The bestowal of these keys in this dispensation was one of the greatest and most significant things incident to the entire Restoration. It was the first bestowal of divine authority in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times. It is the priesthood of God, with authority to act in the name of the Savior of mankind.

It is the authority under which the emblems of the Lord's Supper are administered to the membership of the Church. That great and important sacrament was instituted by the Savior himself shortly before His crucifixion. It was He who first gave to those He loved the emblems of His flesh and blood and commanded that all should partake of them in remembrance of Him and as a token of a covenant between God and man.

When you priests of the Aaronic Priesthood administer the sacrament, you are doing what Jesus did while He was yet in the flesh, and which He also did when He ministered among the Nephites following His resurrection.

When you, as a priest, kneel at the sacrament table and offer up the prayer, which came by revelation, you place the entire congregation under covenant with

the Lord. Is this a small thing? It is a most important and remarkable thing.

Importance of being worthy

Now, my dear young brethren, if we are to enjoy the ministering of angels, if we are to teach the gospel of repentance, if we are to baptize by immersion for the remission of sins, if we are to administer to the membership of the Church the emblems of the sacrifice of our Lord, then we must be worthy to do so.

You cannot consistently so serve on the Sabbath and fail to live the standards of the Church during the week. It is totally wrong for you to take the name of the Lord in vain and indulge in filthy and unseemly talk at school or at work, and then kneel at the sacrament table on Sunday. You cannot drink beer or partake of illegal drugs and be worthy of the ministering of angels. You cannot be immoral in talk or in practice and expect the Lord to honor your service in teaching repentance or baptizing for the remission of sins. As those holding His holy priesthood, you must be worthy fellow servants.

I would not wish to leave the impression that these abhorrent practices are common among the young men of the Church, but I know that they are not entirely absent. Most of you are trying to do the right thing, and I compliment you most warmly. But if there be any here who are not doing the right thing, then I plead with you, and I invoke upon you the spirit of repentance, the keys of which you hold as those endowed with the Aaronic Priesthood. Make yourselves worthy in every respect, and the Lord will bless you. You will have peace in your hearts and a greater sense of the remarkable power which has been given to you under this greatest of all programs for young men, this program which has come from the Lord Himself for the blessing of young men and those to whom they minister.

I bear my witness and testimony of these things as I invoke the blessings of the Lord upon you, His servants, who have been endowed with His power. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has just spoken to us.

We shall now be privileged to listen to the counsel of our beloved prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson. He will be our concluding speaker.

Before President Benson speaks, we note that the nationwide CBS Tabernacle Choir Broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 daylight saving time Sunday morning. Those desiring to attend must be in their seats before 9:15 A.M.

We change to daylight saving time at 2:00 A.M. tonight, so please move your

clocks ahead one hour to ensure that you will be here when the conference convenes tomorrow.

As you leave this priesthood meeting tonight, we ask you to obey traffic rules, to use caution, and to be courteous in driving.

We are grateful to you brethren from the Ogden and Mount Ogden regions for your inspiring music this evening. Thank you.

Following President Benson's closing remarks, the choir will sing "Rise Up, O Men of God."

The benediction will then be offered by Elder Adney Y. Komatsu of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

President Ezra Taft Benson

My dear brethren of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood, how happy I am to be with you this evening.

I rejoice in the messages of my brethren who have preceded me, and I now ask you for your faith and prayers in my behalf as I address you.

For some time I have wanted to speak directly to the great body of single adult brethren of the Church. Many of you have served full-time missions. Many of you are giving outstanding service in your wards and stakes.

To you single adult brethren, I want you to know of my great love for each of you. I have great expectations for you and a great hope in you. You have so much to contribute to the Lord and to the kingdom of God now and in the future. You may be twenty-seven years of age, or thirty, or possibly even older.

Examine priorities

Just what are your priorities at this time in your life?

May I suggest for your careful consideration the counsel we give to returning missionaries. This counsel applies just as much to those who have been home for a while as to those who may

not have served full-time missions for the Church.

Here are some of the priorities we pray that you single adult brethren will consider to be essential in your life.

First, continue to draw close to the Savior through private, sincere, heartfelt prayer. Remember always, "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

"Feast upon the words of Christ" (2 Nephi 32:3) by consistently studying the scriptures every day and by following the counsel of the living prophets. Particularly make the study of the Book of Mormon a lifetime pursuit and daily sup

port your leaders, and otherwise keep the commandments. Serve cheerfully and gratefully in every calling you receive. Live worthy of a temple recommend and enjoy the sweet, sacred spirit that comes from frequent temple attendance.

Dress and groom yourself in a way that reflects your lifelong commitment to share the gospel with others.

Be thoughtful, loving, helpful, and appreciative of your family as you seek to deepen those eternal relationships.

In your dating and courting, fully maintain the standards of the Church. Be morally clean. "Let virtue garnish [your] thoughts unceasingly" (D&C 121:45).

Remember the counsel of Elder Bruce R. McConkie that "the most important single thing that any Latter-day Saint ever does in this world is to marry the right person in the right place by the right authority" (*Choose an Eternal Companion*, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year [Provo, 3 May 1966], p. 2).

Understand that temple marriage is essential to your salvation and exaltation.

Carefully select practical and worthwhile goals and, in an organized way, work to reach them.

Apply yourself prayerfully and diligently to selecting and pursuing academic and vocational goals.

Share the gospel and your testimony with those who are not members of the Church or who are less active.

Improve your community by active participation and service. Remember in your civic responsibility that "the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing" (Edmund Burke, in George Seldes, comp., *The Great Thoughts* [New York: Ballantine Books, 1985], p. 60). Do something meaningful in defense of your God-given freedom and liberty.

Remember that your entire life is a mission and that each new phase of it can be richly rewarding as you magnify your talents and take advantage of your opportunities.

Importance of celestial marriage

May I now say an additional word about an eternal opportunity and responsibility to which I have referred earlier and which is of greatest importance to you. I am referring to celestial marriage.

Just a few weeks ago, I received a letter from two devoted parents, part of which reads as follows:

"Dear President Benson: We are concerned about what seems to be a

growing problem—at least in this part of the Church familiar to us—that is, so many choice young men in the Church over the age of thirty who are still unmarried.

"We have sons thirty, thirty-one, and thirty-three in this situation. Many of our friends also are experiencing this same concern for unmarried sons and daughters."

Their letter continues:

"In our experience these are usually young men who have been on missions, are well educated, and are living the commandments (except this most important one). There does not appear to be a lack of choice young ladies in the same age bracket who could make suitable companions.

"It is most frustrating to us, as their parents, who sometimes feel we have failed in our parental teachings and guiding responsibilities."

My dear single adult brethren, we are also concerned. We want you to know that the position of the Church has never changed regarding the importance of celestial marriage. It is a commandment of God. The Lord's declaration in Genesis is still true: "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone" (Genesis 2:18).

Do not risk greatest joys

To obtain a fulness of glory and exaltation in the celestial kingdom, one must enter into this holiest of ordinances.

Without marriage, the purposes of the Lord would be frustrated. Choice spirits would be withheld from the experience of mortality. And postponing marriage unduly often means limiting your posterity, and the time will come, brethren, when you will feel and know that loss.

I can assure you that the greatest responsibility and the greatest joys in life are centered in the family, honorable marriage, and rearing a righteous posterity. And the older you become, the less likely you are to marry, and then you may lose these eternal blessings altogether.

President Spencer W. Kimball recounted an experience he once had:

"Recently I met a young returned missionary who is 35 years old. He had been home from his mission for 14 years and yet he was little concerned about his bachelorhood, and laughed about it.

"I shall feel sorry for this young man when the day comes that he faces the Great Judge at the throne and when the Lord asks this boy: 'Where is your wife?' All of his excuses which he gave to his fellows on earth will seem very light and senseless when he answers the Judge. 'I was very busy,' or 'I felt I should get my education first,' or 'I did not find the right girl'—such answers will be hollow and of little avail. He knew he was commanded to find a wife and marry her and make her happy. He knew it was his duty to become the father of children and provide a rich, full life for them as they grew up. He knew all this, yet postponed his responsibility" ("The Marriage Decision," *Ensign*, Feb. 1975, p. 2).

Replace fears with faith

I realize that some of you brethren may have genuine fears regarding the real responsibilities that will be yours if you do marry. You are concerned about being able to support a wife and family and provide them with the necessities in these uncertain economic times. Those fears must be replaced with faith.

I assure you, brethren, that if you will be industrious, faithfully pay your tithes and offerings, and conscientiously keep the commandments, the Lord will sustain you. Yes, there will be sacrifices required, but you will grow from these and will be a better man for having met them.

Work hard educationally and in your vocation. Put your trust in the Lord, have faith, and it will work out. The Lord never gives a commandment without providing the means to accomplish it (see 1 Nephi 3:7).

Also, do not be caught up in materialism, one of the real plagues of our generation—that is, acquiring things,

fast-paced living, and securing career success in the single state.

Honorable marriage is more important than wealth, position, and status. As husband and wife, you can achieve your life's goals together. As you sacrifice for each other and your children, the Lord will bless you, and your commitment to the Lord and your service in His kingdom will be enhanced.

Expectations of a mate

Now, brethren, do not expect perfection in your choice of a mate. Do not be so particular that you overlook her most important qualities of having a strong testimony, living the principles of the gospel, loving home, wanting to be a mother in Zion, and supporting you in your priesthood responsibilities.

Of course, she should be attractive to you, but do not just date one girl after another for the sole pleasure of dating without seeking the Lord's confirmation in your choice of your eternal companion.

And one good yardstick as to whether a person might be the right one for you is this: in her presence, do you think your noblest thoughts, do you aspire to your finest deeds, do you wish you were better than you are?

God bless you single adult brethren of the Church. May your priorities be right. I have suggested some very important priorities this evening. May you seriously consider and ponder them.

Know, my good brethren, that I have spoken from my heart and by His Spirit because of my love and concern for you. It is what the Lord would have you hear today. With all my heart I echo the words of the prophet Lehi from the Book of Mormon, "Arise from the dust, my sons, and be men" (2 Nephi 1:21), in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Rise Up, O Men of God."

Elder Adney Y. Komatsu offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY MORNING SESSION

The fourth session of the 158th Annual General Conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 3, 1988. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music, with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducting and John Longhurst at the organ.

Before the session, the choir sang "Come, Rejoice" without announcement.

President Hinckley made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

We welcome you this beautiful Easter morning from the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, Utah, in this, the fourth general session of the 158th annual conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Our beloved prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked me, Brother Hinckley, to conduct.

We acknowledge the large audience assembled in the Tabernacle and in the overflow gathering in the nearby Assembly Hall, where Elders Jacob de Jager and Russell C. Taylor are seated on the stand. We extend our greetings to those of

you participating by radio, television, cable, or satellite transmission. We are grateful to the owners and operators of these facilities for assisting in this great conference.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders, and officers and members of the Church from many lands who have assembled to worship and to counsel together.

The Tabernacle Choir is providing the music for this session under the direction of Brothers Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger, with Brother John Longhurst at the organ.

The choir opened by singing "Come, Rejoice" and will now sing "Come unto Him," following which Elder Charles Didier, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "Come unto Him."
Elder Charles Didier offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will be our first speaker.

President Thomas S. Monson

Life's greatest questions

Everywhere, people are in a hurry. Jet-powered planes speed their precious human cargo across broad continents and vast oceans. Appointments must be kept, tourist attractions beckon, and friends and family await the arrival of a particular flight. Modern freeways with multiple lanes carry millions of automobiles,

occupied by more millions of people, in a seemingly endless stream.

Does this pulsating, mobile ribbon of humanity ever come to a halt? Is the helter-skelter pace of life ever punctuated with moments of meditation—even thoughts of timeless truths?

When compared to eternal verities, the questions of daily living are really rather trivial. What shall we have for dinner? Is there a good movie playing tonight? Have you seen the television log?

Where shall we go on Saturday? These questions pale in their significance when times of crisis arise, when loved ones are wounded, when pain enters the house of good health, or when life's candle dims and darkness threatens. Then, truth and trivia are soon separated. The soul of man reaches heavenward, seeking a divine response to life's greatest questions: *Where did we come from? Why are we here? Where do we go after we leave this life?*

Answers to these questions are not discovered within the covers of academia's textbooks, by dialing Information, in tossing a coin, or through random selection of multiple-choice responses. These questions transcend mortality. They embrace eternity.

Where did we come from?

Where did we come from? This query is inevitably thought, if not spoken, by every parent or grandparent when a tiny infant utters its first cry. One marvels at the perfectly formed child. The tiny toes, the delicate fingers, the beautiful head, to say nothing of the hidden but marvelous circulatory, digestive, and nervous systems all testify to the truth of a divine Creator.

The Apostle Paul told the Athenians on Mars' Hill that we are "the offspring of God" (Acts 17:29). Since we know that our physical bodies are the offspring of our mortal parents, we must probe for the meaning of Paul's statement. The Lord has declared that "the spirit and the body are the soul of man" (D&C 88:15). It is the spirit which is the offspring of God. The writer of Hebrews refers to Him as "the Father of spirits" (Hebrews 12:9). The spirits of all men are literally His "begotten sons and daughters" (D&C 76:24).

We note that inspired poets have, for our contemplation of this subject, written moving messages and recorded transcendent thoughts. William Wordsworth penned the truth:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,

And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come

From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
("Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood," lines 58–66)

Another writer described a newborn infant as "a sweet, new blossom of humanity, fresh fallen from God's own home to flower here on earth."

Why are we here?

Parents, gazing down at a tiny infant or taking the hand of a growing child, ponder their responsibility to teach, to inspire, and to provide direction. While parents ponder, children and, particularly, youth ask the penetrating question: "Why are we here?" Usually, it is spoken silently to the soul and phrased: "Why am I here?"

How grateful we should be that a wise Creator fashioned an earth and placed us here, with a veil of forgetfulness of our previous existence, so that we might experience a time of testing, an opportunity to prove ourselves, and qualify for all that God has prepared for us to receive.

Clearly, one primary purpose of our existence upon the earth is to obtain a body of flesh and bones. In a thousand ways, we are privileged to choose for ourselves. Here we learn from the hard taskmaster of experience. We discern between good and evil. We differentiate as to the bitter and the sweet. We discover that decisions determine destiny.

While Paul taught the Philippians that man is called upon to "work out [his] own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12), the Master provided a guide we know as the Golden Rule: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" (Matthew 7:12).

By obedience to God's commandments, we can qualify for that "house"

spoken of by Jesus when He declared: "In my Father's house are many mansions. . . . I go to prepare a place for you . . . that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2-3).

Contemplating such far-reaching matters, we reflect upon the helplessness of a newborn child. No better example can be found for total dependency. Needed is nourishment for the body and love for the soul. Mother provides both. She who, with her hand in the hand of God, descended into "the valley of the shadow of death" (Psalm 23:4), that you and I might come forth to life, is not in her maternal mission abandoned by God.

Never a hopeless dawn

Several years ago, the Salt Lake City newspapers published an obituary notice of a close friend—a mother and wife taken by death in the prime of her life. I visited the mortuary and joined a host of persons gathered to express condolence to the distraught husband and motherless children. Suddenly the smallest child, Kelly, recognized me and took my hand in hers.

"Come with me," she said; and she led me to the casket in which rested the body of her beloved mother. "I'm not crying, Brother Monson, and neither must you. My mommy told me many times about death and life with Heavenly Father. I belong to my mommy and my daddy. We'll all be together again."

Through tear-moistened eyes, I recognized a beautiful and faith-filled smile. To my young friend, whose tiny hand yet clasped mine, there would never be a hopeless dawn. Sustained by her unflinching testimony, knowing that life continues beyond the grave, she, her father, her brothers, her sisters, and indeed all who share this knowledge of divine truth, can declare to the world, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psalm 30:5).

Life moves on. Youth follows childhood, and maturity comes ever so imperceptibly.

We treasure the inspired thought:

"God is a Father.
Man is a brother.
Life is a mission
And not a career."

(In Stephen L. Richards, *Where Is Wisdom?* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1955], p. 74)

The great commandments

God, our Father, and Jesus Christ, our Lord, have marked the way to perfection. They beckon us to follow eternal verities and to become perfect, as they are perfect (see Matthew 5:48, 3 Nephi 12:48). We remember the inquiring lawyer who asked:

"Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

"This is the first and great commandment.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:36-39).

The race of life

The Apostle Paul likened life to a race with a clearly defined goal. To the Saints at Corinth he urged:

"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain" (1 Corinthians 9:24).

In our zeal, let us not overlook the sage counsel from Ecclesiastes: "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong" (Ecclesiastes 9:11). Actually the prize belongs to him who endures to the end.

When I reflect on the race of life, I remember another type of race, even from childhood days. When I was about ten, my boyfriends and I would take pocket-knives in hand and, from the soft wood of a willow tree, fashion small toy boats. With a triangular-shaped cotton sail in place, each would launch his crude craft

in the race down the relatively turbulent waters of the Provo River. We would run along the river's bank and watch the tiny vessels sometimes bobbing violently in the swift current and at other times sailing serenely as the water deepened.

During such a race, we noted that one boat led all the rest toward the appointed finish line. Suddenly, the current carried it too close to a large whirlpool, and the boat heaved to its side and capsized. Around and around it was carried, unable to make its way back into the main current. At last it came to an uneasy rest at the end of the pool, amid the flotsam and jetsam that surrounded it.

The toy boats of childhood had no keel for stability, no rudder to provide direction, and no source of power. Inevitably their destination was downstream—the path of least resistance.

Unlike toy boats, we have been provided divine attributes to guide our journey. We enter mortality not to float with the moving currents of life, but with the power to think, to reason, and to achieve.

Our Heavenly Father did not launch us on our eternal voyage without providing the means whereby we could receive from Him guidance to ensure our safe return. Yes, I speak of prayer. I speak, too, of the whisperings from that still, small voice within each of us; and I do not overlook the holy scriptures, written by mariners who successfully sailed the seas we too must cross.

Our existence after death

At some period in our mortal mission, there appears the faltering step, the wan smile, the pain of sickness—even the fading of summer, the approach of autumn, the chill of winter, and the experience we call death.

Every thoughtful person has asked himself the question best phrased by Job of old: "If a man die, shall he live again?" (Job 14:14). Try as we may to put the question out of our thoughts, it always returns. Death comes to all mankind. It comes to the aged as they walk on faltering feet. Its summons is heard by those

who have scarcely reached midway in life's journey, and often it hushes the laughter of little children.

But what of an existence beyond death? Is death the end of all? Such a question was asked of me by a young husband and father who lay dying. I turned to the Book of Mormon and, from the book of Alma, read to him these words:

"Now, concerning the state of the soul between death and the resurrection—Behold, it has been made known unto me by an angel, that the spirits of all men, as soon as they are departed from this mortal body, yea, the spirits of all men, whether they be good or evil, are taken home to that God who gave them life.

"And then shall it come to pass, that the spirits of those who are righteous are received into a state of happiness, which is called paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care, and sorrow" (Alma 40:11–12).

My young friend through moist eyes and with an expression of profound gratitude whispered a silent, but eloquent, "Thank you."

Jesus was resurrected

After the body of Jesus had lain in the tomb for three days, the spirit again entered, and the resurrected Redeemer walked forth clothed with an immortal body of flesh and bones.

The answer to Job's question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" came when Mary and others approached the tomb and saw two men in shining garments who spoke to them: "Why seek ye the living among the dead?

"He is not here, but is risen" (Luke 24:5–6).

Testimonies of the resurrected Lord provide comfort and understanding.

First, from the Apostle Paul:

"Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; . . . he was buried, and . . . he rose again the third day: . . . he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: . . . he was seen of above five

hundred brethren at once; . . . he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time" (1 Corinthians 15:3-8).

Second, from the combined testimony of twenty-five hundred of His other sheep, as recorded in the Book of Mormon, Another Testament of Jesus Christ, the resurrected Lord "spake unto them saying:

"Arise and come forth unto me, that ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet, that ye may know that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world. . . .

"And when they had all gone forth and had witnessed for themselves, they did cry out with one accord, saying:

"Hosanna! Blessed be the name of the Most High God! And they did fall down at the feet of Jesus, and did worship him" (3 Nephi 11:13-14, 16-17).

Third, from Joseph Smith: "After the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That He lives!

"For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—

"That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God" (D&C 76:22-24).

As the result of Christ's victory over the grave, we shall all be resurrected. This is the redemption of the soul. Paul wrote:

"There are . . . celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

"There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.

"So also is the resurrection of the dead" (1 Corinthians 15:40-42).

It is the celestial glory which we seek. It is in the presence of God we desire to dwell. It is a forever family in which we want membership. Such blessings must be earned.

An invitation to exaltation

Where did we come from? Why are we here? Where do we go after this life? No longer need these universal questions remain unanswered. Our Heavenly Father rejoices for those who keep His commandments. He is concerned also for the lost child, the tardy teenager, the wayward youth, the delinquent parent. Tenderly the Master speaks to these, and indeed to all: "Come back. Come home. Come unto me." What eternal joy awaits when we accept His divine invitation to exaltation.

I testify He is a teacher of truth—but He is more than a teacher. He is the exemplar of the perfect life—but He is more than an exemplar. He is the great physician—but He is more than a physician. He is the literal Savior of the World, the Son of God, the Prince of Peace, the Holy One of Israel, even the risen Lord, who declared: "I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world.

" . . . I am the light and the life of the world" (3 Nephi 11:10-11).

"I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father" (D&C 110:4).

As his witness I testify to you that He lives, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "How Wondrous and Great" without announcement.

President Hinckley

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has just addressed us, followed by the

Tabernacle Choir singing "How Wondrous and Great."

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our next speaker.

Elder M. Russell Ballard

Appreciate the wonders of nature

Brothers and sisters, this is a beautiful time of year with spring beginning to burst forth in many parts of the world, bringing all of its colors, scents, and cheerful sounds. The miracle of the changing seasons, with the reawakening and rebirth in nature, inspires feelings of love and reverence within us for God's marvelous, creative handiwork.

The Easter season is a good time for people everywhere to appreciate the wonders of nature and give thanks to the Creator of this beautiful world. Men and women in all parts of the world have a desperate need to take time from their demanding routines of everyday life and to quietly observe God's miracles taking place all around them. Think of what would happen if all of us took time to look carefully at the wonders of nature that surround us and devoted ourselves to learning more about this world that God created for us!

My family and I recently had a simple but impressive experience with one of God's creations. I gave my wife, Barbara, a dozen roses for a valentine. They were a delicate shade of peach in color and had a rich scent. Barbara put them in a vase and placed them on the table in our family room. As the days passed, the family watched the blossoms unfold from buds to full flower.

As I watched this miracle, I became curious about roses. I was amazed to learn from a botanist friend that there are thousands of different varieties of roses. Inside each rose is a giant storehouse of genetic coding that develops a seed or a slip into roots, stems, thorns, leaves, colors, and blooms.

Each rose is a compact chemical-processing factory. Using sunlight, the green leaves take carbon dioxide from the

air and replace it with oxygen, which we breathe. When other chemicals within the plant react with sunlight, it produces starch that becomes food. As you know, this process is called photosynthesis, and without it the earth's atmosphere would soon be devoid of oxygen, and most living things would disappear from the earth. My friend told me that the chemical energy and the electrical energy our brains were using at that very moment were once sunlight that was absorbed by the chlorophyll in green vegetation we previously had eaten.

All creations bear record of God

This experience led me to consider the myriad forms of plant and animal life that thrive in astounding balance upon the earth. My esteem for our little roses took on an element of wonder and reverence. I pondered the power of the creative genius who lovingly provided such marvels for his children. I thought then how important it is for every human soul to see and appreciate the glory and grandeur of God in everything about us. Into my mind came the words and message of a beautiful hymn:

When thru the woods and forest
glades I wander,
And hear the birds sing sweetly in
the trees,
When I look down from lofty
mountain grandeur
And hear the brook and feel the
gentle breeze,
Then sings my soul, my Savior God,
to thee,
How great thou art! How great thou
art!
("How Great Thou Art," *Hymns*
[1985], no. 86)

I felt a deep reverence for both the creation and the Creator. *Reverence* may

be defined as a profound respect mingled with love and awe. Other words that add to our understanding of reverence include *gratitude, honor, veneration, and admiration*. The root word *revere* also implies an element of fear. Thus, reverence might be understood to mean an attitude of profound respect and love with a desire to honor and show gratitude, with a fear of breaking faith or offending.

In the book of Moses we read, "And behold, all things have their likeness, and all things are created and made to bear record of me, both things which are temporal, and things which are spiritual; things which are in the heavens above, and things which are on the earth, and things which are in the earth, and things which are under the earth, both above and beneath: all things bear record of me" (Moses 6:63).

Truly, the heavens and the earth and all things in them evidence the handiwork of God, their Creator. In the Book of Mormon we learn of Korihor, an anti-Christ who was brought to the prophet Alma. He asked for a sign of God's existence before he would believe. "But Alma said unto him: Thou hast had signs enough; will ye tempt your God? Will ye say, Show unto me a sign, when ye have the testimony of all these thy brethren, and also all the holy prophets? The scriptures are laid before thee, yea, and all things denote there is a God; yea, even the earth, and all things that are upon the face of it, yea, and its motion, yea, and also all the planets which move in their regular form do witness that there is a Supreme Creator" (Alma 30:44). These eternal evidences continue to testify to us today.

Astronauts viewing the earth from space have stated how incredibly beautiful it is and how alive it appears. United States Senator Jake Garn wrote of his experience in space: "It is impossible for me to describe the beauty of the earth. It is a breathtaking, awe-inspiring, spiritual experience to view the earth from space while traveling at twenty-five times the speed of sound. I could also look into the blackness of the vacuum of space and see billions of stars and galaxies millions of

light-years away. The universe is so vast as to be impossible to comprehend. But I did comprehend the hand of God in all things. I felt his presence throughout my seven days in space. I know that God created this earth and the universe. I know that we are his children wherever we live on the earth, without regard to our nationality or the color of our skin. Most important, I know that God lives and is the Creator of us all" (letter to M. Russell Ballard, 3 March 1988).

Again, the words of the hymn came to mind:

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder
Consider all the worlds thy hands
have made,
I see the stars, I hear the rolling
thunder,
Thy pow'r thruout the universe
displayed;
Then sings my soul, my Savior God,
to thee,
How great thou art! How great thou
art!
("How Great Thou Art")

The greatest of God's creations

The psalmist wrote, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

"For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour" (Psalm 8:3-5).

The Lord gave an answer to the psalmist's question; it is recorded in the book of Moses: "For mine own purpose have I made these things. . . .

"And by the word of my power, have I created them. . . .

"For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:31-32, 39).

When we look to see the evidence of creation all around us, from a grain of sand to the majestic planets, we begin to

realize that we are the greatest of all God's creations; we are created in his image. I was joyfully reminded of this fact three weeks ago when our twenty-fourth grandchild was born. I was again filled with wonder and love to hold this precious infant in my arms, to contemplate the miracle of birth, and to see a child born into mortality who had come so recently from the presence of our Father in Heaven.

The gift of new life brings a profound feeling of reverence. Parents and other family members are drawn closer together. Even little children sense a feeling of awe and wonder. They want to hold the baby, touch it, run their hands over its warm, soft head, or extend a finger for it to grasp and hold.

Welcoming this new little spirit into our family circle brought home once more to me an incredible truth. I realized again that God created the earth in all its magnificent glory, not as an end in itself, but for us, his children. Indeed, we are his children, his offspring, and he is the Father of our spirits.

Revere God's power and majesty

We sometimes feel great respect and reverence for creative genius as expressed in great art or music. How much more should we revere the power and majesty of our Divine Creator? We may stand in awe of man's creations of beautiful buildings or bridges. But remember the Apostle Paul's words to the Hebrews: "He who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house.

"For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God" (Hebrews 3:3-4).

Those who feel no reverence for the creations and the divine attributes of God likely will have little appreciation for other sacred things. Such a lack of veneration for God's creations may diminish until a person becomes totally insensitive to the feelings of others. This, I am afraid, is the condition in some parts of the world.

When we consider people who are irreverent, we may think of those who lack manners, sensitivity, and courtesy,

and who show little or no respect for the finer things or for sacred things. Perhaps some lack reverence for life and for their fellowmen because they do not understand who they are and what they have the potential to become.

Expressions of God's love

God expresses his love for us by providing the guidance we need to progress and reach our potential. Perhaps a simple story will illustrate this point. Recently, a young man purchased a used computer but could not get it to work properly. Soon he became discouraged. His temper grew short and he threatened the inanimate object with painful destruction unless its performance improved. A wise father intervened and took his son to a local vendor, where they obtained an instruction manual. After all, who would know more about a complex computer than the person or company that created it? Who would know most about its capacity and potential? Who would better know the safeguards required to avoid damaging or ruining this fine instrument? Soon the boy enjoyed the full potential of his computer by working within the guidelines given in the instruction book provided by its creator.

Likewise in our lives, he who knows most about us, our potential, and our eternal possibilities has given us divine counsel and commandments in his instruction manuals—the holy scriptures. When we understand and follow these instructions, our lives have purpose and meaning. We learn that our Maker loves us and desires our happiness. In an incomparable manifestation of this divine love for us, he sent his Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:16-17).

Jesus was born into mortality. He led a perfect life and, in so doing, marked the path for us to follow. He taught his

disciples, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

A gospel of love

His gospel is a gospel of love—love for God and love for one another. He directs us to follow his example. Our discipleship is measured by how well we comply.

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34–35).

Can you imagine what an impact following this instruction would have on society today?

Many people, I fear, never come to understand that the commandments of God are for our benefit and that as we sow, so shall we reap.

Ponder the depths of Christ's love

Our return to our Heavenly Father is through his Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus told his disciples, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). He instructed us to keep his commandments if we love him (see v. 15). He taught further that "he that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him" (v. 21).

In the atonement and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we can glimpse the reality of his divine mission to redeem all who will come unto him and will honor and reverence God, our Eternal Father.

We may begin to understand the depths of Christ's love for us when we consider that he was willing to atone and suffer the pain for our sins, "which suffering caused [him], even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer

both body and spirit" (D&C 19:18). Nevertheless, he gave glory to his Father and partook and finished his preparations unto the children of men (see v. 19).

The crowning words of the inspired hymn continue:

And when I think that God, his Son
not sparing,
Sent him to die, I scarce can take it
in,
That on the cross my burden gladly
bearing
He bled and died to take away my
sin,
Then sings my soul, my Savior God,
to thee,
How great thou art! How great thou
art!
(*"How Great Thou Art"*)

Give thanks to God

Brothers and sisters, on this Easter Sunday, let us give special thanks to God for the atonement and resurrection of his beloved Son, Jesus Christ. For in him, by him, and through him, this temporary mortal condition can be made into a permanent, perfect existence, for which words cannot express our joy.

To truly reverence the Creator, we must appreciate his creations. We need to plan to take time to observe the marvels of nature. Today, we can easily become surrounded by brick buildings and asphalt surfaces that shelter us from real life around us. Plan to share with your family the miracle of buds changing to fragrant blossoms. Take time to sit on a hillside and feel the tranquility of the evening when the sun casts its last golden glow over the horizon. Take time to smell the roses.

All the marvels of nature are glimpses of his divine power and expressions of his love. Yet the greatest of all miracles awaits us. It will occur when, by his power, we will come forth from death and the grave to a new world that will not pass away, where, if we are worthy, we will be with him and our Father in Heaven forever and ever.

Blessings of the Restoration

With humility but with firm conviction, we declare to all the world that we know for a surety that God the Father and Jesus Christ, his Son, live. We know that they visited the Prophet Joseph Smith in the spring of 1820. They spoke to Joseph and, through him, they revealed wonderful, true doctrines and restored the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ that had been lost from the world.

We invite all men and women everywhere to know of the restoration of the gospel, for in so doing they will develop a deep reverence and love for God, his beloved Son, Jesus Christ, and their creations. I bear testimony that true reverence will bring peace, joy, and happiness to us all. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Richard G. Scott

How to be comforted by the Lord

It is Easter morning, that sacred season when the heart of each devout Christian turns in humble gratitude to our beloved Savior. It is a season that should bring peace and joy to all. Yet many of you have heavy hearts because a son or daughter, husband or wife, has turned from righteousness to pursue evil. My message is for you.

Your life is filled with anguish, pain, and, at times, despair. I will tell you how you can be comforted by the Lord.

First, you must recognize two foundation principles:

1. While there are many things you can do to help a loved one in need, there are some things that must be done by the Lord.

2. Also, no enduring improvement can occur without righteous exercise of agency. Do not attempt to override agency. The Lord himself would not do that. Forced obedience yields no blessings (see D&C 58:26–33).

I will suggest seven ways you can help.

The choir sang "Come, We That Love the Lord" without announcement.

President Hinckley

We have just heard from Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. The choir then sang "Come, We That Love the Lord."

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "The Lord Is My Shepherd," following which we shall hear from Elder Richard G. Scott of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation sang "The Lord Is My Shepherd."

Love, extend hope, and teach truth

First, love without limitations. When in a dream Lehi partook of the fruit of the tree of life and was filled with joy, his first thought was to share it with each member of his family, including the disobedient (see 1 Nephi 8:3–4, 12–18).

Second, do not condone the transgressions, but extend every hope and support to the transgressor. To his missionary son Corianton, who had violated the law of chastity, Alma said, "Behold, O my son, how great iniquity ye brought upon the Zoramites; for when they saw your conduct they would not believe in my words" (Alma 39:11). Then he clarified in careful detail principles which his son had improperly used to justify his acts. Subsequently, that loving father gave this counsel:

"O my son, I desire that ye should deny the justice of God no more. Do not endeavor to excuse yourself in the least point because of your sins, . . . but do you let the justice of God, and his mercy, and his long-suffering have full sway in your heart; and let it bring you down to the dust in humility.

“ . . . And now, my son, go thy way, declare the word with truth and soberness” (Alma 42:30–31). Corianton repented and became a powerful servant.

Third, teach truth. Nephi taught his brothers, “Whoso would hearken unto the word of God, and would hold fast unto it, they would never perish; neither could the temptations and the fiery darts of the adversary overpower them unto blindness, to lead them away to destruction” (1 Nephi 15:24).

Then he gave this example of how to teach: “I did exhort them with all the energies of my soul, and with all the faculty which I possessed, that they would give heed to the word of God and remember to keep his commandments always in all things” (v. 25).

Forgive, pray, and keep perspective

Fourth, honestly forgive as often as is required. The Lord declared: “If he . . . repenteth in the sincerity of his heart, him shall ye forgive, and I will forgive him also.

“ . . . And as often as my people repent will I forgive them” (Mosiah 26:29–30).

Fifth, pray trustingly. “The . . . fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16).

The Master taught, “Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you” (3 Nephi 18:20). “Pray always, and I will pour out my Spirit upon you, and great shall be your blessing” (D&C 19:38).

Sixth, keep perspective. When you have done all that you can reasonably do, rest the burden in the hands of the Lord.

When I take a small pebble and place it directly in front of my eye, it takes on the appearance of a mighty boulder. It is all I can see. It becomes all-consuming—like the problems of a loved one that affect our lives every waking moment. When the things you realistically can do to help are done, leave the matter in the hands of the Lord and worry no more. Do not feel guilty because you cannot do more. Do not waste your energy on use-

less worry. The Lord will take the pebble that fills your vision and cast it down among the challenges you will face in your eternal progress. It will then be seen in perspective. In time, you will feel impressions and know how to give further help. You will find more peace and happiness, will not neglect others that need you, and will be able to give greater help because of that eternal perspective.

Abraham labored that his own father would overcome transgression. Despite his best efforts, his father turned to idolatry. Had Abraham let that proper concern for a father consume his every thought, he could not have received this promise: “In thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed” (3 Nephi 20:25).

Some who have overcome serious sin in their own lives blame themselves because of that prior disobedience when a loved one does not respond as desired. Such promptings come from Satan, not from the Lord. Alma could help his son Corianton because Alma spoke from a position of strength, knowing that his own sins had been entirely forgiven through repentance.

This is not a doctrinal discourse; rather, it is a personal witness of what I know to be true. At times my wife, Jeanene, and I have had challenges that seemed more difficult than we could possibly face alone. Once she lost a baby girl and nearly her life. Within six weeks, another beloved son was taken home. We pled for help, and it came.

When other challenges have brought us to our knees, we have had confidence that we would receive comfort and guidance, and they came. The Lord opens doors of opportunity and provides the strength each of us needs at difficult times in our life.

This Easter, as we remember the Resurrection and the price paid and the gift given through the Atonement, let us ponder what the scriptures teach of those sacred events. Our personal witness of their reality will be strengthened. They must be more than principles we memorize. They must be woven into the very fiber of our being as a bulwark in time of need.

Nephi taught: "For ye have not come thus far save it were by the word of Christ with unshaken faith in him, relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save.

"Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life" (2 Nephi 31:19-20).

He could well have added, "and shall have peace and happiness now." Happiness comes from understanding and living the teachings of the Lord. It comes from not being critical of ourselves when we don't accomplish all we want to do.

Never give up

One last suggestion—Never give up on a loved one, never!

I know we have a loving Father in Heaven. He asks us to worship him that we may feel his love. He entreats us to love his Son that we may be comforted and strengthened.

Sometimes, we foolishly recite facts about the Father and the Son, mechanically, and—forgive us—preach to them, preen before them, and display our

ignorance and pride. Yet they continue to love us perfectly, each one of us, individually. Yes, they are all-powerful and all-knowing; their works extend eternally, yet their love for each of us is personal, knowing, uncompromising, endless, perfect.

I know they live. I know that Jesus is the Christ, our Savior and Redeemer. I love him with all my soul. He gave his life that we might overcome errors to live eternally. I don't understand how he did it. In my own imperfect way, I try to imagine the incomprehensible burden he felt as he entered into the closing hours of his ministry on earth, knowing that his life had to be completely sinless, without error. He had to provide the perfect atonement for all mankind, each individual, without exception, or not one soul could ever return to the presence of God. He did it. He did it perfectly. Neither he nor his Father will ever fail us—never in all eternity. I bear that witness, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have just heard from Elder Richard G. Scott, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now address us.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

"What can I do while I am waiting?"

A few days ago a new friend, not now a member of the Church because of recent discipline, asked, "What can I do while I am waiting? Over the past period of time it has been made very evident what I cannot do. Tell me and others in my situation what we can do."

As I try to respond to this sincere plea from a good person, perhaps I am directing my suggestions only to a few, but they are a precious few. I would endeavor to instill hope instead of despair in

those who temporarily have lost certain powers and privileges. Some of these people in this category dare not hope anymore for fear of being disappointed. May they and their families be helped with thoughts that will bring action, comfort, and a new sense of self-worth.

I recall vividly and with feeling this friend's additional request, "Please don't tell me to be patient, loving, sweet, and understanding. I need more than that. I need solid direction. I have an urgent need to get over my frustrated feelings and get on with life. Please help me."

“Ye shall minister unto him”

How can we as Church members best help these good people?

I suggest a quotation from the Book of Mormon as a foundation for our actions: “Nevertheless, ye shall not cast him out from among you, but ye shall minister unto him and shall pray for him unto the Father, in my name; and if it so be that he repenteth and is baptized in my name, then shall ye receive him, and shall minister unto him of my flesh and blood” (3 Nephi 18:30).

Often in the scriptures we are reminded that we should minister to all of God’s children, that we should do so with the pure love of God in our hearts. George Bernard Shaw once wrote, “The worst sin towards our fellow creatures is not to hate them, but to be indifferent to them” (*The Devil’s Disciple*, act 2). Indifference can be one of the most hurtful ways of behavior. Never should we in life allow ourselves to turn away, walk on the other side of the street, and pretend we didn’t see, or prohibit involvement in accepted ways. We need to learn to love everyone, even those who are difficult.

A warm handshake and a friendly smile can be wonderfully healing medicine. Conversely, how unwise we are when we declare, “I’ll never speak to him again.” Never is a long time, and even those who have caused heartache or shame are not beyond ultimate repentance. Sometimes hurts to the heart are more damaging than physical blows. Yes, they may take longer to heal, but they will heal more quickly if we avoid bitterness and anger and practice forgiveness.

As we support the efforts of those who are trying to work through their challenges, we should be helpful, and will be if we can extend kindness, compassion, patience, and love. It is a sad day when any one of us surrenders to sin or circumstances.

Many of those “waiting” have often been hurt by thoughtless words and deeds of those around them. Blessed is he or she who avoids being offended. There are appropriate and acceptable assignments which can and should be given to those who are in this waiting period.

“Whosoever will come, him will I receive”

Now as to the request of my friend, “What can I do while I’m waiting?” Also from 3 Nephi we are given this warm invitation:

“Yea, verily I say unto you, if ye will come unto me ye shall have eternal life. Behold, mine arm of mercy is extended towards you, and whosoever will come, him will I receive; and blessed are those who come unto me” (3 Nephi 9:14).

This scripture indicates that in life there is no waiting period before we can come unto God. In our weakness we know where we can turn for strength. What good advice and wise direction for our lives can be gleaned through study of the scriptures! Self-esteem can be renewed and strength to do His will can be revived. People must always count more than programs.

As one comes unto Christ, he learns of the reality of forgiveness: “Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more.

“By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them” (D&C 58:42–43).

When a man is convinced of the truth of that scripture, “I, the Lord, remember them no more,” he is ready to start coming back to full fellowship. Some suggestions can be made using two effective words: *shun* and *participate*. *Shun* means to avoid deliberately and especially consistently, to abhor. To *participate*, one takes part or has a share in common with others.

Things to shun

We would recommend that one should—

1. Shun feelings of resentment, bitterness, and contention toward individuals rendering decisions. When discipline is administered, there is a tendency on the part of some to become resentful toward the individuals and institutions who have had to make the judgment. We should

permit ourselves to take a self-inventory sampling before we "cast the first stone." Resentment and anger are not good for the soul. They are foul things.

Bitterness must be replaced with humility. Truly, bitterness injures the one who carries it. It blinds, shrivels, and cankers.

Some of us are inclined to look to the weaknesses and shortcomings of others in order to expand our own comfort zone. A worthy personal support system in cases like this must include, to be effective, family, friends, and acquaintances who are willing to help us cope with what we see and experience.

Moroni gave us all some words of advice. "Condemn me not because of mine imperfection, neither my father, because of his imperfection, neither them who have written before him; but rather give thanks unto God that he hath made manifest unto you our imperfections, that ye may learn to be more wise than we have been" (Mormon 9:31).

A repentant individual will choose his own course and proceed with confidence. He has no need to protect a wounded self. He will not allow himself the danger of self-inflicted sympathy. It is generally good medicine to sympathize with others, but not with yourself.

2. Shun discouragement. One of Satan's most powerful tools is discouragement. Whisperings of "you can't do it," "you're no good," "it's too late," "what's the use?" or "things are hopeless" are tools of destruction. Satan would like you to believe that because you've made one mistake it's all over. He wants you to quit trying. It is important that discouragement is cast out of the lives of those who are waiting. This may take a decided amount of work and energy, but it can be accomplished.

3. Shun escape routes. There are those who would welcome you into rebellious or apostate groups. We can never build with purpose if we join the ranks of those who criticize and aim to tear down.

It is easier to demean and place blame on others for our situation than it is to repent and grow. Some who set out to damage and destroy others end up losing themselves in the process. Drugs, drink,

pornographic materials, and subculture associations are also escape routes. Attitudes of "it won't matter now" or "there is nothing for you to do" are totally inappropriate. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). Maintaining and building require discipline and patience. Shun those who would build themselves by destroying others.

4. Shun the desire to become anonymous. When difficulties arise, some want to fade into the crowd and become lost and unknown. Any thinking person will realize that there is a wonderful support system available to those who are listed on the records of the Church. There are those who will listen, help, and teach. There will be opportunities to study scriptures, ponder, and pray. Caring people and a caring God want to know where you are.

All need to be known, recognized, and loved. Hearts and souls reach out for nurturing and meaningful association. Even those who claim they just want to be left alone are in reality seeking their own identity.

Some privileges and powers are lost when we lose our membership in the Church, but let us not lose ourselves in the process of finding ourselves again. In God's eyes, nobody is a nobody. We should never lose sight of what we may become and who we are.

Ways to participate

While waiting, there are many ways to participate:

5. Participate with your family. Family members are priceless possessions. They offer love and strength. But even more, family members need each other. You can choose to be aware of the needs of each family member and do your part to help fill those needs. Some need a person to listen; some may need a compliment or positive reinforcement. There is strength and satisfaction in becoming involved in family projects. Encourage family love by being approachable even when you feel you have reason to turn

away. The first step back in seeking family acceptance is to change oneself for the better. It is true today, true yesterday, and will be true tomorrow that effective leadership can only be administered through love.

6. Participate in church functions and meetings. Accept opportunities to take appropriate assignments when given the opportunity. I will always be grateful to a good man who helped our boys on a continuing basis while it was not possible for him to take part in all the Church programs. He was well loved, and he loved the boys to whom he gave time and guidance.

Practice dependability and commitment. Adapt to existing conditions. There are places to serve where you are needed.

When someone declares, "There's nothing for me to do," it just isn't true. We sometimes make that statement because we have learned to live with present situations and resist new opportunities. Leaders must always be sensitive enough to look beyond restrictions and policies to the ultimate long-range needs of God's children.

7. Participate in worthy community projects, including compassionate and other volunteer services. Often our own problems seem to diminish when we become aware of the challenges faced by others. When my wife was volunteering as a pink lady at one of our local hospitals, she noticed that some of the doctors in the area would encourage their patients who were depressed, sad, or emotionally ill to join the volunteer organization. That prescription often worked better than medicine to build self-image and restore health to those who found joy in helping others.

As budget cuts plague so many of our cultural and civic programs, there is a place for anyone who desires to work with Scouts, help with reputable drives to collect money, and help in schools, art galleries, welfare agencies, and many other places.

There are no restrictions on participating in good works. There are no reasons to wait while God's children are in need of your love and service. Love should be a vehicle allowed to travel

without limitations. Jesus was always supremely interested in the individual over the circumstances.

8. Participate in "reporting in." Part of your responsibility in coming back is to find someone with whom you can share your concerns, questions, and progress. John Powell, in his book *The Secret of Staying in Love*, tells us that "the genius of communication is the ability to be both totally honest and totally kind at the same time" ([Valencia, California: Tabor Publishing, 1974], p. 131).

Look for this kind of person in your life. Problems often seem to diminish when they are vocalized. Another person's point of view may help you gain a different perspective of a situation. It is comforting to have a listener who will share your feelings and respect your needs.

Communication should be kind, gentle, open, and constructive.

One of the greatest blessings available to all is personal prayer. By this means everyone can "report in" to an understanding Father who loves all His children. God knows the feelings in every human heart. He can soften sorrow and lead when there seems to be no light. Prayer can give guidance and confidence. It reminds us that no one need be alone in this world. If all else fails, remember: God and one other person can be a family.

A plea to come back

My plea and invitation to all, especially to those who have temporarily lost certain privileges, is come back. Your lives are as important to us as they should be to you. One of the main goals of the Church is to secure the development and happiness of the individual. We want to have your association and your influence. President David O. McKay once wrote:

"In thus emphasizing individual effort, I am not unmindful of the necessity of cooperation. A single, struggling individual may be stalled with his heavy load even as he begins to climb the hill before him. To reach the top unaided is an impossibility. With a little help from fellow travelers he makes the grade and goes on

his way in gratitude and rejoicing" (*Paths to Happiness*, comp. Llewelyn R. McKay [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1957], p. 131).

We want to be your fellow travelers while you are en route back. Anxiously engage in actions and attitudes that will bring full fellowship and the accompanying joys and rights to which you will be entitled. We will be at your side to help as you travel upward in a support system with God at the helm. We promise you in all the days ahead that while you are going through what is identified as a waiting period, the quotation from Psalm 142:4 will not be your relationship to us: "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul."

We love you. We know you, and we care for you. We are all God's children,

and for members in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and their treasured associates, there need be no waiting period. Instead we will work together for self-worth and ultimate victory in righteous achievement. To these truths I leave my witness in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Jesus, Once of Humble Birth" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve has addressed us, and the choir has sung "Jesus, Once of Humble Birth."

President Gordon B. Hinckley

I desire now to share a few thoughts on the eternal things of God, and I pray for His directing Spirit.

If I repeat one or two things that my brethren have said, it is because this is Easter morning, when we commemorate the greatest of all events in the history of mankind—the breaking of the bonds of death by Him who is the eternal Son of the living God.

Memories of classmates

I have spoken at three different funerals of old friends in the past three weeks. I have had occasion to reflect on the fact and miracle of life, and the wonder and miracle of death.

Returning from a memorial service for a high school friend of long ago, I took from a shelf in my study the yearbook for the class of 1928. I spent an hour quietly thumbing through the pages of photographs of my associates in our graduating class of sixty years ago.

All of those faces were then young and bright and full of promise. I do not know what has become of all of them, but

I know what has become of many of them. We have followed a myriad of interests in pursuit of our dreams. Some perished with honor in the terrible wars that have scourged the earth during these threescore years. Most of us have married, happily I am glad to say, and have already become the forebears of three generations of posterity. I know of no divorces among that large number.

Once as lively students we shouted for victory for our basketball and football teams. Now, somewhat bent, we prefer to read and ponder and reflect. Once we danced and sang with noisy delight. We now enjoy peace and quiet and a comfortable chair. These of my peers have become educators, scientists, doctors, lawyers, civil servants, and have done well in many other honorable vocations. As I thumbed through the pages of that old book, I could not think of one who had been convicted of a serious crime. I think that remarkable. All who are alive are now in their late seventies. Many are gone, and we remember them with affection and appreciation.

In each case their passing has brought sorrow over the separation of friends. But in every case there have also been comfort and reassurance and certainty that death, though bitter to observe, is not the end, but is, rather, only another graduation from which we go on to a better life. For all of my classmates were of my faith, who believed as I believe. Along with English and chemistry, history and math, we were taught the things of God, just as hundreds of thousands of our youth today are taught through the great programs of the Church.

The other day as I stood at the bier of my classmate and reflected on the things of eternity, I had peace in my heart and gratitude. There were tears, yes, properly so. The Lord said: "Thou shalt live together in love, inasmuch that thou shalt weep for the loss of them that die, and more especially for those that have not hope of a glorious resurrection.

"And it shall come to pass that those that die in me shall not taste of death, for it shall be sweet unto them" (D&C 42:45-46).

I am confident that for the friend of my high school days, death was a sweet experience with the assurance of a glorious resurrection.

Now absent is the pain of mortal life. Gone is the suffering of long sickness and much of loneliness. She is again in the association of loved ones, the parents who gave her mortal life and others of her family who loved her while they lived. Her spirit has gone to join theirs, and there will come that promised morning of the first resurrection, when they shall again take up their bodies and live in that sociality which bound them with the bonds of love while they were mortal beings.

The great promise of Easter

This is the great promise of Easter. How wonderful it is that this is a day of celebration throughout the Christian world. Of all the events of human history, none is so significant as the resurrection of the Son of God.

Since the creation of man, no fact of life has been so certain as death with the close of mortality. When the last of life's breath is drawn, there is a finality comparable to no other finality. When a father and mother lay the remains of a beloved child in the cold of the grave, there is grief almost inconsolable. When a husband buries the companion of his life, there is a loneliness that is poignant and unrelieved. When a wife closes the casket on the remains of her beloved husband, there are wounds that seem never to heal. When children are bereft of parents who loved and nurtured them, there is an abject destitution comparable to none other. Life is sacred, and death is somber. Life is buoyant and hopeful. Death is solemn and dark. It is awesome in its silence and certainty. Appropriately did Sir Walter Raleigh cry out, "O eloquent, just and mighty death" (Alfred Noyes, *Raleigh*, in Tom Peete Cross and Clement Tyson Goode, sel., *Heath Readings in the Literature of England* [Boston: D. C. Heath and Co., 1927], p. 1133).

But death is not final. Though it seems so when its dark shroud overshadows mortal life, to those who accept the Christ and His eternal mission there is light and comfort, there is assurance, there is certainty.

I penned these lines some years ago while seated in the funeral service of a friend:

What is this thing that men call
death,
This quiet passing in the night?
'Tis not the end, but genesis
Of better worlds and greater light.

O God, touch Thou my aching heart,
And calm my troubled, haunting
fears.
Let hope and faith, transcendent,
pure,
Give strength and peace beyond my
tears.

There is no death, but only change
With recompense for victory won;
The gift of Him who loved all men,
The Son of God, the Holy One.

The resurrection and the life

Of all the victories in human history, none is so great, none so universal in its effect, none so everlasting in its consequences as the victory of the crucified Lord who came forth in the Resurrection that first Easter morning.

We laud the captains and the kings, we praise the nations that are victorious against oppressors. We appropriately build monuments to remember their sacrifices and their triumphs over the forces of oppression. But great and important as are these achievements, none can compare with the victory of the lonely, pain-racked figure on Calvary's cross who triumphed over death and brought the gift of eternal life to all mankind.

He it was who answered Job's desperate question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" (Job 14:14). And it was Job who prophetically declared concerning the resurrected Master:

"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

"And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

"Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me" (Job 19:25-27).

At some time every one of us must face the question which Job faced, and because of the Atonement wrought by Jesus Christ we may answer it as Job answered it. How wondrous is the story of the great Creator, the mighty Jehovah, who condescended to come to earth as the babe born in Bethlehem of Judea, who walked the dusty paths of Palestine teaching and healing and blessing, who gave His life on Calvary's painful cross, and who rose from Joseph's tomb, appearing to many on two continents—the resurrected Lord of whom we read in the testament of the Old World, the Bible, and in the testament of the New World, the Book of Mormon, as well as in the sure word of modern revelation.

We have read these, and the Spirit has borne witness in our hearts so that

we too can testify that Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life, and that he that believeth in Him, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and he that liveth and believeth in Him shall never die (see John 11:25-26).

Gone is the sting of death. The grave is robbed of its victory.

The master of life and death

He was the master of life and death, the man of miracles. It was He who made the blind to see, the lame to walk, the dead to live.

"There cometh [one day] one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw [Jesus], he fell at his feet,

"And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live. . . .

"While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house certain which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further?

"As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he sayeth unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe" (Mark 5:22-23, 35-36).

Then he took with him Peter, James, and John, and, dismissing those without faith, "he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.

"And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment" (vs. 41-42).

Small wonder that they were astonished with a great astonishment. None other in all of their acquaintance, nor in all of history, had done as He had done. He raised the damsel from death to life. And as it was with her, so it was and even more so with Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, who had been dead and entombed when the Master called him forth to life, and he came forth. Surely Jesus was the master of life and death, yet

He accepted the ignominy and the horrendous pain of the cross as cruel and barbarous men planned His death. As He hung in agony, His evil tormentors cried out, "He saved others; himself he cannot save" (Matthew 27:42).

He had the power to save Himself. To the impetuous Peter who had tried to defend Him against those who had come to arrest Him, He had said, "Think-est thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matthew 26:53).

So it might have been had He asked His Father. "But," said He, "how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" (Matthew 26:54).

He became our Redeemer

No, the Son of Man must give His life to atone for the sins of all mankind, that He, being lifted up, might lift up all men after Him.

He submitted Himself, and they took Him and in mockery crowned Him with a crown of platted thorns and placed a purple robe on His back. Without mercy and with hatred vile and intemperate, they beat Him and scourged Him and cried out for His crucifixion. He had done no evil. He had done only good, and in greater measure than any man before Him had ever done. Yet they cried for His death.

He staggered under the weight of the cross on which He was to hang. They nailed His quivering flesh to the unyielding wood. They mocked Him as He hung in agony.

While suffering, He forgave them. He cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46). Then He died for each of us.

But in dying He brought about the redemption of mankind. None can fully comprehend the extent and wonder and majesty of that sacrifice in our behalf. Suffice it to say He became our Redeemer.

His body was dressed and placed in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. The tomb was sealed, and guards were set.

The first fruits of them that slept

But no force beneath the heavens could now hold back the power of the Son of God. It was as if His Almighty Father could stand no more. The earth trembled. The guards fled. The stone was moved. The Lord of heaven and earth arose from the bier, shook off the burial clothes, and stepped forth to become the first fruits of them that slept. The empty tomb bore testimony of this greatest of all miracles. With the appearance of the risen Lord first to Mary and then to many others, even to upwards of five hundred, came the undeniable testimony of His everlasting power over life and death.

Mary addressed Him as *Rabboni*, which means Master. The Apostles felt of His wounds, and Thomas, who had doubted, declared, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28).

Book of Mormon witnesses of Christ

Nor was the miracle witnessed only in Palestine. There were other sheep of His fold of whom He had spoken. He must visit them. All of this is set forth as the testimony of many witnesses in the four gospels of the New Testament. And there is a fifth which speaks with equal power as an added witness of His divinity and of the reality of His resurrection. It is found in this other testament which we call the Book of Mormon. It concerns events that occurred in this western hemisphere when the earth trembled at His dying. There was destruction and darkness and weeping and death.

And there gathered a multitude round about the temple in the land Bountiful who marveled at the great changes that had taken place and at the terrible destructions which they had witnessed. And "they heard a voice as if it came out of heaven; and they cast their eyes round about, for they understood not the voice which they heard; and it was not a harsh voice, neither was it a loud voice; nevertheless, and notwithstanding it being a small voice it did pierce them that did hear to the center, insomuch that there

was no part of their frame that it did not cause to quake; yea, it did pierce them to the very soul, and did cause their hearts to burn" (3 Nephi 11:3).

And the voice came again, and yet a third time, "and it said unto them:

"Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name—hear ye him.

"And . . . they saw a Man descending out of heaven; and he was clothed in a white robe; and he came down and stood in the midst of them; . . .

"And it came to pass that he stretched forth his hand and spake unto the people, saying:

"Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world.

"And behold, I am the light and the life of the world; and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world, in the which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning" (3 Nephi 11:6–11).

They felt of His wounds, they cried out with love, and they fell at His feet and worshiped Him.

At that time and during the days that followed He taught them as He had taught in Palestine. He instituted the sacrament of the Last Supper among them that they and the generations who followed might hold Him in remembrance. He blessed them, and when He departed from them the Holy Ghost came upon them.

Latter-day witnesses of Christ

He has come again in this period of history. In a manifestation without

comparison, our Eternal Father and the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ appeared to open this "the dispensation of the fulness of times" (D&C 112:30). He to whom they appeared became the prophet of this dispensation. And it was he who declared:

"And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

"For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—

"That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God" (D&C 76:22–24).

To which we add our solemn testimony this Easter Sabbath. We too know, by the power of the Holy Ghost which has borne witness to us, that He is the living Son of the living God.

He is our Savior, our Redeemer, the Prince of Peace, the Prince of Life, the Son of the Everlasting Father, the Hope of all mankind, of which I bear witness in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir will sing, in closing, "Father in Heaven, We Do Believe," following which the benediction will be offered by Elder George I. Cannon of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and we shall be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The choir sang "Father in Heaven, We Do Believe."

Elder George I. Cannon offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY AFTERNOON SESSION

The fifth session of the 158th Annual General Conference commenced at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, April 3, 1988. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

Music was provided by the Tabernacle Choir, directed by Jerold Ottley and Donald H. Ripplinger with Robert Cundick at the organ.

President Monson made the following remarks at the outset of the meeting.

President Thomas S. Monson

President Ezra Taft Benson, who has presided at all sessions of this conference, has asked that I, Brother Monson, conduct this fifth and concluding session of the 158th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We extend a sincere welcome to all assembled in the Tabernacle and to those seated in the Assembly Hall, where Elders Rex D. Pinegar and Ronald E. Poelman are seated on the stand. We also send our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere who are participating in these proceedings by radio, television, cable, or satellite transmission.

The Tabernacle Choir, with Jerold D. Ottley and Donald H. Ripplinger directing and Robert Cundick at the organ, will begin this service by singing "Praise the Lord with Heart and Voice." The invocation will then be offered by Elder Robert L. Simpson of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Praise the Lord with Heart and Voice."

Elder Robert L. Simpson offered the invocation.

President Monson

This magnificent choir will now sing the beautiful number entitled "Praise," and following the singing, Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our first speaker.

The choir sang "Praise."

Elder Boyd K. Packer

The Lord's atonement

The Lord had come from Gethsemane; before Him was His crucifixion. At the moment of betrayal, Peter drew his sword against Malchus, a servant of the high priest. Jesus said:

"Put up again thy sword into his place. . . .

"Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matthew 26:52-53).

During all of the taunting, the abuse, the scourging, and the final torture of crucifixion, the Lord remained silent and submissive. Except, that is, for one moment of intense drama which reveals the very essence of Christian doctrine.

That moment came during the trial. Pilate, now afraid, said to Jesus: "Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not

that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?" (John 19:10).

One can only imagine the quiet majesty when the Lord spoke. "Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above" (John 19:11).

What happened thereafter did not come because Pilate had power to impose it, but because the Lord had the will to accept it.

"I lay down my life," the Lord said, "that I might take it again.

"No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John 10:17-18).

Before the Crucifixion and afterward, many men have willingly given their lives in selfless acts of heroism. But none faced what the Christ endured.

Upon Him was the burden of all human transgression, all human guilt.

And hanging in the balance was the Atonement. Through His willing act, mercy and justice could be reconciled, eternal law sustained, and that mediation achieved without which mortal man could not be redeemed.

He, by choice, accepted the penalty for all mankind for the sum total of all wickedness and depravity; for brutality, immorality, perversion, and corruption; for addiction; for the killings and torture and terror—for all of it that ever had been or all that ever would be enacted upon this earth.

In choosing, He faced the awesome power of the evil one who was not confined to flesh nor subject to mortal pain. That was Gethsemane!

How the Atonement was wrought, we do not know. No mortal watched as evil turned away and hid in shame before the light of that pure being.

All wickedness could not quench that light. When what was done was done, the ransom had been paid. Both death and hell forsook their claim on all who would repent. Men at last were free. Then every soul who ever lived could choose to touch that light and be redeemed.

By this infinite sacrifice, through this atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel.

The word *atonement* in the Bible

Atonement is really three words: *At-one-ment*, meaning to set at one, one with God; to reconcile, to conciliate, to expiate.

But did you know that the word *atonement* appears only once in the English New Testament? Only once! I quote from Paul's letter to the Romans:

"Christ died for us. . . .

" . . . We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

"And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the

atonement" (Romans 5:8, 10–11; italics added).

Only that once does the word *atonement* appear in the English New Testament. *Atonement*, of all words! It was not an unknown word, for it had been used much in the Old Testament in connection with the law of Moses, once only in the New Testament. I find that to be remarkable.

I know of only one explanation. For that we turn to the Book of Mormon.

Nephi testified that the Bible once "contained the fulness of the gospel of the Lord, of whom the twelve apostles bear record" (1 Nephi 13:24) and that "after [the words] go forth by the hand of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, from the Jews unto the Gentiles, thou seest the formation of that great and abominable church, which is most abominable above all other churches; for behold, they have taken away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious; and also many covenants of the Lord have they taken away" (1 Nephi 13:26).

Jacob defined the great and abominable church in these words:

"Wherefore, he that fighteth against Zion, both Jew and Gentile, both bond and free, both male and female, shall perish; for they are they who are the whore of all the earth; for they who are not for me are against me, saith our God" (2 Nephi 10:16).

Nephi said, "Because of the many plain and precious things which have been taken out of the book, . . . an exceedingly great many do stumble, yea, insomuch that Satan hath great power over them" (1 Nephi 13:29). He then prophesied that the precious things would be restored (see 1 Nephi 13:34–35).

The word *atonement* in latter-day scripture

And they were restored. In the Book of Mormon the word *atone* in form and tense appears fifty-five times. I quote but one verse from Alma: "And now, the plan of mercy could not be brought about except an *atonement* should be made;

therefore God himself *atoneth* for the sins of the world, to bring about the plan of mercy, to appease the demands of justice, that God might be a perfect, just God, and a merciful God also" (Alma 42:15; italics added).

Only once in the New Testament—fifty-five times in the Book of Mormon. What better witness that the Book of Mormon is indeed another testament of Jesus Christ?

And that is not all. The words *atone*, *atonement*, *atoneth*, appear in the Doctrine and Covenants eleven times and in the Pearl of Great Price three. Sixty-nine references of transcendent importance. And that is not all! Hundreds of other verses help to explain it.

Agency in the Fall and Atonement

The cost of the Atonement was borne by the Lord without compulsion, for agency is a sovereign principle. According to the plan, agency must be honored. It was so from the beginning, from Eden.

"The Lord said unto Enoch: Behold these thy brethren; they are the workmanship of mine own hands, and I gave unto them their knowledge, in the day I created them; and in the Garden of Eden, gave I unto man his agency" (Moses 7:32).

Whatever else happened in Eden, in his supreme moment of testing, Adam made a choice.

After the Lord commanded Adam and Eve to multiply and replenish the earth and commanded them *not* to partake of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, He said, "Nevertheless, thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee; but, remember that I forbid it, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Moses 3:17).

There was too much at issue to introduce man into mortality by force. That would contravene the very law essential to the plan. The plan provided that each spirit child of God would receive a mortal body and each would be tested. Adam saw that it must be so and made his choice. "Adam fell that men might be;

and men are, that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25).

The Fall and Atonement were essential

Adam and Eve ventured forth to multiply and replenish the earth as they had been commanded to do. The creation of their bodies in the image of God, as a separate creation, was crucial to the plan. Their subsequent fall was essential if the condition of mortality was to exist and the plan proceed.

Jacob described what would happen to our bodies and our spirits except an atonement, an infinite atonement, were made. We should, he said, have become "like unto [the devil]" (see 2 Nephi 9:7-9).

I seldom use the word *absolute*. It seldom fits. I use it now—twice. Because of the Fall, the Atonement was absolutely essential for resurrection to proceed and overcome mortal death.

The Atonement was absolutely essential for men to cleanse themselves from sin and overcome the second death, which is the spiritual death, which is separation from our Father in Heaven. For the scriptures tell us, seven times they tell us, that no unclean thing may enter the presence of God.

Those scriptural words, "Thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee" (Moses 3:17), introduced Adam and Eve and their posterity to all the risks of mortality. In mortality men are free to choose, and each choice begets a consequence. The choice Adam made energized the law of justice, which required that the penalty for disobedience would be death.

But those words spoken at the trial, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above" (John 19:11), proved mercy was of equal rank. A Redeemer was sent to pay the debt and set men free. That was the plan.

Alma's son Corianton thought it unfair that penalties must follow sin, that there need be punishment. In a profound lesson Alma taught the plan of redemption to his son, and so to us.

Alma spoke of the Atonement and said, "Now, repentance could not come unto men except there were a punishment" (Alma 42:16).

If punishment is the price repentance asks, it comes at bargain price. Consequences, even painful ones, protect us. So simple a thing as a child's cry of pain when his finger touches fire can teach us that. Except for the pain, the child might be consumed.

I readily confess that I would find no peace, neither happiness nor safety, in a world without repentance. I do not know what I should do if there were no way for me to erase my mistakes. The agony would be more than I could bear. It may be otherwise with you, but not with me.

An atonement was made. Ever and always it offers amnesty from transgression and from death if we will but repent. Repentance is the escape clause in it all. Repentance is the key with which we can unlock the prison from inside. We hold that key within our hands, and agency is ours to use it.

How supernally precious freedom is; how consummately valuable is the agency of man.

Lucifer in clever ways manipulates our choices, deceiving us about sin and consequences. He, and his angels with him, tempt us to be unworthy, even wicked. But he cannot, in all eternity he cannot, with all his power he cannot completely destroy us; not without our own consent. Had agency come to man without the Atonement, it would have been a fatal gift.

God created man in His own image

We are taught in Genesis, in Moses, in Abraham, in the Book of Mormon, and in the endowment that man's mortal body was made in the image of God in a separate creation. Had the Creation come in a different way, there could have been no Fall.

If men were merely animals, then logic favors freedom without accountability.

How well I know that among learned men are those who look down at animals

and stones to find the origin of man. They do not look inside themselves to find the spirit there. They train themselves to measure things by time, by thousands and by millions, and say these animals called men all came by chance. And this they are free to do, for agency is theirs.

But agency is ours as well. We look up, and in the universe we see the handiwork of God and measure things by epochs, by eons, by dispensations, by eternities. The many things we do not know we take on faith.

But this we know! It was all planned before the world was. Events from the Creation to the final, winding-up scene are not based on *chance*; they are based on *choice*! It was planned that way.

This we know! This simple truth! Had there been no Creation, no Fall, there should have been no need for any Atonement, neither a Redeemer to mediate for us. Then Christ need not have been.

The Passover: a symbol and a type

At Gethsemane and Golgotha the Savior's blood was shed. Centuries earlier the Passover had been introduced as a symbol and a type of things to come. It was an ordinance to be kept forever (see Exodus 12).

When the plague of death was decreed upon Egypt, each Israelite family was commanded to take a lamb, firstborn, male, without blemish. This paschal lamb was slain without breaking any bones, its blood to mark the doorway of the home. The Lord promised that the angel of death would *pass over* the homes so marked and not slay those inside. They were saved by the blood of the lamb.

After the crucifixion of the Lord, the law of sacrifice required no more shedding of blood. For that was done, as Paul taught the Hebrews, "once for all, . . . one sacrifice for sins for ever" (Hebrews 10:10, 12). The sacrifice thenceforth was to be a broken heart and a contrite spirit—repentance.

And the Passover would be commemorated forever as the sacrament, in which we renew our covenant of baptism and partake in remembrance of the body

of the Lamb of God and of His blood, which was shed for us.

It is no small thing that this symbol reappears in the Word of Wisdom. Beyond the promise that Saints in this generation, who obey, will receive health and great treasures of knowledge is this: "I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them" (D&C 89:21).

He ransomed us

I cannot with composure tell you how I feel about the Atonement. It touches the deepest emotion of gratitude and obligation. My soul reaches after Him who wrought it, this Christ, our Savior of whom I am a witness. I testify

of Him. He is our Lord, our Redeemer, our advocate with the Father. He ransomed us with His blood.

Humbly I lay claim upon the atonement of Christ. I find no shame in kneeling down in worship of our Father and His Son. For agency is mine, and this I choose to do!

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elders George R. Hill III and John R. Lasater, who were sustained as members of the First Quorum of the Seventy at April conference last year.

Elder George R. Hill III

Science and religion complementary

My beloved fellow servants of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, since receiving this special call to full-time service for the Master, I have studied and pondered and prayed, as do all of you, to determine how best to serve.

It has been my privilege during the forty years prior to last April conference to search for truth through research in the physical sciences, an endeavor which blends some inspiration with a lot of perspiration, but which leads to the discovery of facts and principles which bring much benefit to mankind. I am most grateful for that privilege, as well as for the simultaneous privilege of discovering the principles of truth revealed directly from the Lord to his chosen prophets, as recorded in the scriptures. To the many young people of the Church who have the privilege of discovering truth through the scientific method, let me add my testimony to those of Elders James E. Talmage and John A. Widtsoe (author of a choice book, *In Search of Truth*) that there is no conflict between the facts and

truths of science and those given to us by direct revelation. Rather than conflicting, the facts and truths in each area complement each other, each supplying answers to basic questions which we must know, eventually, if we are to fulfill our destiny as sons and daughters and copartners with our Father in his eternal plan.

Apparent conflicts arise when the theories of science—which serve as a scaffolding erected to try to understand relationships among observed facts—are mistaken for the experimentally verified facts.

Occasionally also, some people subject the scriptures to personal interpretation. This can give rise to differences in perception as well. I have learned to say, "I don't know," when confronted with choices which seem to be in conflict. No true scientist will say that we have final, exact answers through scientific research; it is an ongoing, learning process. The Articles of Faith teach us that the Lord "will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God" (Articles of Faith 1:9). As members of the Lord's church our blessing is to

believe all that is true and to diligently seek learning "by study and also by faith" (D&C 88:118).

Search scriptures for solutions

In our assignment in the Philippines, we have found it necessary to go to the scriptures for solutions to the challenges accompanying the wonderfully high conversion rate of a very spiritually sensitive people who need guidance in Church administrative procedures.

This is occurring in a land with an extremely high unemployment rate. We find food and materials shortages which remind us of the conditions that must have followed the destruction of the Nephite cities at the time of the Savior's crucifixion. At that time, the resurrected Savior gave the surviving Nephites some direction they needed to reestablish their civilization. He quoted His own words to Malachi of the need for their being faithful in their tithes and offerings:

"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say: Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. . . .

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house; and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it. . . .

"And all nations shall call you blessed, for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of Hosts" (3 Nephi 24:8, 10, 12).

The marvelous fulfillment of that promise within three years is described in 4 Nephi 1:2-5.

The members of the Church in the Philippines are becoming aware that sacrifice precedes the blessing and that they must live the law of tithing and the law of the fast if they are to receive the promises given those who do, as described in Isaiah 58:

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free? . . .

"Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? . . .

"Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily. . . .

"Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. . . .

"And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not" (vs. 6-9, 11).

Mosiah 4:26 reinforces this counsel.

Retain, reactivate, and record

We are finding it very important to follow the advice given by the First Presidency—to get back to basics and to practice the new version of the three R's. Because the flood of new members exceeds the normal friendship capacity in wards and branches, our perceptive mission presidents and stake presidents are cooperating in the "Retaining and Re-activating, by Recording the participation and growth in Church service" of each current member and recent convert to the Church. The marked increase in continuing activity of new members is most encouraging and satisfying.

Meeting the need for leaders

The need for leaders who understand the principles of the gospel and who can carry out the detailed administrative responsibilities in their new callings, while ministering to the individual, reminds us of the challenges faced by the Prophet Joseph in the Kirtland era of the early Church. Then, as now, there was a need for intense instruction in the Lord's way of doing things. The Lord's direction then was to institute the "school of the prophets, established for their instruction in all things that are expedient for them, even for all the officers of the church, . . . even down to the deacons" (D&C 88:127). The stake priesthood

leadership meeting provides a forum for the pretraining of potential leaders, to supplement the learning-by-observing method followed in established areas of the Church. What a blessing it is to be able to go to the scriptures to find the answers to virtually any challenge we face in our Church callings.

Let me close by expressing my love and gratitude for goodly parents, to my

choice wife and companion, and to our children and grandchildren, who sustain us so well with their prayers and the lives they lead. To them and to you I testify that the gospel of Jesus Christ is true, that Jesus lives and loves each of us with an unbounded love, and that Ezra Taft Benson is His chosen prophet today, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder John R. Lasater

I am aware, more than at any other time in my life, of the great responsibility that rests on the shoulders of those who carry out assignments at this pulpit. Nevertheless, I rejoice in the blessing and opportunity that is now mine to add my personal witness regarding the divinity of this great work to which we have been called.

Example of the Master Shepherd

The personal nature of the Lord's ministry as the Master Shepherd should be the pattern for all who shepherd the flocks of Israel. The depth of His love, His willingness to give freely of Himself, His undeviating loyalty and devotion to the cause shared so completely with His Father, and His constant attention to the needs of the one stand as hallmarks of the true shepherd's calling.

A shepherd in Morocco

Some years ago, it was my privilege to visit the country of Morocco as part of an official United States government delegation. As part of that visit, we were invited to travel some distance into the desert to visit some ruins. Five large black limousines moved across the beautiful Moroccan countryside at considerable speed. I was riding in the third limousine, which had lagged some distance behind the second. As we topped the brow of a hill, we noticed that the limousine in front of us had pulled off to

the side of the road. As we drew nearer, I sensed that an accident had occurred and suggested to my driver that we stop. The scene before us has remained with me for these many years.

An old shepherd, in the long, flowing robes of the Savior's day, was standing near the limousine in conversation with the driver. Nearby, I noted a small flock of sheep numbering not more than fifteen or twenty. An accident had occurred. The king's vehicle had struck and injured one of the sheep belonging to the old shepherd. The driver of the vehicle was explaining to him the law of the land. Because the king's vehicle had injured one of the sheep belonging to the old shepherd, he was now entitled to one hundred times its value at maturity. However, under the same law, the injured sheep must be slain and the meat divided among the people. My interpreter hastily added, "But the old shepherd will not accept the money. They never do."

Startled, I asked him why. And he added, "Because of the love he has for each of his sheep." It was then that I noticed the old shepherd reach down, lift the injured lamb in his arms, and place it in a large pouch on the front of his robe. He kept stroking its head, repeating the same word over and over again. When I asked the meaning of the word, I was informed, "Oh, he is calling it by name. All of his sheep have a name, for he is their shepherd, and the good shepherds know each one of their sheep by name."

It was as my driver predicted. The money was refused, and the old shepherd with his small flock of sheep, with the injured one tucked safely in the pouch on his robe, disappeared into the beautiful deserts of Morocco.

The shepherd's call is personal

As we continued our journey toward the ruins, my interpreter shared with me more of the traditions and practices of the shepherds of that land. Each evening at sundown, for example, the shepherds bring their small flocks of sheep to a common enclosure where they are secured against the wolves that roam the deserts of Morocco. A single shepherd then is employed to guard the gate until morning. Then the shepherds come to the enclosure one by one, enter therein, and call forth their sheep—by name. The sheep will not hearken unto the voice of a stranger but will leave the enclosure only in the care of their true shepherd, confident and secure because the shepherd knows their names and they know his voice.

The words of the Master Shepherd rang loudly in my ears:

"But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

"To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

"And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

"And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers" (John 10:2-5).

Become true shepherds

My dear brothers and sisters, there are great lessons to be learned from these stirring words of the Master Shepherd. Into our hands, as members of this great church, has been given responsibility to be the true shepherds unto the flocks of Israel. Do we understand the personal nature of the shepherd's call? Whether we

go as home teachers or visiting teachers, whether we serve as auxiliary leaders or teachers, or priesthood leaders at whatever level, we have received a divine injunction from God, through a living prophet, to become personal shepherds and ministers. No, it is not a new call; it has always been so.

Do we know our sheep, each one, by name? Do they know our voice, or must they hearken unto the voices of strangers? Do they know us as true shepherds who love them, who willingly and freely give time and attention to their needs, and, in that marvelous process, instill the confidence and security so greatly needed in God's children today? Are we then able to lead them into full activity in the Church and onward to immortality and eternal life? Do we go before them, constantly reassuring and building confidence because they know our voice?

Or are we strangers unto many? I promise you that you will not be a stranger, that you cannot be if you come to know the voice of the Master Shepherd, for that voice will confirm what a prophet has declared, and the Spirit will direct your efforts. And then, and only then, you will become a true shepherd in Israel.

There can be no greater example of the very personal nature of a true shepherd's call than the events of that Easter weekend nearly two thousand years ago—the depth of the Master Shepherd's love, His willingness to give freely of Himself, His undeviating loyalty and devotion to the cause, and His constant attention to the needs of the one. Those same qualities must mark our ministries as the shepherds of Israel.

I testify, with all the fervency of my soul, regarding the need we have to be true shepherds and to come to know the personal nature of the true shepherd's call. As one of His shepherds, I bear witness of the sacred responsibility that has been placed on our shoulders to be true shepherds unto the flocks of Israel and to know the personal nature of that calling. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elders George R. Hill III and John R. Lasater of the First Quorum of the Seventy have just addressed us.

It will now be our privilege to listen to Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy and currently serving as president of the Hawaii Honolulu Mission.

Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi

My dear brothers and sisters, I bring greetings from the Saints and missionaries in the beautiful islands of Hawaii. I say to you, aloha!

Today, I would like to ask a question: My dear brothers, are we treating our wives as daughters of God? Are *you* treating *your* wife as a daughter of God?

A daughter of God. The words have a special feeling. Even as you say them, you feel a reverence. You may say, "Oh, Brother Kikuchi, of course I treat her as a daughter of God!" But my next question is, How *much* do you treat and honor her as a daughter of God? Let's stop and think of your lovely companion. She was entrusted to you by Heavenly Father as a special daughter of God.

I believe that in this lifetime, the closest person or neighbor that you can have in your life is your sweet wife. She is your sweetheart! She is your love! She is your best friend! She is your lover! And she is a daughter of God!

Love thy wife

The Lord's teaching to the lawyer was very clear:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

"This is the first and great commandment.

"And the second is *like unto it*, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37-39; italics added).

Yesterday, our beloved prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, said that above everything we do in our lives, we must place the first commandment first—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God."

The second is also like the first. The Lord said, "Love thy neighbour as thyself." Brothers, among all the children of our Father in Heaven, don't you think your wife is the closest neighbor that you can have?

The Lord said, "Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart" (D&C 42:22).

Truly, "marriage is ordained of God" (D&C 49:15). "Marriage is honorable in all" (Hebrews 13:4).

Abraham's commitment

When the Lord told Abraham to offer his only son, Isaac, on Mount Moriah, Abraham took Isaac, two servants, and a donkey and built an altar (see Genesis 22:2-3). On the way, Isaac asked, "Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Though Father Abraham knew that Isaac was the one, he said, "My son, God will provide" (vs. 7-8).

When the time came, Abraham was willing to offer Isaac, and Isaac did not run away (see vs. 9-11). Brothers and sisters, in our marriages, we need both the commitment of Abraham and also the spirit of Isaac.

Behold thy mother

At the time of his unendurable agony, the Savior looked down on his mother, Mary, and introduced John to her, saying, "Woman, behold thy son!" And to John he said, "Behold thy mother!" The scripture records that John "took her unto his own home" (John 19:26-27).

Are we worthy to be entrusted by the Lord to take care of one of our Heavenly Father's daughters?

The Savior must have a special feeling toward the women of the world, because the first person that saw the resurrected Lord was a woman, Mary Magdalene. Oh, how special that was! (See John 20.)

Jonathon H. Napela

May I share today a story about a person who lived in such a way, *in an eternal*, loving companionship in Hawaii.

In 1850, Brigham Young sent ten missionaries to the Hawaiian Islands. Without understanding the language and culture, the missionaries found the work extremely difficult. Eventually they became discouraged, including the mission president. They became so discouraged that five of the ten left to go home. The youngest of the remaining missionaries, Elder George Q. Cannon, was determined to stay. He went to the Lord in prayer. The Lord inspired him to go to Lahaina on Maui. He did so.

As he approached this town, two ladies went screaming into a nearby house and brought out a local gentleman. The previous night, this man had had a dream that a messenger of God was coming to his town and that he must feed him. Elder Cannon was invited to stay and preach in the home of this man, Jonathon H. Napela, who was a very well-educated man and the magistrate of that district (see Alma 10:4).

Subsequently, Elder Cannon and Jonathon Napela became very close friends, like Alma and Amulek in the Book of Mormon (see Alma 10–15). Because of the guiding hand of God and Brother Napela's great help, along with the hospitality and kindness of the Hawaiian Saints, the missionary work began to excel in Hawaii, and the foundation was laid.

His great and deep love

Many years later, in 1873, Kitty, the wife of this great man, Jonathon Napela, contracted leprosy. She was a beautiful and noble woman in the early days of the

Church in Hawaii. Today modern medical knowledge has advanced so that this disease is no longer fatal, but at that time, there was no cure for this dreadful disease. In order to prevent the spreading of this disease, once you contracted it you were forced to live on one of the seashores in the leper colony on Molokai. The lepers were taken there by boat. The sailors were so afraid of this disease that they pushed the patients into the sea, forcing them to swim to shore.

Because his wife had to go to Kalaupapa, the leper colony, Jonathon, too, wanted to go. He took her hand and they went there together. Why would he do this? Because he loved her so much! He knew that life is eternal and love is eternal, even through days of "sickness and health."

Oh, how much do I love my wife? Oh, do I love her as a daughter of God, as Jonathon loved his wife? Would I be willing to go to a place like that to be with her? Would you be willing to demonstrate your pure love like Jonathon? Brethren, are we honoring our companions? Are we caring? Are we thoughtful? We must be, because God has joined us together (see Mark 10:9).

History records that this valiant and giant man of God worked in the leper colony and fought to obtain government assistance for the lepers to have a more comfortable place to live. He was a giant in the pure love of Christ for his own people. Oh, I can almost hear the words of Paul to the Corinthians when he said, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal" (1 Corinthians 13:1).

This good brother later contracted that same disease and died even before his wife passed away. She followed him two years later. Husbands, do you love your wife as a daughter of God? Oh, "husbands, love your wives" as daughters of God, "even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25).

I know that God lives! This is his church. I know that the Savior lives!

I know that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, who restored this church. I know that our beloved prophet, even President Ezra Taft Benson, is the living oracle of God and an example to us. The Book of Mormon is true. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have just heard a beautiful message from Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi, a member of the First Quorum of the

Seventy and currently the president of the Hawaii Honolulu Mission.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "I Know That My Redeemer Lives," following which Sister Dwan J. Young, who was released yesterday as general president of the Primary, will speak to us.

The choir and congregation sang "I Know That My Redeemer Lives."

Dwan J. Young

Strong and valiant children

Holly loved the towering pine tree in front of her home. Its branches shaded her favorite place to play.

The day of the accident, there were three younger children listening to Holly read under the tree. Suddenly, in her mind, something whispered to her. Holly's heart started to thump as the command echoed in her head, "Move!" She responded at once. Scrambling to her feet, she shouted to the children to run. She grabbed the smallest one, and the rest followed. The children thought it was a game until they heard a terrible crash.

A driver had lost control of his car and hit the big pine tree where the children had been reading only minutes before. They would have been badly hurt if they hadn't moved. Some of the children were so frightened that they started to cry. But not Holly. She was thinking about the small voice she had heard in her mind and heart that told her to move. She knew that the warning had come to her from the Holy Ghost. The gift that she had received from Heavenly Father after she had been baptized and confirmed had helped her, just as she had been promised. (See Elaine Cannon, *Baptized and Confirmed: Your Lifeline to Heaven* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1986], pp. 36-37.)

Now, there are many Hollies among us—children who have been taught to be

sensitive to the Spirit. Who are these children? Our beloved President Benson told us not long ago, "God has saved for the final inning some of His stronger and most valiant children, who will help bear off the kingdom triumphantly" (*Ensign*, Apr. 1987, p. 73). They are all sons and daughters of God, each with a special mission to perform. Their self-esteem grows as they learn who they truly are.

A challenging environment

But many of our children today are learning under less than ideal circumstances. Even in elementary schools, some of the children are confronted with drugs, alcohol, profane language, and even immorality among their classmates. In many cases, family members are involved in so many activities away from home that there is no time for parents and children to develop meaningful relationships with one another. Fewer families are praying together and eating their meals together. Fewer fathers are spending time with their children, and more mothers are too tired at the end of the day to share an hour of reading or visiting with their children. Time that could be spent with family members is often spent watching television. By the age of eighteen, a child has typically spent more time in front of the television set than in school.

Importance of teaching children

In this kind of an environment, we *must* take time to teach the children about the important things of life—about Heavenly Father, the Savior, and the Holy Ghost. We must teach them about repentance, baptism, honesty, and doing good to others. Now, you might say, “I’m not a parent; I don’t teach children.” Actually, we are all teachers of children—parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, priesthood leaders, ward members, neighbors. Children are always watching and learning. We teach them through our behavior as well as by what we say. They watch how we treat each other. They listen to the voices of their parents and to the voices at church. Unfortunately, they also listen to voices on television and elsewhere which sometimes teach values contrary to gospel principles. We must teach them at an early age to listen to the right voices, as Holly did.

Five truths about children

Over the years, I’ve learned certain truths about children I’d like to share with you.

First, children *want* to be taught. This was brought home to me when I was visiting a Primary in Bolivia. I planned to visit an older class when three little girls tugged at my sleeve. They had been to their classroom but they came back because there was no teacher. “Please, will you teach us?” they asked. “We need a teacher.” This was one of the sweetest teaching experiences I have ever had because those children were thirsty for gospel truths.

Second, children understand quiet whisperings of the Spirit as Holly understood.

Third, as children learn, they can have a great influence for good. One young girl was taught a lesson about temples and eternal families. She went home and asked her father what would happen to her, because her family wasn’t sealed. Would she be given to another family? The faith of this tender soul touched her father and moved him to

action. Within a year their family was sealed in the temple.

Fourth, parents are commanded to teach their children gospel principles. In Doctrine and Covenants 68:25, the Lord instructs parents to teach their children “the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands.”

The Savior also teaches parents something more—that they should be as teachable as their children. He said, “Teach parents that they must repent and be baptized, and humble themselves as their little children, and they shall all be saved with their little children” (Moroni 8:10).

Fifth, gospel truths make a difference in the lives of children. Over the past few years, I’ve seen countless examples of children who have been taught gospel principles. When they learn these truths, they build a reservoir of strength to draw from throughout their lives. Let me share two examples with you.

Eight-year-old Annie spent a night at her friend’s house. When they finally settled down, their conversation turned to serious things. Were the scriptures true? They each asked Heavenly Father in their prayers and felt a strong witness from the Spirit that, yes, the scriptures are true. The next day Annie told her mother about that witness of the Spirit and made a commitment to start regular scripture study.

Now, like most eleven-year-old boys, Steven loved basketball. One afternoon he went with his friends to watch a game on television. Thirty minutes later, he returned home. His mother was surprised because she knew the game wasn’t over. When she questioned Steven, he said the boys had decided to watch a different program, but the program made him feel dark inside. That feeling had helped Steven recognize he was in a setting where the Spirit could not be present, and he was too uncomfortable to stay.

Although it is our responsibility to teach the children, they often teach us.

I shall be eternally grateful for my Primary experience and for all that the children have taught me.

I am also grateful for loving parents and dedicated Primary leaders, including those who have served by my side, who faithfully teach eternal principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ to our children. May each of us recognize the importance of teaching children.

On this beautiful Easter Sunday I bear witness that Jesus Christ lived and died for us, and that he lives again. He is my Savior, my example, my friend, and I love him. I pledge my continued devotion and service to him, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

My beloved brethren and sisters, I pray for that same spirit that we've enjoyed so much during this most beautiful and inspirational conference.

Seeking Jesus Christ

Early in his mortal ministry, the Savior soon had a multitude of disciples drawn to him by the power of his presence and the spirit of his message. From among these disciples, he chose twelve to be his special witnesses. "And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles" (Luke 6:13).

Clearly, Jesus had chosen them; he said, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you" (John 15:16). These twelve were common men from various walks of life. The Savior selected them because he could see far beyond their earthly appearance and look into their hearts, recognizing their potential.

After the Savior called Peter, Andrew, and Philip, Philip introduced Jesus to Nathanael, whom some scholars believe to be Bartholomew, the Apostle. Philip said to Nathanael, "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph" (John 1:45). In this statement, Philip testified that Jesus is the Messiah. Nathanael wondered whether

President Monson

Sister Dwan J. Young, former president of the Primary, has just spoken to us. What an outstanding service Sister Young and her counselors, Sister Cannon and Sister Grassli, have rendered the Primary these last eight years. She will accompany her husband, Thomas Young, who has been called to preside over the Canada Calgary Mission this coming July.

It will now be our privilege to hear from Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

any good thing could come out of Nazareth, indicating the relatively bad reputation of Nazareth in those days. Philip asked him to come and see. This is the perfect answer to all who seek to know the truth about Christ. Impartial investigators are converted when they come and see.

The guileless Nathanael

When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he exclaimed of Nathanael, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" (John 1:47). At that moment, Nathanael recognized that Jesus could see into his heart and asked, in surprise, "Whence knowest thou me?" (v. 48). The Savior's reply demonstrated an even greater power of perception. He told Nathanael that before Philip had called him to come and see, Jesus saw him under a fig tree.

Nathanael apparently had undergone some surpassing spiritual experience while praying, or meditating, or worshipping under a fig tree. The Lord, though absent in body, had been present with Nathanael in spirit. Nathanael then recognized the Savior as the Christ and said, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel" (John 1:49).

Nathanael spoke without guile. The words came from his heart. They

expressed a deep conviction of truth. He followed the Savior.

Without guile

To be without guile is to be free of deceit, cunning, hypocrisy, and dishonesty in thought or action. To beguile is to deceive or lead astray, as Lucifer beguiled Eve in the Garden of Eden. A person without guile is a person of innocence, honest intent, and pure motives, whose life reflects the simple practice of conforming his daily actions to principles of integrity.

The psalmist wrote, "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile" (Psalm 32:2), and then admonished, "Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile" (Psalm 34:13).

In the New Testament, we learn that the Savior was without guile (see 1 Peter 2:22) and that "he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile" (1 Peter 3:10).

In latter-day scriptures, we read that the Lord called Edward Partridge to be bishop for the Church because "his heart is pure before me, for he is like unto Nathanael of old, in whom there is no guile" (D&C 41:11). In another revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith the Lord said, "My servant George Miller is without guile; he may be trusted because of the integrity of his heart; and for the love which he has to my testimony I, the Lord, love him" (D&C 124:20).

These passages of scripture help me understand what the Lord could see in Nathanael, Edward Partridge, and George Miller, and give me some insight into what he expects of the Saints. I believe the Savior was seeking purity of soul in those he called to be his twelve Apostles. When he spoke of being without guile, he referred to something far deeper than outward appearance. He was reaching into the soul, to the very heart of righteousness. He was touching the key to goodness and to the Christlike life.

To be without guile is to be pure in heart—an essential virtue of those who would be counted among true followers of Christ. He taught in the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8; see also 3 Nephi 12:8). He revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith that Zion is the pure in heart (see D&C 97:21) and that a house is to be built in Zion in which the pure in heart shall see God (see D&C 97:10–16).

If we are without guile, we are honest, true, and righteous. All of these are attributes of Deity and are required of the Saints. Those who are honest are fair and truthful in their speech, straightforward in their dealings, free of deceit, and above stealing, misrepresentation, or any other fraudulent action. Honesty is of God and dishonesty of the devil; the devil was a liar from the beginning. Righteousness is living a life that is in harmony with the laws, principles, and ordinances of the gospel.

The example of little children

As parents know, little children are, by their nature, without guile. They speak the thoughts of their minds without reservation or hesitance as we have learned as parents when they embarrass us at times. They do not deceive. They set an example of being without guile. The Savior taught of this attribute of little children when his disciples asked: "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

"And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

"And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:1–4).

On another occasion, he referred again to the purity of children:

"Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them.

"But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19:13-14).

To the Nephites the Savior said, "Ye must repent, and be baptized in my name, and become as a little child, or ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God" (3 Nephi 11:38).

"He commanded that their little children should be brought.

"So they brought their little children and set them down upon the ground . . . and Jesus stood in the midst; and the multitude gave way till they had all been brought unto him. . . .

"He took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them. . . .

"And . . . angels did minister unto them" (3 Nephi 17:11-12, 21, 24).

What a great responsibility rests with parents to be certain that they do nothing to alter or destroy the guileless innocence of their little ones!

Urgency of being without guile

I believe the necessity for the members of the Church to be without guile may be more urgent now than at other times because many in the world apparently do not understand the importance of this virtue or are indifferent to it. We see and hear reports of fraud and deception in all levels of our society. A few citizens of some nations betray their country by exchanging sensitive information for money, information they have stolen or with which they have been entrusted. The entertainment industry seems to have lost, in large measure, the concept of moral values. Employees falsify expense accounts. These few examples of guile illustrate how pervasive it is.

Guile hinders spiritual progress

Of far greater concern than the outward acts of guile are the inner feelings and the attitudes that motivate them.

Fraud and deception appear to be increasingly acceptable; the only wrongdoing seems to be in being caught. The objective often is to get gain or to profit, regardless of the injury, loss, or damage to others. This attitude is totally contrary to the principles of the gospel. It hinders or thwarts the spiritual progress of anyone afflicted by it. The practice of guile prevents the Holy Ghost from prompting, guiding, and instructing us, leaving us ever more susceptible to the buffetings of Satan. When we break the commandments, we close ourselves to God's influence and open ourselves to Satan's influence.

Guile can lead to hypocrisy

If we practice guile in small matters, we soon can find ourselves entangled in an ever-increasing, unending spiral, because each lie or other deception often requires a larger one to cover the first. Moreover, the practice of guile often leads to hypocrisy, which is the false pretense of virtue or righteousness and pretending to be something that we are not. If we know what is right and profess to live by that knowledge but, in fact, do not, we are hypocrites. The Savior denounced hypocrites in unmistakable language. He declared:

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of . . . all uncleanness.

"Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity" (Matthew 23:27-28).

To the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord revealed: "Wo unto them that are deceivers and hypocrites, for, thus saith the Lord, I will bring them to judgment. . . .

"[They] shall be detected and shall be cut off, . . . and wo unto them who are cut off from my church, for the same are overcome of the world" (D&C 50:6, 8).

Be totally free of guile

What are the Latter-day Saints to do? The answer is plain. The Saints are to be absolutely without guile in every aspect of their lives: in their homes and families, Church callings, all business dealings, and, especially, the private and personal parts of their lives into which only they and the Lord see.

I suggest that we look into our hearts and see whether our motives and actions are pure and above reproach and to see whether we are free of deceit and fraud. Perhaps we can ask ourselves a few questions.

Are we totally free of guile in our conversations and associations with our spouses and children so they always know what to expect and always have unquestioning trust and confidence in us?

Are we forthright in our interviews with our bishops and other priesthood leaders?

Are we true to ourselves, our classmates, and our teachers in our schoolwork, even if a little cheating might improve our grades?

Do we do more work than our employers expect or require, and are we always alert for ways to do our work better?

Do we pay our employees fairly for their labors?

Do we file accurate tax returns?

Are we scrupulous in all business transactions to the extent that our associates always know they are being treated fairly and would feel secure if they had no contract?

Are we satisfied with our personal standards of integrity, morality, and honesty? Can we say of ourselves, as Jesus said of Nathanael, that we are without guile?

Some may think the idea of a society without guile is preposterous in this day. If so, it is because of the power Satan has over the hearts of men. With the Lord's help, the Saints can be without guile. Being honest and fair helps rather than hinders success and prosperity. One man of my acquaintance was in a very competitive business for thirty-six years. He always gave full value in service, quality,

and quantity. He paid every debt in full. He never sued anyone and never was sued during those years.

During a recent visit to the land of Chile, we visited people who were without guile almost to the point of possessing the naive innocence of little children. We were humbled and refreshed to be among them. They strengthened our faith in mankind and our hope for the future.

Yes, the Saints can be free of guile—and must be, to be prepared for the Savior's second coming. The Saints can provide a leavening influence and can demonstrate the value of guileless living. As we develop this divine attribute, we can become a shining light to the world. Certainly, we can teach the principles of the gospel and bless the families of the earth by following the perfect example of the Savior as one who is without guile.

Blessings of a guileless society

Visualize in your mind a society in which all are pure in heart and completely free of deceit and dishonesty. Can you imagine a total absence of contention and disputes, with no one ever attempting to deceive another? How would life be if we always were certain, without question, that what others represent to us is true? Theft would be unknown. We would have little use for jails or prisons, and litigation would be rare. The greatest blessing that would come to a society without guile is the individual, personal inner peace that comes to those who know they are doing right and know their lives are acceptable to the Lord.

Examples of guileless societies

A society without guile is possible. I cite two examples from the scriptures. The first is the City of Holiness, even Zion, a city in which the inhabitants were pure in heart and dwelt in righteousness. In fact, Zion is the name given by the Lord to his Saints. That city, referred to as the city of Enoch, was taken up into heaven (see Moses 7:18–21). The second example is the society of the Nephites

that lasted for about two hundred years after the resurrected Lord visited and taught them. The following words of inspiration from the Book of Mormon describe this society:

"There were no contentions and disputations among them, and every man did deal justly one with another.

"And there were no envyings, nor strifes, nor tumults, nor whoredoms, nor lyings, nor murders, nor any manner of lasciviousness; and surely there could not be a happier people. . . .

"There were no robbers, nor murderers, . . . but they were in one, the children of Christ, and heirs to the kingdom of God. . . .

"And how blessed were they! For the Lord did bless them in all their doings; yea, even they were blessed and prospered" (4 Nephi 1:2, 16-18).

These are examples of the goal of perfection that we should strive for, even though we know that we must perfect our lives grace upon grace and line upon line (see John 1:16, 2 Nephi 28:30).

I look to President Ezra Taft Benson as one whose life of service exemplifies the virtue of being without guile.

Testimony

In closing, I add my testimony at this Easter season to the testimonies of my brethren that the Atonement and Resurrection are real. I am grateful for the blessing they provide of immortality for all and for the possibility of eternal life it offers those who are faithful.

President Thomas S. Monson

President Benson has suggested that I bear my testimony to you at this time. I am pleased to again express my witness that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, that this work is true, and that happiness comes through serving our Heavenly Father and serving our fellowmen.

If from this conference we can gain a new feeling of closeness to the Savior and

I testify to you that our Heavenly Father lives and that he is the father of our spirits. Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. He stands at the head of this church. Joseph Smith was the prophet of God through whom the gospel of Jesus Christ was restored in these, the latter days. President Ezra Taft Benson is the Lord's prophet today. He directs this church by revelation. I bear this testimony humbly in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have just heard from Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation for all who have provided the music for this great conference—to the Mormon Youth Chorus, the Ricks College Centennial Choir, the men's choir from the Ogden and Mount Ogden regions, and the Tabernacle Choir, and to their conductors and organists.

We thank our city officials for the cooperation given this conference, the Relief Society and Church Health Unit nurses who have been on hand to render service, and the ushers and interpreters.

We express appreciation to the local and national press representatives for the coverage given to the conference and to the owners and managers of the many radio and television stations and cable systems who have given time and facilities to carry sessions of this conference in many countries.

a testimony of his divine mission, and on this Easter Sunday if we can, renewed with the spirit of the Resurrection, go forward in looking after His sheep and our family responsibilities and our church duties in a way which will be pleasing to our Heavenly Father, we ourselves will be abundantly blessed.

God bless you, my brothers and sisters, in all of your incomings and

outgoings. May you have peace in your hearts, may you have tranquility in your homes, and may you have the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ in your souls, I ask in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson is feeling a bit weary after having attended and participated in the many sessions of the conference, and therefore has asked that President Gordon B. Hinckley read the

message which President Benson has prepared for us.

I might mention that after President Hinckley has read this message, the Tabernacle Choir will sing "Sweet Is the Peace the Gospel Brings." The benediction will then be offered by Elder Gardner H. Russell of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and this conference will then stand adjourned for six months.

President Ezra Taft Benson

(Read by President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency)

President Hinckley

We heard President Benson's strong voice yesterday morning and again last evening, and we were all encouraged by what he said. I am happy to respond to his request that I read the message which he prepared as the closing benediction of this conference.

Follow the counsel of the Brethren

My dear brethren and sisters, this has been a wonderful general conference of the Church. We have felt a marvelous spirit in all of our meetings.

I commend my brethren of the General Authorities for the excellent addresses they have given. My humble prayer is that all of us will follow the counsel and instruction we have received.

As we have felt the Spirit and made new and sacred resolves, may we now have the courage and fortitude to carry out those resolves.

For the next six months, your conference edition of the *Ensign* should stand next to your standard works and be referred to frequently. As my dear friend and brother Harold B. Lee said, we should let these conference addresses "be the guide to [our] walk and talk during the next six months. These are the important matters the Lord sees fit to reveal to

this people in this day" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1946, p. 68).

May we all go to our homes rededicated to the sacred mission of the Church as so beautifully set forth in these conference sessions—to "invite all to come unto Christ" (D&C 20:59), "yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him" (Moroni 10:32).

Accomplishing the Church's mission

This grand mission of the Church is accomplished by proclaiming the gospel, perfecting the Saints, and redeeming the dead.

In the next few days, in each of our homes, may we prayerfully consider specific ways we as families and individuals can accomplish this mission. While we still feel the spirit of this great conference and while the words still ring in our ears, let us determine how each of us can be doers of the word and not hearers only (see James 1:22).

Proclaim the gospel

In proclaiming the gospel, would you prayerfully consider and ponder the following as it applies to you:

As a young man, are you earnestly preparing to serve a full-time mission? The Lord needs every young man between the ages of nineteen and twenty-six worthy, prepared, and excited about serving in the mission field.

As a mature couple, having reared your children, have you prayerfully considered serving a full-time mission? The Lord needs many more couples in the mission field who can love and fellowship and lead people to Christ.

As a single sister, where marriage is not in your immediate future, have you prayed about serving a full-time mission and sought counsel from your parents and your bishop? Our single sisters are serving marvelous missions throughout the world.

Finally, as a member of the Church, do you realize that, as a member-missionary, you have a sacred responsibility to share the gospel with friends and family? The Lord needs every member of the Church having the faith and the courage to set a date to have someone prepared to be taught by the missionaries. Would each member of the Church prayerfully consider this sacred challenge?

Perfect the Saints

Another way we come unto Christ is by perfecting the Saints. How do we accomplish this? One way to help perfect ourselves and our families is by daily reading from the scriptures.

Are we as families and individuals reading daily from the Book of Mormon and using its teachings to bless and perfect our lives and those of our children? I rejoice in the thousands of members who are responding to this invitation and who testify of the blessings they are receiving.

Communicating with our Father in Heaven through prayer also brings a spiritual power and strength found in no other way. Are we praying both morning and night as a family and as individuals?

Again, are we holding family home evenings each week? Your immediate results may seem far from ideal at times, but by holding weekly family home evenings, as we have been counseled, we help to perfect that eternal family unit.

And what about family preparedness? Family preparedness has always been an essential welfare principle in perfecting the Saints. Are each of us and our

families following, where permitted, the long-standing counsel to have sufficient food, clothing, and, where possible, fuel on hand to last at least one year?

Redeem the dead

Finally, let us consider the divine charge to redeem the dead. As you ponder this responsibility, would you give serious consideration to the following:

Have we prepared ourselves to receive our own endowments, and have sealings for our families been performed in the holy temple? By precept and example, our posterity should understand the transcendent importance of marrying the right person in the right place and sealing families for time and eternity.

Also, have we identified and received the ordinances for at least one of our ancestors? All members of the Church should be actively engaged in working on their family histories and receiving the help they need from trained stake and ward temple and family history consultants.

Do we periodically participate in all of the temple ordinances and thus receive the full blessings of vicarious work for our ancestors?

Do we return to the temple often to receive the personal blessings that come from regular temple worship? Prayers are answered, revelation occurs, and instruction by the Spirit takes place in the holy temples of the Lord.

Come unto Christ

Yes, brothers and sisters, the mission of the Church is glorious—to invite all of us to come unto Christ through proclaiming the gospel, perfecting our lives, and redeeming our dead. As we come unto Christ, we bless our own lives, those of our families, and our Father in Heaven's children, both living and dead.

Now, as we conclude this general conference of the Church, I feel to say to you what Alma said to the members of the Church in his day:

"I would that ye should be humble, and be submissive and gentle; easy to be entreated; full of patience and long-suffering; being temperate in all things; being diligent in keeping the commandments of God at all times; asking for whatsoever things ye stand in need, both spiritual and temporal; always returning thanks unto God for whatsoever things ye do receive.

"And see that ye have faith, hope, and charity, and then ye will always abound in good works.

"And may the Lord bless you, and keep your garments spotless, that ye may at last be brought to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the holy prophets who have been ever since the world began. . . .

"And now my beloved brethren, I have spoken these words unto you according to the Spirit which testifieth in me; and my soul doth exceedingly rejoice, because of the exceeding diligence and heed which ye have given unto my word.

"And now, may the peace of God rest upon you, and upon your houses and lands, and upon your flocks and herds, and all that you possess, your women and your children, according to your faith and good works, from this time forth and forever" (Alma 7:23-27).

Expression of love and testimony

Now, may I express my love for the Latter-day Saints everywhere. There are no better people in all the world.

I pray that we will be obedient to God, learn His will and do it, and, above all, that we will keep the first and great commandment—to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

I testify to you that this is His work, that the kingdom of God has been restored, that Joseph Smith was and is a prophet of the living God, and that the Book of Mormon is truly the word of God.

As your humble servant, I desire with all my heart to do God's will and to faithfully serve you and Him to the end.

Let us all come unto Christ and be perfected in Him, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

To which I add my testimony that these are the words of the Lord's anointed, the prophet of the living God, the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, President Ezra Taft Benson.

The choir sang "Abide With Me" without announcement, then sang "Sweet Is the Peace the Gospel Brings."

Elder Gardner H. Russell offered the benediction.

SALT LAKE TABERNACLE CHOIR AND ORGAN BROADCAST

The following broadcast, announced by J. Spencer Kinard and originating with KSL Radio and Television, Salt Lake City, Utah, was presented from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 3, 1988, through the courtesy of the Columbia Broadcasting System's network throughout the United States and parts of Canada,

and through other facilities to several points overseas:

Announcer: Once more we welcome you within these walls with a program of inspirational music and spoken word from the crossroads of the West.

CBS and its affiliated stations bring you at this hour the Mormon Tabernacle

Choir from Temple Square in Salt Lake City, with Jerold Ottley conducting the choir, Robert Cundick, Tabernacle organist, and the Spoken Word given by Spencer Kinard.

(Choir: "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today"—Thiman; melody from *Lyra Davidica*)

Announcer: With Charles Wesley's jubilant text, the Tabernacle Choir, with Donald Ripplinger conducting, has sung the traditional Easter hymn "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today." On this special day, thoughtful people everywhere have reason to rejoice in the words of the Apostle Paul to the Christian community at Corinth: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Corinthians 15:19-20).

And, in the rich imagery of the 23rd Psalm, we read: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. . . . Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever" (vs. 4-6). A rhymed paraphrase presents these thoughts in an anthem by Harry Rowe Shelley: "The King of Love My Shepherd Is."

(Choir: "The King of Love My Shepherd Is"—Shelley; arr. Scholin)

Announcer: Nothing affects us like a funeral. It is there, in the presence of death, that mortal life is seen for what it is: a fragile and momentary voyage between the shores of birth and death.

So it is, so it has been, and so it will be, as long as human hearts cling together, transcending time and geography. From the first human grave of rough-hewn rocks to the most elaborate mausoleum of today, we have struggled with the anguish, the awe, and even the fear of death. We have done so because we know that we, of ourselves, cannot animate the lifeless forms nor restore the spirit to the body.

But our fear is mitigated by events of another time and another place. Somewhere on the outskirts of Jerusalem is a tomb—a tomb different from all other tombs and graves the world over, for this one is empty—it has been empty for nearly two thousand years.

It is the tomb of Jesus—of Him who died and rose again, robbing the grave of its contents, depriving death of its victory; and, with His resurrection, the rebirth of our own dreams and aspiration.

Today, as we might peer into a silk-lined coffin or upon the pallid face of death—of friend or family member—our fear turns to hope; hope in the reuniting of body and spirit; hope in a future meeting; hope for a time when stilled hearts will once again beat, and silenced lips will speak to us once more.

This, then, is the greatest victory of all—the brilliant triumph of eternal love over the foreboding darkness of endless extinction: for it was God's love of us which lit the road to Calvary and rolled the heavy portal from the tomb.

All politics, all art, all philosophy, indeed, all religion point to this one empty tomb; all comes down to this, to this one place in space and time.

Without the Resurrection, all Christianity is meaningless, leading us along a road which leads nowhere, a road which leads to final defeat.

But with it—with that triumphant conquest—death's truer name is progress, and life becomes a road which leads everywhere.

"Death be not proud," wrote the poet, "though some have called thee mighty and dreadful. . . . Thou art not so" (John Donne, Holy Sonnets No. X). It is life we celebrate today; it is life we celebrate at Easter, even eternal life for all, because we have placed our hope, our faith, our joy in Him who has put an end to death.

"I am Jesus Christ the Son of God. . . . I was with the Father from the beginning. . . . I am the light and the life of the world" (3 Nephi 9:15, 18).

"Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into

the world. . . . I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world" (3 Nephi 11:10-11).

"[Now you] know that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world" (3 Nephi 11:14).

(Choir: "The Resurrected Christ"—Gates)

Announcer: We have just heard, with four-hand organ accompaniment, in celebration of the risen Christ, in a dramatic, compelling musical and narrative portrayal by American composer Crawford Gates, "The Resurrected Christ."

And now, at the Tabernacle organ, John Longhurst plays a chorale prelude of J. S. Bach: "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring."

(Organ: "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring"—J. S. Bach)

Announcer: At the conclusion of this Easter broadcast, we turn again to the music of Crawford Gates as the choir sings a lyrical setting of "The Song of Mary" with the traditional words of the

Magnificat. That will be followed by "The Lord Is My Shepherd" and "Song of Redeeming Love."

(Choir: "The Song of Mary," "The Lord Is My Shepherd," "Song of Redeeming Love"—Gates)

Announcer: Again we leave you from within the shadows of the everlasting hills. May peace be with you this day . . . and always.

Announcer (on radio): This concludes the 3,059th performance continuing the 59th year of this traditional broadcast from the Mormon Tabernacle on Temple Square, brought to you by CBS and its affiliated stations, originating with station KSL in Salt Lake City.

Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducted the choir, John Longhurst was at the organ, and the Spoken Word was given by Spencer Kinard.

In another seven days at this same hour, "Music and the Spoken Word" will be heard again from the crossroads of the West.

This is the CBS Radio Network.

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE MUSIC

The Mormon Youth Chorus, conducted by Robert C. Bowden, furnished the choral numbers for the Saturday morning session of the conference.

Music for the Saturday afternoon session was provided by the Ricks College Centennial Choir, conducted by Florence Bowman.

At the general priesthood session, music was furnished by a men's choir from the Ogden and Mount Ogden regions. Jerry F. Simon conducted the choir.

The Tabernacle Choir, conducted by Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger,

provided music for the Sunday morning and Sunday afternoon sessions.

Throughout the conference sessions, the accompaniments and the prelude, postlude, and interlude music were played on the Tabernacle organ by Robert Cundick, John Longhurst, and Clay Christiansen, Tabernacle organists.

F. Michael Watson

Clerk of the conference

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JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY
SAINTS

Official Report of the
One Hundred Fifty-eighth
Semiannual General

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of Latter-day Saints

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THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-EIGHTH SEMIANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The 158th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, October 1, 1988, at 10:00 A.M.

The general sessions of the conference were held at 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday, October 1 and 2, 1988. The general priesthood session was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, October 1, 1988, at 6:00 P.M.

President Ezra Taft Benson presided at all sessions of the conference. President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday morning, general priesthood, and Sunday afternoon sessions. President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning sessions.

Television and radio stations carried portions or all of some of the conference sessions to large audiences throughout the world. In addition, the general sessions and priesthood session were carried via satellite transmission to more than one thousand stake centers. The general priesthood session was also carried by closed-circuit transmission to approximately nine hundred locations in many countries.

General Authorities present

The following General Authorities of the Church attended one or more of the general sessions:

The First Presidency: Ezra Taft Benson, Gordon B. Hinckley, and Thomas S. Monson

The Council of the Twelve: Howard W. Hunter, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, Joseph B. Wirthlin, and Richard G. Scott

The Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy: Dean L. Larsen, Marion D. Hanks, Wm. Grant Bangerter, Robert L. Backman, Hugh W. Pinnock, James M. Paramore, and J. Richard Clarke

Additional Members of the First Quorum of the Seventy: Theodore M. Burton, Paul H. Dunn, Hartman Rector, Jr., Loren C. Dunn, Robert L. Simpson, Rex D. Pinegar, J. Thomas Fyans, Adney Y. Komatsu, Gene R. Cook, Charles Didier, William R. Bradford, George P. Lee, Carlos E. Asay, John H. Groberg, Jacob de Jager, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Royden G. Derrick, Robert E. Wells, F. Enzio Busche,¹ Ronald E. Poelman, Derek A. Cuthbert, Rex C. Reeve, Sr., F. Burton Howard, Ted E. Brewerton, Jack H. Goaslind, Angel Abrea, John K. Carmack, Russell C. Taylor, Robert B. Harbertson, Devere Harris, Spencer H. Osborn, Philip T. Sonntag, John Sonnenberg, F. Arthur Kay, Keith W. Wilcox, Victor L. Brown, H. Burke Peterson, Hans B. Ringger, Waldo P. Call, Helio da Rocha Camargo, H. Verlan Andersen, George I. Cannon, Francis M. Gibbons, Gardner H. Russell, George R. Hill III, John R. Lasater, Douglas J. Martin, Alexander B. Morrison, L. Aldin Porter, Glen L. Rudd, Douglas H. Smith, Lynn A. Sorensen, Robert E. Sackley, L. Lionel Kendrick, Monte J. Brough, Albert Choules, Jr., Lloyd P. George, and Gerald E. Melchin

The Presiding Bishopric: Robert D. Hales, Henry B. Eyring, and Glenn L. Pace

General Authorities Emeritus: Eldred G. Smith, Sterling W. Sill, Bernard P. Brockbank, and Joseph Anderson²

¹Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi was away presiding over the Hawaii Honolulu Mission.

²Elder John H. Vandenberg was excused due to ill health.

Other authorities present

Other Church authorities in attendance included Regional Representatives, presidents of stakes and their counselors, presidents of temples, bishops of wards,

and presidencies and members of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood quorums.

Many general, stake, and ward auxiliary officers also attended.

FIRST DAY MORNING SESSION

The first general session of the 158th Semiannual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, October 1, 1988, at 10:00 A.M. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The music for the opening session was provided by the Mormon Youth Chorus with Robert C. Bowden conducting and Clay Christiansen at the organ.

Before the meeting, the Mormon Youth Chorus sang "Oh Say, What Is Truth?" without announcement.

President Hinckley made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

We welcome you this morning from the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City in this, the first general session of the 158th semiannual conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Our beloved prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked me to conduct this session.

We welcome all who are participating in the large audience assembled in the Tabernacle and the overflow gathering in the nearby Assembly Hall, where Elders Robert L. Backman and Ted E. Brewerton are seated on the stand. We welcome also the many others who are receiving these conference proceedings

by satellite transmission, radio, cable, and television.

We acknowledge the General Authorities of the Church, all of whom are in attendance except Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi, who is serving as president of the Hawaii Honolulu Mission, and Elder John H. Vandenberg. We also acknowledge the Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary general presidencies, who are seated on the stand. We extend a special welcome to government, education, and civic leaders who are present with us.

The Mormon Youth Chorus, under the direction of Brother Robert C. Bowden, with Brother Clay Christiansen at the organ, opened this session by singing "Oh Say, What Is Truth?" The chorus will now favor us with "How Lovely Are the Messengers."

Following the singing, the invocation will be offered by Elder William R. Bradford, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The chorus sang "How Lovely Are the Messengers."

Elder William R. Bradford offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

We will now be privileged to listen to President Ezra Taft Benson, President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

President Ezra Taft Benson

My beloved brethren and sisters, I rejoice to be with you in another glorious general conference of the Church. I am always filled with great anxiety as I approach these conferences. But I humbly pray that the Holy Spirit will be with us in rich abundance as we listen to the inspired counsel and messages of the Lord.

Landmark use of the Book of Mormon

This has been a landmark year in the history of the Church in the use of the keystone of our religion—the Book of Mormon. This sacred volume of scripture has brought more souls to Christ, both within and without the Church, than ever before.

There are so many who could be commended for this progress, but time will permit mention of only a few.

We commend all those who had a part in producing and distributing the Church video on the Book of Mormon entitled *How Rare a Possession*. That video has had a powerful impact in the lives of its viewers, and tens of thousands of copies were distributed in the first weeks after its initial showing.

We commend you leaders and teachers of the various Church organizations for your inspired use of the Book of Mormon in helping to rear a generation that can redeem Zion. In many cases a little child has led a parent to the Lord through the Book of Mormon reading program in the Primary.

We commend the members of the Church who have participated in the family-to-family Book of Mormon program, placing their pictures and testimonies inside copies of the Book of Mormon. These testimonies have been translated into many languages, and the books have been given away by our missionaries around the world. This is helping to bring in tens of thousands of converts each year.

We commend those responsible for the excellent articles on the Book of

Mormon which have appeared in our Church publications.

We commend the personnel of radio stations who broadcast excerpts from the Book of Mormon.

We commend those who have sponsored and supported faith-building Book of Mormon lectures and symposiums.

We commend many of you who in an edifying manner have taught classes, given talks, authored articles, and written books on the Book of Mormon.

And finally and most important, we commend that vast number of faithful Saints who individually and as families are changing their lives, cleansing the inner vessel, through the daily reading of the Book of Mormon.

Book of Mormon must be central

The Book of Mormon is the instrument that God designed to “sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out [His] elect” (Moses 7:62). This sacred volume of scripture needs to become more central in our preaching, our teaching, and our missionary work.

At present, the Book of Mormon is studied in our Sunday School and seminary classes every fourth year. This four-year pattern, however, must *not* be followed by Church members in their personal and family study. We need to read daily from the pages of the book that will get a man “nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book” (*History of the Church*, 4:461).

And when we are called upon to study or teach other scriptures, we need to strengthen that undertaking by frequent reference to the additional insights which the Book of Mormon may provide on the subject (see 1 Nephi 13:40, 2 Nephi 3:12).

The recent, well-done video on the Book of Mormon entitled *How Rare a Possession* carried many messages. First was the power of the Book of Mormon to convert men to Christ and hence to His church. Another message was that a man could study and preach the contents of the

Book of Mormon for so many years without either his or his associates' knowing the name of the book or the Church which published it.

Flood the earth with the Book of Mormon

The time is long overdue for a massive flooding of the earth with the Book of Mormon for the many reasons which the Lord has given. In this age of the electronic media and the mass distribution of the printed word, God will hold us accountable if we do not now move the Book of Mormon in a monumental way.

We have the Book of Mormon, we have the members, we have the missionaries, we have the resources, and the world has the need.

The time is now!

My beloved brothers and sisters, we hardly fathom the power of the Book of Mormon, nor the divine role it must yet play, nor the extent to which it must be moved.

"Few men on earth," said Elder Bruce R. McConkie, "either in or out of the Church, have caught the vision of what the Book of Mormon is all about. Few are they among men who know the part it has played and will yet play in preparing the way for the coming of Him of whom it is a new witness. . . . The Book of Mormon shall so affect men that the whole earth and all its peoples will have been influenced and governed by it. . . . There is no greater issue ever to confront mankind in modern times than this: Is the Book of Mormon the mind and will and voice of God to all men?" We testify that it is. (*The Millennial Messiah* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1982], pp. 159, 170, 179.)

Now, my good Saints, we have a great work to perform in a very short time. We must flood the earth with the Book of Mormon—and get out from under God's condemnation for having treated it lightly (see D&C 84:54–58).

Challenges to Church members

I challenge the members of the Church to participate in the family-to-

family Book of Mormon program—to send copies of the Book of Mormon on a mission for you. Sister Benson and I have been doing this for some time now, and we intend to do more. We should be sending out millions of copies of the Book of Mormon to the missionaries every month.

I challenge our mission leaders to show their missionaries how to challenge their contacts to read the Book of Mormon and pray about it. Missionaries need to know how to use the Book of Mormon to arouse mankind's interest in studying it, and they need to show how it answers the great questions of the soul. Missionaries need to read with those they teach various passages from the Book of Mormon on gospel subjects.

I challenge our Church writers, teachers, and leaders to tell us more Book of Mormon conversion stories that will strengthen our faith and prepare great missionaries. Show us how to effectively use it as a missionary tool, and let us know how it leads us to Christ and answers our personal problems and those of the world.

I challenge those who are in business and other professions to see that there are copies of the Book of Mormon in their reception rooms.

I challenge owners of cassette players to play Book of Mormon cassettes from time to time and to listen to them at home and while walking, jogging, or driving.

I challenge the homes of Israel to display on their walls great quotations and scenes from the Book of Mormon.

I challenge all of us to prayerfully consider steps that we can personally take to bring this new witness for Christ more fully into our own lives and into a world that so desperately needs it.

A vision

I have a vision of homes alerted, of classes alive, and of pulpits aflame with the spirit of Book of Mormon messages.

I have a vision of home teachers and visiting teachers, ward and branch officers, and stake and mission leaders counseling our people out of the most correct

of any book on earth—the Book of Mormon.

I have a vision of artists putting into film, drama, literature, music, and paintings great themes and great characters from the Book of Mormon.

I have a vision of thousands of missionaries going into the mission field with hundreds of passages memorized from the Book of Mormon so that they might feed the needs of a spiritually famished world.

I have a vision of the whole Church getting nearer to God by abiding by the precepts of the Book of Mormon.

Indeed, I have a vision of flooding the earth with the Book of Mormon.

An absolute need

My beloved Saints, I am now entering my ninetieth year. I am getting older and less vigorous and am so grateful for your prayers and for the support of my younger Brethren. I thank the Lord for renewing my body from time to time so that I can still help build His kingdom.

I do not know fully why God has preserved my life to this age, but I do know this: That for the present hour He has revealed to me the absolute need for us to move the Book of Mormon forward

now in a marvelous manner. You must help with this burden and with this blessing which He has placed on the whole Church, even all the children of Zion.

Moses never entered the promised land. Joseph Smith never saw Zion redeemed. Some of us may not live long enough to see the day when the Book of Mormon floods the earth and when the Lord lifts His condemnation (see D&C 84:54–58). But, God willing, I intend to spend all my remaining days in that glorious effort. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The chorus sang “What Glorious Scenes Mine Eyes Behold” without announcement.

President Hinckley

It has been our privilege to listen to the opening address of our beloved prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson. Following his remarks, the Mormon Youth Chorus sang “What Glorious Scenes Mine Eyes Behold.”

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now speak to us.

Elder Russell M. Nelson

Warning against drug abuse

I am impressed to speak out on a problem of deep concern—the worldwide epidemic of drug addiction. As a medical doctor, my study of drugs began early in medical school. Each doctor spends months in specialized courses learning potential benefits and risks of medicinal agents. Proper prescription of drugs is the forte of skilled physicians. Generally, when their advice is carefully followed, results are remarkably successful. In addressing this topic, I specifically exclude such application of modern knowledge by educated professionals.

But I raise my voice with others throughout the world who warn against

abuse of drugs beyond prescribed limits, and the recreational or social use of chemical substances so often begun naively by the ill-informed.

A vicious cycle

From an initial experiment thought to be trivial, a vicious cycle may follow. From trial comes a habit. From habit comes dependence. From dependence comes addiction. Its grasp is so gradual. Enslaving shackles of habit are too small to be sensed until they are too strong to be broken. Indeed, drugs are the modern “mess of pottage” for which souls are sold. No families are free from risk.

But this problem is broader than hard drugs. Their use most often begins with cigarette smoking.¹ Tobacco and alcoholic beverages contain addicting drugs. They lead the list in incidence and cost to society.

As I speak with governmental and medical leaders of many nations, they voice grave concern over the consumption of alcohol and other substances by their citizens. Though the extent of the challenge is international, data from the United States of America will be cited solely to indicate the monstrous scope of this worldwide problem.

Tobacco

Consider the magnitude of tobacco's harm. Cigarette smoking is the most frequent preventable cause of heart disease, artery disease, lung disease, and cancer.² In the USA in 1982, 16 percent of all deaths (314,000) were attributed to the smoking of tobacco.³

For the year 1985, the estimated cost of both smoking-related health care and lost productivity amounted to \$65 billion. That calculates to an average of \$2.17 per pack of cigarettes sold.⁴ Social consequences of smoking far exceed the price paid to purchase cigarettes.

An insurance company recently reported that one-fifth of all its claims were for afflictions that could have been prevented by simply not smoking.⁵ We all bear this financial burden of illness that need not be.

Surgeon General Dr. C. Everett Koop and his team of more than fifty scientists recently published a landmark report. For the USA alone, they attributed 320,000 deaths annually to tobacco, 125,000 to alcohol, and lesser mortality to cocaine (2,000) and other opioids (4,000). They declared nicotine to be a powerfully addicting drug in the same sense as are drugs such as heroin and cocaine.⁶ Comparable views have been recorded by medical authorities in many other nations.⁷ Yet many of our good friends who use tobacco may not believe it to be addicting. Some are reluctant to admit that their behavior is substantially

controlled by a drug. We understand those feelings.

Alcohol

There is mounting concern worldwide over the consumption of alcohol. The U.S. government estimates that 10.6 million adults are alcoholics and that one family in four is troubled by alcohol.⁸ It is a factor in half of all the nation's traffic deaths.⁹

Last year, a tragic milestone was reached. More Americans had been killed from alcohol-related motor vehicle accidents (1,350,000) than had been killed in all the wars America has ever fought (1,156,000).¹⁰

Other drugs

Drugs such as LSD, marijuana, heroin, and cocaine are also endangering people throughout the earth. The noble attributes of reason, integrity, and dignity, which distinguish men and women from all other forms of life, are often the first to be attacked by these drugs and alcohol.

We reach out in love to family, friends, and neighbors, regardless of nationality or creed, who suffer addiction. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints continues to help relieve this international plague.

Importance of understanding agency

The solution to this problem ultimately is neither governmental nor institutional. Nor is it a question of legality. It is a matter of individual choice and commitment. Agency must be understood. The importance of the will in making crucial choices must be known. Then steps toward relief can follow.

Agency, or the power to choose, was ours as spirit children of our Creator before the world was (see Alma 13:3, Moses 4:4). It is a gift from God, nearly as precious as life itself.

Often, however, agency is misunderstood. While we are free to choose, once we have made those choices, we are tied to the consequences of those choices.

We are free to take drugs or not. But once we choose to use a habit-forming drug, we are bound to the consequences of that choice. Addiction surrenders later freedom to choose. Through chemical means, one can literally become disconnected from his or her own will!

Road to recovery

For relief of an ailment, as a doctor of medicine I might write a prescription. As an ordained Apostle, I would invoke the spiritual blessing of eternal perspective. Combined, my spiritual prescription would return the gift of agency to its rightful owner.

Each one who resolves to climb that steep road to recovery must gird up for the fight of a lifetime. But a lifetime is a prize well worth the price.

This challenge uniquely involves the will, and the will can prevail. Healing doesn't come after the first dose of any medicine. So the prescription must be followed firmly, bearing in mind that it often takes as long to recover as it did to become ill. But if made consistently and persistently, correct choices can cure.

Spiritual prescription

My spiritual prescription includes six choices which I shall list alphabetically, A through F, and then comment about each:

- Choose to be alive
- Choose to believe
- Choose to change
- Choose to be different
- Choose to exercise
- Choose to be free

1. Choose to be alive. Seek beloved family, friends, and physicians. Plead for their help. Your precious life is at stake. Cheer up your hearts, and remember that ye are free to act for yourselves—to choose the way of everlasting death or the way of eternal life (see 2 Nephi 10:23).

The choice for life brings an outlook of optimism. It breathes hope. It rekindles self-esteem—regarding one's body as a timeless trust. And it awakens a personal

commitment to "see that ye take care of these sacred things, . . . that ye look to God and live" (Alma 37:47).

2. Choose to believe. Believe in God. Accept yourself as His child, created in His image. He loves you and wants you to be happy. He wants you to grow through life's choices and become more like Him. He pleads that you will "reconcile [yourself] to the will of God, and not to the will of the . . . flesh" (2 Nephi 10:24).

Reconciliation requires faith, repentance, and baptism. Be "born of God, changed from [your] carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness" (Mosiah 27:25). Renew covenants made at baptism by worthily partaking of the sacrament regularly, "that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world" (D&C 59:9).

Then "be meek and lowly in heart; . . . withstand every temptation of the devil, with . . . faith on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Alma 37:33).

Choose to believe in and be blessed by your Creator.

3. Choose to change. "How long will ye suffer [yourself] to be led by foolish and blind guides? Yea, how long will ye choose darkness rather than light?" (Helaman 13:29). Choose to change—today!

"The spirit and the body are the soul of man" (D&C 88:15). Both spirit and body have appetites. One of life's great challenges is to develop dominance of spiritual appetites over those that are physical. Your willpower becomes strong when joined with the will of the Lord.

Addiction to any substance enslaves not only the physical body but the spirit as well. Therefore, repentance is best achieved while one still has a body to help attain spiritual supremacy:

"This life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; . . . this life is the day for men to perform their labors.

" . . . Do not procrastinate the day of your repentance; . . . if we do not improve our time while in this life, then cometh the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed. . . .

Saturday, October 1

First Day

"That same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life . . . will have power to possess your body in that eternal world" (Alma 34:32-34).

"To be carnally-minded is death, [but] to be spiritually-minded is life eternal" (2 Nephi 9:39; see also Romans 8:6). That blessing will come to those with the will to change.

4. *Choose to be different.* Distinguish yourself from worldly crowds. Defenders do not resemble offenders. Among them are clever merchandisers who plot to link beer with sports, tobacco with charm, and drugs with fun. Scripture warns of those who so deceive:

"Thus saith the Lord unto you: In consequence of evils and designs which do and will exist in the hearts of conspiring men in the last days, I have warned you, and forewarn you, by giving unto you this word of wisdom by revelation" (D&C 89:4).

His Word of Wisdom includes sound nutritional guidance and simple instructions. We are not to drink alcoholic beverages (see D&C 89:5-7). We are not to use tobacco (see D&C 89:8). We are not to drink tea or coffee (see D&C 89:9). And in this same spirit, we are not to use addicting drugs.¹¹

So to modern Israel, God has given modern counsel, similar to ancient commandments recorded in the Old Testament:

"It is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink:

"Lest they drink, and forget the law" (Proverbs 31:4-5).

"Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken" (Habakkuk 2:15; see also Proverbs 20:1).

Certainly modern medical research validates the physical benefits of obedience to the Word of Wisdom. The evidence is so great that many will be taught the right things for only half of the right reasons. With that limited understanding, could they then try a smoke, a drink, or a drug, rationalizing that "just one won't hurt?" Could the prospect of only future physical rewards even be bait for foolish

dares of defiance now? Or to phrase these questions another way, how many would be *determined* to obey the will of the Lord even if physical benefits were *not* assured? When God asked Abraham to offer Isaac in sacrifice, did they first seek scientific confirmation that their choice to obey was medically advisable?

The Word of Wisdom is a spiritual law. To the obedient He proclaimed, "I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them" (D&C 89:21).

At the first passover, the destroying angel did pass over houses that were marked with blood on the doorposts. In our day, the faithful keep the Word of Wisdom. It is one of our signs unto God that we are His covenant people.

Choose to be different; you will be blessed both physically and spiritually.

5. *Choose to exercise.* Exercising the body and the spirit will aid in the climb toward recovery. Appropriate physical activity helps to combat depression, which so often accompanies addiction.

But spiritual exercise is even more crucial. This battle will be more easily won with fervent prayer. If we truly "counsel with the Lord in all [our] doings, . . . he will direct [us] for good" (Alma 37:37).

Strength comes from uplifting music, good books, and feasting from the scriptures. Since the Book of Mormon was to come forth "when there shall be great pollutions upon the face of the earth" (Mormon 8:31), study of that book in particular will fortify us. President Benson has issued that challenge.

Exercise the body and the spirit and choose to exercise faith in God.

6. *Choose to be free.* Break "bands of iniquity" (Mosiah 23:12; see also 1 Nephi 13:5). Leave behind "an iron yoke, . . . handcuffs, and chains, and shackles, and fetters of hell" (D&C 123:8).

Choose to be free from feigned friends who first flatter yet later despise (see D&C 121:20). Drug abuse may have started with them, but you pay the price.

"Remember, my brethren [and sisters], that whosoever perisheth, perisheth unto himself; and whosoever doeth iniquity, doeth it unto himself; for behold, ye are free; ye are permitted to act for yourselves; for behold, God hath given unto you a knowledge and he hath made you free" (Helaman 14:30).

The Lord has revealed His sacred standard to guide people in a troubled world. You and I were born free to follow His divine guidance. We may choose for ourselves. Those choices may bring addiction or freedom. For freedom and joy, choose to "be faithful in Christ." He will lift you up. May "the hope of his glory and of eternal life, rest in your mind forever" (Moroni 9:25). I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. *The Health Consequences of Smoking: Nicotine Addiction*, Public Health Service [U.S. Government Printing Office, 1988], pp. 262-63.

2. *Cigarette Smoking and Cardiovascular Disease 1985: Special Report to the Public*, American Heart Association (50-075-A).

3. Office of Technology Assessment, U.S. Congress Staff Memorandum, Sept. 1985, p. 2.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

5. *Utah Hospital Leaders Digest*, 15 July 1988, p. 2.

6. *The Health Consequences of Smoking: Nicotine Addiction*, Public Health Service [U.S. Government Printing Office, 1988], pp. 14, 334.

7. Among them are Nigel Gray, director, Anti-Cancer Council, Victoria, Australia; David Simpson, director, Action on Smoking

and Health, U.K.; Pamela Taylor, spokesperson, British Medical Association, U.K.; Andrew Pipe, University of Ottawa Heart Institute, Canada; Roberta Ferrence, Addiction Research Foundation, Canada; Bernice McKay, secretary, Commonwealth Department of Health, Australia. *Times and Seasons*, Documentary on Tobacco, July 1988.

8. "Coming to Grips with Alcoholism," *U.S. News and World Report*, 30 Nov. 1987, pp. 56-57.

9. *Healthy People: The Surgeon General's Report on Health Promotion and Disease Prevention*, Public Health Service [U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979], p. 125.

10. *Accident Facts*, Annual Report of the National Safety Council, 1975, confirmed by telephone conversation 20 July 1988.

11. Ezra Taft Benson, in Conference Report, April 1983, pp. 69-72; or *Ensign*, May 1983, pp. 54-55. Spencer W. Kimball, in Conference Report, Apr. 1974, p. 8; or *Ensign*, May 1974, p. 7. Joseph Fielding Smith, in Conference Report, Apr. 1971, p. 47; or *Ensign*, June 1971, p. 49. Heber J. Grant, J. Reuben Clark, Jr., David O. McKay, "Message of the First Presidency," in Conference Report, Oct. 1942, pp. 8-10.

President Hinckley

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

The chorus and congregation will now join in singing "Praise to the Man." After this, Bishop Robert D. Hales, Presiding Bishop of the Church, will address us.

The chorus and congregation sang "Praise to the Man."

Bishop Robert D. Hales

How to make good choices

The scriptures teach us that an important part of mortal probation will be making the right choices. How do we make the right choices when there are so

many temptations and so many people telling us what they think we should do with our lives?

There are three important elements that will allow us to make good decisions:

First, we must have an eternal *plan* with objectives that we are committed to achieve.

Second, we need to *study and pray* on a daily basis about our decisions for feelings of spiritual guidance, courage, and commitment.

And third, we need to *examine our motives* each time we make a decision.

Have an eternal plan

We need an eternal plan. Life's plan and the challenge to be successful are demonstrated in an Aesop Fable, "The Man, the Boy, and the Donkey." The objective of the man and the boy was to journey to the city marketplace and sell the donkey for winter provisions. As they started to town, the father rode the donkey. In the first village, the villagers said, "What an inconsiderate man, riding the donkey and making his son walk!" So the father got off the donkey and let his son ride.

In the next hamlet, the people whispered, "What an inconsiderate boy, riding the donkey and making his father walk!"

In frustration, the father climbed on the donkey; and father and son rode the donkey, only to have the people in the next town declare, "How inconsiderate of the man and the boy to overload their beast of burden and treat him in such an inhumane manner!"

In compliance with the dissident voices and mocking fingers, the father and son both got off the donkey to relieve the animal's burden, only to have the next group of onlookers say, "Can you imagine a man and a boy being so stupid as to not even use their beast of burden for what it was created!"

Then, in anger and total desperation, having tried to please all those who offered advice, the father and son both rode the donkey until it collapsed. The donkey had to be carried to the marketplace. The donkey could not be sold. The people in the marketplace scoffed, "Who wants a worthless donkey that can't even walk into the city!"

The father and son had failed in their goal of selling the donkey and had no

money to buy the winter provisions they needed in order to survive.

How much different the outcome would have been if the father and son had had a plan to follow. Father could have said, "I'll ride the donkey one-third of the way; Son, you ride the donkey one-third of the way; and we'll both walk the last third of the way. The donkey will arrive at the marketplace fresh and strong, ready to be sold."

Then, as they received confusing advice while traveling through each hamlet and village along their way to the city, they could look at each other, give a reassuring wink of the eye, and say, "*We have a plan.*"

Eternal life is our goal

Indeed, you and I have a plan to guide us in our lives—the eternal plan that was given to us in the premortal world and that will bring us back into the presence of our Heavenly Father. During our mortal probation on earth, we will be tested with enticements and opposition in all things. But if we are obedient and faithful to the laws, ordinances, and covenants which we accept with our free agency, of our own free will and choice, we can attain eternal life.

To attain eternal life is why we came to earth. Eternal life is our goal. The definition of eternal life is to be able to live in the presence of our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ with our families for all eternity.

Every time we make choices in our lives, we should weigh the ultimate effect our decisions will have on our goal of attaining eternal life.

Study and pray

That is why we must study and pray. Having the eternal plan as a goal in our lives, we will make eternal choices. However, we will not make the right eternal choices based solely on our pure intellectual deduction and factual analysis from our own understanding: Prayer and study must be used together to build knowledge and wisdom.

First, we start with the intelligence with which we were born. To our intelligence we add knowledge as we search for answers, study, and educate ourselves. To our knowledge we add experience, which should lead us to a level of wisdom. In addition to our wisdom, we add the help of the Holy Ghost through our prayers of faith, asking for spiritual guidance and strength. Then, and only then, do we reach an understanding in our hearts—which motivates us to “do what is right; let the consequence follow” (*Hymns* [1985], no. 237). The feelings of an understanding heart give us the sweet spirit of assurance of not only knowing but doing what is right no matter what the circumstances. The understanding in our hearts comes from a close interdependence of study and prayer.

“Behold, you have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me.

“But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right” (D&C 9:7–8).

After we have attained knowledge and understanding, it is important to feel that our decision is right. Then when we act, we will do what is right.

“Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding” (Proverbs 3:13).

“Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding” in your heart (Proverbs 4:7).

Stories about prayer

Last Saturday, I had the experience of visiting Joe and Linda in their home in Boise, Idaho. They gave me permission to share their story with you in the hope that it might help someone who had to make a similar decision in his or her life. About three to four years ago, Joe was an alcoholic. Linda, while she did not drink, was codependent emotionally on the

behavior of an alcoholic husband. She was nearing a nervous breakdown. She had made the decision to save herself and the children from the manipulative behavior of a husband suffering from alcoholism. So she left home, taking the children, except for a fourteen-year-old son.

Joe related to me the depression and despair he felt the night Linda left him. Somewhere in the middle of the night, about 2:00 or 3:00 A.M., Joe awoke. He reached out in prayer to his Heavenly Father and prayed until dawn. It was his Gethsemane. He cried out to the Lord and asked for help with his affliction and expressed love for his caring wife, who had confronted him with his abusive behavior.

When Joe arose in the early morning light, he made a commitment not to take another drink of alcohol. Joe has lived up to that commitment. His testimony as he talks with others in Alcoholics Anonymous is that God lives and answers prayers.

There is another story about a little boy named Josh who was having terrible nightmares that were frightening him. He asked his father to kneel down and have a prayer with him to ask Heavenly Father to stop the dreams and nightmares.

Josh opened his prayer by thanking Heavenly Father for the blessings that were his. He then asked his Heavenly Father to have the nightmares stop and send him a confirmation through his feelings during the prayer. He said no more. He waited about a minute, said “thank you,” and closed the prayer. He had had his confirmation and comfort that his prayers were answered—that he would not have any more nightmares. What an important lesson for a young man to learn!

Each time a stake president is chosen, members of the Council of the Twelve and the First Quorum of the Seventy have feelings similar to those Josh and Joe had. What an important lesson to learn about prayer and the feelings of reassurance that come when we ask in faith, with nothing wavering (see James 1:6), as the Prophet Joseph did!

Seek wise counsel

Along with study and prayer, we must seek wise counsel.

"A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels" (Proverbs 1:5).

When seeking wise counsel, turn to those who have exhibited obedience to the commandments and willingness to follow the promptings of the Spirit in their lives.

You will know you have a true friend and counselor when the advice you are given makes it easier to live the commandments and when you are not asked to choose between a wayward friend's ways and the Lord's ways.

Even though we counsel with others, we must take the responsibility for our actions. Some try to go through life without making their own decisions and blame others when all does not go as well as expected.

As we study our problems out in our minds, patience and pondering should have an important place in our decision-making process. We should reflect on our eternal goals and not make hasty and unwise decisions.

President Joseph F. Smith gave these sobering words of advice to leaders and members of the Church to help us when making decisions. It is a statement I have had displayed in my office since becoming Presiding Bishop.

"In leaders undue impatience and a gloomy mind are almost unpardonable, and it sometimes takes almost as much courage to wait as to act. It is to be hoped, then, that the leaders of God's people, and the people themselves, will not feel that they must have at once a solution of every question that arises to disturb the even tenor of their way" (Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939], p. 156).

Examine motives

And lastly, we must examine our motives. A good check and balance in decision making is to look at our motives

for making our decisions. We should ask ourselves, "Are my motives selfish, or is there charity in the decision I am about to make? Is this decision in keeping with the commandments, both in the spirit and the letter of the law? Is my decision basically right, honorable, and compatible with the golden rule? Have I considered the impact of my decision on others?"

"Let all your [decisions] be done with charity" (1 Corinthians 16:14).

Beware of fear and greed. Be aware of your true motives.

We make poor and irrational decisions if our decision is motivated by greediness: greed for monetary gain; greed that results in a conflict of interest; desire for power, titles, and recognition of men.

"He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live" (Proverbs 15:27).

Likewise, we make poor and irrational decisions if we are motivated by fear: fear of man, fear of not being popular, fear of failure, fear of public opinion.

As Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice" (1 Samuel 15:24).

The poet Robert Frost, in the poem "The Road Not Taken," gives us a vivid, visual image of standing at the crossroads of life, having to make a decision:

Two roads diverged in a yellow
wood,
And sorry I could not travel
both . . .
Yet knowing how way leads on
to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood,
and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

When we stand at the crossroads of life and must make a decision whether to go to the great and spacious building of the world's ways or to walk the straight and narrow path that leads to eternal life,

we must realize that we cannot travel *both* roads—although sometimes we try. It is difficult to come back, but we can; and our greatest satisfaction will more than likely come from taking the lonelier road which is less traveled.

May the Lord bless us as we make our decisions in life to constantly keep our goal of eternal life in view. That we may study and pray each day to *know* and *understand* what is right but, more importantly, to *do* what is right; that we may have those who stand by us say, “Thee lift me, and I’ll lift thee, and we’ll ascend together,” is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder James E. Faust

My dear brothers, sisters, and friends, sixteen years ago I was called to be a General Authority of this church, and ten years ago this conference I was sustained as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. These years have been challenging and, in many ways, difficult, but they have also been fulfilling. My wife and I have been trying humbly to serve the Lord as best we know how. We have traveled over much of the earth in my ministry. This has afforded us opportunity to bear witness of the Savior in many countries.

Testimony of Jesus Christ

During those years, having worn as a spiritual cloak the knowledge that Jesus is the Christ, I feel led today to give my personal witness concerning Jesus of Nazareth and His mission. I wish to testify of the mediation, the atonement, and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. I speak of these transcendent events in light of my spiritual knowledge that Jesus is the Redeemer and the Son of God. I also testify of His divinity and of those events in the office, the priesthood, the calling, and the authority of the holy Apostleship with which I and my Brethren are charged.

The chorus sang “Hallelujah” from *The Mount of Olives* without announcement.

President Hinckley

Bishop Robert D. Hales, Presiding Bishop of the Church, has spoken to us, followed by the Mormon Youth Chorus singing “Hallelujah” from *The Mount of Olives*.

Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our next speaker.

Jesus’ mediation and atonement

Through the Atonement and those singular events surrounding it, all of the terrible individual and collective sins of all mankind were taken upon the Lord’s shoulders. The marvelous result of this great suffering was that He was able to redeem from physical death the believers and the obedient as well as the unbelieving and disobedient (see D&C 46:13–14, Acts 24:15, 1 Corinthians 15:22). Every person ever born or yet to be born is the beneficiary of both the mediation and the atonement of the Savior (see Alma 11:42).

The act of the Atonement is, in its simplest terms, a reconciliation of man with his God. The word *atonement* means to be at one. “It is literally *at-one-ment*” (James E. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith*, 12th ed. [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1924], p. 75). Because of their transgression, Adam and Eve, having chosen to leave their state of innocence (see 2 Nephi 2:23–25), were banished from the presence of God. This is referred to in Christendom as the Fall, or Adam’s transgression. It is a spiritual death because Adam and Eve were separated from the presence of God and given agency “to act for themselves and not

to be acted upon" (2 Nephi 2:26). They were also given the great power of procreation, so that they could keep the commandment to "multiply, and replenish the earth" and have joy in their posterity (Genesis 1:28).

All of their posterity were likewise banished from the presence of God (see 2 Nephi 2:22–26). However, the posterity of Adam and Eve were innocent of the original sin because they had no part in it. It was therefore unfair for all of humanity to suffer eternally for the transgressions of our first parents, Adam and Eve. It became necessary to settle this injustice; hence the need for the atoning sacrifice of Jesus in His role as the Savior and Redeemer. Because of the transcendent act of the Atonement, it is possible for every soul to obtain forgiveness of sins, to have them washed away and be forgotten (see 2 Nephi 9:6–9; Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, p. 89). This forgiveness comes about, however, on condition of repentance and personal righteousness.

Immortality and eternal life

There is a distinction between immortality, or eternal existence, and eternal life, which is to have a place in the presence of God. Through the grace of Jesus Christ, immortality comes to all men, just or unjust, righteous or wicked. However, eternal life is "the greatest of all the gifts of God" (D&C 14:7). We obtain this great gift, according to the Lord, "if you keep my commandments and endure to the end." If we so endure, the promise is, "you shall have eternal life" (D&C 14:7).

President Joseph Fielding Smith explains: "This distinction between *eternal life*, as received by the faithful, and *immortality*, obtained by both the faithful and unfaithful, is shown in the words of the Lord to Moses: 'For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.' The conjunction clearly separates the two thoughts. It explains that the Lord is giving to the vast majority of men, those who will not be obedient, the blessing of immortality; and to those who will serve him, the blessing of eternal life" (*The*

Way to Perfection [Salt Lake City: The Genealogical Society of Utah, 1946], p. 329).

Jesus' suffering

It has been almost two thousand years since the wondrous occasion when death was conquered. We still do not know how the Savior was able to take upon Himself and bear our transgressions, our foolishness, our grief, our sorrows, and our burdens. It was indefinable and unfathomable. It was almost unbearable. The indescribable agony was so great in Gethsemane that "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44). The haunting cry on the cross, in a loud voice in His native Aramaic, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which is, being interpreted, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34) gives but a mere glimpse of His suffering and humiliation. One cannot help wondering how many of those drops of precious blood each of us may be responsible for.

Even though, as a man or a woman, we are born, live a brief moment, and then die, through the atonement of Jesus Christ we will all live after death. Through the divinity which is within us as a gift of the great Creator, we can come to complete fruition as heirs of God with eternal powers, dominions, and progression without end. Paul said this gift is a free gift (see Romans 5:15). Through the Mediation and Atonement we will be resurrected ourselves without going through any part of the atoning agony that the Son of God went through.

Jacob's teachings in the Book of Mormon further explain, "if the flesh should rise no more our spirits must become subject to that angel who fell from before the presence of the Eternal God, and became the devil, to rise no more" (2 Nephi 9:8).

Jesus' resurrection

The testimonies of those faithful followers who saw, heard, and touched the resurrected Lord stand uncontroverted to this day. After the crucifixion, Mary

Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome had bought sweet spices to anoint His body (see Mark 16:1).

But the devoted women were concerned as to who would roll away the great stone in front of the sepulchre. When they arrived, they found that the stone had been rolled away (see Mark 16:3-4). A great earthquake had intervened, and an angel had rolled back the stone from the door and sat upon it, causing the keepers to shake with fear and become as dead men (see Matthew 28:2-4). The angel instructed the women to tell the disciples quickly of the Lord's resurrection, assuring them that "he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him" (Matthew 28:7). As they went to tell the disciples, "Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him" (Matthew 28:9).

The Apostles' transformation

During the forty days that the Savior spent with the Apostles and others, they heard and saw many unspeakable things. This special ministry changed the Apostles from an uncertain, confused, divided, and weak group into powerful witnesses of the Lord. Mark records that the Savior upbraided the eleven "because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen" (Mark 16:14).

Perhaps the Apostles should not be unduly criticized for not believing that Jesus, having been crucified and buried in a tomb, had come back to earth as a glorified being. In all human experience, this had never happened before. It was completely unprecedented. This was a different experience than the raising of Jairus' daughter (see Mark 5:22, 24, 35-43), the young man of Nain (see Luke 7:11-15), or Lazarus (see John 11:1-44). They all died again. Jesus, however, became a resurrected being. He would never die again. So it was that to the Apostles the story of Mary Magdalene and the other women who witnessed the Resurrection "seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not" (Luke 24:11).

Said President David O. McKay of this experience: "The world would never

have been stirred by men with such wavering, doubting, despairing minds as the apostles possessed on the day of the crucifixion.

"What was it that suddenly changed these disciples to confident, fearless, heroic preachers of the gospel of Jesus Christ? It was the revelation that Christ had risen from the grave. His promises had been kept, his Messianic mission fulfilled. In the words of an eminent writer, 'The final and absolute seal of genuineness has been put on all his claims, and the indelible stamp of divine authority upon all his teachings. The gloom of death had been banished by the glorious light of the presence of their Risen, Glorified Lord and Savior.'

"On the evidence of these unprejudiced, unexpected, incredulous witnesses, faith in the resurrection has its impregnable foundation" (*Treasures of Life*, comp. Clare Middlemiss [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1962], pp. 15-16).

We should be transformed

Like the Apostles of old, this knowledge and belief should transform all of us to be confident, settled, unafraid, and at peace in our lives as followers of the divine Christ. It should help us carry all burdens, bear any sorrows, and also fully savor all joys and happiness that can be found in this life. The disciples who walked with the Savior on the road to Emmaus said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" (Luke 24:32). No wonder they entreated him, "Abide with us: for it is toward evening," and he "sat at meat with them" (Luke 24:29-30). They sought to savor those precious moments and feelings.

The vacating of the tomb transcended all other events in the history of the world, for it attested that Jesus had not died, but that death itself had been overcome.

As I have traveled over much of the earth, I have been saddened over and over again by the legions of crippled, maimed, deformed, suffering, and diminished people almost everywhere. What parent

of a special child has not agonized over the future and well-being of that child? Through the individual resurrection of each of us, there is great hope for all.

Testimonies of the Resurrection

Amulek, in the Book of Mormon, promises that following the temporal death, "the spirit and the body shall be reunited again in its perfect form; both limb and joint shall be restored to its proper frame, . . . and we shall be brought to stand before God, . . . and have a bright recollection of all our guilt" (Alma 11:43).

The Prophet Joseph Smith stated: "I can taste the principles of eternal life, and so can you. . . . I know that when I tell you these words of eternal life . . . , you taste them, and I know that you believe them" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, ed. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 355). So it is that the humblest and newest believer, the child, youth, or adult can come to have a personal conviction of the truth of eternal life.

John the Revelator "saw a new heaven and a new earth" and "heard a great voice out of heaven" (Revelation 21:1, 3). "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (Revelation 21:7). "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Revelation 21:4).

Testimony comes through obedience

It is not necessary for anyone to depend continually upon the testimony of another regarding the mediation, atonement, and resurrection of Christ as our Redeemer and Savior. Each can savor the sweetness of the truths of the gospel by obedience to the principles, ordinances, and covenants.

One can still go to the Garden of Gethsemane, but the Lord Jesus cannot be found there, nor is He in the Garden

Tomb. He is not on the road to Emmaus, nor in Galilee, nor at Nazareth or Bethlehem. He must be found in one's heart. But He left us the great Comforter forever (see John 14:16) and the everlasting power of the priesthood. Of this power, Jacob, the son of Lehi, testified, "We truly can command in the name of Jesus and the very trees obey us, or the mountains, or the waves of the sea" (Jacob 4:6).

I testify that, through righteousness, this priesthood power and these supernal gifts of the Atonement and the Mediation can operate in our lives. Ultimately each of us must come to know these great spiritual truths by following the counsel of Jesus: "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John 7:17).

Testimony and prayer

In conclusion, I wish to make a humble declaration and affirmation that Jesus is the Christ, our Redeemer, and the Savior of the world. I do this with all the solemnity of my soul. This testimony has come to me, not alone from a lifetime of study or from reason or logic, but more by personal revelation under the spirit of prophecy.

I pray that our Savior will heal our souls, dry our tears, and create in each of us a pure heart. I also pray that we may find shelter in the shadows of His outstretched arms and that He will be merciful and forgiving concerning our weaknesses. That He will be a father to the fatherless, and deliver to the needy according to their needs, and incline His ear to our cries, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The chorus sang "Now We'll Sing with One Accord" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has borne eloquent testimony to us, following which

the Mormon Youth Chorus sang "Now We'll Sing with One Accord."

Elder Marvin J. Ashton, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles,

will be our concluding speaker for this session.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

Measurements

I would like to share some thoughts about measurements. A measurement is a standard by which we determine the capacity or dimension of a person or object. A measurement gives us a basis for comparison.

If I say, "She is a three-point student," you have a pretty good idea of this person's scholastic ability. A measurement may also be an estimate of what is expected.

Human measurement, of course, is subject to human fallibility. My generation, for example, was taught that a person's I.Q. was supposedly a fixed measurement of a person's capacity to learn. Such a notion is now generally discredited by the teaching profession. Interestingly, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught in the nineteenth century: "We consider that God has created man with a mind capable of instruction, and a faculty which may be enlarged in proportion to the heed and diligence given to the light communicated from heaven to the intellect" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 51). He was obviously ahead of his time!

We also tend to evaluate others on the basis of physical, outward appearance: their "good looks," their social status, their family pedigrees, their degrees, or their economic situations.

The measure of our hearts

The Lord, however, has a different standard by which he measures a person. When it came time to choose a king to replace King Saul, the Lord gave this criterion to his prophet Samuel: "Look not

on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; . . . for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

When the Lord measures an individual, He does not take a tape measure around the person's head to determine his mental capacity, nor his chest to determine his manliness, but He measures the heart as an indicator of the person's capacity and potential to bless others.

Why the heart? Because the heart is a synonym for one's entire makeup. We often use phrases about the heart to describe the total person. Thus we describe people as being "big-hearted" or "good-hearted" or having a "heart of gold." Or we speak of people with faint hearts, wise hearts, pure hearts, willing hearts, deceitful hearts, conniving hearts, courageous hearts, cold hearts, hearts of stone, or selfish hearts.

The measure of our hearts is the measure of our total performance. As used by the Lord, the "heart" of a person describes his effort to better self, or others, or the conditions he confronts.

How do our hearts measure up?

A question I suggest to you is this: How do you measure up? Ultimately you and I will be judged not only for our actions, but also for the desires of our hearts. This truth was revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith at a time when he was shown in vision the celestial kingdom. The revelation is recorded in section 137 of the Doctrine and Covenants. Joseph marveled when he saw his deceased brother Alvin in the celestial kingdom, for Alvin had died before the gospel was restored. Joseph then received this great truth:

"All who have died without a knowledge of this gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God; . . .

"For I, the Lord, will judge all men according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts" (vs. 7, 9).

If our works and the desires of our hearts are the ultimate criteria of our character, how do we measure up? What kind of heart should we seek? For what kind of heart should we pray? How should we measure the worth of other people?

Today may I suggest four questions that deal with the heart that may help you determine how you are measuring up.

Have an honest heart

First question: How honest in heart am I? We pray that our missionaries will find the honest in heart. What does it mean to be honest in heart? It describes an individual who is open to truth, who will evaluate information or people without prejudice.

Honest-hearted persons are individuals without pretense, without hypocrisy. They are reliable in word and action. They have no "hidden agendas" to deceive others or to misrepresent facts. In contrast, those with conniving hearts will deceive and misrepresent.

An honest heart will lead to a change of heart. Spiritually speaking, a change of heart is not only desirable, but essential for eternal life. The Book of Mormon describes the conversion experience, which all of us must have, as a "mighty change in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually" (Mosiah 5:2).

The Book of Mormon is a study of interesting contrasts between those who hardened their hearts and those whose hearts were softened by the Spirit of the Lord. How does one have his or her heart softened under the influence of the Holy Ghost?

Nephi's testimony provides an answer: "Having great desires to know of the mysteries of God, wherefore, I did cry unto the Lord; and behold *he did* . . .

soften my heart that I did believe all the words which had been spoken by my father" (1 Nephi 2:16; italics added).

After obtaining a testimony of the gospel and the Lord's church, we should then strive to become pure in heart. This will result in happiness and eventually the promise of a society without contention. It is the Savior's way to peace.

Have a willing heart

Second question: Do I have a willing heart?

Let us look again to the scriptures for guidance.

"Behold, the Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind; and the willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land of Zion in these last days" (D&C 64:34).

A willing heart describes one who desires to please the Lord and to serve His cause first. He serves the Lord on the Lord's terms, not his own. There are no restrictions to where or how he will serve.

As one who has tendered calls to serve to many, I am always pleased to see members willing to give their time, energy, and effort to the upbuilding of the Church. They do so for one primary reason—to serve the Lord with all their heart, might, mind, and strength.

I have a friend who served as a priests quorum adviser. The boys and the adviser planned a kayak activity at Flaming Gorge, Utah. After some initial planning, one of the quorum members quietly approached the adviser and said, "We better not plan a kayak trip. Mike won't be able to go because he can't paddle." Mike was partially paralyzed on his right side. When he learned that the quorum was not going on the activity because of him, he told the boys, "I want to go. I can paddle." The quorum adviser placed his hand on Mike's shoulder and said, "OK, Mike. You're my paddle partner."

So from January to August, the boys built their kayaks. They departed to the reservoir in the first week in August.

Rhythm, togetherness, and teamwork are essential to keep a kayak in a straight line. Mike and his partner had more trouble than the others getting their

rhythm and strokes coordinated. Mike had almost no stroke of consequence on his right side. His adviser had to compensate by paddling easy on the left and hard on the right.

After several hours of learning to work together, Mike said to his adviser, "You wouldn't happen to have a Band-Aid, would you?" The adviser pulled his wallet out and gave Mike a Band-Aid. He placed it over a big water blister that had just popped in the crook of his hand between his thumb and his first finger. The hand and arm that was little used now had to help hold the paddle.

Several hours later, Mike turned again to his adviser, who was in the rear cockpit, and said, "Do you have any more bandages?" The adviser pulled out several and handed them to Mike. By now the crook between Mike's right thumb and his first finger was becoming raw. Mike applied the Band-Aids and resumed paddling.

The next day the crew set out again. The adviser encouraged Mike to rest from paddling and let his hand have a respite. The words fell on deaf ears. Instantly, Mike was paddling as he had the day before.

This day found a usual midday and afternoon wind blowing directly at the flotilla of kayak paddlers. It required stronger strokes and took much energy and time. Wincing from the hurt, Mike continued to paddle. Each suggestion that he rest intensified his will to carry his load.

Throughout the week, Mike persisted in holding his own. Though his hand was as raw as hamburger and awful to look at, he would not give up.

During the week's trip, the conversation with his senior companion often centered around his desire to go on a mission. Repeatedly Mike asked, "I hope they will let me go on a mission. Do you think my problem will prevent me from going?" Mike walks with a noticeable limp of his right leg. He has a firm handshake with the left hand, but his right hand doesn't open up all of the way.

How many who have no visible blemish have a heart like Mike's? How many young men with not a single cell

out of place fail to soften their hearts and desire to serve the Lord? How many who have so much forfeit their blessings because of selfish desires or inability to set lofty priorities?

My adviser friend said, "Mike taught eleven others that though one may appear to be a little less physically capable, the heart makes the difference in those who choose to overcome many odds and set a standard for others to follow."

Mike fulfilled an honorable mission to California and is now working in his hometown.

What does the Lord require for service? A willing heart and intense desire.

Have a charitable heart

Third question: Do I have an understanding, loving heart?

An understanding, loving heart is the pinnacle of all human emotions. As the Apostle Paul said, charity "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (1 Corinthians 13:7). We come closest to becoming Christlike when we are charitable and understanding of others.

One may have many talents and knowledge but never acquire wisdom because he does not learn to be compassionate with his fellow man.

We will never approach godliness until we learn to love and lift. Indifference to others and their plight denies us life's sweetest moments of joy and service.

Have a change of heart

Last question (this taken directly from the Book of Mormon): "If ye have experienced a change of heart, and if ye have felt to sing the song of redeeming love, . . . can ye feel so now?" (Alma 5:26; italics added).

Having a "change of heart" at one time in our lives is insufficient to give us an understanding heart today. Helping and understanding a person years ago do not fill us with the love of God today.

Christlike love must be continuous and contemporary.

Plant and nourish the seeds

One night a young idealist had a dream. He dreamed there was a new store in a nearby shopping mall. He went in and saw an angel behind a counter. Nervously, he asked what the shop sold.

"Everything your heart desires," replied the angel.

"Then I want peace on earth," exclaimed the idealist. "I want an end to famine, sorrow, and disease."

"Just a moment," replied the angel. "You haven't understood. We don't sell fruit here—only seeds."

I pray that God will give each of us the courage and desire to strive for a pure heart, a willing heart, an understanding and loving heart. May we take the seeds offered to all of us, plant them, and nourish them that we may help harvest the matured fruit of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

If we can do this, when the final judgment is made and our hearts are measured by the Lord, our measurements will not be found deficient.

I bear my testimony and witness that the gospel of Jesus Christ has the power to change hearts and help individuals become pure, gentle, honest, kind, and loving.

We are led by a living prophet today. President Ezra Taft Benson has a pure,

gentle, honest, kind, and loving heart. This I know. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just given us his testimony.

The beautiful flowers that adorn the Tabernacle this morning were sent by the Saints of Tonga. We are grateful for this expression of their love.

We are grateful to the owners and operators of the many television and radio stations and cable systems for offering their facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this conference to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

The Mormon Youth Chorus will now sing "I Need Thee Every Hour."

The benediction will be given by Elder J. Richard Clarke of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and this conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The chorus sang "I Need Thee Every Hour."

Elder J. Richard Clarke offered the benediction.

FIRST DAY AFTERNOON SESSION

The second general session of the 158th Semiannual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, October 1, 1988, at 2:00 P.M. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

Music for this session was provided by the Salt Lake Tongan Choir. Sione T. Kinikini conducted, and Clay Christiansen was at the organ.

At the beginning of the meeting, President Monson made the following remarks:

President Thomas S. Monson

My beloved brethren and sisters, President Ezra Taft Benson has asked that I conduct this, the second general session of the 158th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We welcome all who are in attendance or who are participating by means of

television, cable, or radio, and many who are watching in stake centers throughout the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico, where the conference is being carried by satellite transmission. We express our appreciation to the owners and operators of many radio and television stations and to the owners and operators of cable systems for their cooperation in making these proceedings available to members and friends of the Church in many countries.

We note that Elders Theodore M. Burton and John Sonnenberg are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall.

The music for this session will be provided by the Salt Lake Tongan Choir, under the direction of Brother Sione T. Kinikini, with Brother Clay Christiansen at the organ. As you look at these wonderful choir members, perhaps you would appreciate with me the words of Robert Louis Stevenson, who described the Polynesian sky as "immoderately blue," but for the Polynesians themselves he re-

served the fitting tribute, "the sweetest people God ever made."

The choir will begin this session by singing "I Know That My Redeemer Lives." The invocation will then be offered by Elder Rex D. Pinegar, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "I Know That My Redeemer Lives."

Elder Rex D. Pinegar offered the invocation.

President Monson

The choir will now sing "Come, O Thou King of Kings," following which President Gordon B. Hinckley will present the General Authorities and general officers of the Church for your sustaining vote.

The choir sang "Come, O Thou King of Kings."

Sustaining of Church Authorities and Officers

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My brothers and sisters, as requested by President Benson, I shall now present to you the General Authorities and general officers of the Church for your sustaining vote.

It is proposed that we sustain President Ezra Taft Benson as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Gordon B. Hinckley as First Counselor in the First Presidency; and Thomas S. Monson as Second Counselor in the First Presidency. Those in favor may manifest it. Those opposed may manifest it.

We pay tribute to President Marion G. Romney, who passed away on May 20, 1988. Following President Romney's death, President Howard W. Hunter was

called and set apart as the President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

It is therefore proposed that we sustain President Hunter as President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles and the following as members of that council: Howard W. Hunter, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, Joseph B. Wirthlin, and Richard G. Scott. Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed may so manifest it.

It is proposed that we sustain the Counselors in the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators. All in favor, please manifest it. Any who may feel otherwise may so indicate.

In view of Elder Scott's call as a member of the Council of the Twelve, we release him as a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

It is proposed that we sustain Elder J. Richard Clarke as a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy. Those in favor may manifest it. Any opposed may so indicate.

It is also proposed that we sustain Monte J. Brough, Albert Choules, Jr., Lloyd P. George, and Gerald E. Melchin as additional members of the First Quorum of the Seventy to serve for a period of five years and that we sustain all other General Authorities and general officers of the Church as presently constituted.

Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed may so manifest it.

President Benson, it appears that the voting has been unanimous in the affirmative. We invite the newly sustained member of the Twelve and members of the Seventy to take their places on the stand.

President Monson

We welcome these newly called General Authorities whom you have sustained with your uplifted hands and with your hearts.

Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our first speaker at this session.

Elder Boyd K. Packer

Elder Scott, we welcome you to the quorum. Elder Richard Scott is a man in whom the Spirit is, and he is sustained by his lovely wife, Jeanene, who is not one whit less a spiritual power.

And to these four brethren who have joined the First Quorum of the Seventy we say, your fellowship will be enjoyed and your help very much appreciated.

A comfortless funeral

A neighbor once told me that as a missionary in earlier days he and his companion were walking along a ridge in the mountains of the South. They saw people gathering in a clearing near a cabin some distance down the hillside. They had come for a funeral. A little boy had drowned, and his parents had sent for the preacher to "say words." The minister, who rode a circuit on horseback, would rarely visit these isolated families. But when there was trouble, they would send for him.

The little fellow was to be buried in a grave opened near the cabin. The elders stayed in the background as the minister

stood before the grieving family and began his sermon.

If the parents had hoped for consolation from this man of the cloth, they were disappointed. He scolded them severely because the little boy had not been baptized. He told them bluntly that their little son was lost in endless torment, and it was their fault.

Truth about death brings comfort

After the grave was covered and the neighbors had gone, the elders approached the grieving parents. "We are servants of the Lord," they told the sobbing mother, "and we've come with a message for you."

As the grief-stricken parents listened, the elders unfolded the plan of redemption. They quoted from the Book of Mormon, "Little children need no repentance, neither baptism" (Moroni 8:11) and then bore testimony of the restoration of the gospel.

I have sympathy for that itinerant preacher, for he was doing the best he could with the light and knowledge he had. But there is more than he had to give.

What comfort the truth brings at times of sorrow! Since death is ever present with us, a knowledge of how essential it is to the plan of salvation is of immense, practical value. Every one of us should know how and why it came to be in the beginning.

The Fall

Mortal death came into the world at the Fall.

It is easier for me to understand that word *fall* in the scriptures if I think both in terms of *location* and of *condition*. The word *fall* means to descend to a lower place.

The fall of man was a move from the presence of God to mortal life on earth. That move down to a lower place came as a consequence of a broken law.

Fall may also describe a change in *condition*. For instance, one can fall in reputation or from prominence. The world *fall* well describes what transpired when Adam and Eve were driven from the garden. A transformation took place in their bodies. The bodies of flesh and bone became temporal bodies. *Temporal* means temporary. The scriptures say, "the life of all flesh is the blood thereof" (Leviticus 17:14; see also Deuteronomy 12:23; *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], pp. 199–200, 367).

President Kimball explained: "Blood, the life-giving element in our bodies, replaced the finer substance which coursed through their bodies before. They and we became mortal, subject to illness, pains, and even the physical dissolution called death" ("Absolute Truth," *Ensign*, Sept. 1978, p. 5).

Temporal bodies must die

After the transformation of the Fall, bodies of flesh and bone and *blood* (unlike our spirit bodies) could not endure. Somehow the ingredient of blood carried with it a limit to life. It was as though a clock were set and a time given. There-

after, all living things moved inexorably toward mortal death.

Temporal, I repeat, means temporary. And so, death is the reality of life. When conditions develop because of age or illness or accident, the spirit is separated from the body.

Death can be tragic with the loss of one upon whom others depend for happiness, for many die too young. Sometimes it is slow in coming to one who yearns to join the loved ones who have gone before. Some sleep peacefully away, while others endure long-suffering. And we know that death can be terrible and violent. To threaten or to take life, even our own in suicide, is to offend God, for He "in all things hath forbidden it, from the beginning of man" (Ether 8:19).

It is my conviction that in the spirit world prior to mortal birth, we waited anxiously for our time to enter mortality. I also believe that we were willing to accept whatever conditions would prevail in life. Perhaps we knew that nature might impose limits on the mind or on the body or on life itself. I believe that we nevertheless anxiously awaited our turn.

Funerals

One of the most solemn and sacred meetings of the Church is the funeral for a departed member. It is a time of caring and support when families gather in a spirit of tender regard for one another. It is a time to soberly contemplate doctrines of the gospel and the purposes for the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Except where burial is prohibited by law, we are counseled to bury our dead. There are important symbolic references to burial in the ordinance of baptism and elsewhere in the doctrines of the Church.

Where required by law, alternate methods of disposing of the remains do not nullify the Resurrection. On occasion a body will be lost through accident or military action. A funeral is nevertheless very important. For we take comfort in the promises in the scriptures of a complete restoration of both the body and the spirit.

A comforting, spiritual funeral is of great importance. It helps console the bereaved and establishes a transition from mourning to the reality that we must move forward with life. Whether death is expected or a sudden shock, an inspirational funeral where the doctrines of resurrection, the mediation of Christ, and certainty of life after death are taught strengthens those who must now move on with life.

Many attend funerals who do not come to church regularly. They come subdued in spirit and are teachable. How sad when an opportunity for conversion is lost because a funeral is less than it might have been.

Concern about reverence at funerals

There is reason to fear that we are drifting from the sacred spirit of reverence which should characterize funerals. The Brethren have discussed this in council meetings and are concerned.

I have read what the revelations teach us concerning mortal death, and the instructions given by the Brethren concerning funerals.

May I review some of that counsel. I hope that bishops will pay attention because the responsibility for arranging and conducting funerals in the Church rests upon the bishopric.

Funerals are church meetings

Funerals held under the direction of the priesthood are church meetings. They have been likened to sacrament meetings. I quote from a priesthood bulletin:

"It is requested that henceforth all funerals conducted under the auspices of officials of the Church follow the general format of the sacrament meeting with respect to music, speaking, and prayers. Music should be used at the beginning of the service prior to the opening prayer and possibly after the invocation also, as in our Sunday meetings. The closing portion of the funeral likewise should follow our customary pattern of having a final musical number immediately before the concluding prayer. Where feasible a choir

could very well be used on the musical program.

"With respect to speaking, it should be kept in mind that funeral services provide an excellent opportunity for teaching the basic doctrines . . . in a positive manner. . . .

"Following these suggestions will help to keep our services in line with our established pattern and will avoid practices now so commonly followed elsewhere" (*Priesthood Bulletin*, Apr. 1972, p. 3).

Bishops always show tender regard for the family of the deceased, and insofar as their requests accord with established policy, they may willingly be met. On occasion a family member has suggested, sometimes even insisted, that some innovation be added to the funeral service as a special accommodation to the family. Within reason, of course, a bishop may honor such a request. However, there are limits to what may be done without disturbing the spirituality and causing it to be less than it might be. We should remember, too, that others attending the funeral may suppose that innovation is an accepted procedure and introduce it at other funerals. Then, unless we are careful, an innovation which was allowed as an accommodation to one family in one funeral may come to be regarded as expected in every funeral.

Occasionally a mortician, out of a desire to be of help and not understanding the doctrines and procedures of the Church, will alter a funeral service. Bishops should remember that when funerals are held under priesthood auspices the service should conform to the instructions given by the Church. We should regard the bishop rather than the family or the mortician as the presiding authority in these matters.

In recent years, there has been a tendency to stray from the accepted pattern for funerals. Sometimes the casket is kept open during the funeral, and members are expected to file by at the close of the funeral. And, instead of the simple family prayer, talks and even musical numbers have been added at the closing of the casket or at the cemetery before the grave is

dedicated. I do not refer to graveside services which may on occasion take the place of a formal funeral. I refer to those alterations of the approved simple agenda for funerals.

When innovations are suggested by family members, morticians, or others, which are quite out of harmony with that agenda, the bishop should quietly persuade them to follow the established pattern. It is not a rigid pattern and allows sufficient flexibility to have each funeral personally appropriate for the deceased.

Family speakers

There now seems to be the expectation that members of the immediate family must speak at funerals. While that may not be out of order, it should not be regarded as required. Family members ordinarily give the family prayer and dedicate the grave.

If family members do speak, and I repeat, it is not a requirement, they are under the same obligation to speak with reverence and to teach the principles of the gospel.

Sometimes family members tell things that would be appropriate at a family reunion or at some other family gathering but not on an occasion that should be sacred and solemn. While quiet humor is not out of order in a funeral, it should be wisely introduced. It should be ever kept in mind that the funeral should be characterized by spirituality and reverence.

Other memorial gatherings

One statement from the instructions refers to events other than the funeral service itself. I quote:

"The bishop should urge members to maintain a spirit of reverence, dignity, and solemnity at gatherings *connected with funerals*" (*General Handbook of Instructions* [1985], p. 2-6; italics added).

That should be kept in mind if a viewing is to be held. Viewings are not mandatory.

Funerals generally bring relatives and friends from distant places. There is

the tendency to greet one another joyfully and, unfortunately, at times noisily. Some visit at length, showing little regard for others who are waiting to pay their respects. Both the irreverence and the delay are discourtesies from which the spirituality of the occasion suffers.

Renewing of friendships should appropriately be made outside the room where the viewing is taking place. Local leaders need to caution us gently on this matter. Surely we do not want to be known as an irreverent people.

There is the need to reestablish the spirit of reverence at funerals whether in a chapel, a mortuary, or at other locations.

We should always have a tender regard for the feelings of the bereaved.

We are close, very close, to the spirit world at the time of death. There are tender feelings, spiritual communications really, which may easily be lost if there is not a spirit of reverence.

Be reverent to feel the Comforter

At times of sorrow and parting one may experience that "peace . . . which passeth all understanding" which the scriptures promise (Philippians 4:7). That is a very private experience. Many have come to marvel in their hearts that such a feeling of peace, even exaltation, can come at the time of such grief and uncertainty.

Testimonies are strengthened by such inspiration, and we come to know, personally know, what is meant when the Lord said, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" (John 14:18).

The Comforter works, as far as I have experience, in moments of reverence and quiet and solemnity. How sad if our own conduct is irreverent at a time when others are seeking so desperately for spiritual strength.

The revelations tell us that "thou shalt live together in love, insomuch that thou shalt weep for the loss of them that die, and more especially for those that have not hope of a glorious resurrection" (D&C 42:45).

A funeral may be a happy-sad occasion when death comes as a welcome

release. Nevertheless, it is a sacred occasion and should be characterized by solemnity and reverence.

Death is necessary for happiness

Alma's son thought that death was unfair. In his remarkable sermon on repentance, Alma taught his son about death, saying, "Now behold, it was not expedient that man should be reclaimed from this temporal death, for that would destroy the great plan of happiness" (Alma 42:8).

Alma did not say that setting mortal death aside would merely delay or disturb the plan of happiness; he said it would *destroy* it.

The words *death* and *happiness* are not close companions in mortality, but in the eternal sense they are essential to one another. Death is a mechanism of rescue. Our first parents left Eden lest they partake of the tree of life and live forever in their sins. The mortal death they brought upon themselves, and upon us, is our journey home.

Reintroduce reverence

Three elements combine in a funeral as in no other meeting: the doctrines of the gospel, the spirit of inspiration, and families gathered in tender regard for one another.

May we reintroduce the attitude of reverence each time we gather to memorialize one who has moved through the veil to that place where one day each of us will go.

No consolation in parting compares with that "peace . . . which passeth all understanding." That is fostered by reverence. Reverence, please, brothers and sisters, reverence, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us and given us wonderful instructions.

Elders Robert E. Sackley and L. Lionel Kendrick, sustained at April conference as members of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now address us.

Elder Robert E. Sackley

"A more excellent way"

My beloved brethren and sisters, I want to speak to you today about what I consider to be one of the greatest challenges of our times—the need to pursue "a more excellent way." It was the Apostle Paul who said, "But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way" (1 Corinthians 12:31).

Why should we all seek to pursue "a more excellent way," and what does it mean? Finding "a more excellent way" means being totally converted to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and doing all that we can to fulfill those covenants we make in becoming His disciples.

The great prophet Alma, speaking of his own life and his conversion, said:

"I have repented of my sins, and have been redeemed of the Lord; behold I am born of the Spirit.

"And the Lord said unto me: Marvel not that all mankind, yea, men and women, all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, must be born again; yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters;

"And thus they become new creatures; and unless they do this, they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God" (Mosiah 27:24–26).

What it means to be converted

Being converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ means to walk in a newness of life. It means learning to yield to the Spirit and responding to the things that the Lord expects us to respond to. It means caring for and serving others with deep, considerate feelings rather than pursuing the natural desires of our own lives. In our day and time there has been a great tendency to shrug off the things of the Spirit as we become more and more involved in worldly things. We seem to be living in a world where people give little thought to others, as they are busily caring for their own needs. As followers of Christ, we must live outside ourselves and lose ourselves in service to others.

I believe we ought to remember what King Benjamin said so long ago. He said: "For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father" (Mosiah 3:19).

"Walk in newness of life"

It was the great Apostle Paul who said, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

To find that "more excellent way," brothers and sisters, we must cast aside our old selves and our old habits and ways of thinking. We must first recognize how we should change, and then we must make those changes, thus putting on the new and beginning to live as we have never lived before—walking in a newness of life.

The Apostle Paul also said, speaking of our relationship to the Lord, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised

up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).

Throughout the world I personally have witnessed man's great tendency to think of himself without consideration of others. I believe with all my heart that we cannot come unto Christ unless we put on a "newness of life" in caring for those we love, in sharing the gospel, in keeping the commandments, and in honoring the covenants we have made. These are the things we must do now and better than we have ever done them before.

Study the Book of Mormon

Our great prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, has called upon each of us to read the Book of Mormon. He has not invited us to read this sacred record just to read the words. Through prayerful study of the Book of Mormon we can pursue that "more excellent way." Our prophet's motive in asking us to read the holy scripture is conveyed in the beautiful words of one of our hymns:

Abide with me; 'tis eventide.
Thy walk today with me
Has made my heart within me burn,
As I communed with thee.
Thy earnest words have filled my
soul
And kept me near thy side.
O Savior, stay this night with me;
Behold, 'tis eventide.
(*Hymns* [1985], no. 165)

Testimony and commitment

Now, to each of you, I bear my witness that you who are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are involved in a true work. This is the Lord's work. I want each of you to know that I sustain it with all my heart. I sustain those who preside over me—our great and living prophet, who is guided by our Father in Heaven, and his associates, who are indeed messengers of the Lord Jesus Christ. This work is true, and this is the way to come unto Christ and walk in newness of life!

My brothers and sisters, it has been a humbling experience for me to speak to you in this great conference. I want you to know that you have my love, my faith, and my prayers. I know that no people on earth have more capacity to be what the Lord wants them to be than those of you who are members of this great church.

I also want you to know that my life was changed more than forty years ago as I read the Book of Mormon. There is nothing on earth that has influenced me more profoundly than my testimony of

this sacred record and the work to which it belongs. It has burned within my soul over the years with ever-increasing brightness, and I find great joy and satisfaction in walking in "newness of life" in my search for the "more excellent way."

And I find great joy and satisfaction in walking that journey with a beloved companion, and now with a posterity who seem to have caught the same vision.

May you have this experience, I pray humbly, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder L. Lionel Kendrick

Communications affect the soul

Heavenly Father has given us a priceless gift in our capacity to communicate with each other. Our communications are at the core of our relationships with others. If we are to return home safely to Heavenly Father, we must develop righteous relationships with His children here in mortality.

Our communications reflect in our countenance. Therefore, we must be careful not only *what* we communicate, but also *how* we do so. Souls can be strengthened or shattered by the message and the manner in which we communicate.

Accountable for all communication

We will be held accountable for all that we say. The Savior has warned "that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matthew 12:36). This means that no communication shall be without consequence. This includes the slight slips of the tongue, the caustic communications that canker the soul, and the vain, vulgar, and profane words which desecrate the name of Deity.

Un-Christlike communications

There are certain kinds of un-Christlike communications which destroy relationships and are not for our development

but are for our destruction. They result in a diminished opportunity of returning home safely to Heavenly Father. One of the major ways that Satan uses to retard the development of righteous relationships is in the use of gossip, rumor, and slander on his communication network. Perhaps the more common un-Christlike communications are those of lying, blaming, criticizing, and anger.

1. Lying. The first of these communications is that of lying. To lie is to be untruthful, deceptive, deceitful, and dishonest. This is a basic communications problem which is not new; it goes back to the Garden of Eden.

Satan introduced the first recorded communications problem in the form of lying in his conversation with Eve. He asked recorded history's first question: "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (Genesis 3:1).

Eve responded, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

"But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, . . . lest ye die" (vs. 2-3).

Satan, in a spirit of deception and defiance, responded, "Ye shall not surely die" (v. 4). He distorted the truth, denied the word of God, and planted the seeds of doubt about the word of Deity. Thus, Satan became the father of lies, deception, and doubt.

It is a serious sin to lie. The scriptures teach us that "lying lips are abomination to the Lord" (Proverbs 12:22) and that "he that lieth and will not repent shall be cast out" (D&C 42:21). They also teach us that to lie about a person is a form of hatred, for "a lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it" (Proverbs 26:28). The Apostle Paul gave us counsel concerning this matter: "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour" (Ephesians 4:25).

Integrity is the core of our character. Without integrity we have a weak foundation upon which to build other Christlike characteristics.

2. Blaming. A second un-Christlike communication is that of blaming. This is a condemning communication. It is interesting that when the Lord confronted Adam in his fallen state, Adam began to place the blame on Eve for his actions. He said, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat" (Genesis 3:12). When Eve was confronted, she placed the blame on Satan. She said, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat" (v. 13).

It has been from the beginning and it will be till the end that the natural man will have a tendency to rationalize and to blame his behaviors on others or on certain circumstances. When we attempt to place responsibility for our choices on others, we are responding in a less than Christlike manner. Blaming is an unrighteous form of communication.

3. Criticizing. A third un-Christlike communication is that of criticizing. Positive criticism is feedback given with the purpose of helping another person to grow and to develop. This is both helpful and needful and is generally accepted and appreciated.

Negative criticism is intended to hurt and often to defame and to destroy. This caustic communication is cruel, and it tends to crush the character of all of those about whom it is directed. King Benjamin urged his people not to "have a mind to injure one another, but to live peaceably" (Mosiah 4:13). We should surely follow

this counsel and defend those who are defamed by these denunciations.

4. Anger. A fourth is anger. This is perhaps the most common form of un-Christlike communication. Anger causes anguish to the souls of all of those who experience the feeling as well as to those who are the recipients of this emotional explosion.

Anger shows a lack of self-control and an inability to relate in a righteous way to others. It is a senseless substitute for self-control. It is sometimes used as a selfish strategy to gain control of a relationship. President Wilford Woodruff counseled that "the moment a man or a woman becomes angry they show a great weakness" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 4:98).

We are instructed to "let all bitterness, . . . and anger, . . . and evil speaking, be put away" (Ephesians 4:31). The implication is clear: we have the capacity to control this carnal communication.

Counsel

Much counsel has been given concerning our communications with others. The counsel given by the Apostle Paul to the Ephesian Saints seems to be most appropriate for the Latter-day Saints. He cautioned, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good" (Ephesians 4:29). He further counseled to be "kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (v. 32).

Christlike communications

May we be found communicating with each other in a manner in which the Savior would communicate. Christlike communications are expressed in tones of love rather than loudness. They are intended to be helpful rather than hurtful. They tend to bind us together rather than to drive us apart. They tend to build rather than to belittle.

Christlike communications are expressions of affection and not anger, truth and not fabrication, compassion and not

contention, respect and not ridicule, counsel and not criticism, correction and not condemnation. They are spoken with clarity and not with confusion. They may be tender or they may be tough, but they must always be tempered.

The real challenge that we face in our communications with others is to condition our hearts to have Christlike feelings for all of Heavenly Father's children. When we develop this concern for the condition of others, we will then communicate with them as the Savior would. We will then warm the hearts of those who may be suffering in silence. As we meet people with special needs along life's way, we can then make their journey brighter by the things that we say.

Christlike communications will help us to develop righteous relationships and ultimately to return to our heavenly home safely. May we treasure the divine gift of communication, and may we use it wisely to build and to assist others on this marvelous journey through mortality. May

Heavenly Father bless us to this end, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "How Firm a Foundation" without announcement.

President Monson

Elders Robert E. Sackley and L. Lionel Kendrick, members of the First Quorum of the Seventy, have just addressed us, followed by the choir singing "How Firm a Foundation."

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Redeemer of Israel," following which we shall be pleased to hear remarks from Elder John K. Carmack, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation sang "Redeemer of Israel."

Elder John K. Carmack

I am sure I speak for all of you when I say how much we have been inspired by this great choir. I think I speak for all of you and especially the Brethren in welcoming these four new members of the First Quorum of the Seventy and sustaining our new leaders, Elder Clarke and Elder Scott.

What does it mean to bear testimony? A testimony is an open declaration or confession of one's faith. To bear is to give or bring forward. So as I bear testimony, I am giving a declaration of my faith.

Most of you would gladly bear testimony if called upon. I wish we could yield a minute to each one of you. The real power of the Church is not financial or political, but the quiet testimonies of its members.

Keep testimonies growing

Members may describe their testimonies as growing. A few say they have

lost their testimonies. In bearing testimony, some use the term *know*, some *believe*. Some say, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24).

I desire to edify all, no matter what the status of their testimonies.

When Shirley and I returned from the marriage of our son in the Oakland Temple last month, we strolled into the backyard. The lawn had looked particularly healthy and green this summer. To our horror, we discovered that the lawn had withered and turned as if to straw in the few days we had been gone. The automatic sprinkler had failed, and the hot summer sun had scorched the lawn.

Testimonies are like our lawn. They may be green and growing, but the heat of summer can change all of that. I shudder when I hear anyone declare, "I will never deny my testimony of the gospel." I seem to hear another standing by and answering quietly, "Well, we shall see."

We need your testimonies. We cannot afford to lose a single one. "Every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friends or of thine own were; . . . therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee" (John Donne, *Devotions*, XVII).

The bell tolls for all of us. To those with strong testimonies I say, keep them growing. To those who have lost their testimonies I say, we need you back once again to take "sweet counsel together, and [to walk] unto the house of God in company" (Psalm 55:14). Isaiah promised, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles" (Isaiah 40:31).

The soil and roots of testimony

The parable of the sower teaches us the principles by which we can gain or retain our testimonies and hints of pitfalls which we need to avoid at the peril of losing them.

The bottom line is simple enough. The gospel seed must be sown in good ground. A seed planted in good ground will grow into a plant which will yield fruit and have a strong root system to withstand the heat of summer. But the plant must be nurtured and watered.

How can we develop that rich and healthy soil in which the word of God can grow? How can we ensure an adequate root system to withstand the heat of summer?

I shall offer three principles and three warnings in answer to the questions posed. This will lead to two specific exhortations to all of us.

Be rooted in Christ

First, our testimonies will be in good ground if they are rooted in Christ. Christ is the source of our greatest strength and comfort in times of stress or doubt.

Years ago I faced a temporal crisis in my business which threatened to engulf me. In answer to fervent prayer, the

Savior not only comforted me, but revealed the pathway out of the crisis into light.

In 1984, when President Hinckley called asking me to bring Sister Carmack and come to general conference for the interview resulting in this calling, the Savior visited me in spirit before dawn and again provided solace and peace.

"He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep" (Psalm 121:4). "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee" (Psalm 55:22). We can cry in times of distress, "O Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy on me, who am in the gall of bitterness, and am encircled about by the everlasting chains of death" (Alma 36:18).

I testify that He lives! I know His presence and have heard His voice in my mind and in my heart (see Enos 1:10, D&C 8:2).

He is the rock, the cornerstone, and our Redeemer. He is the "true vine" to which our testimonies must attach. Good soil, then, is enriched by the Savior.

Desire to gain a testimony

The second principle is so simple that it could easily escape our grasp and hide in the thicket of more profound and complex ideas.

Faith begins by a *desire* to know if the gospel is true. To desire is to want or long for something. It is a strong wish.

When we *desire* to gain a testimony, *desire* to know, *desire* to believe, testimony can begin or grow.

Abraham became the great patriarch because he desired "to be one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge, and to be a father of many nations, a prince of peace." He desired "to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments of God" (Abraham 1:2).

Alma also explained that one must start on the road to a testimony by having a desire, or as he stated, you must "awake and arouse your faculties, even to an experiment upon my words, and exercise a particle of faith, . . . even if ye can no

more than *desire* to believe" (Alma 32:27; italics added).

Desire begets faith and testimony. Testimony isn't achieved by logic and study. For example, we can list hundreds of evidences that the Book of Mormon and the New Testament are true, but the skeptic can probably match us point by point. Without desire, the skeptic is "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Timothy 3:7).

I don't believe it was ever intended that the gospel be proven true by physical or documentary evidence acceptable to all. In this life, the believer must come to his witness by faith, not by logic and proof alone. And the starting point is to place the ingredient of desire in our soil.

The gospel experiment

I come now to the third point. A *spiritual experiment* similar to scientific procedures is the way one gains conviction about gospel principles and is an essential ingredient in achieving the rich soil in which the seed of testimony may grow.

Jesus explained, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John 7:17). In other words, as you try it you can know it is true. This requires the faith to try, but it yields spiritual evidence. To the disciple who tries the experiment will come conviction, knowledge, and light. As the disciple continues, he receives "more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day" (D&C 50:24).

So when I declare that I know this gospel is true, that Christ lives, and that Ezra Taft Benson is God's prophet, I am saying, in effect, that doing and serving have brought me the conviction that this work is true.

I declare today that the lame are healed, the blind are restored to sight, and the dead are raised. Pathways are illuminated. Men and women are called of God by prophecy, and the Lord reveals His will to His prophets for the guidance of the Church.

The three keys then, are, to be rooted in Christ, to have a desire to know,

and to do the things God has commanded. All can come to know that the doctrine is true, growing from light and truth to further light and truth until the perfect day.

The seed "will begin to swell . . . and when you feel these swelling motions, ye will begin to say within yourselves—It must needs be that this is a good seed, or that the word is good" (Alma 32:28).

Yes, there are other ways to a testimony. Paul was converted by a heavenly manifestation. By study and reason one can find the truth. But a testimony based on reason and knowledge alone, without a spiritual witness, can be in danger when a premise of its tight logic gets weak or crumbles. Thanks be to the Lord that my testimony is founded on faith and continues to grow through experience. I have seen, I have felt, and I know what I know.

Yes, I have a whole box of unanswered questions, none of them threatening to my testimony. New questions enter that box regularly. Others come out of the box, yielding to both study and experience. My hope is that I will endure the summer heat and retain that testimony, anchored in Christ, until the end of my mortal probation.

Dangers to a testimony

As I have watched beloved friends and family lose their faith, I have tried to identify major causes.

1. *Arrogance, or pride.* One of the three dangers I shall mention is arrogance, or pride. Intellectual pursuits, financial success, positions of power, and other achievements, in and of themselves neither morally bad nor good, sometimes lead to pride and away from humble dependence on the Lord. Jacob cautioned that "to be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God" (2 Nephi 9:29). Financial and political power can also be seductive and corrupting influences.

It helps to remember and emulate the meekness of Enoch, Moses, and Spencer Kimball.

2. *Sin.* Testimonies are weakened by sin, especially sexual transgressions. The

sinner sometimes blames someone else, rejects the gospel, and flees. A plant growing in rocky soil withers quickly. Serious transgression, then, is the second danger to our testimonies. The road back includes removing the rocks, turning over and enriching the soil, overcoming the sin, and resisting further temptations. Increasing numbers are returning to the Church by repenting of their sins. They seldom completely lose their testimonies.

3. *Substitution.* The final danger I shall call substitution. Some fine and capable people become so committed to science, philosophy, history, art, music, athletics, professional pursuits, intellectual hobbies, or recreation that these interests replace the simple core values, covenants, and doctrines of the gospel. These pursuits become a substitute religion and the governing force in their lives.

The central gospel principles repeated over and over in the covenants and ordinances of the temple, embodied in the sacrament, and found in the scriptures are available to all of us if we do not imagine somehow that we have outgrown the gospel of Christ. We also have our latter-day gnostics who "know" more than the garden-variety disciples of Christ.

I do not mean, however, to suggest that we should not continue to learn and deepen our knowledge about life and about the gospel. A solid, mature, and growing knowledge of the gospel is desirable and should be a constant goal.

To repeat, three dangers which can damage our faith and harm or destroy our testimonies are arrogance and pride, serious transgressions, and the substitution of peripheral pursuits and values for Christ and the central core gospel ideals and standards.

As I prepared for this moment, the backyard lawn was beginning to look

green again, but the sprinkler on the front lawn shut down without warning. One must not become weary with well-doing (see D&C 64:33). Our testimonies, like our lawns, can wither.

Grow and serve

At this point you may be asking, "So what?" I shall limit myself to two exhortations, one to all the members of the Church and one to the leadership of the Church.

First, to grow in light and testimony we must magnify our Church callings throughout our lives, our entire lives. By this means, combined with spontaneous Christian service, we will never lose our testimonies. They will grow brighter and greener.

And then finally, to the Church leaders: please ordain men to the priesthood and extend a call to every brother and sister, active or less-active, giving each an opportunity to serve others and to apply gospel principles. One Church calling for each member is an ideal which we can reach in most places. I know of nothing which will do more to build testimonies and bless people.

And may I just take this opportunity to express my great love to all of you members of the Church. I love you and appreciate you and admire all the things you do. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder John K. Carmack, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder M. Russell Ballard

Brothers and sisters, the topic I wish to address is one about which the Breth-

ren are deeply concerned. I have titled my remarks "The Hand of Fellowship."

The gospel is for all

In the New Testament we read that Peter, the head of the Church after the Savior's resurrection and ascension, was informed in a vision that the gospel is for all mankind. He said, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35). This same message appears in the Book of Mormon and in the Doctrine and Covenants. Every soul is to have an opportunity to hear and then accept or reject the gospel.

Extend fellowship to all

In the Church we use the word *fellowship* to describe our efforts (1) to encourage less-active members to return to full activity and (2) to help new converts make the transition into the Church following baptism. I believe those meanings are valid, but to me the word *fellowship* has a much broader connotation. I believe we members do not have the option to extend the hand of fellowship only to relatives, close friends, certain Church members, and those selected nonmembers who express an interest in the Church. Limiting or withholding our fellowship seems to me to be contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Savior offered the effects of his atoning sacrifice to all mankind. He said, "Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God" (D&C 18:10). Can we justify doing less? Let me give you a few examples that illustrate my message.

Proclaim the gospel to all

Near the end of his earthly ministry, the resurrected Jesus instructed his disciples with these words: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20). That instruction is in force today and is the mandate for General Authorities, missionaries, and other members of the

Church to travel to the four corners of the world teaching the gospel.

Proclaiming the gospel to all mankind is a fundamental part of the mission of the Church. As those of you know who have supported full-time missionaries, the Church devotes very substantial resources, in time and money, to missionary work.

This big world is filled with billions of people. Today more than 35,700 full-time missionaries are combing the earth looking for those of our Father's children who will listen to the message of the Restoration. These dedicated servants of the Lord are serving in 221 missions and are teaching the gospel in 64 different languages. We expect that approximately 245,000 converts will be baptized during 1988. This number is impressive; however, approximately that same number of people are being born in the world every day.

In the missionary training centers, we teach the missionaries that they must have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. They are taught that they need to develop genuinely warm, personal, caring relationships with those whom they meet. They must learn to listen with understanding and to show sincere sensitivity to the interests and concerns of those they teach. As missionaries teach the doctrines, they need to find out what their contacts think and feel so they can clarify misunderstandings, ease doubts, resolve concerns, and provide encouragement. The warm, sincere spirit of the missionaries is essential to help nonmembers feel and recognize the Spirit of the Lord, because the Spirit is the power that leads to conversion.

Welcome newcomers

Brothers and sisters, we must ever keep in mind that missionary work throughout the world requires great sacrifice, and all of this sacrifice, effort, and exhaustive preparation of missionaries may be in vain if those who accept the gospel do not receive a loving and warm welcome by the members of the Church.

We know from years of experience that the first contacts new converts have with members in wards or branches are critical to the conversion process. Recently, several of the Brethren were discussing how we accept and welcome newcomers. Two of them shared experiences with me.

Stories about fellowship

Elder Devere Harris of the First Quorum of the Seventy told me of a recent visit he made to a long-established ward in Utah. He said, "I entered there as a stranger and tried every way that I knew to strike up a conversation, or to say hello, or to be kind, or to be greeted, or to be known. Everyone ignored me; nobody would speak to me—no one!"

"Finally, a man recognized me. He said, 'Oh, Elder Harris.' The bishop turned around and said, 'What did you say?' The brother said, 'This is Elder Harris of the First Quorum of the Seventy.'"

"Well, things changed. It wasn't long before I was asked to sit on the stand; they wondered if I wouldn't like to bear my testimony. After the meeting, many people shook my hand. As I left, I thought, 'What a tragedy! A gray-haired man who was unknown walks into a meeting. Nobody recognizes him, nobody says hello, nobody is kind. Then, because of his Church position, everybody changes and wants to be friendly.'"

The second story involves two sisters who live two thousand miles from each other. Each was taught the missionary discussions by the full-time missionaries. Each felt the confirming witness of the Spirit and was baptized. Both were single adults in their early twenties. One sister attended church meetings, met the bishop, developed friendships with members who invited her into their homes. Ward members made her feel welcome and wanted. She was given a Church calling immediately after her baptism, and she continued to learn and live gospel principles while associating with ward and stake members. She participated continually, serving in various ward, stake,

and general Church callings. In time, she married in the temple, and she maintains her standing as a member in full fellowship.

The other sister, after receiving the witness of the Spirit, never met her bishop personally. She received no visits by home teachers or visiting teachers and was given no Church calling. For several weeks she attended Sunday ward meetings, but she was mostly ignored. In due course, the missionaries who had taught her left the area, and her interest in the gospel waned without the support of members. She was not "remembered and nourished" (Moroni 6:4). Soon she stopped attending church services, resumed her old friendships and life-style, and married a nonmember. Today she is a fine, productive, contributing citizen in her community and a loving, conscientious wife and mother. But she does not enjoy the rich blessings that come from full fellowship in the Church.

Recently, the *Church News* featured two older sister missionaries who exemplify the attributes of love and caring for others while serving on their missions in Duchesne, Utah. The stake president credited these sisters with bringing a spirit of warmth and friendship to his stake. In fact, the teaching and fellowshiping efforts of these sisters have helped change the attitude of the whole stake. The work of the Lord is more effectively coming together and influencing everyone, including the less active as well as nonmembers. The stake president said that in small farming communities, the activation of a less-active family has a big effect on others. He expects twelve to fifteen families to become active and go through the temple this year.

Brothers and sisters, we must ever keep in mind the time, effort, and other resources that missionaries and others spend to find and teach one of our Father's children. Surely, every one of us ought to be alert, looking for ways to be of service to the newcomer. We might ask ourselves how the newcomers in our wards would be treated if we were the only ones they ever met. Every member of the Church should foster the attributes

of warmth, sincerity, and love for the newcomers, as the missionaries are taught to do.

Be friendly at church

Brothers and sisters, we members must help with the conversion process by making our wards and branches friendly places, with no exclusivity, where all people feel welcome and comfortable. You bishops have been given many who can help you foster fellowship. Teach the children, youth, and adults that being warm and friendly are Christlike qualities. In your ward council meetings, consider ways to improve the feeling of fellowship in your ward. Be sure the missionaries introduce you to every investigator before he or she is baptized.

Assign someone to greet at the doors, paying special attention to newcomers and guests. On occasion, use priesthood and Relief Society meetings to teach home and visiting teachers how to fellowship all who live within the ward. Take advantage of the flexibility you have in using high priests and stake and full-time missionaries to lead the less active and new converts into full fellowship. In the true spirit of shepherding, bishoprics can help create a friendly atmosphere by mingling with members when they are gathering together.

True Christian fellowship

Brothers and sisters, my message is urgent because we need to retain in full fellowship many more of the new converts and return to activity many more of the less active. I urge you to increase the spirit of friendship and pure Christian fellowship in your neighborhoods. A new convert or recently activated member should feel the warmth of being wanted and being welcomed into full fellowship of the Church. Members and leaders of the Church should nurture and love them as Jesus would.

In addition to welcoming and accepting recent converts and less-active members, we need to reach out and extend our friendship to others regardless of whether

they are interested in the gospel or not. We must not be too selective in identifying those we feel are worthy or appreciative of our attention. The spirit of true Christian fellowship must include everyone. Our understanding of the gospel should help us see clearly that all people are our brothers and sisters, children of our Heavenly Father. Perhaps more of us could emulate this example.

Years ago while walking up Main Street with his father, Elder LeGrand Richards, then the Presiding Bishop of the Church, tipped his hat and greeted everyone. Upon arrival at their destination, President George F. Richards, then the President of the Council of the Twelve, said, "Son, do you know all those people?" Bishop Richards responded, "Yes, Daddy, I know them all—all but their names."

Share the love of Christ

During his earthly ministry, Jesus posed this challenging question: "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?" (Matthew 5:46). This teaching is clear. We should extend our love far beyond family, close friends, and fellow members of the Church. Our hearts should be open to everyone.

We can share the love of Christ in simple acts. For example, the warmth of a radiant smile and friendly greeting can go far in smoothing the way for good neighborly relations. Jesus posed another question: "And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?" (Matthew 5:47).

Some years ago, a friend of mine was doing some work one morning on his garage roof. He looked down and saw a load of cement being delivered to his non-member neighbor. He could see that the neighbor could use some help. My friend came down from his roof and, without being asked, carried his own cement finishing tools across the street and began helping with the job. Because he had experience doing cement work, his help turned out to be most welcome. Although the neighbor had expressed a dislike for

members of the Church, he showed genuine appreciation for this one by the end of the day. This was the beginning of a long and lasting friendship.

Jesus gave us a new commandment and said it would identify his disciples:

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34-35).

Love nonmembers unconditionally

As disciples of Christ, we need to feel genuine charity for one another. As we do, new light will come into our own lives. This charity is essential in missionary work, but we must never allow ourselves to treat our neighbors only as potential converts. We have had the sad experience of seeing members of the Church who attempted to convert their neighbors and friends and, when they did not respond, withdrew their friendship and neighborliness. We must not be so anxious to share the gospel that we become insensitive to the feelings of others.

I encourage you to build personal, meaningful relationships with your nonmember friends and acquaintances. Interest in the gospel may come later as a natural extension of a good friendship. Invitations to participate in gospel-related activities often will strengthen relationships with acquaintances. If they are not interested in the gospel, we should show unconditional love through acts of service and kindness, and never imply that we see an acquaintance only as a potential convert. Members must understand that when

a nonmember declines one invitation to investigate the gospel, he has not necessarily rejected the gospel.

Let us adhere to the counsel of the Apostle Paul and be "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19).

Despite some well-publicized criticism to the contrary, I believe Church members want to be good friends and neighbors wherever they live, but some are shy and overly cautious. This can appear to be clannish. We must not reserve our kindness and affection only for our fellow members. We must be sensitive and not oblivious to the feelings of those whose views may differ from ours. Considering the early history of the Church in these latter days, unkindness or indifference toward others should be abhorrent to members of the Church.

I bear my testimony that "God is no respecter of persons"; we should follow his example in all of our associations with our fellowmen. I testify that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Savior of all mankind. He loves all men and looks to each one of us to do the same. May we so do I pray humbly, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have just heard from Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our concluding speaker, and we shall hear from him now.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

I join in welcoming all the new Brethren, including Elder Richard Scott to the Council of the Twelve.

Years ago, Elder Scott was called as a mission president. The distinguished admiral for whom he worked was puzzled

and even upset that Elder Scott accepted that call. Later, that same admiral, a distinguished public servant, wrote a book called *Why Not the Best?* I suggest the answer to the admiral's question concerning that call is answered in the title of his

book, which has some applicability today as well, as the Lord has called one of "the best."

Following Jesus: the trek of treks

Sincerely striving to follow Jesus will try our faith and our patience—sometimes sorely (see Mosiah 23:21). Even with all its travail, however, it is the trek of treks.

As we all know, the restored gospel of Jesus Christ gives us abundant answers. But Jesus also asked some searching questions which tell us even more about the stretching journey of discipleship. To those who inquired about His authority, Jesus, in turn, put a pointed question, saying, "Answer me." They could not (see Mark 11:29–30). To all His applicable questions, the invitation "Answer me" stands to this day.

Thank and trust God

"Where are the nine?" inquired Jesus concerning the healed lepers who did not return with thanksgiving (Luke 17:17; italics added). How often are we like the nine? To receive God's blessings without acknowledging their Source is to be unrealistic as well as ungrateful.

We offend God not only by our ingratitude, brothers and sisters, but also by not confessing His competent hand in bringing to pass His transcending purposes on the earth (see D&C 59:21). Too many actually doubt God's plans will finally prevail. Not only in the years ahead, but even now, mortal self-sufficiency will be confounded. Profound fear will eventually pervade this perplexed planet (see D&C 63:33, 88:91). Would that mankind could live in faith, not fear—and with gratitude, not forgetfulness.

Besides, we are all beggars anyway (see Mosiah 4:19), beggars rescued by the Creator of the universe, who lived humbly as a person "of no reputation" (Philippians 2:7). In contrast, we are sometimes so anxious about our personal images, when it is His image we should have in our countenances (see Alma 5:14).

Strive for spiritual balance

"Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath?" Jesus counter-challenged (Mark 3:4; italics added). Can we not keep the spirit of the law without leaving other things undone? Without such spiritual balance, staying on the straight and narrow path will be a great trial for us (see 2 Corinthians 3:6).

Even seeking after things which are praiseworthy or lovely is accelerated by believing all the Articles of Faith which precede article thirteen. Similarly, the followers of the Ten Commandments are not divided into two vast platoons—one specializing in the "thou shalt" and the other in the "thou shalt not."

True orthodoxy consists of keeping the doctrines, ordinances, covenants, and programs of the Church and Christian service in proper balance. In this daily balancing process, we are not excused from exercising good judgment—after all that manuals and handbooks can do.

Render appropriately to God and Caesar

Whose image and superscription is on it? asked Jesus, using a coin now extinct, and exposing those seeking to entrap Him, while giving counsel relevant for as long as there are mortal rulers (see Matthew 22:20). Yes, to Caesar we owe taxes. But to God, in whose image we are minted, we owe ourselves!

In our members' diverse and sometimes stressful situations the world over, can we not follow the twelfth article of faith, rendering appropriately unto God and Caesar? After all, Jesus' immediate audience was a repressed people living under a military protectorate supporting corrupt civil authority.

Keep perspective

If ye know how to give, how much more shall your Father give? (see Matthew 7:11). Though imperfect, we mortals do good, sometimes much good. But can we keep mortal goodness in perspective? Comparatively, we are so much

quicker to return favors and to pay our debts to mortals—and we should be responsive and grateful. But what of Him who gave us mortal life itself, who will ere long give us all immortality, and who proffers to the faithful the greatest gift of all, eternal life?

We are poor bookkeepers, indeed!

Walk by faith

Why does this generation seek a sign? queried Jesus with a deep sigh (see Mark 8:11). The more wicked and adulterous the people of a particular period, the more they demand signs as a condition of belief. Sensual individuals crave and live by sensations. Disciples, instead, walk and “overcome by faith” (D&C 76:53), accepting gratefully the evidence of things not seen which are true (see Hebrews 11:1, Alma 32:21) and using quietly God’s spiritual gifts.

Christ will tutor us

What desirest thou of me? the resurrected Jesus inquired one by one of the Nephite Twelve (see 3 Nephi 28:1). He knows our individual bearing capacities. He will lead us along, not herd us (see D&C 78:18, 50:40). Foremost, the gospel can even educate our desires; then these desires can work affirmatively in us and for us.

Are we really ready, however, for the responsibility and the high adventure of being tutored by Him who genuinely wishes to honor our individual desires, if we do not desire amiss?

As for what God gives differentially to others, we need not be concerned. Peter, inquiring about John’s future role, was asked by Jesus, “What is that to thee? follow thou me” (John 21:22). Sometimes, brothers and sisters, we do too much comparing and too little following. Sometimes a few resent God’s having chosen someone else; perceiving themselves as passed over, they then go under spiritually.

The great question

“What think ye of Christ?” (Matthew 22:42; italics added). However the world ignores or responds to it, this is the reverberating and the great question! (see Alma 34:5–6). Can we answer with both our lives and our tongues, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”? (Matthew 16:16). Until we can, whatever else we say and do will, in the end, make little difference.

Be grounded and rooted in Christ

“Will ye also go away?” (John 6:67; italics added), the Master asked His disciples after many of his fair-weather followers went back and “walked no more with him” (v. 66). The very process of daily living makes and breaks followers. Life’s stern seasons and storms overturn those not grounded and rooted (see Ephesians 3:17, Colossians 1:23, 1 Peter 5:10). However, those who “believe and are sure” (John 6:69) about Jesus’ divinity do not panic, for instance, at the arrival of a new volley of fiery darts; they merely hold aloft the quenching shield of faith.

Such are but a few of Jesus’ searching questions.

May I add several much lesser questions of my own? Some are addressed to all, and some to members as we follow the counsel of an ancient prophet to “consider [our] ways” (Haggai 1:7).

ObeY to keep focus

Why is our life-style sometimes blurred and out of focus when we have been told clearly what “manner of men” and women we ought to be? (3 Nephi 27:27; see also 2 Peter 3:11). Of course, as individuals, we are free to choose! But wrong choices will make us less free. Furthermore, erosive error gradually makes one less and less of an individual. God and His prophets would spare us that shrinkage.

True disciples nourish faith

Why are a few members, who somewhat resemble the ancient Athenians, so eager to hear some new doubt or criticism? (see Acts 17:21). Just as some weak members slip across a state line to gamble, a few go out of their way to have their doubts titillated. Instead of nourishing their faith, they are gambling "offshore" with their fragile faith. To the question "Will ye also go away?" these few would reply, "Oh, no, we merely want a weekend pass in order to go to a casino for critics or a clubhouse for cloakholders." Such easily diverted members are not disciples but fair-weather followers.

Instead, true disciples are rightly described as steadfast and immovable, pressing forward with "a perfect brightness of hope" (2 Nephi 31:20; see also D&C 49:23).

Accept life's tests

Why do we resist and resent life's developmental and obedience tests? By declaring, "I will walk in my own way and do that which is right in my own eyes," we reject the curriculum of the mortal school in which we are irrevocably enrolled (see Judges 21:25, D&C 1:16). There is only one exit gate leading unto eternal life. Unhappily, only a few find it—but not because God is exclusionary, but because they exclude God from their lives. Even God cannot bring to pass a reconciliation involving only one party.

Take up the cross daily

Why do some think adultery and similar sins are permissible as long as anything else they do is commendable? The Lord's focus is not on the one thing we do which is good, but, instead, on the one or more things we still lack in order to have eternal life (see Mark 10:21, 2 Peter 1:9). To compose a symphony, to win a battle, or to save a company—each can be a commendable and worthy entry in the book of life, but these do not compensate for breaking the seventh commandment. In the arithmetic of heaven, several

commendables do not cancel out one inexcusable! The clear command from Jesus is to deny ourselves immorality and "to take up [the] cross daily," not to indulge ourselves and to take up the cross occasionally! (Luke 9:23; see also 3 Nephi 12:30). The Old Testament advises, "He that ruleth" himself is better "than he that taketh a city" (Proverbs 16:32).

Refuse ritual prodigalism

Why do some of our youth risk engaging in ritual prodigalism, intending to spend a season rebelling and acting out in Babylon and succumbing to that devilishly democratic "everybody does it"? Crowds cannot make right what God has declared to be wrong. Though planning to return later, many such stragglers find that alcohol, drugs, and pornography will not let go easily. Babylon does not give exit permits gladly. It is an ironic implementation of that ancient boast, "One soul shall not be lost" (Moses 4:1).

The philosophy of ritual prodigalism is "eat, drink, and be merry, . . . [and] God will beat us with a few stripes" (2 Nephi 28:8). This is a cynical and shallow view of God, of self, and of life. God never can justify us "in committing a little sin" (v. 8). He is the God of the universe, not some night-court judge with whom we can haggle and plea bargain!

Of course God is forgiving! But He knows the intents of our hearts. He also knows what good we might have done while AWOL. In any case, what others do is no excuse for the disciple from whom much is required (see Alma 39:4). Besides, on the straight and narrow path, there are simply no corners to be cut (see D&C 82:3).

Be sensitive and true

Why do some crush and break the tender hearts of spouses and children through insensitivity and even infidelity? Unable to sustain lasting relationships, shouting, in effect, "I am my own, I am in charge!" they retreat like cowards from their real responsibilities (see Jacob 2:35).

In such pathetic men or women, so strong is the competition between self-pity and self-indulgence that these urges both come in second! Furthermore, just as gender was of no saving significance in the self-destructive dash of the Gadarene swine to the sea, neither is it today.

God's work is one of finding, helping, reconciling—not of leaving, betraying, and deserting. Betrayed Uriah, deserted in the fray, represents many (see 2 Samuel 11:15).

Jesus' majesty and humility

In closing, these next observations underscore both the majesty and the humility of Him who said simply, "Answer me."

Though crucified briefly between two thieves, Jesus now sits eternally on the right hand of God! (see Luke 22:69, 1 Peter 3:22). He is the Lord of the constructed universe, yet He was known merely as "the carpenter's son" (Matthew 13:55).

He fashioned worlds without number, providing us with astrophysical awe when we view even "the least of these" (D&C 88:47). Yet, to aid just one blind man—with clay formed from spittle, "He from thick films [purged] the visual ray, / And on the sightless eyeball [poured] the day" (Alexander Pope, in Frederic W. Farrar, *The Life of Christ* [New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1893], p. 394; see also John 9:6).

Jesus was weary but never bored. He was ever tutoring but never condescending. His doctrines are like glistening diamonds with many dimensions, displaying their verity and beauty, facet by facet, depending on the faith and preparation of the beholder.

Jesus had access to immense power but never used it improperly. He refused to put on a show for sign-seeking Herod (see Luke 23:8). Legions of protective angels waited Christ's command, a command which never came (see Matthew 27:42).

Jesus was often misunderstood and rejected. But He felt most forsaken and alone on Calvary—just as the final act of

the Atonement was enveloping mankind in His eternal love. Ironically, during the moments when in agony He was benefiting billions upon billions of mortals, He was attended by only a faithful few.

His infinite atonement affected every age, every dispensation, and every person (see 2 Nephi 9:7, 25:16). Hence the appropriate symbolism of His bleeding at each and every pore—not just some—in order that "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22).

There will be no end to the ripples of the Resurrection resulting from the infinite Atonement. There will be no end either to the posterity of those who receive eternal life—eventually more posterity than the stars in the heavens (see Genesis 26:3–4). How infinite indeed!

These observations describe only in small part Him who said, "Answer me," reminding us from Whom that invitation has come. May we, brothers and sisters, answer Him with the entirety of our lives, sincerely singing, "We feel it a pleasure to serve thee, And love to obey thy command" (*Hymns* [1985], no. 19). May we be thankful for all God's prophets in every dispensation, including President Benson, I so pray in the name of the Lord of all the prophets, even Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Thank you, Elder Maxwell. Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We remind the brethren of the General Priesthood Meeting which will convene in the Tabernacle this evening at 6:00 P.M.

The nationwide CBS Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those desiring to attend this broadcast must be in their seats no later than 9:15 A.M.

We express gratitude to the Salt Lake Tongan Choir for the beautiful music we have heard this afternoon and express to them in their own language the fond greeting *mälō e lelei*.

The choir will now sing in closing, "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet." Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder Robert B. Harbertson of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

Elder Robert B. Harbertson offered the benediction.

GENERAL PRIESTHOOD SESSION

The general priesthood session, the third session of the 158th Semiannual General Conference, convened in the Tabernacle at 6:00 P.M. on Saturday, October 1, 1988. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for this session was provided by a combined men's choir from the Tabernacle Choir and the Mormon Youth Chorus. The choir was directed by Jerold Ottley and Robert C. Bowden, with John Longhurst at the organ.

President Hinckley opened the meeting with the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Brethren, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked that I conduct this general priesthood session. We extend our love and best wishes to all of the brethren participating with us.

These services are being relayed by closed-circuit and satellite transmission to holders of the priesthood gathered in the Assembly Hall, in the BYU Marriott Center, and in locations in many countries around the world. We note that Elders Vaughn J. Featherstone and F. Enzo Busche are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall, and Elders Philip T. Sonntag and F. Arthur Kay are seated on the stand in the BYU Marriott Center.

For the information of the brethren in outlying areas, we announce that at the session this afternoon, Elder Richard G.

Scott was sustained as a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles and Elder J. Richard Clarke was sustained as a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy. Elders Monte J. Brough, Albert Choules, Jr., Lloyd P. George, and Gerald E. Melchin were sustained as members of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The singing during this session will be furnished by a combined men's choir from the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth Chorus under the direction of Brothers Jerold Ottley and Robert C. Bowden with Brother John Longhurst at the organ.

We shall begin by the choir singing "Hark, All Ye Nations." Following the singing, Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "Hark, All Ye Nations."

Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

The choir will now sing "The Lord Is My Shepherd." Following the choir number, Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will address us.

The choir sang "The Lord Is My Shepherd."

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

My beloved brethren of the priesthood, I am honored yet humbled by the assignment to speak to you this evening. I am aware of the great priesthood power that you faithful brethren bear and of the untold good you do in furthering the Lord's work.

How pleased I was today to raise my hand in sustaining Elder Richard G. Scott as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and I'll have the privilege to sit on his left for many years.

During the two years since my call to be a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, I have refined my view of the Church and its place in the world. I have developed a deeper gratitude for the gospel, a broader affection and admiration for the members, and a greater appreciation for the love our Heavenly Father and his Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, have for each one of us. They have shown us the way to be at peace with ourselves and the way to progress and develop.

I have appreciated the privilege of associating regularly with the Brethren of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve and with the other General Authorities. These great leaders, whom the Lord has called to direct his work, have a pure love for the people. They are compassionate and sensitive, especially to those who are ill, infirm, or less fortunate. They feel a driving urgency to build the kingdom of God, and they devote their time and energy totally to this work. Their prayers, which truly are expressions of gratitude and sacred pleadings for guidance, are a source of inspiration to me. I testify to you that the Spirit of the Lord is present at our meetings and guides our deliberations.

Treasure Church membership

Being members of the Church truly is a privilege and an honor. We must be as Paul the Apostle and never be ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ (see Romans 1:16) nor feel threatened when the Church, its leaders, its members, or

its doctrines are criticized or maligned. On the contrary, we should be bold and assertive in proclaiming the gospel. We should be grateful to participate in this great latter-day movement.

Young men, prepare yourselves

I wish to speak first to the young men who bear the Aaronic Priesthood. I want you to understand that we have trust and confidence in you. We realize that from your ranks will come the next generation of Church officers, teachers, and community leaders. Most importantly, you will be fathers and patriarchs in your own families. Your tasks then will be to teach and prepare the generation that follows you. My counsel to you is very simple. In the words of the Lord, "Prepare ye for that which is to come" (D&C 1:12).

Seek counsel from parents

The best source of instruction, guidance, and counsel that most of you young men have is your parents. In the divine wisdom of our Heavenly Father, each of you was born to parents who arrived on this earth a few years ahead of you. They have been over the ground you young men are covering now. They have learned what leads to success and happiness and what leads to misery and sorrow. Seek their counsel, listen to them, and learn from them. You will learn from your own experiences also, but you do not need to make every mistake yourselves. In our society, young people often see parents as the past and friends as the future. Magazines, movies, and music made for teenagers often emphasize going your own way and dismissing parents as naive. Avoid that kind of thinking; it is false. Your parents are wise. They have a maturity that comes only from experience. The Lord has given them the fundamental task of teaching, guiding, and caring for you and helping you prepare for the challenges that are necessary for your growth

and progress (see Mosiah 4:14–15; D&C 68:25–28, 93:40–50; Proverbs 22:6).

When I was a young man, I looked up to my priesthood leaders. They included Charles E. Forsberg, my bishop when I was five years old. His English was somewhat broken, but he knew my name. That was important to me even at that early age. Others of my priesthood leaders were my father, who also was my bishop, and Marion G. Romney, who followed my father as bishop of our ward. These leaders made a big difference in my life; your leaders will do the same for you if you stay close to them.

Have courage to choose the right

Sooner or later, every young man must decide on the direction of his life—whether he will choose good or evil, happiness or misery. The God-given principle of agency provides that right of choice in a world filled with beautiful, heavenly creations on the one hand and with the evil designs of Satan, the enemy of God, on the other. Always have the courage to make the right choice. You can do it because “it is given unto you to judge, that ye may know good from evil” (Moroni 7:15). We learn that in the Book of Mormon. The Lord has given you that judgment. Remember, “God . . . will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Magnify priesthood callings

Always be aware of the privilege you have received of bearing the priesthood of God. It is a unique gift to the world. Bearing the priesthood is an honor and an opportunity, connected with a sacred obligation to magnify every priesthood calling. See every assignment as a blessing, regardless of how small or routine it may seem. Complete each one as well as you can, always striving to do more than is required or expected. Recognize that you are acting for the Lord by authority you have received from him each time you gather fast offerings, bless or pass the sacrament, baptize, and visit assigned families as home teachers. Your

ability to accept greater tasks will depend on how well you do the lesser ones.

Prepare for missionary service

Each one of you young men should be preparing for missionary service. Make yourselves worthy to receive a mission call by learning and living the principles of the gospel, especially by living clean, pure lives. Those who bear the priesthood must never defile it or bring shame to the Lord’s church. Prepare also by studying the divine principles of the gospel so you can teach them to those who are awaiting the truth. Lastly, prepare yourselves financially. The world needs the gospel message; you need to help declare it.

Fortify yourselves

In these latter days when keeping the commandments of God is unimportant to many, you young men have a greater challenge to honor the priesthood than any who have held it at any other time. This is true because Lucifer is on the prowl. He knows that his days are numbered. He has learned how to destroy people, especially the youth. He seeks to find any chink in the armor of each person. He knows our weaknesses and knows how to exploit them if we allow him to do so. We can defend ourselves against his attacks and deceptions only by understanding the commandments and by fortifying ourselves each day through praying, studying the scriptures, and following the counsel of the Lord’s anointed.

Teach and bless others

I remind you brethren who bear the Melchizedek Priesthood that the seed of the present is the harvest of the future. I urge you, as fathers and as priesthood leaders, to focus more attention on teaching, guiding, and shepherding these young men, especially by example. The Lord has given you that obligation. Remember, the lambs have little chance of following the right path if the shepherd goes astray.

The Melchizedek Priesthood has been given to relatively few of our Heavenly Father's children. You have received it to magnify your callings in doing the Lord's work. You are to exercise the priesthood in setting the spiritual tone and building a spiritual foundation in your families. You brethren have a solemn duty to bless your wives, children, and other family members by the power and authority of the priesthood.

Marry at the proper time

I hope you single adult brethren will follow our prophet's admonition to marry at the proper time and will not procrastinate your opportunity to be a husband and father. That is the order of the gospel. President Benson meant what he said when he declared, "Understand that temple marriage is essential to your salvation and exaltation" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1988, p. 58; or *Ensign*, May 1988, p. 51). I would add: better late than never. Many lovely, faithful women are waiting for this privilege. Do not disappoint them, the Lord, or yourselves. Do not fear the added responsibilities that come with marriage.

Use video media wisely

I believe that a noble priesthood bearer should have balance in his life. I have observed that some fathers spend too much time watching sports on television. This practice has almost become an addiction in today's world. It should never cause us to neglect family and Church duties. Television is out of control in some homes; the set is rarely turned off, regardless of the programming. Some programs are filthy and evil and are poisoning the minds of God's children today. Likewise, many movies and videotapes are blatantly corrupt and evil, making their viewers insensible to the promptings of the Spirit (see Helaman 4:24). Satan has made the television and film media among his most effective tools to destroy minds and souls.

Satan's influence on advertising

A good example of satanic influence is in television advertising for alcoholic beverages. Its underlying message seems to be that the sole object of life is to have a good time. This so-called fun-loving time comes to those who drink a certain brand of alcoholic beverage, they say. Brethren, that advertising message is false; it is an absolute lie fostered by the father of lies. Especially insidious, in my view, is the advertising for wine coolers, which are represented falsely as little more than delicious, fruit-flavored soft drinks. Beer consumption is represented as the thing to do in order to have a good time. Drinking alcoholic beverages does not bring the good things of life. Evidence mounts each passing day to prove the damaging, even disastrous effects of these substances on the human body and on society. The Word of Wisdom was valid when it was given in 1833. Through the years some have not accepted it, but scientific discoveries in our day have validated this great revelation.

Despite the concerns I have expressed, many uplifting and inspiring programs are available at little or no cost on television, film, and videotape. I speak for wisdom and balance in accepting the good and rejecting the evil.

Oppose gambling and lotteries

May I say a word about the moral ramifications of gambling. As it has in the past, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints stands opposed to gambling, including government-sponsored lotteries.

Public lotteries are advocated as a means of relieving the burden of taxation. It has been clearly demonstrated, however, that all too often lotteries only add to the problem of the financially disadvantaged by taking money from them and giving nothing of value in return.

In several states in the United States next month, the lottery issue will be on the referendum ballot, and citizens in those states will be able to vote on the measure.

We urge members of the Church to join with others with similar concerns in opposing the legalization and government sponsorship of lotteries.

The priesthood lifts us

I pray that as bearers of the priesthood, we will follow the example of Peter, the Apostle whom the Savior selected to head his church. While Peter and John were going into the temple, a man who had been lame from birth and had been placed at a gate to the temple asked them for help. Apparently he expected to receive money. "Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up" (Acts 3:6-7).

The phrase "lifted him up" is, to me, a key point in this miracle. That is what the priesthood does. To be lifted up in this sense means to "be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof" (Articles of Faith 1:5). You brethren can trace your priesthood authority directly to the Savior. The priesthood lifts us and enables us to do things far beyond our own unassisted abilities if we are worthy to exercise it. Also, it gives us the power and authority to lift others. In fact, it places on us the obligation to lift all who come under our influence, much as Peter lifted the afflicted man.

God speaks through latter-day prophets

The Lord has lifted up his prophets, both ancient and modern. The latter-day prophets, from Joseph Smith to President Ezra Taft Benson, are representatives of the Lord. The world may not recognize them, but God speaks through them. The doctrines of the Church are determined by revelations from God, not by councils out in the world.

A few weeks ago we visited the Sacred Grove near Palmyra, New York.

The experience was most inspirational as I walked on that holy ground. The Holy Ghost reconfirmed to me that the First Vision did occur, and, in the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith, "I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*" (Joseph Smith—History 1:17).

You brethren are entitled to call on the Lord for guidance just as Joseph Smith did in his fifteenth year. You should have the same quest for truth and the same desire to know what you should do and how you should act. Remember, he went into the grove and prayed for guidance to know for himself which church was right and how he would know it (see Joseph Smith—History 1:10-13).

The Church's mission

Brethren, the mission of the Church is much more than a lofty ideal conceived at Church headquarters. It should be a part of the personal mission of every member. Each one of us should incorporate into our lives the practice of inviting all to come unto Christ by "proclaiming the gospel, perfecting the Saints, and redeeming the dead" (Ezra Taft Benson, in Conference Report, Apr. 1988, p. 97; or *Ensign*, May 1988, p. 84). We must not let the demands of the world divert us from this sacred mission.

Ponder prophets' vital counsel

Key statements made by latter-day prophets are not trite clichés. They are vital counsel to us from the Lord through his prophets. We should ponder and act upon such statements as "No other success can compensate for failure in the home," by President David O. McKay (in Conference Report, Apr. 1964, p. 5; or *Improvement Era*, June 1964, p. 445); "The greatest of the Lord's work you brethren will ever do as fathers will be within the walls of your own home," by President Harold B. Lee (in Conference Report, Apr. 1973, p. 130; or *Ensign*, July

1973, p. 98); and "The Church is at a point in its growth and maturity when we are at last ready to move forward in a major way. . . . We have paused on some plateaus long enough. Let us resume our journey forward and upward" by President Spencer W. Kimball (in Conference Report, Apr. 1979, p. 114; or *Ensign*, May 1979, p. 82).

I bear my witness that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. This is his church; he directs it through his prophets. Joseph Smith is the prophet of the Resto-

ration. President Ezra Taft Benson is the present prophet of God. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to listen to Elder Gene R. Cook, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Gene R. Cook

Dear brethren of the priesthood, I greet you this evening in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ with the sacred injunction, "Come unto Christ" (Moroni 10:32).

A divine commission to bring souls to God

I testify that the Lord expects us to bring souls unto Him by inviting all men to come unto Christ, and by so doing, find Him ourselves. It truly is "the thing . . . of the most worth unto you" (D&C 15:6). In fact, your very ordination is "to preach faith and repentance and remission of sins, according to [his] word" (D&C 53:3), "that you may bring souls unto [him]" (D&C 15:6). It is the greatest offering that man can give to God (see D&C 15:6, 29:7; Alma 17:11, 29:9). In fact, you "received [your] first lessons in the world of spirits and were prepared to [labor] for the salvation of the souls of men" (D&C 138:56). You cannot fail. That counsel applies to you young men as well.

Perhaps we are at the time in our ministry when, in preparation for the Lord's second coming, when with renewed emphasis, *in love*, we must call men to repentance (see D&C 6:9, 11:9, 18:14). We must invite them to "come unto Christ," testifying boldly in His name to bring the "mighty change" into the hearts of our people (see Mosiah 5:2, Alma 5:14).

The purpose of visits to homes

As Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood brethren, we are commissioned with a purpose to "visit the house of each member" (D&C 20:47)—

- To "exhort them to pray vocally and in secret" (D&C 20:47),
- "To stir them up in remembrance" of God (Alma 4:19), and
- To turn them "to the Lord with full purpose of heart" (Mosiah 7:33).

We do not visit the active just to "visit," or the less active just to get them out to church, although that may be part of what happens. In essence, we visit to help the heads of those homes, male or female, to become the spiritual leaders in their homes, to lead their families to Christ, to pray, to fast, and to read the scriptures together. If that happens in our visits, all else will take care of itself.

"A preparation to hear the word" (Alma 32:6; see also 33:22–23, 34:3)

How can we make such visits with power and authority, as described in the scriptures, especially to the less active? The most important element in our preparation is to humble ourselves mightily before God. We must be believing (see D&C 90:24, Mormon 9:27). We must not doubt or fear (see D&C 6:36).

We must pray fervently throughout our visits that we may “speak the thoughts that [the Lord] shall put into your hearts, and you shall not be confounded before men; for it shall be given you . . . in the very moment, what ye shall say” (D&C 100:5–6), even “that portion that shall be meted unto every man” (D&C 84:85).

The results of these kinds of visits testify of themselves. For example:

- On a first visit, a man quits smoking after twenty-five years and prays to God to know the next step.

- A less-active man says, “I’ve been waiting for you.”

- A wife tells of her less-active husband’s dream that “messengers would be sent” and says, “We will believe whatever you tell us.”

- An unscheduled phone call is made at a critical moment, touching a woman who was turning to inactivity.

Someone said, “Coincidences like these are God’s little miracles wherein he desired to remain anonymous.”

Suggestions for preparing men’s hearts

Remember, not only the teacher but the learner must have the Spirit of the Lord. You, as the teacher, must do all in your power to *prepare the hearts of men* so the Spirit can teach. May I suggest seven scriptural performances (see Alma 31:10) that, if humbly employed, will immediately invite the Spirit into your heart and the hearts of others. You may want to write them down.

1. Pray. Pray for the Spirit. Ask those you teach to pray for you and for themselves while you are teaching. Ask for discernment to understand the needs of those you visit (see 3 Nephi 17:2–3, 20:1; D&C 136:29, 32). For example:

- During a visit, upon bended knee, two priesthood leaders pray that a wayward daughter will be blessed. Her parents are touched by the prayer and repent that very evening. They begin to attend church and a temple preparation seminar and now have been sealed as a family.

- A seven-year-old responds to his less-active father, who says he won’t pray, with “Please pray, Dad. Take Mom

and me to the temple.” That family has since been sealed.

2. Use the scriptures. They are the words of the Lord to us, and the Spirit of the Lord will speak through them to all, both young and old (see 2 Nephi 32:3, Alma 31:5, D&C 32:4). For example:

- In one of the visits, a testimony is given of a verse relating to baptism. An investigator says, “I do believe God sent you. I’ll be baptized.”

- A scripture is read on another visit about multiplying and replenishing the earth. A young couple with one child humbly confesses their unrighteous decision to have no more children.

3. Testify. If you follow His promptings, the Lord will direct you to testify frequently throughout these visits. Testify that the Lord has sent you. As you do, “the Holy Ghost carrieth it unto the hearts of the children of men” (2 Nephi 33:1; see also Alma 5:44–47). Let me again illustrate:

- In his testimony, a priesthood leader unknowingly quotes a sentence verbatim from a sister’s patriarchal blessing.

- Another visit: one member testifies to a couple of life after death from the scriptures only to learn later of the recent loss of their little one.

4. Use music. Using recorded hymns or singing the songs of Zion with or to the Saints in their homes, as prompted, will always bring the Spirit of the Lord (see D&C 25:12, Matthew 26:30, Colossians 3:16, 1 Samuel 16:23). For example:

- A priesthood leader said with a smile, “I could never sing, I have a terrible voice. But we were prompted to do so. My voice was as the voice of an angel.” The less-active man wept and returned to the Church.

- A home teacher said, “I sang with his children. The crusty old fellow cried and humbled himself for the first time in years.”

5. Express love and gratitude to God and man. Express love openly for God and for His children, and the Spirit will be felt profoundly (see John 13:34–35, 1 Nephi 11:21–23, Moroni 7:47–48). Let me illustrate:

- Touched by the spirit of a visit, a less-active teenager expresses love for his parents, by whose love his heart is turned to God.

- A priesthood leader expresses love to a dissident group of less-active members, and twenty return to sacrament meeting that same day.

6. *Share spiritual experiences.* Spiritual experiences have great impact upon men's souls. Share them as prompted by the Spirit (see D&C 50:21–22, Luke 10:25–37, Acts 26:1–32). For example:

- A less-active husband tells two priesthood leaders of last night's dream. He repents that very evening as he recounts the experience.

- Two priesthood leaders tell an inspiring missionary story. As a result, two less-active sons are now serving missions.

7. *Perform priesthood ordinances.* "In the ordinances . . . , the power of godliness is manifest" (D&C 84:20). Bless the Saints. Bless the sick. Bless the homes of the Saints. Encourage others to seek for priesthood blessings (see 3 Nephi 20:2–9). For example:

- In an unscheduled visit by an institute director, a blessing is received by a college woman who has strayed into transgression. She is caused to remember God and returns to the institute.

- Another man is raised directly from his sickbed.

- A daughter receives a priesthood blessing and finds the peace that has eluded her since her father's death.

Brethren, these seven suggestions—one or more as needed—will always bring the Spirit of the Lord into your visits. Are these not some of the *spiritual gifts* that Christ gave that prepared the way for the Holy Ghost to testify and *change men's hearts*? Spiritually give of yourself, and your visits will not then be routine, but you will discern the needs of the Saints. You will commit them in the Spirit to act. They will repent and come unto Christ.

Yes, it's true, there are a few sheep who will not respond to their Master's voice, who are not willing at this time—

and I repeat, *at this time*—to respond, because Jesus taught that He could only "*bring all men unto him, on conditions of repentance*" (D&C 18:12; italics added).

With those souls, we just go on loving them and try again at a later time when they may have a more repentant heart and will respond to the Spirit (see 3 Nephi 18:32).

A sister's visit

May I share a personal experience of my wife. While on a stake conference assignment with me, she accompanied a Relief Society president on such a visit. As shepherds and servants of the Lord, they had tremendous success.

Then, about a year later while I was teaching some priesthood brethren how to make such visits, a 35-year-old man told me of my wife's visit a year ago and said: "May I tell you a secret? My entire family had decided the day before your wife came to visit that we were leaving the Church, offended, never to return. I bear witness to you that we felt the Lord speak through her as she stirred us up in remembrance of God and our ordinances. I'm a member of a bishopric now. I would not be here today if it were not for her."

He then smiled and said, "How I wish now that I had more carefully watched her invite the Spirit upon me and my family, as it now falls upon me to go out tonight and do my very first home visit."

Yes, brethren, the sisters can assist in this work also.

The divine motivation

May I then summarize:

1. We are to be instruments in the Lord's hands to bring souls to Christ. Perhaps this is the greatest gift one man can bestow upon another.

2. We must better *relearn* how to invite the Spirit of the Lord for such an endeavor, even humbling self "to the dust" (Alma 34:38).

3. The process described works for all men, young and old, who qualify with "faith, hope, charity and love, with an eye single to the glory of God" (D&C 4:5). You young men, encourage your fathers and companions to hold such visits. You have a right to be shown how, and to motivate and teach us as well.

4. Remember, these suggestions are not meant to change the processes for home teaching, visiting teaching, or auxiliary visits, but are a suggested *means* for bringing the Spirit into all such visits.

5. The process described for inviting the Spirit works the same with—

- a rebellious child at home,
- a discouraged individual,
- an associate, and
- even yourself,
- as well as in visits to homes.

6. Let us commit as one leader did: "There will not be one less-active member who has turned from God in my quorum or class. I will do all in my power to see that mighty change come into his heart."

In conclusion, may I remind each of us that our motivation must not be just for duty, for the Church, or as a result of a calling we have, but our *divine motivation* must be for the love of God. Then will the miraculous results occur.

I bear witness from the Book of Mormon that *for our labor*, we will—

- "Wax strong in the Spirit, . . .

• "Teach with power and authority from God" (Mosiah 18:26),

• "Receive the grace of God" (v. 26), and

• Be restored unto the grace we once had (see Helaman 12:24).

And then, with that grace or enabling power of God, we might thereby obtain charity (see Ether 12:34, 36), "even the pure love of Christ" (Moroni 7:47).

May that gift, even charity, be ours. May we give of ourselves to the spiritually needy the spiritual gifts Christ gave. I know of no greater joy that can come to man than "the soul that repenteth" (D&C 18:13; see also vs. 15–16). May the Lord bless us to learn how to bring men to Christ, and, in the process, *find Him ourselves*, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Gene R. Cook of the First Quorum of the Seventy has just spoken to us. We shall now invite the four brethren who were sustained this afternoon as new members of the First Quorum of the Seventy to each give us a few words of testimony or whatever they wish to say as they are guided by the Spirit: Elder Monte J. Brough, Elder Albert Choules, Jr., Elder Lloyd P. George, and Elder Gerald E. Melchin, in that order, please.

Elder Monte J. Brough

I can tell you now, after about a hundred minutes of experience, that these big red chairs are not really as comfortable as they look.

On Thursday afternoon, my family and I were celebrating my child's birthday at a rather loud and noisy gathering in our home when the phone rang. A woman's voice said, "Brother Monte Brough, would you hold the phone a moment? President Hinckley would like to speak with you."

I said, "President Hinckley!" in order to gain some attention from my rather raucous family. They quieted rather quickly, I can tell you.

President Hinckley came on the phone and said, "Brother Brough, would it be convenient for you to come and see me?"

In a rather stilted way, I responded for a moment or two to a couple of questions, then said, "President Hinckley, you have given me a rather frightening phone call."

He said, "Oh, don't worry about it. We're just going to give you a new broom and let you sweep the steps in front of the office building."

President Hinckley, I want you and these Brethren to know that I would be honored to take up that broom and sweep those steps where you have walked, where President Benson has walked, and where all these men whom I admire and love with all my heart have walked.

Mothers' love

A few years ago while I was presiding over the mission in Minneapolis, Minnesota, an interesting event took place. I would like to use that experience to bear my testimony. A rather severe tornado hit the area. It was severe enough that it came to the attention of the nightly news broadcast over the national networks to California, Arizona, Utah, and Idaho. Before long, the telephone started ringing in our office there at the mission home. This went on for two or three hours, with parents calling from many areas wondering about their Johnny or Richard.

I recall later walking across the parking lot from the mission office to the mis-

sion home saying to myself, "You know these Mormon mothers. They just won't undo the apron strings. They just won't let their boys go." As I walked into the mission home, the phone again was ringing. I picked up the phone and guess who? My mother! She was wondering how her missionary was doing under these circumstances.

I learned a great and deep lesson. A mother's love and concern never ceases—nor should it.

I have no memory of my father. I was not raised in a home where the priesthood was strong. A bishop in Randolph, Utah, and mission presidents later on are responsible for my being here tonight.

A willing heart

In reference to Elder Marvin J. Ashton's talk, I have work to do on my heart—but one thing I do have is a willing heart. I am willing to do anything and everything that I can to help in this great cause. I bear witness that I know this is God's work. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Albert Choules, Jr.

I remember sitting in this hall years ago and listening to Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., give his first talk in a general conference. His first words were, "This is a traumatic experience for a convert." Elder Rector, this is not an insignificant experience for one born and reared in the Church, either. I am grateful for that rearing.

Last Wednesday I was in Idaho and telephoned to Phoenix and learned that President Hinckley was trying to reach me. I called him that morning and made an appointment to see him Thursday afternoon. Wednesday afternoon I joined with other members of my family at the

funeral of my mother, who had passed away here in Salt Lake City the previous Sunday at the age of ninety-five. She joined my father, who had preceded her twenty-two years ago, and my wife, who had joined him four years ago.

I am grateful for them. I have prayed since Thursday afternoon that a kind and loving Heavenly Father would let them who had been such an influence in bringing me to this position be aware of it. I am confident they were.

Choose the Church

I remember as a young boy about to receive the priesthood my father calling

me to him and saying, "Albert, if you ever have to choose between me and the Church, choose the Church." Thankfully, I never had to make such a choice. As my own sons reached that same age, I gave them the same charge.

I promised President Hinckley on Thursday afternoon, and now tonight I would like to do so again to the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve, and these other Brethren that I desire to dedicate my all and serve to whatever extent I am asked.

Importance of priesthood ordinances

Four years ago I began service in the Mesa Arizona Temple as a sealer. During these years, I have had an opportunity to

gain a greater appreciation, understanding, and testimony of the exalting ordinances of the priesthood. That service, on the heels of a delightful three-year mission experience in New York City, has taught me the importance of the priesthood and its ordinances and the eternal nature thereof.

I bear you my witness that I know that God lives and that Jesus is the Christ, that this is the Church of Jesus Christ. My current wife, my bride of fifteen months, has promised that with Rosemary, my first wife, pulling for me on the other side of the veil, and with her pulling for me on this side, I will succeed. I know that with the help of the Lord I will succeed. To him I promise to give my all, in the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Lloyd P. George

Prepare to be chosen

On a number of occasions, President Harold B. Lee stated that there is no need for a new organization to take care of the needs of the Saints. All we need to do is to have the priesthood of the Lord go to work.

Brethren of the priesthood, we have a great responsibility. We have a great task. We have all been called. But have we been chosen? If we don't feel that way, we probably have not been chosen. The Lord has been explicit in his direction for us in preparing ourselves. In Revelation he says:

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (3:19-20).

That is the direction, my priesthood brethren.

A conversion story

Two of our missionaries knocked on a door one day. It was opened by a man in

his seventies. He said, "No, I don't think I am interested, but let me ask my sister and my mother. They may want to talk to you." He was in his seventies, his sister was in her eighties, and their mother was ninety-nine.

The missionaries taught them, and a baptismal date was set. Mother became so excited and happy that she ended up in the hospital. So another baptismal date was set. Now, this is the important thing. In the testimony meeting after Mother was baptized, she said, "I have been waiting eighty years for this. When I was twenty years old, the missionaries taught me, but they did not invite me to enter the waters of baptism. How happy I am for this day." She had reached her one-hundredth birthday when she was baptized.

I am so humbled and so grateful for the calling that has come to me and for the love and the respect that I feel from all of the chosen Apostles and prophets of our Heavenly Father. I feel a great spirit of brotherhood and love for each of these Brethren seated here on the stand this day. I support and sustain this great prophet and those associated with him and pray humbly that the Lord will direct

me and bless me with those things that are needful and necessary that I might magnify my calling in the priesthood.

May we all have the desire to accomplish this so there will be no one that will

be able to say, as is recorded in Psalms, "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul" (142:4). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Gerald E. Melchin

When you receive a call from the Office of the First Presidency or one of the Counselors in the First Presidency, your whole life rolls over. I can't think of words to express the thoughts that have been in my mind and in my heart since I visited with President Monson on Friday. As I thought about addressing you tonight, I felt so humbled and yet so honored, so privileged to be able to bear my witness of the Savior to the priesthood of the Church throughout the world. What an honor that is.

Expression of gratitude

I owe the Lord so much because he has blessed me so much. I pray that I can sustain the Brethren in the calls that may be given me, that I might perform in a way that I might partially repay the Lord for those choice blessings. He has seen to it that I have had the blessings that are most important in life. I have had a choice companion with whom I've had a special association of love. She has sustained me throughout all of my activities, as I have tried to sustain her. I think right now her mind is as muddled as mine as we try to make the adjustments that will be coming into our lives. I have been blessed with a family of whom I am proud and who are serving the Lord. I don't know what else you can ask of our Father in Heaven that is of so much worth. I know, too, that they will have to make some changes, as we will not be living as close together as we have been, but I know that they will sustain me in the call and will make the adjustments that are necessary.

I think of two missionaries who came to my grandfather in the 1920s in

Kitchener, Ontario. There were no LDS people in the city. They'd been discouraged, and as they passed his door, they heard a song playing that had been played at their farewell. They approached the door to listen, and he saw them. They introduced the gospel to his heart. He joined the Church, and so all of my life I've been blessed to know that the gospel is true and that we have a prophet who guides and directs us.

Prophets' works are of heaven

I think of the words of the Master to the multitude about the prophetic calling of John the Baptist. He said: "What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? . . . A man clothed in soft raiment?" (Matthew 11:7-8). Then he declared that John was a prophet "and more than a prophet," for "all the prophets and the law prophesied until John" (Matthew 11:9, 13).

On another occasion he asked the scribes and Pharisees who had been questioning him, "The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?" (Mark 11:30). Of course, the works of John, as of all prophets, were of heaven.

As I have read the scriptures, I have watched all of the prophets who have affected my life, and I have seen that they have fulfilled the role that the Master described. I have been privileged to have President Benson in my home as one of us. I have knelt with him as we have called, by prophecy, a stake president. I have felt his divine call as he leads and directs this church through the spirit of revelation. And I bear that testimony in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We will now all join together in singing "Do What Is Right." And following that, we shall hear from President

Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency.

The choir and congregation sang "Do What Is Right."

President Thomas S. Monson

Sportsmanship: a goal beyond victory

Years ago, many of us participated as players or observers in the all-Church basketball tournaments and later in the softball tournaments. The most coveted prize was not to be adjudged first-place winner, but rather to receive the sportsmanship award. The applause of the audience was louder and longer, the smiles broader and more universal. A goal beyond victory had been won.

Lately we have received at the Office of the First Presidency letters which tell of serious arguments on the sports floor or playing field, name-calling by parents, abuse of referees, and all that characterizes poor sportsmanship. We have room for improvement, brethren, and improve we must.

Purpose of church sports activities

In the videotape produced by the Church and entitled *The Church Sports Official*, there is featured this truth from the First Presidency: "Church sports activities have a unique central purpose much higher than the development of physical prowess, or even victory itself. It is to strengthen faith, build integrity, and develop in each participant the attributes of his maker."

Brethren, it is difficult to achieve this objective if winning overshadows participation. The recreation halls in our many buildings are constructed through the tithes of the members of the Church. It is only fair that all worthy young men and young women have an opportunity to play, to learn, to develop, and to achieve.

It is not our objective to produce clones of Larry Bird or Magic Johnson—or even John Wooden or Pat Riley. *When you put a player in a suit, put him in the game.* Basketball begins soon. Let our teams of young men and young women be counseled appropriately. And a word or two for the spectators and coaches would not be amiss.

It's only a game

If I might add a personal touch, I share with you an experience that embarrassed, a game that was lost, and a lesson in not taking ourselves too seriously.

First, in a basketball game when the outcome was in doubt, the coach sent me onto the playing floor right after the second half began. I took an in-bounds pass, dribbled the ball toward the key, and let the shot fly. Just as the ball left my fingertips, I realized why the opposing guards did not attempt to stop my drive: I was shooting for the wrong basket! I offered a silent prayer: "Please, Father, don't let that ball go in." The ball rimmed the hoop and fell out.

From the bleachers came the call: "We want Monson, we want Monson, we want Monson—*out!*" The coach obliged.

I never was a basketball star. What timing—to be a freshman at the University of Utah when All-Americans Arnie Ferrin and Vern Gardner dominated the boards.

I fared much better at fast-pitch softball. My most memorable experience in softball was a thirteen-inning game I pitched in Salt Lake City on a hot Memorial Day. The game was scheduled for just

seven innings, but the tied score could not be broken. In the last of the thirteenth, with two men out and a runner on third, the batter hit a high pop fly to left field. The catch was certain, I thought. And yet the ball fell through the hands of the left fielder. For thirty-eight years I have teased my friend who dropped the ball. I have promised myself I will never do so again. I'm not even going to mention his name. After all, he, too, remembers. It was only a game.

On another occasion, while pitching a game at Pioneer Park, I was absolutely stunned to see that the other team had placed a one-armed batter at the plate. Now how does a pitcher deliver the pitch to such an opponent? I tossed a gentle lob over the plate. To my amazement, the batter knocked a single, right over the second baseman's head. My temper flared. The next batter was a returned missionary from Mexico, Homer Proctor, six foot two and about 210 pounds. I pitched him fast, high, and inside. On the first pitch, he lifted the ball right out of the park for a home run. I shall ever remember the smile of that one-armed runner, Bernell Hales, as he passed second and third and gleefully streaked for home. I felt like crying, but I broke out laughing, as did each player on both sides. We had a wonderful time.

Brethren, let's take the necessary steps to rekindle sportsmanship, to emphasize participation, and to strive for the development of a Christlike character in each individual.

Caring for the needy

Now, there are other phases of the Lord's work in which all members can participate, in which the growth of character is assured and the promise of life eternal bestowed. One such endeavor is referred to as the welfare program. Actually, the language of King Benjamin from the book of Mosiah provides a perfect scriptural description, even a solemn charge to each of us:

"For the sake of retaining a remission of your sins from day to day, that ye may walk guiltless before God—I would

that ye should impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally" (Mosiah 4:26).

Give a generous fast offering

President Marion G. Romney spoke concerning the funding of caring for the needy when he said: "It has been, and now is, the desire and the objective of the Church to obtain from fast offerings the necessary funds to meet the cash needs of the welfare program. . . . At the present time we are not meeting this objective. We can, we ought, and we must do better. If we will double our fast offerings, we shall increase our own prosperity, both spiritually and temporally. This the Lord has promised, and this has been the record" ("Basics of Church Welfare," address delivered to the Priesthood Board, 6 Mar. 1974, p. 10).

Are we generous in the payment of our fast offerings? That we should be so was taught by President Joseph F. Smith. He declared that it is incumbent upon every Latter-day Saint to give to his bishop on fast day an amount equivalent to the food that he and his family would consume for the day and, if possible, a liberal donation to be so reserved and donated to the poor (see *Improvement Era*, Dec. 1902, p. 148).

President Spencer W. Kimball suggested that, in our generosity, we go beyond a minimum amount. He urged that we "give, instead of the amount we saved by our two meals of fasting, perhaps much, much more—ten times more where we are in a position to do it" (in *Conference Report*, Apr. 1974, p. 184).

Saints' response to crises

The generous response of the Latter-day Saints in times of crisis is legendary. Many will remember the emergency aid provided our needy Saints in Europe following World War II. President Ezra Taft Benson directed this effort.

More recently, this generosity helped to avert starvation in Africa. Irrigation projects, producing wells, and improved agricultural methods are all part of a dream come true. Similarly, at the time of the Teton Dam disaster in Idaho, the response of the members to the call of need was overwhelming.

"In mine own way"

Today, in lands far away and right here in Salt Lake City, there are those who suffer hunger, who know want and are acquainted with poverty. Ours is the opportunity and the sacred privilege to relieve this hunger, to meet this want, to eliminate this poverty.

The Lord provided the way when He declared, "And the storehouse shall be kept by the consecrations of the church; and widows and orphans shall be provided for, as also the poor" (D&C 83:6). Then the reminder, "But it must needs be done in mine own way" (D&C 104:16).

Church welfare service

In the vicinity where I once lived and served, we operated a poultry project. Most of the time it was an efficiently operated project, supplying to the storehouse thousands of dozens of fresh eggs and hundreds of pounds of dressed poultry. On a few occasions, however, the experience of being volunteer city farmers provided not only blisters on the hands, but also frustration of heart and mind.

For instance, I shall ever remember the time we gathered together the Aaronic Priesthood young men to really give the project a spring cleaning treatment. Our enthusiastic and energetic throng assembled at the project and in a speedy fashion uprooted, gathered, and burned large quantities of weeds and debris. By the light of the glowing bonfires, we ate hot dogs and congratulated ourselves on a job well done. The project was now neat and tidy. However, there was just one disastrous problem: The noise and the fires had so disturbed the fragile and temperamental population of five thousand laying

hens that most of them went into a sudden molt and ceased laying. Thereafter we tolerated a few weeds, that we might produce more eggs.

No member of the Church who has canned peas, topped beets, hauled hay, or watered corn in such a cause ever forgets or regrets the experience of helping provide for those in need.

A widow serves Elijah

Sharing with others that which we have is not new to our generation. We need but to turn to the account found in 1 Kings to appreciate anew the principle that when we follow the counsel of the Lord, when we care for those in need, the outcome benefits all. There we read that a most severe drought had gripped the land. Famine followed. Elijah the prophet received from the Lord what to him must have been an amazing instruction: "Get thee to Zarephath . . . behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee" (17:9). When he had found the widow, Elijah declared:

"Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.

"And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand" (vs. 10-11).

Her response described her pathetic situation as she explained that she was preparing a final and scanty meal for her son and for herself, and then they would die (see v. 12).

How implausible to her must have been Elijah's response:

"Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.

"For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth.

"And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days.

"And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail"

(vs. 13–16). This is the faith that has ever motivated and inspired the welfare plan of the Lord.

Avoid unreasonable debt

Industry, thrift, self-reliance continue as guiding principles of this effort. As a people, we should avoid unreasonable debt. In a message which Elder Ezra Taft Benson delivered at a general conference more than thirty years ago, he instructed:

“In the book of Kings we read about a woman who came weeping to . . . the prophet [of the Lord]. Her husband had died, and she owed a debt that she could not pay; and the creditor was on his way to take her two sons and sell them as slaves.

“By a miracle [the prophet] Elisha enabled her to acquire a goodly supply of oil. And he said to her:

“‘Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live.’” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1957, p. 53).

“Pay thy debt, and live” (2 Kings 4:7). What wise counsel for us today! Remember, the wisdom of God may appear as foolishness to men, but the greatest single lesson we can learn in mortality is that when God speaks and a man obeys, that man will always be right.

Provide for your family's needs

We should remember that the best storehouse system would be for every family to have a year's supply of needed food, clothing, and, where possible, the other necessities of life. In the early Church, Paul wrote to Timothy, “If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel” (1 Timothy 5:8).

It is our sacred duty to care for our families. Often we see what might be called “parent neglect.” Too frequently the emotional, social, and, in some instances, even the material essentials of life are not provided by children to their aged parents. This is displeasing to the Lord.

Guidelines for bishops

The Lord's storehouse includes the time, talents, skills, compassion, consecrated material, and financial means of faithful Church members. These resources are available to the bishop in assisting those in need. Our bishops have the responsibility to learn how to use properly these resources.

May I suggest in summary form five basic guidelines:

1. A bishop is to seek out the poor, as the Lord has commanded, and administer to their needs.

2. In caring for the needy, a bishop exercises discernment, sound judgment, balance, and compassion. Church resources represent a sacred trust.

3. Those receiving welfare assistance are to work to the extent of their ability for that which is received.

4. The assistance given by the bishop is temporary, rather than ongoing.

5. The bishop assists with basic life-sustaining goods and services. He sustains lives rather than life-styles.

Let me illustrate with a sacred experience which brought these guidelines together in blessing the lives of those in need.

While serving as a bishop, one cold winter day I visited an elderly couple who lived in a two-room duplex. The modest home was heated by a small coal-burning Heatrola. As I approached the home, I met the 82-year-old husband, his aged body bent in the driving snow as he gathered a few pieces of wet coal from his exposed supply of fuel. I helped him with his burden but made a solemn resolve to do more.

I prayed and pondered, seeking a solution. Step by step the inspiration came. In the ward was an unemployed carpenter. He had no fuel for his furnace but was too proud to receive the stoker slack he needed to keep his house warm. I suggested to the carpenter a way he could work for the help he received. Would he build a coal shed for a couple in need? “Of course,” he replied.

Now where were we to obtain the materials? I approached the proprietors of

a local lumberyard from whom we frequently purchased products. I remember saying to the men, "How would the two of you like to paint a bright spot on your souls this winter day?" Not knowing exactly what I meant, they agreed readily. They were invited to donate the lumber and hardware for the coal shed.

Within days the project was completed. I was invited to inspect the outcome. The coal shed was simply beautiful in its sleek covering of battleship-gray paint. The carpenter, who was a high priest, testified that he had actually felt inspired as he labored on this modest shed.

My older friend, with obvious appreciation, stroked the wall of the sturdy structure. He pointed out to me the wide door, the shiny hinges, and then opened to my view the supply of dry coal which filled the shed. In a voice filled with emotion, he said in words I shall ever treasure, "Bishop, take a look at the finest coal shed a man ever had." Its beauty was only surpassed by the pride in the builder's heart. And the elderly recipient labored each day at the ward chapel, dusting the benches, vacuuming the carpet runners, arranging the hymnbooks. He, too, worked for that which he had received.

Once again, the welfare plan of the Lord had blessed the lives of His children.

Remember the poor and the needy

May our Heavenly Father guide the priesthood of this church, that we may be obedient to the revelation of the Lord to the Prophet Joseph in which we are charged to "remember in all things the poor and the needy, the sick and the af-

flicted, for he that doeth not these things, the same is not my disciple" (D&C 52:40).

We will qualify as His disciples when we hear and heed the counsel from Isaiah describing the true fast, the spirit and the promise of the welfare effort:

"Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?"

"Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rereward."

"Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. . . ."

"And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, . . . and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not" (58:7-9, 11).

May this be our blessing is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have just listened to President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency.

President Benson, who gave a wonderful message this morning in opening conference, has indicated that he will not speak this evening. We are honored with his presence and express to him our great love and loyalty as his brethren in the priesthood. He has asked that I speak to you at this time.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Power of united priesthood bearers

My beloved brethren of the priesthood, I look into the faces of you many thousands who are assembled here in the

Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City. This magnificent old building is filled to capacity. Then I realize that there are tens of thousands of others like you who are meeting in various church

halls across the continent and in other areas of the world. I sense the great strength that can come of our unity. There is little we cannot accomplish if we will go forward with united hearts to do so.

I sense the strength of the homes where you brethren preside as worthy husbands and fathers, and where you boys live as sons blessed with the Aaronic Priesthood. I am grateful for your faith and prayers, for your loyalty and love, for your steadfastness and devotion. You become a great witness for the truth and validity of this work. There is nothing like it in all the earth—hundreds of thousands of men who speak in different tongues, but all of whom are ordained to the priesthood of God with authority to speak in His sacred name.

I remember when President J. Reuben Clark, as a counselor in the First Presidency, would stand at this pulpit and plead for unity among the priesthood. I think he was not asking that we give up our individual personalities and become as robots cast from a single mold. I am confident he was not asking that we cease to think, to meditate, to ponder as individuals. I think he was telling us that if we are to assist in moving forward the work of God, we must carry in our hearts a united conviction concerning the great basic foundation stones of our faith, including the truth and validity of the First Vision as the record of this singular event is found in the history of Joseph Smith; of the truth and validity of the Book of Mormon as a voice speaking from the dust in testimony of Jesus the Christ, an ancient record written by inspired prophets and brought forth in this the dispensation of the fulness of times by the gift and power of God; of the reality and power of the priesthood which was restored under the hands of those who held it anciently—John the Baptist in the case of the Aaronic Priesthood, and Peter, James, and John in the case of the Melchizedek Priesthood. If we are to assist in moving forward the work of God, we must carry in our hearts a united conviction that the ordinances and covenants of this work are eternal and everlasting in their consequences; that this kingdom was

established in the earth through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph Smith and that every man who has succeeded him in the office of President has been and is a prophet of the living God; and that there is incumbent upon each of us an obligation to live and teach the gospel as interpreted and taught by the prophet of our day. If we will be united in these basic and fundamental elements, this work will continue to grow in power and strength to touch for good the whole world. Of that I am satisfied and bear solemn testimony.

Bishops

Now, this evening I desire to talk with you concerning the bishops of the Church, many of whom are present.

A young man said to me one day, "Do you belong to a ward and have a bishop?" I replied, "Of course I do." He asked further, "Do you attend tithing settlement with your local ward bishop?" I replied that I do, that I, even though serving as a member of the Presidency of the Church, have an accountability to my local ward bishop just as every other man and woman in this church is accountable either to a bishop or to a branch president.

He was somewhat amazed. I was surprised to think that he would even raise such questions. I thought of the genius of the Lord's work and the wisdom of the organization of His church. I have heard President Benson speak with appreciation for his bishop. I feel a kinship with my bishop. I hope that each of you feels similarly.

We have more than eleven thousand bishops in the Church. Every one is a man who has been called by the spirit of prophecy and revelation and set apart and ordained by the laying on of hands. Every one of them holds the keys of the presidency of his ward. Each is a high priest, the presiding high priest of his ward. Each carries tremendous responsibilities of stewardship. Each stands as a father to his people.

None receives money for his service. No ward bishop is compensated by the Church for his work as a bishop.

Requirements of a bishop

The requirements of a bishop today are as they were in the days of Paul, who wrote to Timothy:

"A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

"Not given to wine, no striker [that is, not a bully or a violent person], . . . not a brawler, not covetous;

"One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;

"(For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

"Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil" (1 Timothy 3:2-6).

In his letter to Titus, Paul adds that "a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; . . .

"Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" (Titus 1:7, 9).

Those words aptly describe a bishop today in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

I saw all of those elements in the life of the bishop of the ward in which I grew up. He served for a quarter of a century. The ward over which he presided had more than eleven hundred members, but he seemed to know and love us all. He was our friend, our counselor, our presiding officer, our confidante, our teacher. He knew us boys by our first names and so addressed us. We respectfully addressed him as "Bishop." He was no martinet who ruled with a heavy hand. He could laugh with us. He could sympathize with us. He understood us, and we knew it. We knew also that he loved us.

Since then I have had a number of bishops. They have been men who have come from different backgrounds, varied in their natures and personalities, but every one has been a wonderful man, dedicated to his work and to the people of his ward.

Men of integrity

Let me now speak directly to the thousands of bishops who are in attendance tonight. Let me say first that I love you for your integrity and goodness. You *must* be men of integrity. You must stand as examples to the congregations over which you preside. You must stand on higher ground, so that you can lift others. You must be absolutely honest for you handle the funds of the Lord, the tithes of the people, the offerings that come of their fasting, and the contributions which they make from their own strained resources. How great is your trust as the keepers of the purse of the Lord!

Your goodness must be as an ensign to your people. Your morals must be impeccable. The wiles of the adversary may be held before you because he knows that if he can destroy you, he can injure an entire ward. You must be wise with inspired wisdom in all of your relationships lest someone read into your observed actions some taint of moral sin. You cannot succumb to the temptation to read pornographic literature, to see pornographic films, even in the secrecy of your own chamber to view pornographic videotapes. Your moral strength must be such that if ever you are called upon to sit in judgment on the questionable morals of others, you may do so without personal compromise or embarrassment.

You cannot use your office as bishop to further your own business interests lest through some ensuing financial mishap accusation be placed against you by those who succumbed to your persuasiveness.

A common judge in Israel

You cannot compromise your qualifications to sit as a common judge in Israel. It is a fearsome and awesome responsibility to stand as a judge of the people. You must be their judge in some instances as to worthiness to hold membership in the Church, worthiness to enter the house of the Lord, worthiness to be baptized, worthiness to receive the priest-

hood, worthiness to teach and to serve as officers in the organizations. You must be the judge of their eligibility in times of distress to receive help from the fast offerings of the people and commodities from the storehouse of the Lord. None for whom you are responsible must go hungry or without clothing or shelter though they be reluctant to ask. You must know something of the circumstances of all of the flock over whom you preside.

A counselor and comforter

You must be their counselor, their comforter, their anchor and strength in times of sorrow and distress. You must be strong with that strength which comes from the Lord. You must be wise with that wisdom which comes from the Lord. Your door must be open to hear their cries and your back strong to carry their burdens, your heart sensitive to judge their needs, your godly love broad enough and strong enough to encompass even the wrongdoer and the critic. You must be a man of patience, willing to listen though it takes hours to do so. You are the only one to whom some can turn. You must be there when every other source has failed. Permit me to read you a few lines from a letter sent to a bishop.

"Dear Bishop:

"It has been almost two years since I desperately called you asking for help. At that time I was ready to kill myself. I had no one else to turn to—no money, no job, no friends. My house had been taken, and I had no place to live. The Church was my last hope.

"As you know, I had left the Church at the age of seventeen and had broken just about every rule and commandment that there was in my search for happiness and fulfillment. Instead of happiness, my life was filled with misery, anguish, and despair. There was no hope or future for me. I even pleaded with God to let me die, to take me out of my misery. Not even he wanted me. I felt that he had rejected me, too.

"That's when I turned to you and the Church. . . .

"You listened with understanding, you counseled, you guided, you helped.

"I began to grow and develop in understanding and knowledge of the gospel. I found that I had to make certain basic changes in my life that were terribly difficult, but that within me I had the worth and strength to do so.

"I learned that as I lived the gospel and repented, I had no more fear. I was filled with an inner peace. The clouds of anguish and despair were gone. Because of the Atonement, my weaknesses and sins were forgiven through Jesus Christ and His love for me.

"He has blessed and strengthened me. He has opened pathways for me, given me direction, and kept me from harm. I have found that as I overcame each obstacle, my business began to grow, enabling my family to benefit and making me feel as though I had accomplished something.

"Bishop, you have given me understanding and support through these past two years. I never would have reached this point if not for your love and patience. Thank you for being what you are as the servant of the Lord to help me, his wandering child."

A watchman on the tower

You stand as a watchman on the tower of the ward over which you preside. There are many teachers in that ward. But you must be the chief teacher among them. You must see that there is no false doctrine creeping in among the people. You must see that they grow in faith and testimony, in integrity and righteousness and a sense of service. You must see that their love for the Lord strengthens and manifests itself in greater love for one another.

You must be their confessor, privy to their deepest secrets, holding absolutely inviolate the confidences placed in you. Yours is a privileged communication that must be guarded and respected against all intruders. There may be temptations to tell. You cannot succumb.

The presiding high priest

You as an individual preside over the Aaronic Priesthood of the ward. You are their leader, their teacher, their example, whether you wish to be such or not. You are the presiding high priest, the father to the ward family, to be called upon as arbiter in disagreements, as defender of the accused.

You preside in meetings where the doctrine is taught. You are accountable for the spiritual nature of those meetings and for the administration of the sacrament to the members, that all may be reminded of sacred covenants and obligations incumbent upon those who have taken upon them the name of the Lord.

A strong friend

You must stand as the strong friend of the widow and the orphan, the weak and the beleaguered, the attacked and the helpless.

The sound of your trumpet must be certain and unequivocal. In your ward you stand as the head of the army of the Lord, leading them on to victory in the conquest against sin, indifference, and apostasy.

Wisdom beyond your strength

I know that the work is hard at times. There are never enough hours to get it done. The calls are numerous and frequent. You have other things to do. That is true. You must not rob your employer of the time and energy that are rightfully his. You must not rob your family of time which belongs to them. But as most of you have come to know, as you seek for divine guidance, you are blessed with wisdom beyond your own and strength and capacity you did not know you had. It is possible to budget your time so that you neglect neither your employer, your family, nor your flock.

The most rewarding service

God bless the bishops of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. You

may on occasion be inclined to complain about the burdens of your office. But you also know the joys of your service. Heavy as the load may be, you know this is the sweetest, the most rewarding, the most important thing you have ever done. You know that yours is the power to shape young lives, yours the right to recommend for missions, yours the authority to open the doors of the temple to your people, yours the calling to feed the hungry and clothe the naked and minister to those in distress, yours the obligation to teach and lead and inspire, yours the mandate to judge with equity and truth and mete out with love and understanding, with charity and faith.

I thank the Lord for you. I thank the Lord for good bishops in this Church throughout the world. I pray for you, all eleven thousand of you. I plead with you to be strong. I plead with you to be true. I plead with you to be uncompromising in your own lives and in the goals you set for others. Though your days be long and wearisome, may your rest be sweet, and in your hearts may you know that peace which comes alone from God to those who serve Him through service to His children.

Memories of a bishop

I again look back to the bishop of my boyhood. He was there when I was given a name and a blessing by my good father. He it was who interviewed me and found me worthy of baptism into the Lord's church. He it was who interviewed me and found me worthy to be ordained a deacon. He called me to my first Church responsibility as a member of the presidency of the deacons quorum. He it was who presided over the quorum of priests to which I once belonged. He it was who recommended me to the stake president as worthy to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood. He it was who recommended me to the President of the Church as one worthy to serve as a missionary. He it was who welcomed me home and who subsequently signed my recommend as one worthy to be married in the house of the Lord.

He grew old in the service and died, and it was my honor to speak at his funeral. A great congregation filled the chapel where he had presided for so long. I spoke out of the heart of a boy whom he had befriended and helped, out of the heart of a youth whom he had guided and counseled, out of the experience of an adult whose life he had blessed in many ways.

Invocation of blessings

I bear testimony of the strength and goodness of the bishops of this church. I pay tribute to counselors who help them and to all who serve under their direction in response to the calls they make. I invoke the blessings of the Lord upon you good men that you may be possessed of strength and vitality to carry the burdens of the day, that you may have wisdom given of God in the delicate and sensitive situations with which you must deal, that you may have generous hearts in meeting the needs of the poor, that you may judge, not as men judge, but with that wisdom which comes from above, and that as the years pass there may come into your hearts the sweet satisfaction of knowing that you have served your Father well through service to His children.

Someday you will be released. It will be a time of sadness for you. But there will be comfort as your people thank you. Nor will they ever forget you. They will remember you and speak with appreciation through years to come, for among

all Church officers you are nearest to them. You have been called, ordained, and set apart as shepherds to the flock. You have been endowed with discernment, judgment, and love to bless their lives. In the process you will bless your own.

I bear testimony of the divine nature of your calling and of the magnificent way in which you fulfill it. May you, your counselors, your wives, your children be blessed as you serve the children of the Lord, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

We call your attention to the fact that the nationwide CBS Tabernacle Choir broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 tomorrow morning. Those desiring to attend must be in their seats before 9:15 A.M.

As you leave this meeting tonight, we ask you to obey traffic rules, to use caution, and to be courteous in driving.

We express our gratitude for the beautiful way you brethren from the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth Chorus have presented the music this evening.

The choir will now sing "Praise the Lord."

The benediction will be offered by Elder Spencer H. Osborn of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Praise the Lord."

Elder Spencer H. Osborn offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY MORNING SESSION

The fourth session of the 158th Semiannual General Conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, October 2, 1988. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music, with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducting and Robert Cundick at the organ.

Before the session, the choir sang "O Ye Mountains High" without announcement.

President Monson opened the meeting with the following remarks:

President Thomas S. Monson

We welcome you this morning from the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, Utah, in this, the fourth general session of the 158th semiannual conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Our beloved prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this and all sessions of the conference, has asked me to conduct these services.

We acknowledge the large audience assembled in the Tabernacle and in the overflow gathering in the nearby Assembly Hall, where Elder Keith W. Wilcox and Bishop Glenn L. Pace are seated on the stand. We also extend our greetings to those of you who are participating by radio, television, cable, or satellite transmission. We are grateful to the owners and operators of the stations who are broadcasting this conference.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders, and officers and members of the Church from many lands who have

assembled to worship and to counsel together.

The Tabernacle Choir is providing the music for this session under the direction of Brothers Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger, with Brother Robert Cundick at the organ.

The choir opened these services by singing "O Ye Mountains High" and will now sing "O Love That Glorifies the Son," following which Elder F. Burton Howard, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "O Love That Glorifies the Son."

Elder F. Burton Howard offered the invocation.

President Monson

President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, will be our first speaker this morning.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

A missionary couple heals and helps

My brothers and sisters, let me tell you of a recent experience. We were in the city of Bacolod on the island of Negros Occidente in the Republic of the Philippines. There, to my great surprise, I met a man I had not seen in years.

The weather was steamy hot, as it always is in Bacolod, the center of the once thriving Filipino sugar industry. My friend was in a short-sleeved white shirt with dark trousers, his shoes shined. His beautiful wife, Marva, was beside him. I said, "Victor Jex, what are you doing here?"

He smiled and replied, "We're doing the Lord's work. We're helping the people. We're missionaries."

"Where do you live?"

"In a little house in Iloilo on the island of Panay. We came over on the ferry for the conference."

I thought of when I had last seen them. It was a few years ago. They then lived in a beautiful home in Scarsdale, New York. He was a widely recognized and honored chemist, with a doctorate in chemical engineering. He worked for one of the big multinational companies headquartered in New York. He was credited with putting together the chemical ingredients of a product now sold around the world, the name of which is known to millions of people and the profit from which has run into many millions of dollars for his company.

He was well paid and highly respected.

He was also the president of the Yorktown stake of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He had under his direction a corps of church workers who served faithfully in their local wards, many of whom commuted each day to

and from New York City where they held high and responsible positions in some of the great corporations of America. He was their church leader.

Now he was retired. He and his wife had sold their beautiful home, had given their children what furniture they wanted, and donated the rest to others. They had disposed of their cars and everything except their clothing, their family photographs, and their family history records. They had made themselves available to the Lord and His church to go wherever they might be sent at their own expense. They were now in the Philippines Bacolod Mission, working among the wonderful, friendly, brown-skinned people of the area. Unemployment is high in this region, and there is much of misery. But wherever Elder and Sister Jex go, they touch for good the lives of those among whom they serve.

They are there to heal the suffering people, to teach the gospel of Christ, to give encouragement and strength and hope and faith. They are there to heal wounds of misunderstanding and contention. They are there to bless the sick and to help those with diseased bodies and frustrated minds. Their smile is infectious, their laugh a joy to hear. They are living humbly among the poor, down at the level of the people, but standing straight and tall to lift with strong hands.

This former New York executive and his charming companion are in the service of the Savior, giving their full time, their resources, and their love to bless with healing the lives of many who are discouraged and need help. Here is a retired New Yorker, a man of great learning and recognized capacity, living in a home with few conveniences, a simple little place that would fit in the living room of his former house.

He and his wife are there, with others of their kind. They are two of a band of remarkable and dedicated older missionary couples who minister to the wants of people with numerous problems. They receive no financial compensation. They pay their own way. This world's goods mean little to them. As I said, they sold

all they had when they left to come to the Philippines. They will stay for as long as they are assigned by the Church to do so. Then they want to go on another mission. They are healers among the people, serving in the cause of the Master Healer.

The healing power of Christ

I have since reflected much on the power of Christ to heal and bless. It was He who said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). In a world of sickness and sorrow, of tension and jealousy and greed, there must be much of healing if there is to be life abundant.

The prophet Malachi declared, "Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings" (Malachi 4:2).

Malachi's prophecy was fulfilled. Jesus came to earth, the Son of God, with power over life and death. He healed the sick, opened the eyes of the blind, caused the lame to walk, and the dead to rise. He was the man of miracles who "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38).

"So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee. . . . And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum.

"When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death. . . .

"Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.

"And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth" (John 4:46-47, 50-51).

This, the second miracle wrought by the Master, was followed by other miracles of healing.

Christ healed by the power of God which was within Him. That power He gave to His chosen disciples, saying, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 16:19).

Healing power has been restored

That same power has been restored in this generation. It came through the laying on of hands by Peter, James, and John, who received it from the Lord Himself. It was bestowed upon Joseph Smith, the prophet of this dispensation. Its presence is among us. Many of you are acquainted with the history of the Church and are familiar with the account related by Wilford Woodruff concerning the events of July 22, 1839. It is worthy of repetition. Nauvoo at that time was an unhealthy and swampy place. There was much of sickness. Joseph was among those who were afflicted. But being filled with the Spirit, he rose from his bed and went out among the sick, healing them and raising them. He then crossed the river to the settlement in Montrose, Iowa. I read now from the account of Elder Woodruff:

"The first house he visited was that occupied by Elder Brigham Young, the president of the quorum of the twelve, who lay sick. Joseph healed him, then he arose and accompanied the Prophet on his visit to others who were in the same condition. They visited Elder W. Woodruff, also Elders Orson Pratt and John Taylor, all of whom were living in Montrose. They also accompanied him. The next place they visited was the home of Elijah Fordham, who was supposed to be about breathing his last. When the company entered the room the Prophet of God walked up to the dying man, and took hold of his right hand and spoke to him; but Brother Fordham was unable to speak, his eyes were set in his head like glass, and he seemed entirely unconscious of all around him. Joseph held his hand and looked into his eyes in silence for a length of time. A change in the countenance of Brother Fordham was soon perceptible to all present. His sight returned, and upon Joseph asking him if he knew him, he, in a low whisper, answered, 'Yes.' Joseph asked him if he had faith to be healed. He answered, 'I fear it is too late; if you had come sooner I think I would have been healed.' The Prophet said, 'Do you believe in Jesus Christ?' He answered in a feeble voice, 'I do.' Joseph then stood

erect, still holding his hand in silence several moments; then he spoke in a very loud voice, saying: 'Brother Fordham, I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to arise from this bed and be made whole.' His voice was like the voice of God, and not of man. It seemed as though the house shook to its very foundations. Brother Fordham arose from his bed and was immediately made whole. His feet were bound in poultices, which he kicked off, then putting on his clothes, he ate a bowl of bread and milk, and followed the Prophet into the street" (in Joseph Fielding Smith, *Essentials in Church History*, rev. ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1979], pp. 223-24).

Declared James of old: "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

"And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him" (James 5:14-15).

That power to heal the sick is still among us. It is the power of the priesthood of God. It is the authority held by the elders of this Church.

A transcendent power

We welcome and praise and utilize the marvelous procedures of modern medicine which have done so much to alleviate human suffering and lengthen human life. All of us are indebted to the dedicated men and women of science and medicine who have conquered so much of disease, who have mitigated pain, who have stayed the hand of death. I cannot say enough of gratitude for them.

Yet they are the first to admit the limitations of their knowledge and the imperfection of their skills in dealing with many matters of life and death. The mighty Creator of the heavens and the earth and all that in them are has given to His servants a divine power that sometimes transcends all the powers and knowledge of men. I venture to say that there is scarcely a faithful elder within the sound of my voice who could not recount

instances in which this healing power has been made manifest in behalf of the sick. It is the healing power of Christ.

The sickness of sin

And there is much of sickness among us other than that of the body.

There is the sickness of sin. One of our national magazines carried an extensive review of a sacrilegious film being shown in theaters across the world. Letters poured in to the editor. I quote from one of these. Said the writer, "I am a former alcoholic and adulterer set free by the power of the living Jesus Christ" (*Time*, 5 Sept. 1988, p. 7).

Legion are those who have testified of the healing power of Christ to lift them from the desolation of sin to higher and nobler living.

Sickness caused by selfishness

There is much of another category of sickness among us. I speak of conflicts, quarrels, arguments which are a debilitating disease particularly afflicting families. If there be such problems in the homes of any within the sound of my voice, I encourage you to invite the healing power of Christ. To those to whom He spoke on the Mount, Jesus said:

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

"But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. . . .

"And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain" (Matthew 5:38-39, 41).

The application of this principle, difficult to live but wondrous in its curative powers, would have a miraculous effect on our troubled homes. It is selfishness which is the cause of most of our misery. It is as a cankering disease. The healing power of Christ, found in the doctrine of going the second mile, would do wonders to still argument and accusation, fault-finding and evil speaking.

Our duty and capacity to heal

The same healing spirit would do wonders for the sickness of our society. The Lord has declared that it is our duty, as those blessed with the healing power of the Master, to "succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees" (D&C 81:5).

Great is the healing capacity of those who follow the admonition given by James: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

Invoke healing powers in worldly conflicts

We live in an environment where there is much of litigation and conflict, of suing and countering. Even here the powers of healing may be invoked. As a young man I worked with Elder Stephen L. Richards, then of the Council of the Twelve. When he came into the First Presidency of the Church, he asked me to assist him with a very delicate and sensitive matter. It was fraught with most grave and serious consequences. After listening to him discuss it, I said, "President Richards, you don't want me; you want a lawyer." He said, "I am a lawyer. I don't want to litigate this. I want to compose it."

We directed our efforts to that end, and wonderful results followed. Money was saved, much of it. Embarrassment was avoided. The work was moved forward without fanfare or headlines. Wounds were closed. The healing powers of the Master, the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ, were invoked in a delicate and difficult situation to compose what otherwise could have become a catastrophe.

Exercise healing power inwardly

It is not always easy to live by these doctrines when our very natures impel us to fight back. For instance, there are those who have made it the mission of their

lives to try to destroy this, the work of God. It has been so from the beginning of the Church, and now, in recent times, we are seeing more of it with evil accusations, falsehoods, and innuendo designed to embarrass this work and its officers. A natural inclination is to fight back, to challenge these falsehoods and bring action against their perpetrators. But when these inclinations make themselves felt, there arise also the words of the Master healer, who said:

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matthew 5:43-44).

Most of us have not reached that stage of compassion and love and forgiveness. It is not easy. It requires a self-discipline almost greater than we are capable of. But as we try, we come to know that there is a resource of healing, that there is a mighty power of healing in Christ, and that if we are to be His true servants we must not only exercise that healing power in behalf of others, but, perhaps more important, inwardly.

Ours is a ministry of healing

I would that the healing power of Christ might spread over the earth and be diffused through our society and into our homes, that it might cure men's hearts of the evil and adverse elements of greed and hate and conflict. I believe it could happen. I believe it must happen. If the lamb is to lie down with the lion, then

peace must overcome conflict, healing must mend injury.

Jesus of Nazareth healed the sick among whom He moved. His regenerating power is with us today to be invoked through His holy priesthood. His divine teachings, His incomparable example, His matchless life, His all-encompassing sacrifice will bring healing to broken hearts, reconciliation to those who argue and shout, even peace to warring nations if sought with humility and forgiveness and love.

As members of the Church of Jesus Christ, ours is a ministry of healing, with a duty to bind the wounds and ease the pain of those who suffer. Upon a world afflicted with greed and contention, upon families distressed by argument and selfishness, upon individuals burdened with sin and troubles and sorrows, I invoke the healing power of Christ, giving my witness of its efficacy and wonder. I testify of Him who is the great source of healing. He is the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world, "The Sun of Righteousness," who came "with healing in his wings." Of this I humbly testify in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has addressed us.

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "The Lord's Prayer," following which President Howard W. Hunter, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will speak to us.

The choir sang "The Lord's Prayer."

President Howard W. Hunter

The promise of divine guidance

All of us face times in our lives when we need heavenly help in a special and urgent way. We all have moments when we are overwhelmed by circumstances or

confused by the counsel we get from others, and we feel a great need to receive spiritual guidance, a great need to find the right path and do the right thing. In the scriptural preface to this latter-day dispensation, the Lord promised that if we

would be humble in such times of need and turn to him for aid, we would "be made strong, and [be] blessed from on high, and receive knowledge from time to time" (D&C 1:28). That help is ours if we will but seek it, trust in it, and follow what King Benjamin, in the Book of Mormon, called "the enticings of the Holy Spirit" (Mosiah 3:19).

Perhaps no promise in life is more reassuring than that promise of divine assistance and spiritual guidance in times of need. It is a gift freely given from heaven, a gift that we need from our earliest youth through the very latest days of our lives.

Allow me to use three examples this morning of such spiritual experiences, examples that recall the anxious moments of the very young as well as the possibility of continued spiritual growth for those who are not so young.

Joseph Smith's spiritual sensitivity

My first example is the well-known and dearly loved account of the boy-prophet Joseph Smith as he sought to know the mind and will of the Lord at a time of confusion and concern in his life. As every Latter-day Saint knows, the area near Palmyra, New York, had become a place of "unusual excitement on the subject of religion" during young Joseph's boyhood years there. Indeed, the entire district appeared to him to be affected by it, with "great multitudes," he wrote, uniting themselves to the different religious parties and causing "no small stir and division" among the people (Joseph Smith—History 1:5).

For a boy who had barely turned fourteen, his search for the truth was made even more difficult and confusing because members of the Smith family differed in their religious preferences at the time.

Now, with that familiar background and setting, I invite you to consider these rather remarkable thoughts and feelings from a boy of such a tender age. He wrote:

"During this time of great excitement my mind was called up to serious reflection and great uneasiness; but

though my feelings were deep and often poignant, still I kept myself aloof from all these [factions] . . . ; so great were the confusion and strife among the different denominations, that it was impossible for a person young as I was, and so unacquainted with men and things, to come to any certain conclusion who was right and who was wrong.

"My mind at times was greatly excited, the cry and tumult were so great and incessant. . . .

"In the midst of this war of words and tumult of opinions, I often said to myself: What is to be done? Who of all these parties are right; or, are they all wrong together? If any one of them be right, which is it, and how shall I know it?

"While I was laboring under the extreme difficulties caused by the contests of these parties of religionists, I was one day reading the Epistle of James, first chapter and fifth verse, which reads: *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*

"Never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to mine. It seemed to enter with great force into every feeling of my heart. I reflected on it again and again, knowing that if any person needed wisdom from God, I did; for how to act I did not know, and unless I could get more wisdom than I then had, I would never know" (Joseph Smith—History 1:8–12).

Of course, what happened next changed the course of human history. Determining to "ask of God," young Joseph retired to a grove near his rural home. There, in answer to his fervent prayer, God, the Eternal Father, and his Son, Jesus Christ, visited Joseph and counseled him. That great manifestation, of which I humbly testify, answered many more questions for our dispensation than simply which church young Joseph should or should not join.

But my purpose this morning is not to outline the first moments of the Restoration, though it is one of the most sacred stories in the scriptures. I wish, rather,

simply to emphasize the impressive degree of spiritual sensitivity demonstrated by this very young and untutored boy.

How many of us, at fourteen or any age, could keep our heads steady and our wits calm with so many forces tugging and pulling on us, especially on such an important subject as our eternal salvation? How many of us could withstand the emotional conflict that might come when parents differ in their religious persuasions? How many of us, at fourteen or fifty, would search within our souls and search within holy writ to find answers to what the Apostle Paul called "the deep things of God"? (1 Corinthians 2:10).

How remarkable—at least it may seem remarkable to us in our day—that this lad would turn profoundly to the scriptures and then to private prayer, perhaps the two greatest sources of spiritual insight and spiritual impression that are available universally to mankind. Certainly he was torn by differing opinions, but he was determined to do the right thing and determined to find the right way. He believed, as you and I must believe, that he could be taught and blessed from on high, as he was.

But, we may say, Joseph Smith was a very special spirit, and his was a special case. What about the rest of us who may now be older—at least older than fourteen—and have not been destined to open a dispensation of the gospel? We also must make decisions and sort out confusion and cut through a war of words in a whole host of subjects that affect our lives. The world is full of such difficult decisions, and sometimes as we face them, we may feel our age or our infirmities.

Sometimes we may feel that our spiritual edge has grown dull. On some very trying days, we may even feel that God has forgotten us, has left us alone in our confusion and concern. But that feeling is no more justified for the older ones among us than it is for the younger and less experienced. God knows and loves us all. We are, every one of us, his daughters and his sons, and whatever life's lessons may have brought us, the promise is still true: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men

liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5).

Pray and study to know God's purpose

For my second example, may I refer to one not nearly as young as Joseph Smith. Listen to these lines written by Elizabeth Lloyd Howell when she considered how the majestic poet John Milton must have felt when he went blind late in life.

I am old and blind!
Men point at me as smitten by God's
frown:

Afflicted and deserted of my kind,
Yet am I not cast down.

I am weak, yet strong;
I murmur not that I no longer see;
Poor, old, and helpless, I the more
belong,
Father supreme, to thee! . . .

Thy glorious face
Is leaning toward me; and its holy
light
Shines in upon my lonely dwelling
place,—
And there is no more night.

On my bended knee
I recognize thy purpose clearly
shown:
My vision thou hast dimmed,
that I may see
Thyself, thyself alone.

("Milton's Prayer for Patience,"
in *The World's Great Religious
Poetry*, ed. Caroline Miles Hill
[New York: MacMillan Co.,
1954], p. 19)

"My vision thou hast dimmed, that I may see / Thyself, thyself alone." That is a wonderfully comforting thought to young and old alike who must look inward and upward when the external world around us is so confusing and unstable and grim. Joseph Smith's view of what to do was certainly a dim one until he found the illumination of the scriptures and the searchlight of prayer.

Obviously, it was important to God's purposes that young Joseph was *not* able to see too clearly amidst the confusion caused by men, lest that half-light keep him from seeking and beholding the source of all light and all truth. Like Mrs. Howell's reference to Milton, the blind poet, "on bended knee" we can all recognize God's "purpose clearly shown" if we will rely on spiritual resources, letting our age and experience—yes, and even our infirmities—turn us yet closer to God.

There may be so very much our Father in Heaven would like to give us—*young, old, or middle-aged*—if we would but seek his presence regularly through such avenues as scripture study and earnest prayer. Of course, developing spirituality and attuning ourselves to the highest influences of godliness is not an easy matter. It takes time and frequently involves a struggle.

Elisha's reliance on heavenly help

Let me close with a third example noting just such a struggle shared by a youth and an older man.

Elisha, a prophet, seer, and revelator, had counseled the king of Israel on how and where and when to defend against the warring Syrians. The king of Syria, of course, wished to rid his army of Elisha's prophetic interference. The record reads:

"Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about. . . .

"[They] compassed the city both with horses and chariots" (2 Kings 6:14–15).

The odds were staggering. It was an old man and a boy against what looked like the whole world. Elisha's young companion was fearful and cried, "Alas, my master! how shall we do?" And Elisha's reply? "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them" (2 Kings 6:15–16). But there were

no others with the old man and his young companion. From what source could their help possibly come?

Then Elisha turned his eyes heavenward, saying, "Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see." And, we read, "the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha" (2 Kings 6:17).

"I will lead you along"

In the gospel of Jesus Christ, we have help from on high. "Be of good cheer," the Lord says, "for I will lead you along" (D&C 78:18). "I will impart unto you of my Spirit, which shall enlighten your mind, which shall fill your soul with joy" (D&C 11:13).

I testify of the divinity of Jesus Christ. God does live and imparts to us his Spirit. In facing life's problems and meeting life's tasks, may we all claim that gift from God, our Father, and find spiritual joy, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Let All Men Praise the Lord" without announcement.

President Monson

We have just heard from President Howard W. Hunter, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, followed by the choir singing "Let All Men Praise the Lord."

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Hope of Israel," following which we shall hear from Elder Marion D. Hanks, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation sang "Hope of Israel."

Elder Marion D. Hanks

Our closest neighbors

In a stake conference only a few days ago, I heard the tender story of an older man who had taken his 1974-model automobile to a garage for repairs. The projected work was more costly than he or the conscientious mechanic had contemplated, and the garage owner wondered if the elderly man really wanted to spend that much on such an old car.

Said the car owner, "Could you take a credit card that isn't mine?"

"Whose is it?" asked the garage man.

"It is my daughter's," the man said. "She wants me to have my automobile in good, safe condition. It is the only thing I have."

As the son of a father of whom I have no conscious memory, and as a father of loving children, I weep over that. There is no neighbor, after all, closer than the ones in our own families. And in this incident, knowing no more details, one does not get the impression of a casual check written on ample funds, but of a loving daughter very likely sacrificing to preserve the self-esteem and precarious independence of a cherished father.

In the same weekend, I listened to the account of a stake president who accompanied his bishop to a hospital to visit a man who was very ill. As they held his hand, the patient sorted through the cobwebs of pain and confusion and discerned the presence of his friends, his busy leaders. He spoke: "You came," he said. "You came."

"Love thy neighbour as thyself"

This morning I would like to speak of my deep conviction concerning one of the most sacred and significant principles in our Heavenly Father's plan for his children, and to express appreciation and admiration for so many who so willingly and unselfishly manifest this principle in the way they live.

I speak of that second commandment, linked inseparably by the Lord

Jesus Christ with the "first and great commandment," being indeed "like unto it. . . . On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets," he said (Matthew 22:38-40).

The Apostle James called the second commandment the "royal law" (James 2:8). Paul wrote to the Corinthians that "all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Galatians 5:14).

The Good Samaritan

Christ's ministry and his teachings leave no room to doubt with what seriousness we must accept and apply this sacred instruction. As he taught the law of love, Jesus was asked, "And who is my neighbour?" (Luke 10:29). In answer he told the story of a man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho who fell among thieves and was robbed and wounded and left at the wayside half dead. A priest and a Levite came by, and "looked on him, and passed by on the other side" (Luke 10:32; see also v. 31).

Into this scene came a Samaritan, a man to whose people and cities the Twelve had been forbidden to go (see Matthew 10:5-6), and he stopped and gave immediate and continuing aid to the troubled man. Jesus said:

"Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?"

"And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise" (Luke 10:36-37).

Can there be any question as to the meaning of that story?

Express love through service

It would be difficult to find anyone offering resistance in principle to the virtue of giving service to others, yet there may be some who do not understand the place of vital importance in the fundamentals of our faith that Jesus gave it. For him, in his life and teachings, it was not an option. Indeed, he declared that with-

out it one could not qualify for the greatest of eternal blessings—eternal life (see Matthew 25:31–46). The scriptures consistently so teach—acts of Christian service are expressions of Christian love. My observation and experience confirm the truth of it for me.

Religion is not a thing apart from life. It is not principles and ordinances or missionary work or leadership as an end in themselves. It is manifested by the kind of people we are, by our relationship with our Heavenly Father and his Son and all of the commandments, by the measure in which we qualify for the approval of our own Spirit-guided conscience, and by the way we treat other people.

It is a continuing marvel to me how well and with what grace and unselfish goodness so many live this sacred commandment. And it is sad to think that some may, in a joyless version of “the gospel,” miss the special blessings awaiting on the path established by our Savior and leading to the *highest* joy through Christian service and sacrifice. An ancient rabbinical aphorism comes to mind: “God will hold us responsible for all the wonderful things on earth that we refused to enjoy.”

An honor to be God's instruments

Adversity is all about us and among us. It is an inevitable element of mortality, and all of us have some share in it ultimately. But our religion, centering in the life and mission of the Lord Jesus Christ, helps us comprehend that. God and Christ love us with a mature, perfect love. The plan by which they lead requires mortal instruments of their love. We have the great honor to be invited to be such instruments. We need them, but they also need us. In this service we find the roots of most of those blessings that God wants us to enjoy.

Be fair and kind

Once I was invited by a civic organization to present an award of recognition to the person who had done the most to help handicapped people in the area.

When the honored lady, who was herself severely handicapped, came to the podium to receive her award, she walked between two stalwart men assisting her, with another wheeling an oxygen tank on a carrier behind her, helping her to breathe.

She protested her unworthiness but accepted the award on behalf of all others who had been helpful to the handicapped. She told how her saintly father had prepared her for her first day at school and then left his office to come home to meet her when she returned. He had prepared her to expect some disagreeable comments from a few who could not handle her physical appearance—the humped back and other problems. These birth difficulties, he had assured her, were no one's fault—they were the consequence of problems not yet solved in this imperfect and sometimes unfair world. “But,” said he, “if you will always be more fair and more kind to others than a few of them may sometimes be to you, you will enjoy every sweet blessing life affords.”

That was her one qualification, she said: she had tried to be more fair and more kind to others than a few of them had sometimes been to her.

Unheralded service

The sweetness of true Christian service is often experienced in obscurity—in quiet rooms in homes and hospitals and places of confinement, in military barracks and refugee camps, and in other places far from public attention. Usually it is unheralded, but it reflects the standard set by the Savior for those who will “inherit the kingdom prepared . . . from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34). These are they who serve the hungry and the thirsty and the naked and the homeless and those who are sick or imprisoned, and who do this after the pattern and in the spirit of him who said, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:40). To those who so serve he promised eternal life (see Matthew 25:46), while to those who fail to minister to the needy he said, “Inas-

much as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me" (Matthew 25:45).

Remember the poor and the needy

An inspiring Book of Mormon teaching deals with the mission of Christ, with his "great and last sacrifice," "infinite and eternal," in bringing about the Atonement, and with justice and mercy and prayer. After a powerful sermon on prayer and the spirit of it, the prophet Amulek declared:

"And now behold, my beloved brethren, I say unto you, do not suppose that this is all; for after ye have done all these things, if ye turn away the needy, and the naked, and visit not the sick and afflicted, and impart of your substance, if ye have, to those who stand in need—I say unto you, if ye do not any of these things, behold, your prayer is vain, and availeth you nothing, and ye are as hypocrites who do deny the faith" (Alma 34:28).

At a time of intense concern to the developing Church, a revelation was received issuing missionary calls, emphasizing the vital importance of ordinances, assigning local leadership of the churches, and then declaring these words: "And remember in all things the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted, for he that doeth not these things, the same is *not my disciple*" (D&C 52:40, italics added; see also Moses 7:33).

The diversity of needs

Through Ezekiel of old the Lord gave us a broader view of the diversity of needs which we are under obligation to serve: "The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost" (Ezekiel 34:4).

The book of Alma describes a group of people who were forced to leave their homes and country for a new land, where their fellow Christians "did receive all the poor . . . that came over unto them; and

they did nourish them, and did clothe them, and did give unto them lands for their inheritance; and they did administer unto them according to their wants" (Alma 35:9).

That spirit is still operative among the people of the Church. For several years in the refugee camps in Asia, young representatives of the Church have served special mission assignments preparing those choice people to live in this country. An observer who felt the special spirit with which they so selflessly worked wrote: "You people don't *have* to talk about your religion. Your values come through like a ton of bricks."

The people whom they served have looked upon them with almost the reverence that they might have bestowed upon the Savior himself. And when they have experienced this purifying blessing—the blessing of service—the missionaries have returned to their regular labors or to their homes with these solemn testimonies: "This was the most decent thing I have ever done. My life will never be the same again."

The royal law of love

Across the world, such individual investment of self in service is happening, following the example and teachings of the Lord, who laid upon the altar his very life for the blessing of others.

In this city at this moment, a noble, unselfish young lady who has experienced her own travails serves nearly around the clock at the bedside and in the anxious home of her sorely ill sister, having interrupted her own cherished and long-struggled-for graduate studies to help.

A promising young man has not returned to a prestigious university in the East because he has discovered during his summer break at home that a friend, with whom he had foolishly tampered briefly with an addictive substance which he himself then quit and never touched again, has gone on with the habit and is now addicted. The scholar stays home to help, saying that this is the most important thing he has to do.

The royal law of love is of sacred significance in the Lord's program for his people—an element as vital as any other in the gospel. It is inseparable from them and the spirit of them. It is well known to us institutionally; indeed, the Church to which we have the honor to belong is celebrated for knowing and acting upon it on occasions of great need across the earth.

My purpose this morning has been, in these few words, to honor that commandment and those who do so well personally to accept his invitation to impart

to others "both temporally and spiritually according to their needs" (Mosiah 18:29).

That we may do so, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Marion D. Hanks, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has spoken to us.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks

A penetrating question

"What think ye of Christ?" (Matthew 22:42). That question is as penetrating today as when Jesus used it to confound the Pharisees almost two thousand years ago. Like a sword, sharp and powerful, it uncovers what is hidden, divides truth from error, and goes to the heart of religious belief.

Here are some answers being given today.

Some praise Jesus Christ as the greatest teacher who ever lived, but deny that he is Messiah, Savior, or Redeemer. Some prominent theologians teach that our secularized world needs "a new concept of God, stripped of the . . . supernatural." They believe that "not even a suffering God can help to solve the pain and tragedy of modern man" (John A. Hardon, *Christianity in the Twentieth Century* [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1971], pp. 356, 359.)

A bishop in one Christian denomination has declared that "Jesus was in every sense a human being, just as we are" ("One Clergyman's Views on the 'Death of God,'" *U.S. News and World Report*, 18 Apr. 1966, p. 57).

Under the influence of such teachings, the religion of many is like the creed of the humanists, who declare that "no deity will save us; we must save ourselves" (*The Encyclopedia of American*

Religions: Religious Creeds, 1st ed., ed. J. Gordon Melton [Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1973], p. 641).

Another church that claims roots in "Christianity" maintains that Jesus' crucifixion was not the fulfillment of his mission, but evidence of its failure. They teach that he did not cleanse men of original sin, but that another messiah must come to complete our salvation and establish the kingdom of heaven on earth. (See *Outline of the Principle, Level 4* [New York: Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity], pp. 159-71, 199-214.)

We are Christians

Many years ago a young Latter-day Saint enrolled in a midwestern university and applied for a scholarship only available to Christians. Both the applicant and the university officials were unsure whether a Mormon was eligible. After consulting a panel of theologians, they concluded that this Mormon was a Christian.

When I first heard of that event over thirty years ago, I was shocked that anyone, especially a member of our church, would entertain any doubt that we are Christians. I have come to a better understanding of that confusion. I think we sometimes thoughtlessly give others cause to wonder. How does this happen?

Simple gospel truths are important

For many years I was a teacher of law. A frequent teaching method in that discipline is to concentrate classroom instruction on the difficult questions—the obscure and debatable matters that lie at the fringes of learning. Some law teachers believe that the simple general rules that answer most legal questions are so obvious that students can learn them by independent study. As a result, these teachers devote little time to teaching the basics.

I believe some of us sometimes do the same thing in gospel teaching. We neglect to teach and testify to some simple, basic truths of paramount importance. This omission permits some members and nonmembers to get wrong ideas about our faith and belief.

Jesus is our Creator and Savior

What do members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints think of Christ?

Jesus Christ is the Only Begotten Son of God the Eternal Father. He is our Creator. He is our Teacher. He is our Savior. His atonement paid for the sin of Adam and won victory over death, assuring resurrection and immortality for all men.

He is all of these, but he is more. Jesus Christ is the Savior, whose atoning sacrifice opens the door for us to be cleansed of our personal sins so that we can be readmitted to the presence of God. He is our Redeemer.

Biblical testimonies of the Atonement

The Messiah's atoning sacrifice is the central message of the prophets of all ages. It was prefigured by the animal sacrifices prescribed by the law of Moses, whose whole meaning, one prophet explained, "point[ed] to that great and last sacrifice [of] the Son of God, yea, infinite and eternal" (Alma 34:14). The Atonement was promised and predicted by the Old Testament prophets. Isaiah declared:

"He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: . . . and with his stripes we are healed.

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

"He was . . . brought as a lamb to the slaughter. . . .

" . . . He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken. . . .

" . . . He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (Isaiah 53:5–8, 12).

At the beginning of the Savior's ministry, John the Baptist exclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

At the end of his ministry, as Jesus blessed the cup and gave it to his disciples, he said, "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28). As Latter-day Saints partake of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, we drink water in remembrance of his blood, which was shed for us (see D&C 20:79).

The writers of the New Testament teach that our Savior's suffering and his blood atoned for our sins.

The Apostle Paul told the Corinthians that the first principle of the gospel he preached to them was "how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3). And to the Colossians he wrote, "We have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:14; see also Hebrews 2:17, 10:10).

Peter described how Christ "bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Peter 2:24).

John wrote that "the blood of Jesus Christ . . . cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7; see also 2:2, 3:5, 4:10).

We revere the Bible. And so we and our fellow believers in Christ sing these words from that inspiring hymn "How Great Thou Art":

And when I think that God, his Son
not sparing,
Sent him to die, I scarce can take it
in,
That on the cross my burden gladly
bearing
He bled and died to take away my sin.
(*Hymns* [1985], no. 86)

Need for the Book of Mormon

Although the Bible's explanation of atonement for individual sins should be unmistakable, that doctrine has been misunderstood by many who have only the Bible to explain it.

Modern prophets declare that the Book of Mormon contains the fulness of the everlasting gospel in greater clarity than any other scripture (see D&C 20:8-9; 27:5). In a day when many are challenging the divinity of Jesus Christ or doubting the reality of his atonement and resurrection, the message of that second witness, the Book of Mormon, is needed more urgently than ever.

President Ezra Taft Benson has reminded us again and again that the Book of Mormon "was written for our day" and that it "is the keystone in our witness of Jesus Christ" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, pp. 4, 5; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, pp. 5, 6). I believe that the reason our Heavenly Father has had his prophet direct us into a more intensive study of the Book of Mormon is that this generation needs its message more than any of its forebears. As President Benson has said, the Book of Mormon "provides the most complete explanation of the doctrine of the Atonement," and "its testimony of the Master is clear, undiluted, and full of power" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, p. 4; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, p. 5).

Heresies about Jesus Christ

In contrast, what is called "liberal theology" teaches that Jesus Christ is important not because he atoned for our sins, but only because he taught us the way to come to God by perfecting ourselves. In this theology, human beings can be reconciled to God entirely through

their own righteousness. (See O. Kendall White, Jr., *Mormon Neo-Orthodoxy: A Crisis Theology* [Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987], pp. 43-44.)

Another group—secular rather than religious—believes that Jesus was not God, that man is God, and that you can create your own destiny through the powers of your own mind. (See "Age-old Fear of New Age Concerns," *Insight*, 11 July 1988, p. 55.)

Man cannot earn salvation

Are Latter-day Saints susceptible to such heresies? The Apostle Paul wrote that we should "work out [our] own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12). Could that familiar expression mean that the sum total of our own righteousness will win us salvation and exaltation? Could some of us believe that our heavenly parentage and our divine destiny allow us to pass through mortality and attain eternal life solely on our own merits?

On the basis of what I have heard, I believe that some of us, some of the time, say things that can create that impression. We can forget that keeping the commandments, which is necessary, is not sufficient. As Nephi said, we must labor diligently to persuade everyone "to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do" (2 Nephi 25:23).

In his famous poem "Invictus," William Ernest Henley hurled man's challenge against Fate. With head "bloody, but unbowed," determined man is unconquerable. The last verse reads:

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate.
I am the captain of my soul.
(In *Out of the Best Books*, 5 vols.,
ed. Bruce B. Clark and Robert K.
Thomas [Salt Lake City: Deseret
Book Co., 1968], 4:93)

Writing a half-century later, Elder Orson F. Whitney replied with these lines:

Art thou in truth? Then what of him
Who bought thee with his blood?
Who plunged into devouring seas
And snatched thee from the flood?

Who bore for all our fallen race
What none but him could bear.—
The God who died that man might
live,
And endless glory share?

Of what avail thy vaunted strength,
Apart from his vast might?
Pray that his Light may pierce the
gloom,
That thou mayest see aright.

Men are as bubbles on the wave,
As leaves upon the tree.
Thou, captain of thy soul, forsooth!
Who gave that place to thee?

Free will is thine—free agency,
To wield for right or wrong;
But thou must answer unto him
To whom all souls belong.

Bend to the dust that head
“unbowed,”
Small part of Life’s great whole!
And see in him, and him alone,
The Captain of thy soul.
(*Improvement Era*, May 1926,
p. 611)

Man unquestionably has impressive powers and can bring to pass great things by tireless efforts and indomitable will. But after all our obedience and good works, we cannot be saved from the effect of our sins without the grace extended by the atonement of Jesus Christ.

Book of Mormon clarifies doctrines

The Book of Mormon puts us right. It teaches that “salvation doth not come by the law alone” (Mosiah 13:28); that is, salvation does not come by keeping the commandments alone. “By the law no flesh is justified” (2 Nephi 2:5). Even those who serve God with their whole souls are unprofitable servants (see Mosiah 2:21). Man cannot earn his own salvation.

The Book of Mormon teaches, “Since man had fallen he could not merit anything of himself” (Alma 22:14). “There can be nothing which is short of an infinite atonement which will suffice for the sins of the world” (Alma 34:12; see also 2 Nephi 9:7, Alma 34:8–16). “Wherefore, redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah; . . . he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law” (2 Nephi 2:6–7). And so we “preach of Christ . . . that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins” (2 Nephi 25:26).

In the Book of Mormon the Savior explains the gospel, including the Atonement and its relationship to repentance, baptism, works of righteousness, and the ultimate judgment:

“My Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross, . . . that I might draw all men unto me, . . . that they may be judged according to their works. And . . . whoso repenteth and is baptized in my name shall be filled; and if he endureth to the end, behold, him will I hold guiltless before my Father at that day when I shall stand to judge the world” (3 Nephi 27:14–16).

In that same teaching the Savior restates these principles in a way that emphasizes our everlasting reliance on the Atonement worked out by the shedding of his blood:

“And no unclean thing can enter into [the Father’s] kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end” (3 Nephi 27:19).

Joseph Smith stated this same relationship in our third article of faith: “We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.”

Atonement is inexplicable but true

Why is Christ the only way? How was it possible for him to take upon him-

self the sins of all mankind? Why was it necessary for his blood to be shed? And how can our soiled and sinful selves be cleansed by his blood?

These are mysteries I do not understand. To me, as to President John Taylor, the miracle of the atonement of Jesus Christ is "incomprehensible and inexplicable" (see *The Mediation and Atonement of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ* [Salt Lake City: Deseret News Co., 1882], pp. 148–49). But the Holy Ghost has given me a witness of its truthfulness, and I rejoice that I can spend my life in proclaiming it.

Testimony of Jesus Christ

I testify with the ancient and modern prophets that there is no other name and no other way under heaven by which man can be saved except by Jesus Christ (see Acts 4:10, 12; 2 Nephi 25:20; Alma 38:9; D&C 18:23).

I witness with the prophet Lehi that "there is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah" (2 Nephi 2:8).

I testify with the prophet Alma that no man can be saved except he is cleansed from all stain, through the blood of Jesus Christ (see Alma 5:21). As he explains, "repentance could not come unto men except there were a punishment" (Alma 42:16), and "therefore God himself atoneth for the sins of the world, to bring about the plan of mercy, to appease the demands of justice" (Alma 42:15).

I witness with the prophets of the Book of Mormon that the Messiah, the Holy One of Israel, suffered "according to the flesh" (Alma 7:13), the pains, the infirmities, and the griefs and sorrows of every living creature in the family of Adam (see 2 Nephi 9:21, Alma 7:12–13, Mosiah 14:4, D&C 18:11).

I testify that when the Savior suffered and died for all men, all men became subject unto him (see 2 Nephi 9:5) and to his commandment that all must repent and be baptized in his name, having faith in him, "or they cannot be saved in

the kingdom of God" (2 Nephi 9:23; see also Alma 11:40; John 3:5, 8:24).

We must repent to be saved

Speaking through the Prophet Joseph Smith in our dispensation, the Savior said:

"I am . . . Christ the Lord, . . . the Redeemer of the world.

"I [have] accomplished and finished the will of him whose I am, even the Father, concerning me—having done this that I might subdue all things unto myself—

"Retaining all power, even to . . . judging every man according to his works and the deeds which he hath done.

"And surely every man must repent or suffer, for I, God, am endless. . . .

"Wherefore, I command you to repent. . . .

"For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

"But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I" (D&C 19:1–4, 13, 16–17).

Salvation is through Christ's blood

What think we of Christ? As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we testify with the Book of Mormon prophet-king Benjamin that "there shall be no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent,

"For behold, . . . salvation was, and is, and is to come, in and through the atoning blood of Christ" (Mosiah 3:17–18).

And as we repent of our sins and seek to keep his commandments and our covenants, we cry out, as Benjamin's people cried out, "O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins" (Mosiah 4:2).

In all of this, we remember and rely on the Lord's sure word: "Keep my commandments in all things.

"And, if you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God" (D&C 14:6-7). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Guide Us, O Thou Great Jehovah" without announcement.

President Monson

Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just addressed us, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "Guide Us, O Thou Great Jehovah."

President Ezra Taft Benson has suggested that I be the concluding speaker at this session.

President Thomas S. Monson

Happiness—the object of our existence

I pray for the Spirit of the Lord to be with me. "Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it; and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God" (Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], pp. 255-56).

This description of such a universal goal was provided by the Prophet Joseph Smith. It was relevant then. It is relevant now. With such a clear road map to follow, why then are there so many unhappy people? Frequently, frowns outnumber smiles and despair dampens joy. We live so far below the level of our divine possibilities. Some become confused by materialism, entangled by sin, and lost among the passing parade of humanity. Others cry out in the words of the convert of Philip of old: "How can I [find my way], except some man should guide me?" (Acts 8:31).

Happiness is found at home

Happiness does not consist of a glut of luxury, the world's idea of a "good time." Nor must we search for it in faraway places with strange-sounding names. Happiness is found at home.

All of us remember the home of our childhood. Interestingly, our thoughts do

not dwell on whether the house was large or small, the neighborhood fashionable or downtrodden. Rather, we delight in the experiences we shared as a family. The home is the laboratory of our lives, and what we learn there largely determines what we do when we leave there.

Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, prime minister of Great Britain, expressed the profound philosophy: "The family is the building block of society. It is a nursery, a school, a hospital, a leisure centre, a place of refuge and a place of rest. It encompasses the whole of the society. It fashions our beliefs; it is the preparation for the rest of our life" (Nicholas Wood, "Thatcher Champions the Family," *The Times*, 26 May 1988, p. 24).

"Home is where the heart is." It *does* take "a heap o' livin'" to make a house a home (Edgar A. Guest, "Home," in *The Family Book of Best-Loved Poems*, ed. David L. George [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1952], p. 151). "Home, home, sweet, sweet home, Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home" (*Hymns* [1948], no. 185). We turn from the reverie of such pleasant recollections. We contemplate parents gone, family grown, childhood vanished. Slowly but surely we face the truth: We are responsible for the home we build. We must build wisely, for eternity is not a short voyage. There will be calm and wind, sunlight and shadows, joy and sorrow. But if we really try, our home can be a bit of heaven here on earth. The thoughts we think, the deeds we do, the lives we live influence not only the success of our

earthly journey; they mark the way to our eternal goals.

Hallmarks of a happy home

Happy homes come in a variety of appearances. Some feature large families with father, mother, brothers, and sisters living together in a spirit of love. Others consist of a single parent with one or two children, while other homes have but one occupant. There are, however, identifying features which are to be found in a happy home, whatever the number or description of its family members. I refer to these as "Hallmarks of a Happy Home." They consist of—

1. A pattern of prayer.
2. A library of learning.
3. A legacy of love.
4. A treasury of testimony.

A pattern of prayer

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire, Uttered or unexpressed" (*Hymns* [1985], no. 145). So universal is its application, so beneficial its result, that prayer qualifies as the number-one hallmark of a happy home. As parents listen to the prayer of a child, they too draw close to God. These little ones, who so recently have been with their Heavenly Father, have no inhibitions in expressing to Him their feelings, their wishes, their thanks.

Family prayer is the greatest deterrent to sin, and hence the most beneficent provider of joy and happiness. The old saying is yet true: "The family that prays together stays together."

"It is not possible for a married couple to reach happiness with eyes fixed on different stars; . . . they must set up a single ideal and work toward [it]. . . . Cease cherishing impossible fancies of impossible futures. Take the best of [your] dreams and fit them to life as it comes every day" (Temple Bailey, "The Bride Who Makes Her Dreams Come True," *Ladies' Home Journal*, 1912).

On October 7, my wife, Frances, and I will have been married forty years. Our marriage took place just to the east of us in the holy temple. He who performed

the ceremony, Benjamin Bowring, counseled us: "May I offer you newlyweds a formula which will ensure that any disagreement you may have will last no longer than one day? Every night kneel by the side of your bed. One night, Brother Monson, you offer the prayer, aloud, on bended knee. The next night you, Sister Monson, offer the prayer, aloud, on bended knee. I can then assure you that any misunderstanding that develops during the day will vanish as you pray. You simply can't pray together and retain any but the best of feelings toward one another."

When I was called to the Council of the Twelve just twenty-five years ago this weekend, President McKay asked me concerning my family. I related to him this guiding formula of prayer and bore witness to its validity. He sat back in his large leather chair and, with a smile, responded, "The same formula that has worked for you has blessed the lives of my family during all the years of our marriage."

Prayer is the passport to spiritual power.

A library of learning

A second hallmark of a happy home is discovered when home is a library of learning. An essential part of our learning library will be good books.

Books are keys to wisdom's treasure;
Books are gates to lands of pleasure;
Books are paths that upward lead;
Books are friends. Come, let us read.
(Emilie Poulsson)

Reading is one of the true pleasures of life. In our age of mass culture, when so much that we encounter is abridged, adapted, adulterated, shredded, and boiled down, it is mind-easing and mind-inspiring to sit down privately with a congenial book.

James A. Michener, prominent author, suggests: "A nation becomes what its young people read in their youth. Its ideals are fashioned then, its goals strongly determined."

The Lord counseled, "Seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith" (D&C 88:118).

The standard works offer the library of learning of which I speak. We must be careful not to underestimate the capacity of children to read and to understand the word of God.

A few months ago we took our grandchildren on an escorted tour of the Church printing facilities. There, all of us saw the missionary edition of the Book of Mormon coming off the delivery line—printed, bound, and trimmed, ready for reading. I said to a young grandson, "The operator says that you can remove one copy of the Book of Mormon to be your very own. You select the copy, and it will then be yours."

Removing one finished copy of the book, he clutched it to his breast and said with sincerity, "I love the Book of Mormon. This is my book."

I really don't remember other events of that day, but none of us who was there will ever forget the honest expression from the heart of a child.

As parents, we should remember that our lives may be the book from the family library which the children most treasure. Are our examples worthy of emulation? Do we live in such a way that a son or a daughter may say, "I want to follow my dad," or "I want to be like my mother"? Unlike the book on the library shelf, the covers of which shield the contents, our lives cannot be closed. Parents, we truly are an open book.

A legacy of love

A third hallmark of a happy home is a legacy of love.

As a small boy, I enjoyed visiting the home of my grandmother on Bueno Avenue here in Salt Lake City. Grandmother was always so happy to see us and to draw us close to her. Seated on her lap, we listened as she read to us.

Her youngest son and his wife now occupy that same home. I visited there recently. The fireplug on the curb seemed so small compared to its size when I

climbed its lofty heights those long years ago. The friendly porch was the same, the quiet, peaceful atmosphere not altered. Hanging on the kitchen wall was a framed expression which my aunt had embroidered. It carried a world of practical application: "Choose your love; love your choice." She who prepared that message is now in frail health. Her husband, Ray, cares for her constantly and is the epitome of faithful and enduring love. She reciprocates in her own way. They live the lesson they framed.

Seemingly little lessons of love are observed by children as they silently absorb the examples of their parents. My own father, a printer, worked long and hard practically every day of his life. I'm certain that on the Sabbath he would have enjoyed just being at home. Rather, he visited elderly family members and brought cheer into their lives.

One was his uncle, who was crippled by arthritis so severe that he could not walk or care for himself. On a Sunday afternoon Dad would say to me, "Come along, Tommy; let's take Uncle Elias for a short drive." Boarding the old 1928 Oldsmobile, we would proceed to Eighth West, where, at the home of Uncle Elias, I would wait in the car while Dad went inside. Soon he would emerge from the house, carrying in his arms like a china doll his crippled uncle. I then would open the door and watch how tenderly and with such affection my father would place Uncle Elias in the front seat so he would have a fine view while I occupied the rear seat.

The drive was brief and the conversation limited, but oh, what a legacy of love! Father never read to me from the Bible about the good Samaritan. Rather, he took me with him and Uncle Elias in that old 1928 Oldsmobile along the road to Jericho.

When our homes carry the legacy of love, we will not receive Jacob's chastisement as recorded in the Book of Mormon: "Ye have broken the hearts of your tender wives, and lost the confidence of your children, because of your bad examples before them; and the sobbings of their hearts ascend up to God against you" (Jacob 2:35).

Let us not be discouraged by the many newspaper and television accounts of discord—and sometimes cruelty—between companions and assume that virtue has vanished and love's lamp no longer glows. Two of my dearest friends now lie in poor health and helpless. They are not alone. Their faithful companions minister to them in tender love. My friend Pres, who rarely leaves the side of his wife, said of her, "Christine is weaker but still beautiful. I love her so." What a noble tribute to fidelity, to love, to marriage!

Another, a wife named Gertrude, makes comfortable her husband, Mark, in his room. Everything is just as he would want the room to be. She reads to him. She chats with him about the family. She once said to me during this long vigil, "I love him more than ever."

For a beautiful example of "love at home," we need not look beyond the family of President and Sister Benson. My wife and I were privileged to attend the Bensons' sixty-second wedding anniversary party just three weeks ago. Children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren rejoiced as the President and his companion held hands and led the group in singing "Keep the Home Fires Burning," "Love's Old Sweet Song," and "I Love You Truly." The entire Church can well emulate the Bensons' example of studying the scriptures, attending the temple, and enjoying life together.

These are pictures which portray a legacy of love as a hallmark of a happy home.

A treasury of testimony

A fourth hallmark of a happy home is a treasury of testimony. "The first and foremost opportunity for teaching in the Church lies in the home," observed President David O. McKay. "A true Mormon home is one in which if Christ should chance to enter, he would be pleased to linger and to rest" (*Gospel Ideals* [Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1953], p. 169).

What are we doing to ensure that our homes meet this description? It isn't

enough for parents alone to have strong testimonies. Children can ride only so long on the coattails of a parent's conviction.

President Heber J. Grant declared: "It is our duty to teach our children in their youth. I may know that the gospel is true, and so may my wife; but I want to tell you that our children will not know that the gospel is true unless they study it and gain a testimony for themselves."

A love for the Savior, a reverence for His name, and genuine respect one for another will provide a fertile seedbed for a testimony to grow.

Learning the gospel, bearing a testimony, leading a family are rarely if ever simple processes. Life's journey is characterized by bumps in the road, swells in the sea—even the turbulence of our times.

Some years ago, while visiting the members and missionaries in Australia, I witnessed a sublime example depicting how a treasury of testimony can bless and sanctify a home. The mission president, Horace D. Ensign, and I were traveling the long distance from Sydney to Darwin, where I was to break ground for our first chapel in that city. En route we had a scheduled stop at a mining community named Mt. Isa. As we entered the small airport at Mt. Isa, a woman and her two children approached. She said, "I am Judith Loudon, a member of the Church, and these are my two children. We thought you might be on this flight, so we have come to visit with you during your brief stopover." She explained that her husband was not a member of the Church and that she and the children were indeed the only members in the entire area. We shared lessons and bore testimony.

Time passed. As we prepared to re-board, Sister Loudon looked so forlorn, so alone. She pleaded, "You can't go yet; I have so missed the Church." Suddenly the loudspeaker announced a thirty-minute mechanical delay of our flight. Sister Loudon whispered, "My prayer has just been answered." She then asked how she might influence her husband to show an interest in the gospel. We counseled her to include him in their home Primary lesson each week and be to him a living

testimony of the gospel. I mentioned we would send to her a subscription to *The Children's Friend* and additional helps for her family teaching. We urged that she never give up on her husband.

We departed Mt. Isa, a city to which I have never returned. I shall, however, always hold dear in memory that sweet mother and those precious children extending a tear-filled expression and a fond wave of gratitude and good-bye.

Several years later, while speaking at a priesthood leadership meeting in Brisbane, Australia, I emphasized the significance of gospel scholarship in the home and the importance of living the gospel and being examples of the truth. I shared with the men assembled the account of Sister Loudon and the impact her faith and determination had made on me. As I concluded, I said, "I suppose I'll never know if Sister Loudon's husband ever joined the Church, but he couldn't have found a better model to follow."

One of the leaders raised his hand, then stood and declared, "Brother Monson, I am Richard Loudon. The woman of whom you speak is my wife. The children [his voice quavered] are our children. We are a forever family now, thanks in part to the persistence and the patience of my dear wife. She did it all." Not a word was spoken. The silence was broken only by sniffles and muffled sobs and marked by the sight of tears streaming from every eye.

Open our hearts and souls

My brothers and sisters, let us determine, whatever our circumstance, to make of our houses happy homes. Let us open wide the windows of our hearts, that each family member may feel welcome and "at home." Let us open also the doors of our very souls, that the dear Christ may enter. Remember His promise: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him" (Revelation 3:20).

How welcome He will feel, how joyful will be our lives, when the "Hallmarks of a Happy Home" greet Him, even—

A pattern of prayer;

A library of learning;

A legacy of love;

A treasury of testimony.

That our loving Heavenly Father may bless all of us in our quest for such happy homes is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Tabernacle Choir will sing in closing "How Great the Wisdom and the Love." The benediction will be offered by Elder Victor L. Brown, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and this conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The choir sang "How Great the Wisdom and the Love."

Elder Victor L. Brown offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY AFTERNOON SESSION

The fifth session of the 158th Semi-annual General Conference commenced at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, October 2, 1988. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music, with Jerold Ottley and Donald

Ripplinger conducting and John Longhurst at the organ.

President Hinckley made the following remarks as the meeting opened:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

President Ezra Taft Benson, who has presided at all sessions of this conference,

has asked that I conduct this fifth and concluding session of the 158th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We extend a sincere welcome to all assembled in the Tabernacle and to those seated in the Assembly Hall, where Elders Dean L. Larsen and George P. Lee are seated on the stand. We send also our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere who are participating in these proceedings by radio, television, cable, or by means of satellite transmission.

The Tabernacle Choir, with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger directing and John Longhurst at the organ, will begin this service by singing "Lead On, O King Eternal." The invocation will be

offered by Elder Russell C. Taylor of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Lead On, O King Eternal."

Elder Russell C. Taylor offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

The choir will now sing "God So Loved the World." Following the singing, Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our first speaker.

The choir sang "God So Loved the World."

Elder L. Tom Perry

Elder Scott, I would just like to add my welcome to the others that have been given to you as you assume this great position. You are joining a most unique quorum. It is made up of very common men with a most uncommon calling. There is a spirit, a unity, and a devotion in this body like none other you will ever experience. We are excited to have you and your great talent and abilities with us in our quorum. Welcome! Welcome! Welcome!

Train up a child

I have selected as the theme for my conference message a line from Proverbs: "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (22:6).

The Lord has been very specific in His instructions to parents in this day. From the Doctrine and Covenants we read:

"And again, inasmuch as parents have children in Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized, that teach

them not to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents. . . .

"And they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord.

"And the inhabitants of Zion shall also observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy. . . .

"Now, I, the Lord, am not well pleased with the inhabitants of Zion, for there are idlers among them; and their children are also growing up in wickedness; they also seek not earnestly the riches of eternity, but their eyes are full of greediness.

"These things ought not to be, and must be done away from among them" (D&C 68:25, 28-29, 31-32).

The language is direct, and it leaves no room for misunderstanding. The responsibility for training children rests primarily with the parents.

Parents' responsibility

Many years ago I had the great pleasure of having the assignment as second counselor in the Sunday School presidency with specific responsibility for what was then the Junior Sunday School. Each Sunday I would watch a particular father bring his son to church. The boy would be crying and screaming, begging not to be turned over to the teacher. I watched the father take him to the classroom, push him through the door, and then hold onto the doorknob on the other side—so his son could not come back out—until the teacher had managed to get control of him and settle him down in the class. It was almost as if the father were saying, "I haven't the patience or the time to train this young man. I am turning him over to you, Teacher, to teach him how to be reverent in his Sunday School class."

I had almost the same feeling the other day when Elder Featherstone and I spent a few hours with the president of Brigham Young University. We had asked for an appointment to discuss with him what the priesthood leadership could do to help enforce the standards required of the students when they are accepted at Brigham Young University. As we sat with the leader of this great institution, I was reminded of this experience in Junior Sunday School many years ago. I had the feeling that many parents were bringing their children to the doorstep of BYU, pushing them through the door, then holding onto the doorknob, expecting school administration to assume the responsibility for completing the training of their children.

I have also had the same feeling about some of the missionaries I have had opportunities to interview in the field. Some parents must feel that "if I can only get my child on a mission, it will make up for those years when I have failed to teach him the principles of the gospel."

Of course, the large majority of the students entering Brigham Young University and the young men and women entering the mission field have been trained in good homes and come forth with a spirit

of the gospel, and are exemplary to all the world. However, there is a small percentage who come with problems, and the trend indicates this number is increasing. So today I would like to echo the counsel that has been given almost from the beginning of time as a voice of warning to parents. If you abdicate your responsibilities of teaching and training your children and then expect some other institution to pick up this responsibility and effect an immediate transformation, you expect what never was or never will be.

Importance of strong family life

Today there are many problems in our society, and so many of these problems are symptoms of failure in the home. President Benson has said:

"If we continue with present trends, we can expect to have more emotionally disturbed young people, more divorce, more depression, and more suicide.

"The family is the most effective place to instill lasting values in its members. Where family life is strong and based on principles and practices of the gospel of Jesus Christ, these problems do not as readily appear" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1982, p. 85; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, p. 59).

Establish a gospel foundation

There are three solutions I would like to call to your attention and emphasize here today. The first is to establish a good, strong, gospel foundation in the home. President Kimball once said: "Our success, individually and as a Church, will largely be determined by how faithfully we focus on living the gospel in the home. Only as we see clearly the responsibilities of each individual and the role of families and homes can we properly understand that priesthood quorums and auxiliary organizations, even wards and stakes, exist primarily to help members live the gospel in the home. Then we can understand that people are more important than programs, and that Church programs should always support and never detract from gospel-centered

family activities" ("Living the Gospel in the Home," *Ensign*, May 1978, p. 101).

I am afraid too many of us have had the experience in life of finding out how difficult it is to establish basic family traditions and practices after our children have grown into their teenage years. It is then that we realize how much easier it would have been to establish these practices early in their lives. How important it is that gospel training begin right at the start when we accept a new little spirit into our home.

In addition to reading fairy tales to our children, we should build a consistent, planned program of introducing the principles of the gospel through Bible and Book of Mormon stories, stories of our current-day prophets, and also of our family histories, which bring a heritage of gospel living into the lives of our children. We should carefully watch their television time to be certain they are tuned to the right programs. We are blessed in this day to have alternatives to programs of violence and sin. The video market has expanded to offer us choices of programs which are proper for family entertainment and learning. We should be certain there is family prayer, night and morning, weekly family home evenings, and regular attendance at our Sunday meetings. And then we should plan time for an activity day when we can teach children how to work and how to play.

This is a responsibility that cannot be abandoned. It rests solely upon the shoulders of parents to establish a gospel foundation in the lives of their children. Of course, there are other organizations that can help, but we should want to be certain that we know what they are learning, and that we take the time and have the patience to determine carefully and in a planned, organized way, that they are growing up with a sure foundation on which to build their lives.

Things of the world

The second area of concern in training children is not to allow them to be caught up so much in the things of the world. It was interesting to me, as we

discussed concerns of students at BYU with the president, that he remarked that the students from the farms where they had been taught to work, save, and conserve were the ones who seldom stepped out of line in violating school standards. Students whose parents had spoiled them with worldly goods were the ones who seemed to create most of the problems. It was the student who arrived at school driving an expensive, fancy car who seemed to think he was above abiding by university standards.

Brigham Young taught:

"I believe in indulging children, in a reasonable way. If the little girls want dolls, shall they have them? Yes. But must they be taken to the dressmaker's to be dressed? No. Let the girls learn to cut and sew the clothing for their dolls, and in a few years they will know how to make a dress for themselves and others. Let the little boys have tools, and let them make their sleds, little wagons, etc., and when they grow up, they are acquainted with the use of tools and can build a carriage, a house, or anything else" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, ed. John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1941], p. 210).

Teach the joy of honest labor

Third, children need to be taught the joy of honest labor and experience the satisfaction which results from seeing a job well done. They do not need everything the neighbor's children across the street are receiving.

Of course, we want them to develop their talents, but do they need to enroll in every athletic camp or every cultural development course which comes along?

I am shocked as I become aware that in so many homes, many of the children do not know how to make a bed, care for their clothing, squeeze a tube of toothpaste to conserve, turn off the lights, set a proper table, mow a lawn, or care for a vegetable garden. These simple acts of cleanliness, order, and conservation will bless their lives every day that they live and prepare them to become self-sufficient when they reach an age when they must

be out on their own. Teach them the basic knowledge that the earth is the Lord's. He has a marvelous system of replenishment and renewal so long as we care for, conserve, and waste not.

Brigham Young again counseled:

"Mothers, will you be missionaries? We will appoint you a mission to teach your children their duty, and instead of ruffles and fine dresses to adorn the body, teach them that which will adorn their minds. Let what you have to clothe them with be neat and clean and nice. Teach them cleanness and purity of body and the principles of salvation, and they will delight to come to these meetings" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, pp. 210-11).

Dress modestly

President Kimball delivered a great talk many years ago at Brigham Young University entitled "A Style of Our Own." He encouraged us not to be among those who would follow worldly, immodest styles, but to have the courage to dress in a way which will send a message that our standards are different. Our dress will reflect the way we intend to live, founded on principles of the gospel of our Lord and Savior. It is impossible to expect a child who has been taught to love to dress in the immodest style trends of the day, to then change overnight to an entirely different wardrobe when they enter a Church university or a missionary training center, or when they are married in the temple, or even when they dress for the Sabbath day. Modest, proper styles must be taught almost from birth.

I know a little girl who is the last child in a large family in which the other children are all boys. I guess the shock of being a girl in this big family of boys has made her keenly aware of the fact that she is different from the other children. Her mother has wisely taught her that the boys wear trousers and that she wears dresses. Now you cannot get her to wear anything else but a modest dress. I am certain she will have no problem adjusting to Church dress standards anytime in her life because there will be no need for change.

This is something she has been taught from the very beginning of her life. How easy it will be for her to accept the proper dress standard as she moves from child to youth to adult.

Now, before I receive letters from upset women telling me that I said they should not wear slacks, save your postage. I did not say that, although I don't think they are appropriate for the Sabbath day. What I am saying is that we have established a dress standard which requires a modest, wholesome style. And the best way to ensure that this standard will be comfortable and acceptable when it is required to be worn is to see that it is taught and practiced throughout a child's life. The way we dress is usually a good indicator of how we will act.

Prepare children

Missions, Church universities, seminaries, and institutes do a tremendous job in establishing gospel standards in the lives of all those who will partake of these grand opportunities. However, their contribution is so much more enhanced if the students or the missionaries come prepared to receive and serve, rather than come to be reformed. Again from the counsel of Brigham Young:

"Let us live so that the spirit of our religion will live within us, then we have peace, joy, happiness and contentment, which makes such pleasant fathers, pleasant mothers, pleasant children, pleasant households, neighbors, communities and cities. That is worth living for, and I do think that the Latter-day Saints ought to strive for this" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p. 204).

May the Lord bless us with the desire to instill in the lives of our children a standard that will always be acceptable to the gospel of our Lord and Savior. I give you my witness that this is his work in which we are engaged, and I pray that we will be earnestly involved in bringing about an understanding in the hearts and souls of our children. This is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to

us. It will now be our privilege to hear from Elder Richard G. Scott, who was sustained yesterday as a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Richard G. Scott

A resolve to know and do God's will

It is understandable that when one has received a call and been conveyed a trust that will completely change his life forever, feelings would be sensitive and emotions very near the surface.

As I have struggled to begin to understand this sacred assignment and all that it implies, I have spent much time pouring out the feelings of my heart to our beloved Father in Heaven. I have pled that he would guide me and strengthen me that I may serve him and his beloved Son as well as I am able.

There has distilled within my mind and heart a resolve that I have covenanted with the Lord to obey. It is to live to be worthy to know the will of the Lord and to live to have, with his help, the capacity and courage to carry out that will—and to desire nothing else.

I make that same commitment with each of you today.

Now, may my prayers be answered that I may help you who are struggling with a personal challenge or striving to overcome a debilitating habit or appetite, or are anguishing over a loved one who has gone astray.

I wish to share with you some of my most treasured friends, that as they have helped me, they may help you now and throughout your life.

Know, live, and share Book of Mormon truths

First, some background. During the dedication of the Mexico City Temple, I had one of those singular experiences that readjusts the course of a life. It occurred during the eighth dedicatory session, where many of the men and women leaders of Mexico and Central America were

present. When unexpectedly asked to speak, I attempted to convey the strong impressions that poured into my heart. I spoke of those beyond the veil who, in fulfillment of prophecy, had served, suffered, and given greatly to form the foundation which permitted the opening of a new era of the work.

I expressed a feeling to plead in behalf of former prophets who had prepared and protected the sacred records of the Book of Mormon. I sensed that they were saddened as they see us walk from place to place with an unopened Book of Mormon under our arm or see it kept in homes where it gathers dust and is not read, pondered, nor its contents applied.

The Book of Mormon was prepared by divine assignment for the blessing and enlightenment of all those who receive it.

As I spoke, I realized in my heart that all the efforts that I had expended for six years in trying to help those beloved leaders overcome the effects of false traditions and learn to apply the teachings of the Lord would have been better directed had I strongly encouraged them to ponder and apply the teachings of the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon contains messages that were divinely placed there to show how to correct the influence of false tradition and how to receive a fullness of life. It teaches how to resolve the problems and challenges that we face today that were foreseen by the Lord. In that book he has provided the way to correct the serious errors of life, but this guidance is of no value if it remains locked in a closed book.

I witnessed that it is not sufficient that we should treasure the Book of Mormon, nor that we testify that it is of God. We must know its truths, incorporate them into our lives, and share them with others. I felt an overwhelming love

for the people and an urgent desire that all would comprehend the value of the Book of Mormon.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Ezra Taft Benson, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve, invited me to join him in a private room in the temple. He asked me to be seated, drew his chair close to mine, looked penetratingly into my eyes, and with an earnestness that I will never forget, witnessed of his profound conviction that every member of the Church must learn to use the Book of Mormon as the Lord intended.

As he spoke I knew that the Lord had inspired him to have those feelings. I had a witness borne to my heart that he was speaking the will of the Lord.

The influence of these two friends, President Benson and the Book of Mormon, has comforted and sustained me in times of intense need. I would share them with you in your hour of need.

President Benson: a true friend

Now President Benson is the prophet—a worthy, righteous son of Father in Heaven, who, by consistent, proper use of agency throughout his life, has acquired virtue and nobility of character that have qualified him to be the mouthpiece of the Lord to all of his children on earth.

As he enters his ninetieth year, it is difficult for him to fulfill his desire to travel throughout the world so that each of us can personally greet him. Yet as we read or listen to his inspired messages and seek to apply them, we will feel the warmth and companionship of a true friend who knows how to help us.

The Book of Mormon: a precious friend

I offer you the Book of Mormon, a precious friend provided by a loving Savior. Within its pages is truth that brings comfort, guidance, peace, and yes, the companionship of other true friends. Between its covers you will find the friendship and worthy example of Nephi, Jacob, Enos, Benjamin, Alma, Ammon, Helaman, Mormon, Moroni, and so many

others. They will rekindle courage and mark the path to faith and obedience. They will help you overcome the bitterness and anguish of transgression.

Jesus Christ: the perfect friend

More important, all of them, without exception, will lift your vision to the perfect friend—our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus the Christ.

I love President Benson. I love the Book of Mormon, the Bible, and the other holy scriptures. But I adore this friend.

I cannot comprehend his power, his majesty, his perfections. But I do understand something of his love, his compassion, his mercy.

There is no burden he cannot lift.

There is no heart he cannot purify and fill with joy.

There is no life he cannot cleanse and restore when one is obedient to his teachings.

Let my other friends guide you to him, but find him yourself through humble, sincere prayer, obedience, and faith.

It is written:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:16–17).

The Book of Mormon records these comforting words of the Savior:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit who come unto me, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"... Blessed are all they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

"... Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

"... Blessed are all they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost.

"... Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

"... Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (3 Nephi 12:3–8).

God will answer your prayers

When Jesus prayed to his father in humility, faith, and obedience for others, his Father answered. When he prayed for strength and comfort in his hour of greatest need and took upon himself the sins of the world and gave his atoning sacrifice, that upon repentance we could enjoy the miracle of forgiveness, his Father answered.

He is your Father; pray to him. If your life is in disarray and you feel uncomfortable and unworthy to pray because you are not clean, don't worry. He already knows about all of that. He is waiting for you to kneel in humility and take the first few steps. Pray for strength. Pray for others to be led to support you

and guide you and lift you. Pray that the love of the Savior will pour into your heart. Pray that the miracle of the Atonement will bring forgiveness because you are willing to change. I know that those prayers will be answered, for God loves you. His Son gave his life for you. I know they will help you. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Elder Scott, for that touching and moving expression. We welcome you most warmly into the new relationship which you will enjoy.

We shall now hear from Sister Michaelene P. Grassli, General President of the Primary Association.

President Michaelene P. Grassli

Spiritual preparation brings peace

Thank you, President Hinckley. Elder Scott, you have touched our hearts, and with our hearts we sustain you.

Seven-year-old Jamie loved her mother dearly. The family had known for nearly a year that their wife and mother was dying of cancer. The father and seven children fasted and prayed; they pled with the Lord to heal her. Everything possible was done for their mother, yet at the end of three painfully difficult months, she passed from this life.

In the first hours following her death, the father brought the grieving family together. After prayer, the children went to their own rooms to prepare for bed. Jamie, who had spent many hours with her mother and was devoted to her, knelt at her own bedside. "Heavenly Father," she prayed through her tears, "we thank thee for the great mom you gave us. We thank thee for helping us try to make her well. Help us to be good so we can live with her again." Without a hint of bitterness, this little seven-year-old girl continued for several minutes in a sweet attitude of peaceful prayer, reflect-

ing her understanding and acceptance of her mother's death.

Jamie was a child at peace. How did she come to that peace? She had been prepared by parents with spiritual understanding. Such preparation brings peace.

Bestow a legacy of peace

I have chosen to speak about our children—precious children of our Heavenly Father throughout the earth. I pray that my message will be received and understood, for these are among the most valiant spirits to come into the world. We can do no less than to bestow on them a legacy of peace.

Our Heavenly Father has promised peace to his children. "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children" (3 Nephi 22:13). Peace in the Lord can give them freedom from self-doubt, freedom from fear, freedom from the confinement of their environment, freedom from enslaving habits. His peace can free them to unfold from the tender buds they are to the mature and fruitful adults they can be.

Just as the fragile bud contains all of the essential elements to develop into a lovely plant or flower, so does each child come to us with the potential for individual self-fulfillment of his eternal destiny. In both instances, in order that what is inside can be fully developed, it must be nurtured from the outside. In nature, plants require light, water, air, and nutrients to thrive. The human spirit thrives on love, knowledge of its origin, and teachings of a spiritual nature. It is important that we provide a favorable environment for spiritual growth and the peace that will accompany it. This peace I speak of will result in quiet assurances even in the midst of worldly pressures and turmoil.

Brothers and sisters, the children need our help. They need us to prepare them. They need us to help them obtain the peace of the Lord. Today is neither too early nor too late to prepare the children, and anyone can do it. A young, new family just beginning; an established family with children of several ages; a family with one parent; grandparents, aunts, uncles, neighbors; and kind, understanding church leaders and teachers—all of us can teach children of the Lord.

Set a proper example

We begin by teaching what we are. The children need us; they need to see in us what they can become. They need to see us keeping the commandments. *We* must come unto the Lord and seek for the peace of the gospel in *our own* lives. "Learn of me," the Lord said, "and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me" (D&C 19:23). When we are at peace, then our children can be at peace.

A wise bishop made this observation: "I have seen families where parents are at home with the gospel, where gospel principles are a matter-of-fact, everyday way of life, where parents treat their children with courtesy and respect with the full understanding that they are children of God. In these homes, the children seem to be at peace because their parents have given them a clear message. They know they are children of God. They feel

their worth and have focus to their lives, knowing that eternity is their goal."

To some, a family like the ones described by that bishop may seem impossible to attain. No family is perfect—all families are made up of human beings with mortal weaknesses, who sometimes go astray. But family members, including parents, can begin where they are and learn and grow together.

Meet, pray, and read as a family

Now, we have been promised that family home evening, family prayer, and reading the scriptures together can strengthen and give direction to each member of a family and can knit the family together. If you haven't been having family home evening or family prayer, you may feel awkward about beginning. That's all right. Do it anyway. Gather the family together, tell them that although you haven't been doing so, you want to begin.

Now, I must warn you that Satan will attempt to thwart your efforts because family strength is a threat to his work. So persevere, even though it takes some effort and planning to overcome attitudes and obstacles.

When the family gathers for evening prayer, it is a good time for sharing the day's experiences, reading the scriptures, and sharing testimonies. Children especially need to hear the testimonies of their parents. One family repeats one article of faith every evening for a week, or memorizes a scripture, or recites books in the Book of Mormon. Another family focuses on one child or a parent each day with each member telling something good about that person. It takes just a few minutes. Children of all ages need to hear positive observations about themselves—especially from their parents.

Teach the stories of Jesus

Immerse the children in the stories of Jesus so that they can know him and can imagine what it might have been like to have lived when he was on earth. Tell them how he took the children on his knee

and blessed them and prayed for them. Tell them how the people knew he was the Son of God.

When I was a child I loved to hear about the Savior's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Many people heard Jesus was coming to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. They knew he was the Son of God. They went out to meet him. Imagine what it must have been like to be a child in that happy crowd. The scripture says it was "a very great multitude" (Matthew 21:8). They were probably waiting along the narrow streets of Jerusalem becoming more and more excited as they strained to see if he was coming yet. Then as he came into view, riding on a donkey, can't you just hear a great cheer going up? They spread their clothes and tree branches on the ground for the donkey to walk on, like they did for kings, and they waved palm leaves in the air. They cried "Hosanna to the Son of David: . . . Hosanna in the highest" (Matthew 21:9). Oh, wouldn't you love to have been there?

Yes, tell them about the Savior so they'll trust him, so they'll develop a desire to be like him, and want to be with him again. Yes, our homes can provide peace for the children. Blessings be on you parents.

And blessings be on you devoted church leaders who hold the welfare and spiritual growth of children in high priority—priesthood and Primary leaders who minister to the children. At Primary, children are taught of the Lord. A wise stake Primary president in Australia has as her goal that when the children come to Primary, they will feel the Spirit of the Lord. Those will be children at peace.

The Book of Mormon brings peace

President Benson, I'm proud to say that Primary children have this year read and discussed the Book of Mormon. Nine-year-old Matt in Wisconsin spoke in the children's sacrament meeting presentation in his ward recently about something he had learned that brought him peace. He said:

"When my father told our family that we would be moving from Denver to Wisconsin, my mother reminded us of Lehi's family. Like them, I was leaving the only home I had known, all my friends, my school, and my ward. Luckily we got to bring all our possessions with us, though they were in storage for three months, and we missed having a house and our 'precious things.'

"My mother reminded us of how Nephi accepted this challenge—willingly—knowing that the Lord would 'prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them.'

"I have learned that I can do without things, but not without my family. My brothers and sisters and I have tried to be more like Nephi than his complaining brothers. I am grateful for the things that the Book of Mormon teaches us."

Yes, when children are taught of the Lord, we bestow on them a gift, a legacy of peace, that can lead them to eternal life. We must not fail them.

May all our children have the blessing to be taught of the Lord that they might be, indeed, children at peace, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "All That Dwell below the Skies" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Does anyone doubt that the Primary is in good hands? Thank you, Sister Grassli, for your statement concerning peace in the lives of children.

The choir has sung "All That Dwell below the Skies." The choir and congregation will now join together in singing "The Spirit of God." Following that, Elder Wm. Grant Bangerter, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will speak to us.

The choir and congregation sang "The Spirit of God."

Elder Wm. Grant Bangerter

Coming near the end of the conference, I feel advance approval for my remarks, since much of what I had planned to say has already been used by previous speakers.

Although we die, life is eternal

The great preoccupation of humanity is with dying. The general tendency, of course, is to try to avoid it. From time immemorial, the dream has been to extend life indefinitely. There have been potions and elixirs which would supposedly protect a person from death. Legends of the fountain of youth have led men to the ends of the earth.

Things are not so different today. From wrinkle creams to vitamins to exercise programs; from preoccupation with cholesterol, climate control, or health resorts to innovations in clothing and food preparations and supplements—all promise an extension of our years.

The medical profession is dedicated to saving human life, as are the countless laws, regulations, and customs of our society.

It is true that many of these life-saving efforts have a beneficial effect on the quality of life. The end result, however, is that we die anyway. From Adam to Abraham, from Peter and Paul to Henry VIII, George Washington and the rest—all have departed with their generations, and so will we.

Where did they go, this countless flowering of humanity?

Is there a purpose in such a temporary existence? Some say there is not. The great question of Job haunts us all: "If a man die, shall he live again?" (Job 14:14). Of course he will! The answer is found in the doctrine of eternal life. It is the gospel of Jesus Christ, the good news, the glad tidings.

Even those who don't think they will live again or who don't want to live again will nevertheless arise from the grave and live again. There is nothing they can do to stop it, since life is eternal.

A dear friend told of the passing away of his atheistic father. As he bid good-bye to his family who had gathered around, he expressed no hope of any future, saying, "No, this is the end."

Then, as the last moment came, he suddenly opened his eyes and said distinctly, "Mother, how good to see you! Sister, you look lovely. How beautiful it all is!" Then he died. What a surprise it must have been for him! I hope he was happy about it.

Eternal happiness comes through Christ

Now, in view of the almost universal concern over the quality of *mortal* life, and since some people seem to be happier than others, we might ask the question about *eternal* life: "How can I be sure to have a happy experience there?" And remember, eternity is a long, long time. Well, you can listen to those who know about it. Atheists don't know about it. Careless, worldly, materialistic people don't know about it or, at best, they are unconcerned.

Who does know? Well, God knows. He is the Eternal Father. And Christ knows. He controls the plan which can bring the quality of happiness. And his prophets know. And so do those who listen to the prophets and understand the scriptures. Even in the Church the doctrine of eternal life is not always well understood or appreciated. If it were, many members would do more about it. After all, the quality of that eternal existence is in our own hands. Lehi said in the Book of Mormon:

"Wherefore, how great the importance to make these things known unto the inhabitants of the earth, that they may know that there is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah" (2 Nephi 2:8).

For the Savior said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: *no man* cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6; italics added).

Deaf ears and hearts

The night the angel Moroni appeared to Joseph Smith "he said there was a book deposited, written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent, and the source from whence they sprang. He also said that the fulness of the everlasting Gospel was contained in it, as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants" (Joseph Smith—History 1:34).

You would think that everyone would want to know what the Savior said to the inhabitants on the American continent. The truth is, however, that many don't. They don't want to hear revelations, and they don't want the gospel to be restored.

I had an interesting experience years ago as we were returning from South America on a ship. Three ministers were on board, and soon each one came to me and asked if there might be an opportunity to talk together to learn what the Mormons believed. One was a Methodist, one a Presbyterian, and one a Disciple of Christ.

We arranged a visit together and spent a pleasant hour, they asking questions and I giving answers. Our visit was warm, friendly, and congenial. After about the first ten minutes, they began to look at each other and say: "Isn't it interesting—he has an answer for every question." And they repeated this comment over and over.

A day or two later the Methodist brother stopped to talk with me, saying, "I have been thinking of what you told us the other day. I think you know too much. I wonder if God wants us to know everything." I could tell that he was offended at my knowledge of the revelations.

Other people are simply not interested, having been carried away by selfish interests and material possessions.

Elder ElRay Christiansen told of a wealthy man in Denmark who was converted to the gospel and had migrated to Utah. His commitment caused the loss of much of his fortune, but, after settling here, he again had the ability to amass riches and, in the process, lost his faith and testimony. As his brethren tried to

counsel him about his eternal purpose, he would not listen. Finally one of them said to him, "Lars, it is not good to think only of money. You cannot take it with you, you know."

Lars answered, "Vat is that you say?" and he was told again, "I say you cannot take it with you."

Lars responded, "Vell, den, I vill not go."

Elder Christiansen's report was that he had gone anyway. And we will go as well.

Joseph Smith tells us that "happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 255).

There are several fundamentals which those who seek to enjoy quality in their eternal existence would want to consider.

Know and follow Jesus Christ

We begin by knowing of Jesus Christ and determining to follow him. Peter said:

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. . . .

"And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: . . . three thousand souls" (Acts 2:38, 40–41).

Press forward and serve

Then, we "press forward with a steadfastness in Christ . . . and endure to the end, [and] thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life" (2 Nephi 31:20). We are to take upon us His name and always remember Him and keep His commandments (see Moroni 4, 5; D&C 20:77–79). That seems to be keeping our repentance up to date.

Now comes the call to serve. We serve God and our fellowmen. The parable

of the Good Samaritan came in answer to the lawyer's question: "What shall I do to obtain eternal life? . . . Thou shalt love the Lord thy God . . . and thy neighbour as thyself" (Luke 10:25, 27).

In the portrayal of the Judgment Day in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, we are called to serve those who are

- an hungry,
- thirsty,
- a stranger,
- naked,
- sick,
- or in prison (see vs. 35–36).

Evidently those who do not undertake this service will not qualify. As the Lord says:

"Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matthew 25:45–46).

Importance of the priesthood

To receive the blessings that accompany this service we are given the priesthood and its power. It has been called "the Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God" (D&C 107:3). "And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, . . . no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live" (D&C 84:21–22).

And furthermore, "Wo unto all those who come not unto this priesthood" (D&C 84:42).

Temple ordinances and covenants

Now, the way of God leads us to the temple. In the past eight years the number of temples in the Church has increased from seventeen to forty-one, with six more in the process of preparation. These sacred edifices fulfill an eternal purpose.

Just as the ancient Israelites looked to the temple for their salvation, even so will those who are in earnest find in the temple the pathway to the presence of the Father and the Son. There they receive holy ordinances as they covenant to keep the commandments.

The doctrine of salvation teaches us that we do not step into the vestibule of the gospel merely by confessing Christ or by being baptized. If we take it seriously, we will reach for all the blessings. Remember, Laman and Lemuel turned their back on the tree of life. They joined the world and lost the promise.

Perform temple service

Finally, understanding the doctrine of salvation makes it clear that the plan of God is to redeem all his children on the basis of their repentance—even those who died without a knowledge of the truth.

And so, once again, we come to the temple and, according to the promise of Malachi, we provide the ordinances by proxy for those who did not have the privilege of knowing the gospel on earth. We know that the teaching of the gospel and the opportunity to repent and be worthy of baptism is provided for those who are now in the world of spirits.

The privilege of returning to the temple helps us to obtain the spirit of the work performed there. We perform this service especially for our ancestors. Moroni also said to Joseph Smith, quoting the words of Malachi, "I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet" (Joseph Smith—History 1:38). The hearts of us, the living children, will turn to our fathers—those ancestors who have died—and will provide them with the ordinances without which their redemption would not be possible.

Immortality or the resurrection will happen to us all. It is an unearned benefit made possible through the grace or free gift of Christ. Eternal life in happiness and glory in association with those we love will be the reward only of those who exercise faith in Jesus Christ through obedience to his commandments.

I have known of Jesus Christ since before I can remember. I was taught to pray to God in his name since infancy. I don't believe there has been a single day of my life when I have not openly sought

for his blessings, his spirit, and his protection. I want his type of eternal life. It has come to mean everything to me. I know that the gospel is true, since I have heard the voice of God through his Spirit confirm and witness it to me. In the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Wm. Grant Bangerter, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

Elder David B. Haight of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our next speaker.

Elder David B. Haight

The Spirit of God

As we all stood a few moments ago and joined in singing, "The Spirit of God like a fire is burning" (*Hymns* [1985], no. 2), I could visualize that beautiful little temple in Kirtland, Ohio, built by valiant Saints during their poverty and relentless persecution but sustained by their abundant faith in God. In my mind's eye I could see the temple filled with devout Saints awaiting the moment of dedication, and many gathered outside hoping to hear the inspired prayer of their prophet, for they knew "the authority of God was upon him" (Matthias Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff: History of His Life and Labors* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1964], p. 68). And then that moment of joy that must have filled their hearts as they joined in singing a new hymn, "The Spirit of God like a Fire Is Burning," which was hastily scribbled on the back of an envelope by Brother Phelps, so as not to lose the spirit of heaven that he felt.

We, as did they, have sung today:

The visions and blessings of old are
returning,

And angels are coming to visit the
earth. . . .

The knowledge and power of God are
expanding;

The veil o'er the earth is beginning to
burst.

We'll sing and we'll shout with the
armies of heaven,

Hosanna, hosanna to God and the
Lamb!

(*Hymns* [1985], no. 2)

The Spirit filled their hearts then, as we have been blessed this afternoon.

Comparisons with pioneer heritage

How grateful we are for our pioneer heritage and early history as the gospel has been revealed and restored in purity and truth. Only 150 years separate the sacrifices and struggles of Kirtland from today's anxieties and personal challenges.

"I suppose every Mormon [man and] woman [have] measured [themselves] at one time or another against [their pioneer ancestors]," wrote Laurel Thatcher Ulrich. "Am I as stalwart? As self-reliant? As devoted to the gospel? As willing to sacrifice?" Could I leave my wife and children without food or means to support themselves while I responded to a call to serve a mission abroad, or take these same innocent ones, dependent solely upon me for their survival, into hostile territory to set up housekeeping and provide a livelihood for them? Or, were I a woman, "could I crush my best china to add glitter to a temple, bid loving farewell to a missionary husband as I lay in a wagon bed with fever and chills, leave all that I possessed and walk across the plains to an arid wilderness?" ("A Pioneer Is Not a Woman Who Makes Her Own Soap," *Ensign*, June 1978, p. 54).

Some may feel that their lives of relative ease and convenience lack the vigor and fortitude of those who survived the pioneer days, that they can never measure up to the toil, struggles, and challenges our pioneer ancestors faced and emerge the victor.

Yet, "Our challenges are just as important as those of the past. Our testing is as crucial; our contributions may be as great. . . .

" . . . An essential quality of the first pioneers was optimism, an ability to see new possibilities in a strange and unsettling environment. To beautify the desert, they needed faith in God, but they also needed faith in themselves and in their ability to help shape the world. The need for that faith has not diminished. . . .

" . . . A pioneer is not [necessarily] a woman who makes her own soap" or a man who grubs sagebrush from the land (*Ensign*, June 1978, pp. 54-55). Pioneers are those who take up their burdens and walk toward the future. With vision and with courage they make the desert blossom and they press on toward new frontiers.

"Go ye into all the world"

The Lord emphasized one such frontier when he declared, "purify your hearts before me; and then go ye into all the world, and preach my gospel unto every creature who has not received it" (D&C 112:28).

An inspired prophet, David O. McKay, expanded this fundamental principle in 1959 while at the Hyde Park chapel in London, England. He proclaimed these four simple words: "Every member a missionary."

In 1974 another prophet, Spencer W. Kimball, broadened our vision as he encouraged us to serve more diligently by lengthening our stride.

Our living prophet today, President Ezra Taft Benson, declared: "Missionary work—the preaching of the gospel—has been the major activity of the true Church of Christ whenever the gospel has been upon the earth" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1970, p. 127; or *Improvement Era*, June 1970, p. 95).

Our sacred, personal duty

Each of us has a sacred duty to personally assist the accomplishment of the mission of the Church in proclaiming the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, perfecting the Saints to receive the ordinances of

the gospel, and the teaching of the doctrines of salvation and the temple.

"All three are part of one work—to assist our Father in Heaven and His Son . . . in Their grand and glorious mission 'to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man' (Moses 1:39)" (Spencer W. Kimball, in Conference Report, Apr. 1981, p. 3; or *Ensign*, May 1981, p. 5).

In the spirit of these prophetic watchwords, there is a continuing but growing need to extend the frontiers of new member conversion, fellowshiping, and activating the lost or the offended or ignored far beyond our previous levels.

The need for missionary couples

In the past few months remarkable indications of interest in the Church have emerged in nations that have had restrictions. We sense providential opportunities beginning to appear where mature couples who have the experience, sensitivity, and insight into old-world customs and respect for tradition may be able to begin planting seeds of the restored gospel in good soil to flower and bloom.

For some time we have been encouraging qualified mature couples to serve full-time missions. President Kimball and President Benson have stated that the goal of physically able couples and some women who may now be single is to serve a mission. The need remains. Indeed, the requests from mission presidents for more—many more—couples are becoming more pressing.

While firefighters were battling roaring forest fires in the West recently, two grandmothers—Altha Clark, from Texas, and Hazel Stills, from Florida—kindled countless spiritual flames by creating new "interest of people who [had] investigated the Church for years, but who needed a firm, loving nudge to accept baptism," and with caring fellowshiping, reached out to the less-active members.

"They don't take no for an answer," the second counselor in the Altamont Utah Stake presidency said, "and they [teach] without offending anyone." They combine the Spirit with hard work.

A rancher said the two sisters "have kept us so busy I don't have time to get my hay in. We . . . keep them [booked with people] to teach. In this stake, the full-time missionaries teach very few discussions without a stake missionary or fellowshipper going along."

The two grandmothers travel about one hundred miles a day on unpaved country roads, and the dust and ruts don't slow them down.

While visiting a member's home, these remarkable missionaries asked if she knew someone they could teach.

The sister replied, "my husband."

Directed by the Spirit how to approach this husband, they taught him the gospel and rejoiced with his wife at his baptism.

Fourteen families have now become active and will go to the temple this year because of the efforts of these full-time grandmother missionaries coordinating with the stake missionaries and properly following a plan in fellowshipping new members. A change has come about in the whole stake that has influenced the less active as well as nonmembers. (See *Church News*, 10 Sept. 1988, pp. 8, 9, 12.)

When people are taught and then fellowshipped with warmth and continued interest until they are integrated into the mainstream of the Church, they are "remembered and nourished by the good word of God, to keep them in the right way" (Moroni 6:4). By working together, stake missionaries and full-time missionaries are able to keep new converts involved as they gain gospel knowledge and a needed testimony. They are also bringing back into fellowship the less active.

In stressing the need for mature men and women to be about the work of the Lord, President Benson related the experience of his two widowed sisters. One was the mother of ten children and the other the mother of eight. After they had sent their children on missions, they approached their bishops about going on missions themselves. President Benson relates that he remembers well the day a number of years ago when they called him and said, "Guess what? We have received our missionary calls." President

Benson said, "What missionary calls?" And they replied, "We're both going to your old field of labor in England" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1984, p. 66; or *Ensign*, May 1984, p. 45).

They did go to England and served as companions for twenty months.

Thousands of devoted mature couples and single sisters have touched the lives of many for good. We are grateful for their dedication and courage and often-times great personal sacrifice. One couple indicated on their missionary form that they would be ready to go just as soon as they were able to find a home for their eighty hives of bees.

There is an unusual opportunity for qualified individuals to do their utmost to fulfill the Lord's injunction to preach his gospel to the ends of the earth and not only to *teach* but *convert*, as Alma said, that as many "as believed in their preaching, and were converted unto the Lord, never did fall away" (Alma 23:6).

The need in Latin America

The Lord's work is blessed to have more than 1,100 couples now serving throughout the world. In Latin America—including Mexico, all of Central America, and South America—there are now 51 missionary couples. From the Rio Grande river in Texas to the southern tip of South America there are 58 missions, and only 51 couples—less than one couple per mission, or, stated another way, one missionary couple to work with more people than live in the entire state of Utah.

For one couple to be assigned to every stake in this vast Latin America area, 278 couples would be needed. Even better would be to have a couple assigned to help two or three wards. To do this we would need another 1,900 couples—just in Latin America. Imagine, 51 now serving where we could effectively use nearly 2,000!

Leaders from our overseas areas indicate similar needs in most parts of the world. One of our pressing challenges is to keep the local leadership trained and ahead of the new members.

It has been estimated that within the United States and Canada there are at least 100,000 Church couples between the ages of fifty-five and seventy. Some researchers estimate that 6,000 couples could serve missions now. The addition of many of these qualified, experienced couples would bring untold blessings not only to precious people waiting to hear the heavenly invitation to "come unto the Christ" and feel of his goodness, but those who answer the call will be blessed also.

The need for gentle encouragement

The Lord instructed in the Doctrine and Covenants, "If ye have desires to serve God ye are called to the work" (D&C 4:3). Many of you undoubtedly have the desire but may need some gentle encouragement to complete your decision.

I challenged eight couples in my former home stake in California to set aside their comfortable lives of planned retirement and to bless the Scottish Saints with their gospel knowledge and service.

Arthur Thulin had been a bishop, his wife Myra a skilled teacher. Arthur anxiously wrote that he was nearing seventy and might die in Scotland. I replied, "Arthur, you are going to die somewhere; Scotland is a great place to die—but when you die, die with your boots on, not in a comfortable rocking chair." The Thulins came, blessed the lives of many, and Arthur lived several years after their two-year mission.

Many couples have concerns about leaving their homes and families, or they picture themselves being sent to a developing area of the world or struggling to learn a new language or trying to keep up with the younger missionaries' tracting and work pace.

These concerns are generally unwarranted. Missionary couples are not expected to work at the same pace or follow the schedule of the younger missionaries. Mission presidents are sensitive to each couple's special need and establish activity and assignments that make the best use of abilities, experience, and talents.

With very few exceptions, couples are not assigned to developing areas or to

missions requiring a new language without some experience or a willingness to accept such an assignment.

Emma Lou and Joseph Slagowski could not speak Spanish but were called to the Peru Lima South Mission. They participated in a trial pre-mission language project for mature couples that assists them in learning language skills in their own homes prior to entering the Missionary Training Center for their training. Sister Slagowski writes:

"When our stake president asked us [if] we would be willing to take part in [a new] pre-mission . . . language learning project, we were concerned, but accepted," she said. "I am now sixty-six years old, and school was [never easy] for me.

"Without the pre-Missionary Training Center Spanish program, it would have been impossible. . . . [but] before [we arrived at] the Missionary Training Center I could read Spanish quite well, . . . could pray, and bear testimony of God the Father and Jesus Christ. To me it's a miracle.

"We plan on another Spanish-speaking mission after this one if health permits."

Blessings to those who serve

There are few things that invite the blessings of the Lord into our own lives and into the lives of our family members more powerfully than does missionary service—the broadening of knowledge of gospel principles, a deeper spirituality, a strengthening of one's faith in the Lord, a greater understanding of the workings of the Spirit, and the expanding of one's talents, as promised by the Savior in the parable of the talents.

Though you may have had many years of married life together, you will never work more closely and more intensely with one another in a more rewarding effort. Your love will deepen, and you will discover wonderful new dimensions of your companion's inner soul. You will have a greater feeling of unity, and a heavenly relationship will be strengthened.

"A witness unto all nations"

If you as a couple meet the personal qualifications, don't wait to be asked. Go to your bishop. He is probably waiting for you. Humbly and prayerfully talk about your plans and desires, even though you may not be quite ready. He will counsel and guide you.

Study the scriptures daily, take care of your health, and start your own mission savings account, just as you have encouraged your children and grandchildren to do. You might even begin learning a second language.

Eternal justice requires that all of God's children have adequate opportunity to hear and receive the gospel message. Christ taught, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14).

Now, my dear friends, as we near the closing moments of this historic conference and receive counsel from our prophet, I add my witness of his divine calling to lead this church as God's holy prophet upon the earth today. We sustain and love him dearly. Our philosophy of life is in accord with divine purposes and, if followed in our actions, will lead us unerringly to eternal life. I leave you this witness and my blessings as you move forward to fulfill your commitments and to live the Lord's commandments. This work is true, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder David B. Haight has just spoken to us.

Before hearing President Benson's concluding remarks, we express our sincere appreciation to the Mormon Youth Chorus, the Salt Lake Tongan Choir, and the great Tabernacle Choir and to their conductors and organists for the beautiful and inspiring music during this conference.

We thank our city officials for the cooperation given. We thank the Relief Society and the Church Health Unit nurses who have been on hand to render service, and the ushers and interpreters.

We express our appreciation to local and national press representatives for the coverage of the conference and to the owners and operators of the many radio and television stations and cable systems who have given time and made facilities available to carry sessions of this conference in many countries. We should thank also the physicians who quietly and effectively are on hand here.

We shall now be pleased to listen to President Ezra Taft Benson, our beloved prophet, after which the Tabernacle Choir will sing "Testimony." The benediction will then be offered by Elder Devere Harris of the First Quorum of the Seventy. This great conference will then stand adjourned for six months.

President Ezra Taft Benson

My beloved brethren and sisters, my heart is full and my feelings tender as we conclude this great general conference of the Church.

We have been richly blessed as we have listened to the counsel and testimonies of those who have spoken to us.

As a special witness of Jesus Christ, and as His humble servant, it is now my obligation and privilege, as the Spirit dictates, to bear pure testimony and witness

to that which I know to be true (see Alma 4:19). This I will do.

Premortal existence

I testify that we are the spirit offspring of a loving God, our Heavenly Father (see Acts 17:29, 1 Nephi 17:36). He has a great plan of salvation whereby His children might be perfected as He is and might have a fulness of joy as He enjoys (see 1 Nephi 10:18; 2 Nephi 2:25; Alma 24:14, 34:9; 3 Nephi 12:48, 28:10).

I testify that in our premortal state our Elder Brother in the spirit, even Jesus Christ, became our foreordained Savior in the Father's plan of salvation (see Mosiah 4:6-7, Alma 34:9). He is the captain of our salvation and the only means through whom we can return to our Father in Heaven to gain that fulness of joy (see Hebrews 2:10, Mosiah 3:17, Alma 38:9).

I testify that Lucifer was also in the council of heaven. He sought to destroy the agency of man. He rebelled (see Moses 4:3). There was a war in heaven, and a third of the hosts were cast to the earth and denied a body (see Revelation 12:7-9, D&C 29:36-37). Lucifer is the enemy of all righteousness and seeks the misery of all mankind (see 2 Nephi 2:18, 27; Mosiah 4:14).

I testify that all those who come into mortality accepted our Father's plan (see Abraham 3:26). Having proved faithful in their first estate in heaven, they are now subject to the test of mortality in this second estate. That test entails doing all things whatsoever the Lord requires (see Abraham 3:25). Those who prove faithful in this second estate will have glory added upon their heads forever and ever (see Abraham 3:26).

God guides us

I testify that God reveals His will to all men through the Light of Christ (see Moroni 7:16, D&C 93:2, John 1:9). They receive the additional light of the gift of the Holy Ghost through the laying on of hands by God's authorized servants following baptism (see Articles of Faith 1:4, D&C 20:41).

I testify that throughout the ages God has spoken to His children through His prophets (see Amos 3:7, Helaman 8:13-20). Only when His children rejected the prophets were the prophets taken out of their midst, and then tragedy followed (see 1 Nephi 3:17-18, 7:14; Helaman 13:24-27).

Jesus' birth, ministry, and sacrifice

I testify that Christ was born into mortality with Mary as His mother and

our Heavenly Father as His father (see 1 Nephi 11:18-21, Mosiah 3:8). He lived a sinless life, providing us a perfect example (see D&C 45:4; 3 Nephi 12:48, 27:27). He worked out the great Atonement, which, through His grace, provides for every soul a resurrection and, for the faithful, the means to become exalted in the celestial kingdom (see Articles of Faith 1:3; 2 Nephi 25:23; Mosiah 4:6-7; Alma 11:41-45; D&C 76:50-70, 132:19).

I testify that during His mortal ministry Christ established His church on the earth (see Matthew 16:18, Acts 2:47, 3 Nephi 21:22). He called and ordained men to be Apostles and prophets with authority so that what they bound on earth would be bound in heaven (see Matthew 16:19, John 15:16). They received revelation, which provided new scripture (see 2 Peter 1:20-21, D&C 68:4).

The Apostasy and Restoration

I testify that a world so wicked that it killed the Son of God soon began killing the Apostles and prophets and so plunged itself into a spiritual dark age (see 2 Thessalonians 2:2-7). Scripture ended, apostasy spread, and the church that Christ established during His earthly ministry ceased to exist (see 2 Nephi 27:4-5).

I testify that God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to Joseph Smith in the spring of 1820, thus bringing to an end the long night of apostasy (see Joseph Smith—History 1:15-20). To Joseph Smith appeared other beings, including John the Baptist and Peter, James, and John, who ordained him with authority to act in the name of God (see Joseph Smith—History 1:68-72, D&C 27:5-13). The church and kingdom of God was restored in these latter days, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, with all the gifts, rights, powers, doctrines, officers, and blessings of the former-day Church (see D&C 65, 115:3-4).

The Book of Mormon

I testify that through the Book of Mormon God has provided for our day

tangible evidence that Jesus is the Christ and that Joseph Smith is His prophet (see D&C 20:8–33). This other testament of Jesus Christ is a scriptural account of the early inhabitants of America. It was translated by Joseph Smith through the gift and power of God (see D&C 135:3). Those who will read and ponder the Book of Mormon and ask our Eternal Father in the name of Christ if it is true may know for themselves of its truthfulness through the power of the Holy Ghost, provided they will ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ (see Moroni 10:3–5).

America

I testify that America is a choice land (see 2 Nephi 1:5). God raised up the founding fathers of the United States of America and established the inspired Constitution (see D&C 101:77–80). This was the required prologue for the restoration of the gospel (see 3 Nephi 21:4). America will be a blessed land unto the righteous forever and is the base from which God will continue to direct the worldwide latter-day operations of His kingdom (see 2 Nephi 1:7).

Living prophets

I testify that there have been, and there are now, and there will be legal successors to the Prophet Joseph Smith who hold the keys of the kingdom of God on earth, even the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (see D&C 21:1–7, 107:91–92, 112:15). He receives revelation from God to direct His kingdom. Associated with him are others who are prophets, seers, and revelators, even those who make up the presiding quorums of the Church, namely the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (see D&C 112:30).

Confrontations between good and evil

I testify that wickedness is rapidly expanding in every segment of our society (see D&C 1:14–16, 84:49–53). It is more highly organized, more cleverly

disguised, and more powerfully promoted than ever before. Secret combinations lust for power, gain, and glory are flourishing. A secret combination that seeks to overthrow the freedom of all lands, nations, and countries is increasing its evil influence and control over America and the entire world (see Ether 8:18–25).

I testify that the church and kingdom of God is increasing in strength. Its numbers are growing, as is the faithfulness of its faithful members. It has never been better organized or equipped to perform its divine mission.

I testify that as the forces of evil increase under Lucifer's leadership and as the forces of good increase under the leadership of Jesus Christ, there will be growing battles between the two until the final confrontation. As the issues become clearer and more obvious, all mankind will eventually be required to align themselves either for the kingdom of God or for the kingdom of the devil. As these conflicts rage, either secretly or openly, the righteous will be tested. God's wrath will soon shake the nations of the earth and will be poured out on the wicked without measure (see Joseph Smith—History 1:45, D&C 1:9). But God will provide strength for the righteous and the means of escape; and eventually and finally truth will triumph (see 1 Nephi 22:15–23).

It is time

I testify that it is time for every man to set in order his own house both temporally and spiritually. It is time for the unbeliever to learn for himself that this work is true, that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the kingdom which Daniel prophesied God would set up in the latter days, never to be destroyed, a stone that would eventually fill the whole earth and stand forever (see Daniel 2:34–45, D&C 65:2). It is time for us, as members of the Church, to walk in all the ways of the Lord, to use our influence to make popular that which is sound and to make unpopular that which is unsound. We have the scriptures, the

prophets, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Now we need eyes that will see, ears that will hear, and hearts that will hearken to God's direction.

The cleansing and Judgment

I testify that not many years hence the earth will be cleansed (see D&C 76:41). Jesus the Christ will come again, this time in power and great glory to vanquish His foes and to rule and reign on the earth (see D&C 43:26–33). In due time all men will gain a resurrection and then will face the Master in a final judgment (see 2 Nephi 9:15, 41). God will give rewards to each according to the deeds done in the flesh (see Alma 5:15).

I testify to you that a fulness of joy can only come through the atonement of Jesus Christ and by obedience to all of the laws and ordinances of the gospel, which are found only in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (see Articles of Faith 1:3).

To all these things I humbly testify and bear my solemn witness that they are true, and I do so in the name of Him who is the head of this church, even Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Testimony."

Elder Devere Harris offered the benediction.

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE MUSIC

The Mormon Youth Chorus, conducted by Robert C. Bowden, furnished the choral numbers for the Saturday morning session of the conference.

Music for the Saturday afternoon session was provided by the Salt Lake Tongan Choir, conducted by Sione T. Kinikini.

At the general priesthood session, music was furnished by a combined men's choir from the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth Chorus. Jerold Ottley

and Robert C. Bowden conducted the combined choir.

The Tabernacle Choir, conducted by Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger, provided music for the Sunday morning and Sunday afternoon sessions.

Throughout the conference sessions, prelude, postlude, and interlude music and accompaniments on the Tabernacle organ were played by Robert Cundick, John Longhurst, and Clay Christiansen, Tabernacle organists.

F. Michael Watson

Clerk of the conference

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THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-NINTH ANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The 159th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 1, 1989, at 10:00 A.M.

The general sessions of the conference were held at 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday, April 1 and 2, 1989. The general priesthood session was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, April 1, 1989, at 6:00 P.M.

President Ezra Taft Benson presided at all sessions of the conference. President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday morning, general priesthood, and Sunday afternoon sessions. President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning sessions.

Television and radio stations carried portions or all of some of the conference sessions to large audiences throughout the world. In addition, the general sessions and priesthood session were carried via satellite transmission to more than one thousand stake centers. The general priesthood session was also carried by closed-circuit transmission to approximately nine hundred locations in many countries.

General Authorities present

The following General Authorities of the Church attended one or more of the general sessions:

The First Presidency: Ezra Taft Benson, Gordon B. Hinckley, and Thomas S. Monson

The Council of the Twelve: Howard W. Hunter, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, Joseph B. Wirthlin, and Richard G. Scott

The Presidency of the Seventy: Dean L. Larsen, Marion D. Hanks, Wm. Grant

Bangerter, Robert L. Backman, Hugh W. Pinnock, James M. Paramore, and J. Richard Clarke

The First Quorum of the Seventy: Angel Abrea, Carlos E. Asay, William R. Bradford, Ted E. Brewerton, Victor L. Brown, Theodore M. Burton, F. Enzo Busche, John K. Carmack, Joe J. Christensen, Gene R. Cook, Derek A. Cuthbert, Jacob de Jager, Royden G. Derrick, Charles Didier, Loren C. Dunn, Paul H. Dunn, Vaughn J. Featherstone, J. Thomas Fyans, Jack H. Goasling, John H. Groberg, W. Eugene Hansen, Jeffrey R. Holland, F. Burton Howard, Marlin K. Jensen, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Adney Y. Komatsu, George P. Lee, H. Burke Peterson, Rex D. Pinegar, Ronald E. Poelman, Hartman Rector, Jr., Rex C. Reeve, Sr., Hans B. Ringger, Robert L. Simpson, and Robert E. Wells

The Second Quorum of the Seventy: Carlos H. Amado, H. Verlan Andersen, Benjamin B. Banks, Monte J. Brough, Waldo P. Call, Helio da Rocha Camargo, George I. Cannon, Albert Choules, Jr., Spencer J. Condie, Lloyd P. George, Francis M. Gibbons, F. Melvin Hammond, Robert B. Harbertson, Devere Harris, George R. Hill III, Malcolm S. Jeppsen, F. Arthur Kay, L. Lionel Kendrick, John R. Lasater, Richard P. Lindsay, Merlin R. Lybbert, Douglas J. Martin, Gerald E. Melchin, Alexander B. Morrison, Spencer H. Osborn, L. Aldin Porter, Glen L. Rudd, Gardner H. Russell, Robert E. Sackley, Douglas H. Smith, John Sonnenberg, Philip T. Sonntag, Lynn A. Sorensen, Russell C. Taylor, and Horacio A. Tenorio¹

The Presiding Bishopric: Robert D. Hales, Henry B. Eyring, and Glenn L. Pace

General Authorities Emeritus: Joseph Anderson, Bernard P. Brockbank, Sterling W. Sill, and Eldred G. Smith¹

¹Elders Keith W. Wilcox and John H. Vandenberg were excused due to ill health.

Other authorities present

Other Church authorities in attendance included Regional Representatives, presidents of stakes and their counselors, presidents of temples, bishops of wards,

and presidencies and members of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood quorums.

Many general, stake, and ward auxiliary officers also attended.

FIRST DAY MORNING SESSION

The first general session of the 159th Annual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 1, 1989, at 10:00 A.M. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The music for the opening session was provided by the Mormon Youth Chorus, with Robert C. Bowden conducting and Clay Christiansen at the organ.

Before the meeting, the Mormon Youth Chorus sang "Father, Thy Children to Thee Now Raise" without announcement.

President Monson then made the following remarks:

President Thomas S. Monson

Good morning. We welcome you this morning from the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City in this, the first general session of the 159th annual conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Our beloved prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked me to conduct this session.

We welcome all who are participating in the large audience assembled in the Tabernacle and the overflow gathering in the nearby Assembly Hall, where Elders Robert L. Simpson and George R. Hill III are seated on the stand. We welcome also the many others who are receiving these conference proceedings by satellite transmission, radio, cable, and television.

We acknowledge the General Authorities of the Church, all of whom are in attendance except Elders David B. Haight, Keith W. Wilcox, and John H. Vandenberg, who are excused. We also acknowledge the Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary general presidencies, who are seated on the stand. And we extend a special welcome to government, education, and civic leaders who are present here with us this morning.

The Mormon Youth Chorus, under the direction of Brother Robert C. Bowden, with Brother Clay Christiansen at the organ, opened this session by singing "Father, Thy Children to Thee Now Raise." The chorus will now favor us with "Shout the Glad Tidings."

Following the singing, the invocation will be offered by Elder Carlos E. Asay, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The chorus sang "Shout the Glad Tidings."

Elder Carlos E. Asay offered the invocation.

President Monson

At the request of President Ezra Taft Benson, our beloved prophet and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, will read to us a message prepared by President Benson.

President Ezra Taft Benson

(Read by President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency)

President Hinckley

We are grateful for President Benson's presence. He honors us. We love him, as we know he loves us. I shall now read the message which he has prepared for the opening of this conference.

President Benson

My beloved brethren and sisters, I rejoice to be with you in another glorious general conference of the Church. How grateful I am for the love, prayers, and service of the devoted members of the Church throughout the world.

May I commend you faithful Saints who are striving to flood the earth and your lives with the Book of Mormon. Not only must we move forward in a monumental manner more copies of the Book of Mormon, but we must move boldly forward into our own lives and throughout the earth more of its marvelous messages.

This sacred volume was written for us—for our day. Its scriptures are to be likened unto ourselves (see 1 Nephi 19:23).

The sin of pride

The Doctrine and Covenants tells us that the Book of Mormon is the "record of a fallen people" (D&C 20:9). Why did they fall? This is one of the major messages of the Book of Mormon. Mormon gives the answer in the closing chapters of the book in these words: "Behold, the pride of this nation, or the people of the Nephites, hath proven their destruction" (Moroni 8:27). And then, lest we miss that momentous Book of Mormon message from that fallen people, the Lord warns us in the Doctrine and Covenants, "Beware of pride, lest ye become as the Nephites of old" (D&C 38:39).

I earnestly seek an interest in your faith and prayers as I strive to bring forth light on this Book of Mormon message—the sin of pride. This message has been weighing heavily on my soul for some time. I know the Lord wants this message delivered now.

"Beware of pride"

In the premortal council, it was pride that felled Lucifer, "a son of the morning" (2 Nephi 24:12–15; see also D&C 76:25–27; Moses 4:3). At the end of this world, when God cleanses the earth by fire, the proud will be burned as stubble and the meek shall inherit the earth (see 3 Nephi 12:5, 25:1; D&C 29:9; Joseph Smith—History 1:37; Malachi 4:1).

Three times in the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord uses the phrase "beware of pride," including a warning to the second elder of the Church, Oliver Cowdery, and to Emma Smith, the wife of the Prophet (D&C 23:1; see also D&C 25:14; 38:39).

God's definition of pride

Pride is a very misunderstood sin, and many are sinning in ignorance (see Mosiah 3:11; 3 Nephi 6:18). In the scriptures there is no such thing as righteous pride—it is always considered a sin. Therefore, no matter how the world uses the term, we must understand how God uses the term so we can understand the language of holy writ and profit thereby (see 2 Nephi 4:15; Mosiah 1:3–7; Alma 5:61).

Most of us think of pride as self-centeredness, conceit, boastfulness, arrogance, or haughtiness. All of these are elements of the sin, but the heart, or core, is still missing.

The central feature of pride is enmity—enmity toward God and enmity toward our fellowmen. *Enmity* means "hatred toward, hostility to, or a state of opposition." It is the power by which Satan wishes to reign over us.

Enmity toward God

Pride is essentially competitive in nature. We pit our will against God's. When we direct our pride toward God, it is in the spirit of "my will and not thine be done." As Paul said, they "seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's" (Philippians 2:21).

Our will in competition to God's will allows desires, appetites, and passions to go unbridled (see Alma 38:12; 3 Nephi 12:30).

The proud cannot accept the authority of God giving direction to their lives (see Helaman 12:6). They pit their perceptions of truth against God's great knowledge, their abilities versus God's priesthood power, their accomplishments against His mighty works.

Our enmity toward God takes on many labels, such as rebellion, hard-heartedness, stiff-neckedness, unrepentant, puffed up, easily offended, and sign seekers. The proud wish God would agree with them. They aren't interested in changing their opinions to agree with God's.

Enmity toward fellowmen

Another major portion of this very prevalent sin of pride is enmity toward our fellowmen. We are tempted daily to elevate ourselves above others and diminish them (see Helaman 6:17; D&C 58:41).

The proud make every man their adversary by pitting their intellects, opinions, works, wealth, talents, or any other worldly measuring device against others. In the words of C. S. Lewis: "Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man. . . . It is the comparison that makes you proud: the pleasure of being above the rest. Once the element of competition has gone, pride has gone" (*Mere Christianity* [New York: Macmillan, 1952], pp. 109–10).

In the pre-earthly council, Lucifer placed his proposal in competition with the Father's plan as advocated by Jesus Christ (see Moses 4:1–3). He wished to be honored above all others (see 2 Nephi

24:13). In short, his prideful desire was to dethrone God (see D&C 29:36; 76:28).

Consequences of pride

The scriptures abound with evidences of the severe consequences of the sin of pride to individuals, groups, cities, and nations. "Pride goeth before destruction" (Proverbs 16:18). It destroyed the Nephite nation and the city of Sodom (see Moroni 8:27; Ezekiel 16:49–50).

It was through pride that Christ was crucified. The Pharisees were wroth because Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, which was a threat to their position, and so they plotted His death (see John 11:53).

Saul became an enemy to David through pride. He was jealous because the crowds of Israelite women were singing that "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands" (1 Samuel 18:7; see also 18:6, 8).

The proud stand more in fear of men's judgment than of God's judgment (see D&C 3:6–7; 30:1–2; 60:2). "What will men think of me?" weighs heavier than "What will God think of me?"

King Noah was about to free the prophet Abinadi, but an appeal to his pride by his wicked priests sent Abinadi to the flames (see Mosiah 17:11–12). Herod sorrowed at the request of his wife to behead John the Baptist. But his prideful desire to look good to "them which sat with him at meat" caused him to kill John (Matthew 14:9; see also Mark 6:26).

Fear of men's judgment manifests itself in competition for men's approval. The proud love "the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:42–43). Our motives for the things we do are where the sin is manifest. Jesus said He did "always those things" that pleased God (John 8:29). Would we not do well to have the pleasing of God as our motive rather than to try to elevate ourselves above our brother and outdo another?

Some prideful people are not so concerned as to whether their wages meet their needs as they are that their wages are more than someone else's. Their reward is being a cut above the rest. This is the enmity of pride.

When pride has a hold on our hearts, we lose our independence of the world and deliver our freedoms to the bondage of men's judgment. The world shouts louder than the whisperings of the Holy Ghost. The reasoning of men overrides the revelations of God, and the proud let go of the iron rod (see 1 Nephi 8:19–28; 11:25; 15:23–24).

Manifestations of pride

Pride is a sin that can readily be seen in others but is rarely admitted in ourselves. Most of us consider pride to be a sin of those on the top, such as the rich and the learned, looking down at the rest of us (see 2 Nephi 9:42). There is, however, a far more common ailment among us—and that is pride from the bottom looking up. It is manifest in so many ways, such as faultfinding, gossiping, backbiting, murmuring, living beyond our means, envying, coveting, withholding gratitude and praise that might lift another, and being unforgiving and jealous.

Disobedience is essentially a prideful power struggle against someone in authority over us. It can be a parent, a priesthood leader, a teacher, or ultimately God. A proud person hates the fact that someone is above him. He thinks this lowers his position.

Selfishness is one of the more common faces of pride. "How everything affects me" is the center of all that matters—self-conceit, self-pity, worldly self-fulfillment, self-gratification, and self-seeking.

Pride results in secret combinations which are built up to get power, gain, and glory of the world (see Helaman 7:5; Ether 8:9, 16, 22–23; Moses 5:31). This fruit of the sin of pride, namely secret combinations, brought down both the Jaredite and the Nephite civilizations and has been and will yet be the cause of the fall of many nations (see Ether 8:18–25).

Another face of pride is contention. Arguments, fights, unrighteous domination, generation gaps, divorces, spouse abuse, riots, and disturbances all fall into this category of pride.

Contention in our families drives the Spirit of the Lord away. It also drives many of our family members away. Contention ranges from a hostile spoken word to worldwide conflicts. The scriptures tell us that "only by pride cometh contention" (Proverbs 13:10; see also Proverbs 28:25).

The scriptures testify that the proud are easily offended and hold grudges (see 1 Nephi 16:1–3). They withhold forgiveness to keep another in their debt and to justify their injured feelings.

The proud do not receive counsel or correction easily (see Proverbs 15:10; Amos 5:10). Defensiveness is used by them to justify and rationalize their frailties and failures (see Matthew 3:9; John 6:30–59).

The proud depend upon the world to tell them whether they have value or not. Their self-esteem is determined by where they are judged to be on the ladders of worldly success. They feel worthwhile as individuals if the numbers beneath them in achievement, talent, beauty, or intellect are large enough. Pride is ugly. It says, "If you succeed, I am a failure."

If we love God, do His will, and fear His judgment more than men's, we will have self-esteem.

"A damning sin"

Pride is a damning sin in the true sense of that word. It limits or stops progression (see Alma 12:10–11). The proud are not easily taught (see 1 Nephi 15:3, 7–11). They won't change their minds to accept truths, because to do so implies they have been wrong.

Pride adversely affects all our relationships—our relationship with God and His servants, between husband and wife, parent and child, employer and employee, teacher and student, and all mankind. Our degree of pride determines how we treat our God and our brothers and sisters. Christ wants to lift us to where He is. Do we desire to do the same for others?

Pride fades our feelings of sonship to God and brotherhood to man. It separates and divides us by "ranks," according to our "riches" and our "chances for learn-

ing" (3 Nephi 6:12). Unity is impossible for a proud people, and unless we are one we are not the Lord's (see Mosiah 18:21; D&C 38:27; 105:2-4; Moses 7:18).

The cost of pride

Think of what pride has cost us in the past and what it is now costing us in our own lives, our families, and the Church.

Think of the repentance that could take place with lives changed, marriages preserved, and homes strengthened, if pride did not keep us from confessing our sins and forsaking them (see D&C 58:43).

Think of the many who are less-active members of the Church because they were offended and their pride will not allow them to forgive or fully sup at the Lord's table.

Think of the tens of thousands of additional young men and couples who could be on missions except for the pride that keeps them from yielding their hearts unto God (see Alma 10:6; Helaman 3:34-35).

Think how temple work would increase if the time spent in this godly service were more important than the many prideful pursuits that compete for our time.

The universal sin

Pride affects all of us at various times and in various degrees. Now you can see why the building in Lehi's dream that represents the pride of the world was large and spacious and great was the multitude that did enter into it (see 1 Nephi 8:26, 33; 11:35-36).

Pride is the universal sin, the great vice. Yes, pride *is* the universal sin, the great vice.

Humility: the antidote for pride

The antidote for pride is humility — meekness, submissiveness (see Alma 7:23). It is the broken heart and contrite spirit (see 3 Nephi 9:20; 12:19; D&C

20:37; 59:8; Psalm 34:18; Isaiah 57:15; 66:2). As Rudyard Kipling put it so well:

The tumult and the shouting dies;
The captains and the kings depart.
Still stands thine ancient sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget, lest we forget.*
("God of Our Fathers, Known of
Old," *Hymns*, no. 80)

Choose to be humble

God will have a humble people. Either we can choose to be humble or we can be compelled to be humble. Alma said, "Blessed are they who humble themselves without being compelled to be humble" (Alma 32:16).

Let us choose to be humble.

We can choose to humble ourselves by conquering enmity toward our brothers and sisters, esteeming them as ourselves, and lifting them as high or higher than we are (see D&C 38:24; 81:5; 84:106).

We can choose to humble ourselves by receiving counsel and chastisement (see Jacob 4:10; Helaman 15:3; D&C 63:55; 101:4-5; 108:1; 124:61, 84; 136:31; Proverbs 9:8).

We can choose to humble ourselves by forgiving those who have offended us (see 3 Nephi 13:11, 14; D&C 64:10).

We can choose to humble ourselves by rendering selfless service (see Mosiah 2:16-17).

We can choose to humble ourselves by going on missions and preaching the word that can humble others (see Alma 4:19; 31:5; 48:20).

We can choose to humble ourselves by getting to the temple more frequently.

We can choose to humble ourselves by confessing and forsaking our sins and being born of God (see D&C 58:43; Mosiah 27:25-26; Alma 5:7-14, 49).

We can choose to humble ourselves by loving God, submitting our will to His, and putting Him first in our lives (see 3 Nephi 11:11; 13:33; Moroni 10:32).

Let us choose to be humble. We can do it. I know we can.

The great stumbling block to Zion

My dear brethren and sisters, we must prepare to redeem Zion. It was essentially the sin of pride that kept us from establishing Zion in the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith. It was the same sin of pride that brought consecration to an end among the Nephites (see 4 Nephi 1:24–25).

Pride is the great stumbling block to Zion. I repeat: Pride *is* the great stumbling block to Zion.

We must cleanse the inner vessel by conquering pride (see Alma 6:2–4; Matthew 23:25–26).

We must yield “to the enticings of the Holy Spirit,” put off the prideful “natural man,” become “a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord,” and become “as a child, submissive, meek,

humble” (Mosiah 3:19; see also Alma 13:28).

That we may do so and go on to fulfill our divine destiny is my fervent prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The chorus sang “How Gentle God’s Commands” without announcement.

President Monson

It has been our privilege to listen to President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, read the opening address of President Ezra Taft Benson, followed by the Mormon Youth Chorus singing “How Gentle God’s Commands.”

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now speak to us.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

My beloved brethren and sisters, we have been inspired by this outstanding and meaningful message of our prophet, seer, and revelator. In addition, this beautiful singing of our young people has been enjoyed by all of us.

Thrive in the heat of adversity

In a hot, dry, desert area of north-west Mexico, farmers plant seeds and grow varieties of corn and beans that are unusually hardy and drought resistant. These varieties survive and flourish in a harsh climate where other plants would wither and die. One of these plants is the white tepary bean. Its seed will sprout and the plant will grow even when very little rain falls. It sends its roots as deep as six feet into the rocky, sandy earth to find the moisture it needs. It can flower and fruit in the 115-degree (Fahrenheit) desert temperatures with only one yearly rainfall. Its foliage remains remarkably green, with little irrigation, even in the heat of mid-July. (See Gary Paul Nabhan, “Seeds of

Renewal,” *World Monitor*, Jan. 1989, pp. 17–20).

Perhaps members of the Church could emulate the example of these hardy, sturdy plants. We should send our roots deep into the soil of the gospel. We should grow, flourish, flower, and bear good fruit in abundance despite the evil, temptation, or criticism we might encounter. We should learn to thrive in the heat of adversity.

Our pioneer ancestors survived and grew stronger in the face of extreme trials and afflictions and made the desert blossom as a rose. My own great-grandfather suffered so much from asthma that he had to walk a mile or two behind the covered wagons crossing the plains to avoid the dust. However, he always arrived at his destination and did his share of the work.

Our challenges today are different from those of our ancestors. Many of them lived lives of poverty and hardship; some among us, however, are affluent and complacent. Wealth, abundance, and easy living do not help us develop the

ability to flourish when faced with the rigors and reversals of life. Rather than seeking ease, we must plant, cultivate, and nourish within ourselves the seeds that will enable us to withstand the winds and heat of temptation, sin, and evil and that will help us live successful, happy, and pure lives. Let us consider a few such seeds.

Plant and nurture seeds of faith

First, we should plant and nurture the seed of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer. We each should develop the faith of Nephi to do the things the Lord has commanded (see 1 Nephi 3:7), knowing that all commandments are given for our good. Nephi expressed his faith in these words: "If it so be that the children of men keep the commandments of God he doth nourish them, and strengthen them, and provide means whereby they can accomplish the thing which he has commanded them" (1 Nephi 17:3). When the Lord instructed him to build a ship, his brothers called him a fool to think he could do it. He told them: "If God had commanded me to do all things I could do them. If he should command me that I should say unto this water, be thou earth, it should be earth" (17:50).

Next, let us nurture the seed of faith which gives us the courage to follow the prophets. Today's prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, is the Lord's spokesman to mankind at this time. We need the wisdom and the courage to accept his inspired counsel with gratitude and conform our lives to it because "whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same" (D&C 1:38). The revelation given to President Benson's first predecessor, Joseph Smith, on the day the Church was organized applies to Church members today:

"The church . . . shalt give heed unto all his [the Prophet's] words and commandments which he shall give unto you as he receiveth them, . . .

"For his word shall ye receive, as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith" (D&C 21:4-5).

I am sure the Lord is pleased with the response of Church members to President Benson's emphasis on reading and sharing the Book of Mormon. In 1988, more than 3.5 million copies were purchased, by far the most in any year to date. Perhaps more important, tens of thousands of our members are reading that book more than ever before!

Sow the seed of charity

Next, we should sow within our hearts the seed of charity, the pure love of Christ. He is the perfect model of charity. His total life, particularly his atoning sacrifice, is a lesson in charity. His every act reflects absolute, unequivocal love for all mankind and for each one of us. His example teaches us that charity means subordinating personal interests willingly and gladly for the good of others. I believe our progress toward exaltation and eternal life depends upon how well we learn and live the principle of charity. Charity must become a fundamental state of mind and heart that guides us in all we do.

We urge you home teachers and visiting teachers to look after your families in a spirit of charity. Home teaching and visiting teaching are vehicles for saving souls when done the right way with the right intent.

Nourish the seed of harmony at home

Next, I believe we must constantly nourish the seeds of love, harmony, and unity in our homes and families. Fathers are to preside over their families in kindness, remembering that "no power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned" (D&C 121:41). Husbands and wives are to love each other with a pure love that transcends selfishness. In a single-parent family, the parent presides. Parents are to nurture their children and teach them the principles of right living. Regardless of the help other individuals or institutions may give, the Lord has placed this

responsibility ultimately with parents. Children are to honor their parents (see Exodus 20:12) by obeying them, living as they are taught, and fostering peace in the home.

Plant the seed of the work ethic

Parents should plant deeply the seed of the work ethic into the hearts and habits of their children. As society has shifted from an agrarian to an urban structure, the joy and necessity of diligent, hard work have been neglected. If our young people do not learn to work while in their homes, they likely will be compelled to learn later in a setting where the lesson may be painful.

The remarks of President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., given fifty-six years ago, are instructive today. He said: "It is the eternal, inescapable law that growth comes only from work and preparation, whether the growth be material, mental, or spiritual. Work has no substitute" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1933, p. 103). More recently, Elder Howard W. Hunter counseled: "The first recorded instruction given to Adam after the Fall dealt with the eternal principle of work. The Lord said: 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.' (Gen. 3:19.) Our Heavenly Father loves us so completely that he has given us a commandment to work. This is one of the keys to eternal life. He knows that we will learn more, grow more, achieve more, serve more, and benefit more from a life of industry than from a life of ease" (*Ensign*, Nov. 1975, p. 122).

Take charge of teaching children

Parents can plant seeds in the hearts and minds of their children only if they know where the children are and what they are doing. Parents should not leave the teaching of their children to chance. They should be in charge of their homes and families, remembering that "reproof give[s] wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame" (Proverbs 29:15). I have heard of parents who travel extensively for pleasure, leaving their teenage children without parental protec-

tion for extended periods. Unprotected teenagers can indulge in a "little" sin without realizing the possible consequences in sorrow and disappointment.

Do not rationalize sin

Too many of our young people have the idea that limited sin is not really wrong because it will be forgiven easily with no consequences. We see young people who are guilty of moral sins but are not overly concerned because they expect to repent quickly, thinking all is well. The idea that any sin is unimportant is false; it comes from the devil. "The Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance" (D&C 1:31). We should heed the counsel of Nephi when he wrote:

"Many . . . shall say: Eat, drink, and be merry; nevertheless, fear God—he will justify in committing a little sin; . . . there is no harm in this; . . . and if it so be that we are guilty, God will beat us with a few stripes, and at last we shall be saved in the kingdom of God. . . ."

"... And thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carelessly down to hell" (2 Nephi 28:8, 21).

We ask our young people who will be approaching marriage within a few years to think of their own unborn children. Think of what these spirits would ask you to do in your life if they could speak to you now.

Counsel about television

Parents must know what their children are watching on television and must protect them from its evil influence. They should set a proper example by watching only those programs that are uplifting and worthwhile and opposing those that are corrupt and degrading. Many people decry television shows that portray sin and evil as being normal and acceptable, and even preferable to righteous living. However, viewers set the standards for television broadcasting. The networks and stations broadcast the types of programs that most of the people want to see. Mr. Frank Stanton, CBS president emeritus,

told a Brigham Young University audience that network television standards will continue to decline because they are based on society's standards. He said, "Standards come from the audience . . . ; the audience determines the programming and program content." Further, he said, "I believe there will be more infractions with respect to [immorality] and violence and it will get a lot worse before it gets better because of the changing standards of our society" (*The Daily Universe*, 2 Feb. 1989, p. 1).

What a sad commentary on our society! Again we can learn a great principle from the Book of Mormon. When King Mosiah proposed that judges should rule instead of kings, he said:

"It is not common that the voice of the people desireth anything contrary to that which is right; . . .

"And if the time comes that the voice of the people doth choose iniquity, then is the time that the judgments of God will come upon you" (Mosiah 29:26-27).

That time of iniquity came about sixty years later and at several other times. In the book of Helaman we read that "they who chose evil were more numerous than they who chose good" (Helaman 5:2). If television viewing choices serve as a valid measure of our society, they who choose evil surely are more numerous than they who choose good.

Plant the seed of testimony

Finally, I suggest that we plant in our hearts the seed of testimony, a firm unwavering conviction of the truth and divinity of the gospel that we can share freely with power and persuasion. Humble, fervent testimonies borne as prompted by the Spirit can have far-reaching effects.

President Benson bore such a testimony in October 1959 when he visited the Central Baptist Church in Moscow, Russia, and was asked to speak. He described the event later as one of the most moving experiences of his life. The church was filled with about 1,500 people seeking to satisfy their spiritual hunger

and thirst even though government policy discouraged religion. He testified: "God lives, I know that He lives. He is our Father. Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the World, watches over this earth. . . . Be unafraid, keep His commandments, love one another, pray for peace and all will be well." In closing, he said: "I leave you my witness as a Church servant for many years that the truth will endure. Time is on the side of truth. God bless you and keep you all the days of your life." Those present were touched deeply. Many wept openly, including a cynical newsman and a young Russian interpreter. The congregation began singing "God Be with You Till We Meet Again." They waved their handkerchiefs in joyous gratitude and in farewell as he and those with him left the meeting. (In Ezra Taft Benson, *Cross Fire: The Eight Years with Eisenhower* [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1962], pp. 485-88).

President Benson's testimony made a deep and lasting impression on a minister of that church, Father Alexander. A few years later, this minister told a Finnish member of our church, Sister Irma Airtto, that of all the notable people who visited the Baptist church and signed the guest register, Ezra Taft Benson was the greatest. President Benson was visiting Russia as a high official in the United States government, but Father Alexander recognized him as a great spiritual leader. Father Alexander told Sister Airtto, "When you meet Mr. Benson, tell him . . . that we know he is a man of God and I pray for him." Sister Airtto never expected to meet President Benson in person to convey this message. However, when he visited Finland and created the Helsinki Finland Stake in October 1977, she was able to deliver the message, strengthening her testimony that the Lord guides our affairs.

Another example of the far-reaching effects of an inspired testimony is that of the prophet Abinadi. The testimony he bore as he called an apostate king, Noah, and his priests to repentance is one of the most significant doctrinal discourses in the Book of Mormon. The king and his priests, except one, rejected Abinadi's

teachings and had him put to death. That one was Alma. Abinadi may have felt that he failed as a missionary because he had only one convert, so far as the record shows. However, that one convert, Alma, and his descendants were spiritual leaders among the Nephites and Lamanites for about three hundred years. His son Alma became the first chief judge of the Nephite people and the high priest over the Church. Alma's other descendants who became prominent religious leaders include his grandson Helaman; great-grandson Helaman; great-great-grandson Nephi; and great-great-great-grandson Nephi, who was the chief disciple of the resurrected Jesus Christ. All of this resulted from Abinadi's lone convert. (See Mosiah 18 and Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976], p. 187).

Testimony

My brothers and sisters, I bear my testimony that we can plant in our hearts and minds the seeds I have mentioned, and others. If we will plant them and nurture them, we can be true, faithful, and

happy regardless of adversity and the buffeting of Satan.

I testify further that I know our Heavenly Father loves each of his children, that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior and Redeemer, that Joseph Smith is the Prophet of the Restoration, and that President Ezra Taft Benson is the prophet today. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The chorus sang "Joseph Smith's First Prayer" without announcement.

President Monson

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us. The choir then sang "Joseph Smith's First Prayer."

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "How Firm a Foundation," following which Elder Hugh W. Pinnock, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will address us.

The chorus and congregation sang "How Firm a Foundation."

Elder Hugh W. Pinnock

The age of blaming

Brethren and sisters, we are living in a strange time. It has been called the space age or computer age. However, it seems to be the age of blaming everyone and everything for any unfavorable condition. We blame acquaintances, parents, the Church, spouses, teachers, neighbors, the area where we dwell, or even the weather for our problems.

This is wrong. It is not God's way. It is not part of his great plan. Each of us must stand before our Redeemer *alone* and account for what we have done. We must assume responsibility for our actions. Jacob wrote, "Now, my beloved brethren, . . . according to the *responsibility* which I am under to God, to

magnify mine office with soberness, [I] declare unto you the word of God" (Jacob 2:2; italics added).

Of course, heartache and pain can be spilled upon us by dishonest, manipulative, or unkind people. Accidents happen that can inflict terrible pain and sometimes lifetime disability. But to judge, blame, and not forgive always intensifies the problem. It pushes healing further into the future. It is not responsible.

Taking responsibility for ourselves

Why should we demand or even want another to provide what we need if we can furnish it ourselves? Father Lehi taught, "Wherefore, the Lord God gave

unto man that he should act for himself" (2 Nephi 2:16).

However, too many look to the government, the Church, or some other institution to carry them. Why do we not resolve to take responsibility for our own actions and thoughts? "Choose ye this day, whom ye will serve" (Alma 30:8; see also Joshua 24:15).

It is entirely appropriate to depend upon others for some of what we need. There is no substitute for loving and supportive parents, priesthood and auxiliary leaders, skilled doctors, dedicated teachers, and expert auto mechanics. Turning to these people for help is not wrong. But what is wrong is expecting others to do what we can and should do for ourselves.

We become excited when those who have wandered return to full activity. We feel that we, perhaps, had something to do with it—and, hopefully, our love and encouragement did help. But it is the people who return who have taken responsibility for their salvation.

A missionary might say, "I brought fifteen people into the Church." No, fifteen of our brothers and sisters decided to come unto Christ and, by being baptized, assumed *responsibility* for their own spiritual progress. Our converts must be taught that fact. They will be stronger members because of it.

People who have taken responsibility

Let me share with you some examples of taking responsibility.

Many of us have a special hero. His name is Chuck Anderson. Brother Anderson died fourteen months ago. He had an extremely rare disease, epidermalosis belosa. When he was young, whenever his skin was touched it would hemorrhage. After a time the injury would scab over. Cotton would partially protect his hands, feet, and other areas of his body, but not well enough to avoid the pain and scabbing. His skin became a form of inflexible tissue. He could not touch his scalp, so combing his hair was very difficult. He lived to be twenty-six years old, but never during those 312 months did he have a day free of pain,

scabs, and bandages, or a day that he could run and play as others.

But *he* decided to be positive and as productive as he could be. He had a wonderful sense of humor. His example of courage and of being as self-sustaining as possible blessed everyone who knew him. Of course, his wonderful parents, friends, church leaders, and teachers did all they could, but Chucky Anderson determined he would be as self-reliant as possible.

He desperately wanted to serve a mission but could not in the typical sense. So what did he do? He served a mission by helping all who knew him to know that he was a Mormon boy and loved the Lord. He made the decision to forget himself and do all he could do to be courageous and helpful and to build others.

Another example: Just last spring a group of high school students sat in a seminary class looking at their watches, hoping the class would soon end. They were not paying attention to what was going on. They were laughing and teasing and passing notes.

President Benson's face appeared on the video they should have been watching. He was talking about the Book of Mormon. The noise continued. Suddenly, a young woman stood up, stepped to the front of the class, pushed the pause button, and said in a frightened voice, "He is our prophet. He talks with Heavenly Father. He is telling us about the Book of Mormon, and we should listen."

Suddenly, every eye was focused on the front of the room as that lovely young lady turned the television set back on and quietly returned to her seat.

As I spoke with the seminary teacher a week or two later, he said, "In all the years that I have taught, I have never seen a class more reverent, more focused upon the things that matter, as the day when that young lady went to the front of the class and said, 'You listen to our prophet.' " She did it on her own. She did not wait for another.

Several months ago, after boarding an airplane scheduled to fly to Phoenix, Arizona, the passengers found themselves retained on the ground because of foggy weather. While we were waiting, the door

of the airplane opened several times and others joined us, even though it was half an hour or more after the plane should have departed.

A young teenager took the vacant seat beside me. After a short time, he looked toward me and said, "Hey, mister, are you a Mormon?"

I said "Yes" and inquired why he asked.

He reported, "I joined the Church several months ago, but I don't know whether I believe it any more."

We talked about the gospel. I bore my testimony. We discussed many things relating to the Church and to life. Meanwhile, the plane had left Salt Lake and was winging its way south.

This fine young man who wanted to have his testimony reaffirmed and strengthened was willing to do something about it. Cody and I are pen pals now. When I think of him, I recall a wonderful young man, searching for truth, needing a little reassurance, and seeking it on his own. He took responsibility.

In every ward and branch throughout the world are those who ask, "Is it true?" or inquire, "How can I change my life for the better?" We must assist, but the task is theirs alone to walk the path that will strengthen testimonies and straighten lives.

Four steps of taking responsibility

I would like to talk to you about how this takes place. What are the steps? What must I do to have my testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ strengthened and my life modified for the better?

First, you must want to change with all your heart. You must take responsibility upon yourself to do whatever is necessary to be different.

Second, do as our prophet has directed and read the scriptures. Concentrate upon the words of the Master as reflected through the writings of Nephi, Moses, Paul, Luke, Joseph Smith, and other prophets. Often, when the days are dark and times are difficult, turning to the scriptures will provide a strength and confirmation that generally can come in no other way. To have a testimony and

personality become stronger, one must go it alone.

Third, live the commandments. We generally struggle with a weakening testimony and with a diminished knowledge of the truthfulness of Heavenly Father's plan when we do not live the way He has asked us to live. Another cannot repent for us. *This is a task we must do alone.*

Of course, everyone makes mistakes. But let me tell you about a lovely young lady who visited in my office. She was discouraged, almost depressed. She enjoyed her profession of teaching yet felt that her life was not going anywhere. To complicate the problem she was feeling, her testimony had waned, and she was lacking the spark that all who had known her acknowledged was part of her vibrant personality.

"I am going to ask you a question," I said, "but I do not want details. Are you living the commandments?"

She whispered, "No."

We talked about her going to her bishop. We also talked about testimony and about how when one lives the commandments, that individual is endowed with blessings of the Spirit that can come in no other way.

She left, seemingly as discouraged as she had entered my office. But in a while, perhaps a month later, my telephone rang. She reported that all was well.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Well, I went to my bishop. I am living the commandments now, and, yes, I know the gospel is true. I did it on my own," she reported.

"No one else could have done it for you," I replied.

Think of the days, weeks, even months and years wasted by people waiting for someone else to assume responsibility for their needs. It simply cannot be. God, in his heaven, will not do for us what we can and should do for ourselves.

Fourth, we all have the task to help others when they really need burdens lifted. This is the heart of Christian service. But remember, doing for others tasks they should be doing on their own leads to their detriment and atrophy.

These four steps will help us develop a oneness with the Savior. Do we fully realize that Jesus is to be the center of our lives? Only the Savior can be our Savior, and that relationship is always personal. We go to him alone. He accepts us that way only.

There is no other way.

Our Church magazines, lesson manuals, and videotapes will never supply everything that a person needs to solve a problem, prepare a lesson, or find a new direction in life. These resources will remain helpful, but all of them together will never be as complete or as powerful as the scriptures. And incidentally, let us not rely too heavily upon what others tell us the Lord is saying in the standard works. Let us find out by going directly to those sacred pages ourselves.

We love our church buildings where we worship on Sunday, play volleyball on Wednesday, and meet on other days as our assignments dictate. They are well designed and almost always beautifully maintained, but they do not substitute for our homes and never will. Even where chapels are not or cannot be found, places always will be available where good people can meet together, partake of the sacrament, and worship our Heavenly Father.

Personal initiative and inspiration

Evidence shows that less is often more and often better. Homemade lesson enrichment materials, parent-and-child-designed family home evening discussions and activities, and examples that conform to the scriptures, to the words of the Brethren, and to one's unique culture are often more beneficial than materials we might purchase.

Do not outlaw common sense or forget the inspiration you can receive to

provide examples for your family worship, Gospel Doctrine lesson, or other Church assignments.

How often a child will say, "No, let me do it," when a well-meaning adult provides a little too much assistance.

Remember when you made a whistle out of a willow branch, and it sounded better than a store-bought one?

How much is lost when we limit ourselves to a rented video, a television program, or some other form of packaged entertainment. We can miss the growth and enjoyment that come from playing catch with a child, walking with a neighbor, making a simple drawing, singing with a friend, or seeking pure truth from a well-worn copy of the Book of Mormon.

What is happening to us? Why do we rely upon others for our opinions, our directions, our activities, and even our vocabulary?

It is time to say, "Whoa, stop. I want to take personal responsibility for my actions." Now is the time to stop blaming others, the government, the Church, or our circumstances for what might disturb us.

It is time to take responsibility for ourselves.

To these things I testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, amen.

The chorus sang "Sing Praises" without announcement.

President Monson

Elder Hugh W. Pinnock, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has addressed us, after which the Mormon Youth Chorus favored us with "Sing Praises."

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our next speaker.

Elder L. Tom Perry

Great potential for declaring the gospel

From the book of 1 Peter we receive this counsel:

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15).

We live in the most exciting era in the history of mankind. The potential for declaring the gospel to the peoples of the world has never been greater. Throughout many lands we have established stakes of Zion. Newly constructed and well-cared-for buildings make worship service inviting to all who attend. Trained priesthood leaders are being taught how to minister to the people and build faith in the gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The Book of Mormon has been translated into many languages, making available this great doctrinal base of scripture to so many more of our Heavenly Father's children. It is opening the way for their understanding of the blessings attendant to living the Lord's law.

Technology has blessed mankind with the tools for teaching and communicating. Temples dot the maps of nations, making the saving ordinances available to millions more of our Heavenly Father's children. How exciting it is to live in this great day and be called to labor and bear testimony of the great work in which we are now engaged!

Every member a missionary

Yet we see so much more to be done. Most of the world's population still awaits the gospel message. Blessed with a strong foundation and a world prepared as never before to receive this message, this is surely the time to heed the words of our prophet, President Benson:

"We are commanded by God to take this gospel to all the world. That is the cause that must unite us today. Only the gospel will save the world from the calamity of its own self-destruction. Only the gospel will unite men of all races and

nationalities in peace. Only the gospel will bring joy, happiness, and salvation to the human family" (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], p. 167).

The work grows in direct proportion to the number of messengers we have proclaiming the glad tidings. Last year we had the largest number of full-time missionaries serving in many lands in the history of the Church. Last year we also had the highest yield of convert baptisms. This is gratifying, but oh, so far from our potential. Still, many of our young men, young women, and couples have not heeded the prophet's call to serve.

Even though we have heard the prophets declare for decades "Every member a missionary," we still have only a small percentage of the membership of the Church actively engaged in assisting stake and full-time missionaries in our responsibilities to declare the gospel to the world.

Reasons for reluctance

Why have we been so reluctant to catch the spirit of this work? I believe there are two basic reasons.

First, we are afraid we will offend. But we have not been able to find justification for this fear. In fact, experience confirms that the member-missionary process usually enhances relationships between ourselves and our friends.

Second, I believe we have not prepared ourselves to be good messengers. The general membership of the Church seems to be in the same position I found myself in as a full-time missionary many years ago. At that time we were given little training to fulfill our responsibilities. As I arrived in the mission field, I was assigned a companion who was also new in the field. He was anxious to be about the work that he had been assigned and called to perform. He encouraged me almost immediately to go door-to-door tracting with him. I will never forget our first door approach. As we started toward the house, I turned to him and asked,

"What do I do?" His reply astonished me. He said, "I don't know. I have never tried this before." How different is the training of our full-time missionaries we have serving today! We need to be more on a par with them if we are to fulfill our responsibilities as member missionaries.

Experience tells us there are three messages which have the greatest appeal to those who might be interested in the gospel. Perhaps they offer us a starting point in our preparation to become better messengers.

Our message about the purpose of life

The first is the purpose of life. If we were only to have life here, and if death were an end to our existence, we would have little to be concerned about. But when we study the writings of holy prophets from the beginning, we soon discover that man is a dual being, possessing a body and a spirit. The main purpose of earth life is to allow our spirits, which existed before the world was, to be united with our bodies for a time of great opportunity in mortality. The association of the two together has given us the privilege of growing, developing, and maturing as only we can with spirit and body united. With our bodies, we pass through a certain amount of trial in what is termed a probationary state of our existence. This is a time of learning and testing to prove ourselves worthy of eternal opportunities. It is all part of a divine plan our Father has for His children.

Yes, we are all anxious to know the purpose of our creation and the opportunities and limitations resulting from our mortal probation. The answers to all these questions are found in the gospel of Jesus Christ. We should be prepared to declare this exciting message to those who are seeking truth.

Could I suggest that together as families you study the scriptures specifically to increase your understanding of the purpose of life? Perhaps you could check out from your ward library a video or a cassette entitled *Our Heavenly Father's Plan* and play it as part of one of your family home evenings. As family

members better comprehend where they came from, why they are here, and where they are going, they are better equipped to share this basic lesson of what life is all about with those who are earnestly seeking the answers.

Our message about eternal families

The second message to those who would like to know more about the gospel is the concept of an eternal family. In the very beginning the Lord taught Adam and Eve the importance of the family. The scriptures record, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24).

God's plan is to unite His eternal family together through a sacred union of husband and wife which can endure beyond the grave. Responsibilities are placed upon husbands and wives to bring their children into the world and teach them who they are and what part they will have in this divine plan of our Eternal Father.

Parents have the glorious opportunity of being the most powerful influence, above and beyond any other, on the new lives that will bless their homes. Look around you, and you will soon discover that the greatest joy in this life, and the most comforting hope for the eternities to come, is found in the uniting of eternal family units. Whether we are married or single, we are a part of a family which can be eternal.

We can also observe the pain inflicted on society when proper care and training are not exerted by righteous fathers and mothers in the home.

Once again, we encourage you as families to study the scriptures dealing with the eternal nature of the family, in order that you may be living examples of what joy can be brought into this world as the result of your devotion to this eternal principle. We have another video or a cassette, entitled *Together Forever*, which you may want to play in one of your family home evenings. It should also be available to you in your meetinghouse library.

Our message about the Lord

The third message is the testimony of our Lord and Savior. We declare to the world that Jesus is the Christ. We abhor the doctrine that He is a myth or a creation of conspiring men in the world. We denounce the idea that He was just a great teacher. We testify of the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth, that He is the Son of God, the Savior of the world. We declare that we have an added witness of this divine truth, as contained in the Book of Mormon.

Translation of the Book of Mormon

We should develop as one of our teaching skills the presentation of the truthfulness of this book as another reliable, sound witness of the mission of our Lord and Savior. We should know its history and its content. For example, let us consider the miracle of the translation of the Book of Mormon by the Prophet Joseph Smith, with Oliver Cowdery acting as his scribe.

After the 116 pages were lost when Martin Harris was allowed to take them home, the real translation began on April 7, 1829, two days after Oliver Cowdery arrived in Harmony, Pennsylvania, to serve as the Prophet's scribe. By May 15, five weeks later, they had reached the account of the Savior's ministry to the Nephites as contained in 3 Nephi, chapter 11.

By June 11 they had translated the last plates of Mormon, and it was on June 11 that the Prophet applied for a copyright. By June 30 the book was finished—from start to finish, no more than eighty-five days in translation time. However, with all that went on during these eighty-five days, it is apparent there were only sixty to sixty-five days in which the actual translation could have occurred.

Remember that during that time the Prophet moved from Harmony to Fayette, made several trips for supplies, received and recorded thirteen sections of the Doctrine and Covenants, received the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods, converted and baptized several people, and on and

on. They had no time to consult libraries to study the content. There was no time to revise or refine, no time to cross-reference dates or intervals and details. Instead, the text came, as Oliver recorded, day after day, uninterrupted, as the words fell from the Prophet's mouth.

This was an astonishing achievement! The text came through final copy, one time, dictated and left as it stood with only minor, stylistic editing to this day. It is no simple book dashed off from the top of a young man's head, but reflects the best of a thousand years of colonization and inspiration. Added to the rapidity with which the translation occurred is the astonishing fact that the Prophet Joseph Smith was doing it in an unknown language in which he had no training and for which there was no one to whom he could go for guidance and help.

Prepare to teach the Book of Mormon

The Book of Mormon purports to be a sacred history of the inhabitants of ancient America. It teaches of a faith in Christ and strongly urges obedience to His will; it also testifies of the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth, that He is the Son of God, the Savior of the world. Surely, we as members of the Church can prepare to be capable teachers of this second witness, the Book of Mormon, and what it gives to the world of the mission of our Lord and Savior.

Approach those who need the gospel

How do we approach a friend who needs the light and life of the gospel? Be a good example! Develop a meaningful and sincere relationship of caring. Be genuinely interested in your friend's thoughts, feelings, and experiences involving our Eternal Father, the meaning of life, the reason for families, and the mission of our Savior. Have an enjoyable, edifying experience listening to your friends. Then, as President Kimball once said, "We have a double responsibility: we must testify of the things we know, feel, and have felt, and we must live so the Holy Ghost can be with us and convey our words in power to the heart of

the investigator" ("It Becometh Every Man," *Ensign*, Oct. 1977, p. 5).

The only hope I can find in this troubled world is to have the standards by which our lives are governed firmly grounded in the gospel of our Lord and Savior.

May each of us be prepared and have the courage to share this greatest of all gifts the Lord has given to His children. I testify of the truthfulness of His message in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, amen.

President Howard W. Hunter

The miracle of springtime

In our Northern Hemisphere, we are enjoying in this beautiful, bursting season of the year one of the great recurring miracles of nature—the regeneration and renewal of the earth that we call spring. There may be a few wintry days left, but the sun has begun its vernal return, the buds are appearing on the flowers and trees, and luxuriant greenery is sprouting to the surface.

How fitting that just one week ago all of Christendom celebrated on Easter Day the great restoring and renewing resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, declaring all of the joy and eternal promise that event holds for mankind. With you, I welcome this season of the year which reminds us that God is a God of miracles, that his Only Begotten Son is "the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in [him], though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25).

In this beautiful time of year, we remember that death has no sting and the grave has no dominion. I testify that after every winter's season there is the miracle of springtime ahead—in our personal journey through life as well as in nature. These restorations and renewals are a gift from the Lord Jesus Christ, the ultimate "man for all seasons." I wish to speak briefly of some of those divine moments

The chorus sang "Nearer, My God, to Thee" without announcement.

President Monson

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has spoken to us, following which the Mormon Youth Chorus sang "Nearer, My God, to Thee."

President Howard W. Hunter, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our concluding speaker for this session.

in our lives when the Savior reaches out to redeem and make whole and strengthen us.

The God that doest wonders

The Psalmist has written:

"I cried unto God with my voice, . . . and he gave ear unto me. . . .

"And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High. . . .

"Thou art the God that doest wonders: thou hast declared thy strength among the people" (Psalm 77:1, 10, 14).

Among the signs of the true church, and included in the evidences of God's work in the world, are the manifestations of his power which we are helpless to explain or to fully understand. In the scriptures these divine acts and special blessings are variously referred to as miracles or signs or wonders or marvels.

Not surprisingly, these signs and marvels were most evident in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, the very Son of God himself. But startling and wonder-filled as they were, Christ's many miracles were only reflections of those greater marvels which his Father had performed before him and continues to perform all around us. Indeed, the Savior's humble performance of such obviously divine acts may be just one very special application of the declarations he made:

"The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise" (John 5:19) and "I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me" (John 8:28).

Recognize everyday miracles

For example, the first miracle by Jesus recorded in the New Testament was the turning of water into wine at the marriage at Cana (see John 2:1-11). But poor, indeed, was the making of the wine in the pots of stone, compared with its original making in the beauty of the vine and the abundance of the swelling grapes. No one could explain the onetime miracle at the wedding feast, but then neither could they explain the everyday miracle of the splendor of the vineyard itself.

It is most remarkable to witness one who is deaf made to hear again. But surely that great blessing is no more startling than the wondrous combination of bones and skin and nerves that lets our ears receive the beautiful world of sound. Should we not stand in awe of the blessing of hearing and give glory to God for that miracle, even as we do when hearing is restored after it has been lost?

Is it not the same for the return of one's sight or the utterance of our speech, or even that greatest miracle of all — the restoration of life? The original creations of the Father constitute a truly wonder-filled world. Are not the *greatest* miracles the fact that we have life and limb and sight and speech in the first place? Yes, there will always be plenty of miracles if we have eyes to see and ears to hear.

Just one other reminder. Once we start to recognize the many miraculous and blessed manifestations of God and Christ in our lives — the everyday variety as well as restored sight to the blind and restored hearing to the deaf — we may be truly bewildered at the unexplainable principles and processes that bring about such wonders.

Do not deny miracles

In the contemplation of miracles "we must of necessity recognize the operation

of a power transcending our present human understanding," wrote Dr. James E. Talmage, who, as both a scientist and an Apostle of the Lord, had uniquely strong qualifications for examining such phenomena (*Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1916], p. 149). Science and the unaided human mind, he said, have not advanced far enough to analyze and explain these wonders. But, he cautioned, to deny the reality of miracles on the ground that the results and manifestations *must* be fictitious simply because we cannot comprehend the means by which they have happened is arrogant on the face of it (see p. 149). Indeed, those who have been the beneficiaries of such miracles are the most compelling witnesses of all. It is hard to argue with results.

Jesus heals a blind man

Consider this simple but telling account from the Savior's ministry to make manifest the works of God in men's lives.

One Sabbath day Jesus anointed the eyes of a man blind from birth, and the man's eyesight was restored. It was a startling and inspiring manifestation. Unfortunately, however, some who learned of it would not rejoice that one of the local citizens had his vision returned.

"Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man [meaning Jesus] is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them," the scripture tells us (John 9:16).

With such a controversy inside their ranks, this group did a very intelligent thing — they asked the opinion of the man who had been healed. "What sayest thou of him, that . . . hath opened thine eyes?" they asked, and waited for his answer (John 9:17).

As he spoke, the blind man undoubtedly looked directly into their eyes (a new and precious privilege). He said plainly, "He is a prophet" (John 9:17).

But that was an unsettling answer. After much discussion, including conversation with the man's parents, the

Pharisees agreed to acknowledge that there had indeed been a miracle and that it might have come from God, but that this man must deny any role Christ may have played in the process:

"Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man [Jesus] is a sinner" (John 9:24).

Unencumbered by theory or law, the man said, slowly enough for everyone to hear, "Whether [Jesus] be a sinner or no, I know not: [just] one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see" (John 9:25).

The Pharisees, in total frustration and unable to argue with that single greatest and undeniable fact in the case, cast the man out of their presence. Then comes this sweet conclusion to a story about renewed sight and brighter light:

"Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"

"He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?"

"And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.

"And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him" (John 9:35-38).

Now sight had been given *twice* — once to remedy a congenital defect and once to behold the King of Kings before he would ascend to his eternal throne. Jesus had quickened both temporal and spiritual vision. He had cast his light into a dark place, and this man, like many others in that day as well as in our own, had accepted the light and had seen.

Faith and miracles

President Spencer W. Kimball taught us with a book by the title *Faith Precedes the Miracle*. But there is, of course, an increase of faith that should follow the miracle as well. As a result of the many miracles in our lives, we should be more humble and more grateful, more kind and more believing. When we are personal witnesses to these wonders which God performs, it should increase

our respect and love for him; it should improve the way we behave. We will live better and love more if we will remember that. We are miracles in our own right, every one of us, and the resurrected Son of God is the greatest miracle of all. He is, indeed, the miracle of miracles, and every day of his life he gave evidence of it. We should try to follow after him in that example.

Miracles have not ceased

Moroni quotes his father in the Book of Mormon:

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, have miracles ceased because Christ hath ascended into heaven? . . . Has the day of miracles ceased?" (Moroni 7:27, 35).

"I say unto you, Nay; neither have angels ceased to minister unto the children of men. . . . [Nor will they], so long as time shall last, or the earth shall stand, or there shall be one man upon the face thereof to be saved" (Moroni 7:29, 36).

I testify of God's goodness and Christ's power, and of the privilege Apostles have been given. I know that Peter and John did take a lame man by the right hand and, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, command him to rise up and walk — and he did walk (see Acts 3:1-11). I testify of the restoration of the gospel in these latter days and of the priesthood powers that make possible the many modern miracles of our dispensation.

I say of our Father as the Psalmist said, "Thou art the God that doest wonders: thou hast declared thy strength among the people" (Psalm 77:14). In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

President Howard W. Hunter, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us. His theme was that of miracles. He spoke of the miracle of renewal, the springtime following winter, and all who have heard his voice, all who have witnessed his coming to the podium, have witnessed a miracle in our time.

We are grateful to the owners and the operators of the many television and radio stations and cable and satellite systems for offering their facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this conference to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

The Mormon Youth Chorus will now sing "Hark, All Ye Nations!" The benediction will be given by Elder

Alexander B. Morrison of the First Quorum of the Seventy. The conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The chorus sang "Hark, All Ye Nations!"

Elder Alexander B. Morrison offered the benediction.

FIRST DAY AFTERNOON SESSION

The second general session of the 159th Annual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 1, 1989, at 2:00 P.M. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

Music for this session was provided by the Brigham Young University combined choirs. Ronald Staheli and Mack Wilberg conducted, and Robert Cundick was at the organ.

At the beginning of the meeting, President Hinckley made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My beloved brethren and sisters, President Ezra Taft Benson has asked that I conduct this second general session of the 159th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We commented as we looked at the building this Saturday afternoon that the Tabernacle is filled to capacity, and President Benson remarked, "These people love to come to church."

We welcome all who are in attendance or who are participating by means of television, cable, or radio, and many who are watching in stake centers throughout the various parts of the world

where the conference is being carried by satellite transmission. We express our appreciation to the owners and operators of many radio and television stations and cable and satellite systems for their cooperation in making these proceedings available to members and friends of the Church in many countries.

Elders Charles Didier and John R. Lasater are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall. We are pleased to note that Elder David B. Haight is with us this afternoon. He has had a long convalescence, and it is wonderful to have him on his feet here participating with us in the conference. We welcome him with love and great appreciation.

The music for this session will be provided by the Brigham Young University combined choirs, under the direction of Brothers Ronald Staheli and Mack Wilberg, with Brother Robert Cundick at the organ.

The choir will open this session by singing "If You Could Hie to Kolob." The invocation will then be offered by Elder Paul H. Dunn, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "If You Could Hie to Kolob."

Elder Paul H. Dunn offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

The choir will now sing "Redeemer of Israel." Following this, President Thomas S. Monson will present to you the General Authorities and general officers of the Church for your sustaining

vote. This will include some business of great significance and interest to all of us.

The choir sang "Redeemer of Israel."

The Sustaining of Church Authorities and Officers

President Thomas S. Monson

My brothers and sisters, as requested by President Benson, I shall now present to you the General Authorities and general officers of the Church for your sustaining vote.

It is proposed that we sustain President Ezra Taft Benson as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Gordon B. Hinckley as First Counselor in the First Presidency; and Thomas S. Monson as Second Counselor in the First Presidency. Those in favor may manifest it. Those opposed may manifest it.

It is proposed that we sustain President Howard W. Hunter as President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles and the following as members of that council: Howard W. Hunter, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, Joseph B. Wirthlin, and Richard G. Scott. Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed, by the same sign.

It is proposed that we sustain the Counselors in the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators. All in favor, kindly manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

With the continued rapid growth of the Church, the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve have determined that the time has come to take additional steps to provide for the expansion and regulation of the Church. We announce, therefore, the organization of the Second

Quorum of the Seventy to become effective immediately.

The initial membership of the Second Quorum of the Seventy will be those General Authorities currently serving under a five-year call. Additional brethren will be added to the Second Quorum of the Seventy from time to time and will serve as Seventies and as General Authorities also under a five-year call.

The First Quorum of the Seventy will continue much as at present, with its members called from the Second Quorum of the Seventy or from the priesthood at large.

It is proposed that we sustain as Presidents of the Seventy Elders Dean L. Larsen, Marion D. Hanks, Wm. Grant Bangert, Robert L. Backman, Hugh W. Pinnock, James M. Paramore, and J. Richard Clarke. Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed?

It is proposed that we sustain as members of the First Quorum of the Seventy Elders Theodore M. Burton, Paul H. Dunn, Hartman Rector, Jr., Loren C. Dunn, Robert L. Simpson, Rex D. Pinegar, J. Thomas Fyans, Adney Y. Komatsu, Gene R. Cook, Charles Didier, William R. Bradford, George P. Lee, Carlos E. Asay, John H. Groberg, Jacob de Jager, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Royden G. Derrick, Robert E. Wells, F. Enzo Busche, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Ronald E. Poelman, Derek A. Cuthbert, Rex C. Reeve, F. Burton Howard, Ted E. Brewerton, Jack H. Goasland, Angel Abrea, John K. Carmack, Victor L. Brown, H. Burke Peterson, and Hans B. Ringger.

As additional members of the First Quorum of the Seventy, Joe J. Christensen, W. Eugene Hansen, Jeffrey R. Holland, and Marlin K. Jensen.

It is proposed that we sustain the following as members of the Second Quorum of the Seventy, who will serve for a period of five years from the time of their initial call: Russell C. Taylor, Robert B. Harbertson, Devere Harris, Spencer H. Osborn, Philip T. Sonntag, John Sonnenberg, F. Arthur Kay, Keith W. Wilcox, Waldo P. Call, Helio da Rocha Camargo, H. Verlan Andersen, George I. Cannon, Francis M. Gibbons, Gardner H. Russell, George R. Hill III, John R. Lasater, Douglas J. Martin, Alexander B. Morrison, L. Aldin Porter, Glen L. Rudd, Douglas H. Smith, Lynn A. Sorensen, Robert E. Sackley, L. Lionel Kendrick, Monte J. Brough, Albert Choules, Jr., Lloyd P. George, and Gerald E. Melchin.

As additional members of the Second Quorum of the Seventy, who have been called and are being presented at this

conference, Carlos H. Amado, Benjamin B. Banks, Spencer J. Condie, F. Melvin Hammond, Malcolm S. Jeppsen, Richard P. Lindsay, Merlin R. Lybbert, and Horacio A. Tenorio. Those in favor, please manifest it. Those opposed, if any, by the same sign.

It is proposed that we sustain the other General Authorities and general officers of the Church as currently constituted. Those in favor, please manifest it. Those opposed, by the same sign.

President Benson, it appears that the voting has been unanimous in the affirmative. We invite the newly sustained members of the Seventy to take their places on the stand.

President Hinckley

Brother Wilford G. Edling will now read the auditors' report, following which Brother F. Michael Watson, secretary to the First Presidency, will present the statistical report of the Church for the year 1988.

The Church Audit Committee Report for 1988

Wilford G. Edling

For the purpose of evaluating the adequacy of controls over receipts and expenditures of the general funds of the Church and its controlled organizations, we have reviewed the system of budgeting, accounting, and auditing, and the related financial statements of the Church for the year ended December 31, 1988, and the manner in which funds are received and expenditures are controlled.

The expenditures of general Church funds for the year were authorized by the Council on the Disposition of Tithes, composed of the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, and the Presiding Bishopric, as prescribed by revelation from the Lord. The Appropriations Committee, in weekly meetings, administers major expenditures under the budget.

The general fund accounts of the Church are maintained by its Finance and

Records Department, which uses modern accounting technology and equipment to keep abreast of the rapidly expanding and varied activities of the Church.

The Auditing Department, which consists of a staff of certified public accountants and similarly qualified auditors, is independent of all other departments and performs financial audits, operational audits, and audits of the computer systems employed by the Church. These auditing services are performed on a continuing basis for Church departments and other Church-controlled organizations engaged in worldwide operations, including missions, schools, administrative offices, and departmental activities.

The audits of local funds of wards and stakes are performed by stake auditors. The audit procedures are established and the audit reports are reviewed by the Church Auditing Department. Incorpor-

rated businesses owned or controlled by the Church for which accounts are not maintained in the Finance and Records Department are audited by the Church's internal auditors, independent professional auditing firms, or government regulatory agencies.

Based on our review of the system of financial controls within the Church, together with continuing discussions with personnel of the Finance and Records and the Auditing departments, we are of the opinion that budgeting, accounting, and auditing controls are adequate for Church needs and purposes, and that in all ma-

terial respects the general funds of the Church received and expended during the year ended December 31, 1988, have been controlled and accounted for in accordance with established Church policy and procedures.

Respectfully submitted,

Church Audit Committee
Wilford G. Edling
David M. Kennedy
Warren E. Pugh
Merrill J. Bateman
Ted E. Davis

The Church Statistical Report for 1988

F. Michael Watson

For the information of the members of the Church, the First Presidency has issued the following statistical report concerning the growth and status of the Church as of December 31, 1988. (Membership figures include estimates based on 1988 reports available prior to conference.)

Church units

Number of stakes	1,707
Number of districts.....	402
Number of missions.....	222
Number of wards	11,196
Number of branches in stakes	2,899
Number of branches in missions.....	2,463
Number of sovereign countries with organized wards or branches.....	100
Number of territories, colonies, and possessions with organized wards or branches	25

(These statistics reflect an increase of 41 stakes and 552 wards and branches during 1988.)

Church membership

Total membership at the close of 1988	6,720,000
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Church growth during 1988

Increase in children of record.....	93,000
Children of record baptized	73,000
Converts baptized	256,515

Missionaries

Full-time missionaries	36,132
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Prominent member who has passed away since last April

President Marion G. Romney, former Counselor in the First Presidency and longtime member and President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

President Hinckley

Thank you, brethren, for those reports.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our first speaker at this session. He will be followed by Elder Ronald E. Poelman, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

Judging ourselves as unworthy

Over the past number of weeks I have had some conversations that have made me ponder the meaning of the word *worthy*. As I recently talked to a young twenty-year-old man, I discussed his attitude about going on a mission. He said, "I wanted to go, but I am not worthy."

"Who made that judgment?" I asked.

"I did," was his answer.

On another occasion I asked a young lady who was contemplating marriage if she was going to the temple. She said, "I would like to, but I am not worthy." In response to the same question of who determined her unworthiness, she too said, "I did."

A member mother who had known for many weeks that her daughter had planned a temple marriage was asked if she was going to attend the temple ceremony. "No. I am not worthy to get a temple recommend," she answered.

Each of these people seemed to have made his own determination about worthiness. We do not have to be hindered by self-judgment. All of us have the benefit and added wisdom of a bishop and a stake president to help us determine our worthiness and, if necessary, to assist us to begin the process of becoming worthy to accomplish whatever goal we wish to achieve. When we take it upon ourselves to pass self-judgment and simply declare, "I am not worthy," we build a barrier to progress and erect blockades that prevent our moving forward. We are not being fair when we judge ourselves. A second and third opinion will always be helpful and proper.

Understanding what worthiness is

It occurs to me that there are probably hundreds or even thousands who do not understand what worthiness is. Worthiness is a process, and perfection is an eternal trek. We can be worthy to enjoy certain privileges without being perfect.

Perhaps it is reasonable to conclude that personal measurement or judgment

often may be severe and inaccurate. We may get bogged down as we try to understand and define *worthiness*. All of us are particularly aware of our shortcomings and weaknesses. Therefore, it is easy for us to feel that we are unworthy of blessings we desire and that we are not as worthy to hold an office or calling as someone next door.

Overcoming feelings of inadequacy

All through life we meet some people who tell of their weaknesses with great enthusiasm and unreasonable prejudice. They may not report untruths, but they may leave out truths or they may not be fair with themselves. Misjudgments can be made. To move forward wisely and think clearly, all sides of the story must be reviewed. When we feel inadequate, capable and loving friends can help us realize our strengths and potential.

When counseling, I have always tried to get the facts. Often, people being interviewed resist sharing some of the facts because they make them uncomfortable. Worthy and lasting changes can be made only when actions are based upon the light of truth. Very often, people become comfortable in their self-declared unworthiness status.

Possibly the hardest guidelines for us to follow are those we set for ourselves. To analyze our fears, our dreams, our goals, our motives can be soul-wrenching. We need others to help us. We may find that we fear failure so much that we won't take a risk. Often our self-esteem is bruised by criticism. Many other facts about ourselves can be brought to light if we really want to know.

Destructive misconceptions and comparisons

Perhaps we all live under some misconceptions when we look at each other on Sundays as we attend our meetings. Everyone is neatly dressed and greets each other with a smile. It is natural to assume that everyone else has his life

under control and doesn't have to deal with dark little weaknesses and imperfections.

There is a natural, probably a mortal, tendency to compare ourselves with others. Unfortunately, when we make these comparisons, we tend to compare our weakest attributes with someone else's strongest. For example, a woman who feels unschooled in the gospel may take particular note of a woman in her ward who teaches the Gospel Doctrine class and seems to have every scripture at her fingertips. Obviously these kinds of comparisons are destructive and only reinforce the fear that somehow we don't measure up and therefore we must not be as worthy as the next person.

We need to come to terms with our desire to reach perfection and with our frustration when our accomplishments or behaviors are less than perfect. I feel that one of the great myths we would do well to dispel is that we've come to earth to perfect ourselves, and nothing short of that will do. If I understand the teachings of the prophets of this dispensation correctly, we will not become perfect in this life, though we can make significant strides toward that goal.

Elder Joseph Fielding Smith offers this counsel:

"Salvation does not come all at once; we are commanded to be perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect. It will take us ages to accomplish this end, for there will be greater progress beyond the grave, and it will be there that the faithful will overcome all things, and receive all things, even the fulness of the Father's glory.

"I believe the Lord meant just what he said: that we should be perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect. That will not come all at once, but line upon line, and precept upon precept, example upon example, and even then not as long as we live in this mortal life, for we will have to go even beyond the grave before we reach that perfection and shall be like God" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954-56], 2:18-19).

I am also convinced of the fact that the speed with which we head along the straight and narrow path isn't as important as the direction in which we are traveling. That direction, if it is leading toward eternal goals, is the all-important factor.

We are of great worth to God

Another quotation, which comes from President George Q. Cannon, is very meaningful to me:

"Now, this is the truth. We humble people, we who feel ourselves sometimes so worthless, so good-for-nothing, we are not so worthless as we think. There is not one of us but what God's love has been expended upon. There is not one of us that He has not cared for and caressed. There is not one of us that He has not desired to save and that He has not devised means to save. There is not one of us that He has not given His angels charge concerning. We may be insignificant and contemptible in our own eyes and in the eyes of others, but the truth remains that we are children of God and that He has actually given His angels . . . charge concerning us, and they watch over us and have us in their keeping" (*Gospel Truths*, comp. Jerreld L. Newquist, 2 vols. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1974], 1:2).

If we are in the keeping of angels, God is certainly telling us that we are worthy to be watched over, helped, and directed by him. As we become aware of God's watch-care and as we turn to Church leaders to help us learn how to become worthy members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we learn that we can reach the status of worthiness for each goal along life's path. Yet we must strive for worthiness.

In Official Declaration — 2, accepted by the Church on September 30, 1978, we are reminded that certain privileges have worthiness as a prerequisite. In this official declaration, the word *worthy* or *worthiness* is used six times. This leaves little doubt as to the importance of being worthy if specific blessings are to be available to us.

Interviews with priesthood leaders

As we said in the beginning, it is a wonderful strength and a needful process to be able to go to a bishop or a stake president and discuss our worthiness. During such interviews it may be determined how worthiness can be achieved if there is need for improvement.

President N. Eldon Tanner gave us some wise counsel:

"With all this evil present in the world today, it is most important that those who are responsible conduct proper interviews.

"Let us always remember that our main purpose, assignment, and responsibility is to save souls.

"It is important that those we interview realize that they are *spirit children of God* and that *we love them*, and let them know that *we love them* and are interested in their welfare and in helping them succeed in life.

"It is a great responsibility for a bishop or stake president to conduct a worthiness interview. There is equal responsibility, however, upon the member who is interviewed. Careful, searching interviews need to be conducted always individually and privately. . . .

"Let [the member] know that if there is something amiss in his life, there are ways to straighten it out. There is a great cleansing power of repentance. . . .

"You bishops and stake presidents might approach an interview for a temple recommend something like this:

"'You have come to me for a recommend to enter the temple. I have the responsibility of representing the Lord in interviewing you. At the conclusion of the interview there is provision for me to sign your recommend; but mine is not the only important signature on your recommend. Before the recommend is valid, you must sign it yourself.' . . .

"And so it is. The Lord gives the privilege to members of the Church to respond to those questions in such interviews. Then if there is something amiss, the member can get his life in order so that he may qualify for the priesthood advancement, for a mission, or for a temple recommend" (in Conference Report, Oct.

1978, pp. 59–60; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1978, pp. 41–42).

The need to be chastised

As we strive for worthiness, a scripture we should not lose sight of is Doctrine and Covenants, section 136, verse 31: "He that will not bear chastisement is not worthy of [the Lord's] kingdom." Sometimes there is a great need for us to be chastised, disciplined, and corrected in a spirit of love, help, and hope. Guidance and suggestions should be offered in a loving way, but most of us tend to rebel or be dismayed when someone suggests that our conduct is less than it should be. As Benjamin Franklin once said: "Those things that hurt, instruct. It is for this reason that wise people learn not to dread but welcome problems."

Seeking help to become worthy

In life there are requirements for almost all privileges — education demands them, business has its regulations, sports and games have their rules, the Church has certain standards, and so on. But in every case there is help to meet those requirements. It is up to us to look for that assistance so we can understand the rules and strengthen ourselves as we receive direction from the sources available. It is not wise or proper for us to judge ourselves as being unworthy and thus stop our progress.

When we dwell on our own weaknesses, it is easy to dwell on the feelings that we are unworthy. Somehow we need to bridge the gap between continually striving to improve and yet not feeling defeated when our actions aren't perfect all the time. We need to remove *unworthy* from our vocabulary and replace it with *hope* and *work*. This we can do if we turn to quieter, deeper, surer guidelines — the words of our prophets and leaders, past and present.

Abraham Lincoln wisely said, "It is difficult to make a man miserable while he feels worthy of himself and claims kindred to the great God who made him" (in *The International Thesaurus of Quotations*, comp. Rhoda Thomas Tripp

[New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1970], p. 575).

"I Would Be Worthy"

To reinforce the importance of the word *worthy* and of worthy processes, I would like to share part of a poem by Elder Hugh B. Brown, "I Would Be Worthy."

I thank thee, Lord, that thou hast
called me "son,"
And fired my soul with the
astounding thought
That there is something of thee
in me.

May the prophecy of this
relationship—
Impel me to be worthy.

I am grateful for a covenant birth;
For noble parents and an ancestry
who beckon me
To heights beyond my grasp, but still
attainable
If with stamina and effort I cultivate
their seed—
And prove that I am worthy.

I am grateful for a companion on this
Eternal Quest,
Whose roots and birth and vision
match my own;
Whose never-failing faith and loyalty
have furnished light in darkness,
And re-steered fortitude. May her
faith in me
Inspire me to be worthy.

I am grateful for the cleansing power
of parenthood,
With its self-denial and sacrifice—
prerequisites to filial and parent
love;
For each child entrusted to our care,
I humbly thank thee;

If I would associate with them
eternally,
I know I must be worthy. . . .

I am grateful for the lifting power of
the gospel of thy Son;
For the knowledge thou hast given
me of its beauty, truth and worth.
To attain its promised glory, may I
to the end endure,
And then, forgiven, let charity tip the
scales and allow me
To be considered worthy.

(*Eternal Quest*, sel. Charles Manley
Brown [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft,
1956], p. 13)

It is my hope and prayer that we will learn individually and collectively the importance of the process of becoming worthy. We are entitled to the help of others not only in assessing our worthiness but also in making the classification of "worthy" available to each of us. As we measure our worthiness, let us no longer put limitations upon ourselves. Rather, let us use those strengths and powers that are available to make us worthy to gain great heights in personal development. Thus we will reap the joy that comes to those who desire to improve and move forward with determination and effectiveness as they practice self-discipline and refuse to judge themselves as unworthy.

I leave my love, blessings, and testimony of these truths in the worthy name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Marvin J. Ashton, a member of the Council of the Twelve, has just spoken to us.

Elder Ronald E. Poelman of the First Quorum of the Seventy will now address us.

Elder Ronald E. Poelman

Adversity in the lives of the obedient

"Happiness," in the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith, "is the object and

design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it" (*History of the Church*, 5:134). Often that path includes afflic-

tion, trials, and suffering—physically, mentally, and even spiritually.

Adversity, or what we perceive to be adversity, enters into the life of every individual at various times and in various forms. Adversity may be the consequence of willful disobedience to the laws of God. However, my remarks are directed to those who with righteous desire seek earnestly to learn and strive diligently to do God's will, yet nevertheless experience adversity. Much about this subject we do not understand, but let us consider some of what the Lord has revealed.

Adversity in the lives of the obedient and faithful may be the consequence of disease, accidental injury, ignorance, or the influence of the adversary. To preserve free agency, the Lord also at times permits the righteous to suffer the consequences of evil acts by others (see 1 Nephi 18:16).

Some may respond to such innocent suffering with resentment, anger, bitterness, doubt, or fear (see 1 Nephi 17:20). Others, with a knowledge and testimony of the divine plan of salvation, often respond with faith, patience, and hope born of that "peace . . . which passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:6-7).

Values of adversity

The plan of salvation presented to and accepted by us in our premortal state includes a probationary period on earth, during which we experience opposites, make choices, learn the consequences thereof, and prepare to return to the presence of God. Experiencing adversity is an essential part of the process. Knowing this, we elected to come into mortality. (See 2 Nephi 2:11-16.)

The Savior himself "learned . . . obedience by the things which he suffered" (Hebrews 5:8). Prophets and Apostles, ancient and modern, have struggled with adversity in their own lives, as well as with trials associated with their divine callings. No one is exempt.

However, Paul teaches "that all things work together for good to them that love God" (Romans 8:28). Similarly, the

prophet Lehi assured his son Jacob with these words:

"Jacob, . . . in thy childhood thou hast suffered afflictions and much sorrow because of [others].

"Nevertheless, . . . thou knowest the greatness of God; and he shall consecrate thine afflictions for thy gain" (2 Nephi 2:1-2).

Responding positively to adversity

How, then, shall we respond to undeserved adversity in our own lives? How may our responses to affliction and suffering draw us closer to the Savior, to our Heavenly Father, and to the realization of our own celestial potential? May I suggest some examples and role models found in the scriptures.

The sons of Mosiah, in the course of their missionary labors, "had many afflictions . . . both in body and in mind . . . and also much labor in the spirit" (Alma 17:5). Partly because of such experiences, they became "strong in the knowledge of the truth; . . . men of a sound understanding . . . [who] searched the scriptures diligently, that they might know the word of God. . . .

"They had given themselves to much prayer, and fasting; therefore they had the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation" (Alma 17:2-3). Through their positive response to adversity, they grew spiritually.

In the time of Nephi, son of Helaman, "the more humble part of the people . . . [suffered] much affliction"; but they fasted and prayed frequently and became "stronger in their humility, and . . . firmer in the faith of Christ, unto the filling their souls with joy and consolation" (Helaman 3:34, 35).

From their example, we learn some positive responses to our own undeserved adversity.

Look to the Savior

As they did, we should look to the Savior for divine assistance. Paul reminds us that "we have a great high priest, . . .

Jesus the Son of God, . . . [who is] touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Hebrews 4:14–15). We are invited to seek his "help in time of need" (4:16).

Because the Savior suffered "pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind . . . [taking] upon him the pains and the sickness of his people . . . [and taking] upon him their infirmities, . . . [he knows] according to the flesh how to [help] his people according to their infirmities" (Alma 7:11–12). Therefore, we should follow the counsel of Amulek: "Let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually for your welfare, and also for the welfare of those who are around you" (Alma 34:27).

Study the scriptures daily

Next, our prayers should be accompanied with daily scripture study. The eternal perspective attained thereby reminds us of who we are, what the true purpose of this mortal experience is, and who placed us here. The availability of divine help is repeatedly reconfirmed. Daily scripture study also makes us continuously conscious of covenants we have made with the Lord and of his promised blessings.

Fulfill the baptismal covenant

As we fulfill our baptismal covenant, we "bear one another's burdens, that they may be light" (Mosiah 18:8), and our own burdens are lightened. We "comfort those that stand in need of comfort" (18:9), and we receive comfort. When we "stand as witnesses of God . . . in all things" (18:9), we feel his redeeming love and see our present circumstances more clearly in the perspective of eternal life. In a sense, we are thereby accepting the Savior's invitation:

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

"For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28–30). Is it not probable that bearing his yoke and his burden includes forgetting self in service to others?

Bear afflictions patiently

Patience must also be part of our response to adversity. Ammon, son of Mosiah, recalling personal challenges, acknowledged, "Now when our hearts were depressed, and we were about to turn back [or, in other words, give up], . . . the Lord comforted us, and said: . . . bear with patience thine afflictions, and I will give unto you success" (Alma 26:27).

In our day, the Lord has counseled: "Fear not, let your hearts be comforted; . . . rejoice evermore, and in everything give thanks; waiting patiently on the Lord. . . . And all things wherewith you have been afflicted shall work together for your good" (D&C 98:1–3).

Blessings of positive responses to adversity

Repeated assurances have been given regarding the benefits and blessings of positive responses to adversity, however undeserved. The witness of the Spirit and the manifestation of greater things often follow the trial of one's faith (see Ether 12:6; 3 Nephi 26:7–9). Spiritual refinement may be realized in the "furnace of affliction" (1 Nephi 20:10). Thereby we may be prepared to experience personal and direct contact with God.

In modern revelation we are instructed, "Sanctify yourselves that your minds become single to God, and the days will come that you shall see him; for he will unveil his face unto you, and it shall be in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will" (D&C 88:68). Ancient prophets teach us that "when he shall appear . . . we shall see him as he is . . . [and] be purified even as he is pure" (Moroni 7:48; see also 1 John 3:2).

The Lord's own way of preparing us to see him as he is may well include the refining furnace of affliction, that we may

"offer a sacrifice [to him] . . . of a broken heart and a contrite spirit," the promised reward being "peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come" (D&C 59:8, 23).

Each of us is the spiritual offspring of God. We came to this earth to prepare to return to his presence, there to share a fulness—that is, eternal life. Without adversity, we may tend to forget the divine purpose of mortality and live our lives focused on the transitory things of the world.

Should we therefore desire or seek to experience adversity and suffering? No! May we appropriately try to avoid it? Yes! Is it proper to ask for relief? Yes, always adding, in accordance with the Savior's example, "nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39).

The trials of Alma and his people

There is encouragement and comfort in knowing that we will not be tested beyond our capacity to endure, that we will benefit from our adversities, and that the resources and circumstances necessary for us to do so will be provided (see 1 Corinthians 10:13). From the Book of Mormon comes another illustration:

Those with whom Alma shared the inspired teachings of Abinadi entered into the baptismal covenant and began to live the gospel fully. There was no contention among them; they were knit together in unity and in love one toward another, caring for the poor and needy and for one another temporally and spiritually. Because of their industry and the harmony among them, they prospered. (See Mosiah 23:15–20). Certainly they did not deserve adversity. However, they were provided with the opportunity for further spiritual growth.

The scriptural account continues with these words: "Nevertheless the Lord seeth fit to chasten his people; yea, he trieth their patience and their faith" (Mosiah 23:21). Notwithstanding their righteousness, these faithful people suffered much affliction. Understandably, they pleaded with the Lord for relief, per-

haps hoping that the burdens would be removed. In response to their pleadings, the Lord comforted them and assured them of his help. (See Mosiah 24:8–14). Then he strengthened them "that they could bear up their burdens with ease, and they did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord" (Mosiah 24:15). Eventually, because of their faith and patience, they were delivered from their afflictions. Having been further refined spiritually, and with increased faith, "they gave thanks to God" (Mosiah 24:22; see also 24:16–21).

"May Christ lift thee up"

In the final days of the Nephite civilization, the prophet Mormon wrote a letter to his son, Moroni, describing the wickedness, cruelty, and depravity which caused innocent people to suffer. Then he added these words of admonition and comfort:

"My son, be faithful in Christ; and may not the things which I have written grieve thee, to weigh thee down . . . ; but may Christ lift thee up, and may his sufferings and death, . . . his mercy . . . and the hope of his glory and of eternal life, rest in your mind forever.

"And may the grace of God the Father . . . and our Lord Jesus Christ . . . be, and abide with you forever" (Moroni 9:25–26), which is also my prayer for each of us, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Ronald E. Poelman of the First Quorum of the Seventy has just addressed us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Hope of Israel." Following this, we shall be pleased to hear remarks from Bishop Glenn L. Pace, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric.

The choir and congregation sang "Hope of Israel."

Bishop Glenn L. Pace

One day as one of my sons bade me farewell prior to his leaving for high school, I noticed he had forgotten to tie his shoelaces. For a fleeting second, I was tempted to turn the moment into the major crisis of the week, but, thankfully, I let it pass. A few days later we went to a school function where, to my amazement, I observed the shoelaces of all of the young men were untied. I then realized my son had fallen victim to another fad. I think it was in this same year that I found out it was no longer socially acceptable to go to school with boots, gloves, or earmuffs.

Sometimes we appear to be enslaved by fads and trends in society. Some are good. Some are silly but harmless. Others can be detrimental to our physical or spiritual health.

Knowing the shortest distance from the world to the celestial kingdom is a straight line, the Lord has restored his gospel, which contains the truth and guidance we need to make the journey as smooth as possible. We can avoid unnecessary detours by reading the scriptures and listening to the Lord's current prophets. As the Church holds firm to the traditional values taught by prophets of previous dispensations and reaffirmed by our modern-day prophets, the pointing finger of a failing society seems to be regularly aimed at us. One can hardly get through a day without hearing some form of criticism about the Church.

I will discuss three groups of critics. In order of ascending concern they are (1) nonmembers, (2) former members, and (3) current members.

Criticism from nonmembers

Responsible nonmember teasing and criticism is harmless. In fact, it helps keep us on our toes. Occasionally, we need to step back and look at ourselves from a nonmember's perspective. Really now, *to them*, aren't we just a little bit strange? Imagine yourself coming into a Mormon community for the first time and hearing talk about gold plates, an angel

named Moroni, and baptisms for the dead. Imagine seeing, for the first time, nine children and two beleaguered parents in a beat-up station wagon with a bumper sticker reading, "Families are Forever." The puzzled nonmember doesn't know if this is a boast or a complaint. And where do these families go to church? At a stake house. We are strange to nonmembers—until they get to know us.

In this regard, my counsel to members would be to relax, lighten up, mellow out, and not get so huffy. While the gospel is sacred and serious, sometimes we take ourselves a little too seriously. A sense of humor, especially about ourselves, is an attribute worthy of development.

Other criticisms we receive from nonmembers are a little more painful. Criticism always hurts most when we deserve it. There are a few active members who don't live up to what they have been taught. They can be condescending, intolerant, or clannish. Such characteristics strike at the very heart of the second great commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:39). One can be a friend to all without participating in all of their activities. How shortsighted one is to place church denominational limits on his friendships. How one robs himself when his friendship is contingent upon another's willingness to listen to the first discussion.

We would eliminate the most painful criticism from responsible nonmembers by simply internalizing and living what the Church teaches.

Criticism from former members

The second category of critics is former members who have become disenchanted with the Church but who are obsessed with making vicious and vile attacks upon it. Most members and nonmembers alike see these attacks for what they really are. What credibility can possibly be given to a person who mocks beliefs held sacred by another? Anyone who would resort to these attacks unwit-

tingly discloses his or her true character—or lack of the same. As members of the Church, we are appalled by such attacks. Hopefully, however, they make us more sensitive and extra careful not to make light of the sacred beliefs of other denominations.

In addition to attacking our sacred beliefs, some former members speak evil of the Brethren. Joseph Smith received his share of this criticism from the dissidents of his day. The Lord's revelation to him is applicable to us today:

"Cursed are all those that shall lift up the heel against mine anointed, saith the Lord, and cry they have sinned when they have not sinned before me, saith the Lord, but have done that which was meet in mine eyes, and which I commanded them.

"But those who cry transgression do it because they are the servants of sin, and are the children of disobedience themselves" (D&C 121:16–17).

It seems that history continues to teach us, You can leave the Church, but you can't leave it alone. The basic reason for this is simple. Once someone has received a witness of the Spirit and accepted it, he leaves neutral ground. One loses his testimony only by listening to the promptings of the evil one, and Satan's goal is not complete when a person leaves the Church, but when he comes out in open rebellion against it.

Criticism from within the Church

The last category of criticism I will address comes from within the Church itself. This criticism is more lethal than that coming from nonmembers and former members. The danger lies not in what may come from a member critic, but in the chance that we might become one.

One activity which often leads a member to be critical is engaging in inappropriate intellectualism. While it would seem the search for and discovery of truth should be the goal of all Latter-day Saints, it appears some get more satisfaction from trying to discover new uncertainties. I have friends who have literally spent their lives, thus far, trying to

nail down every single intellectual loose end rather than accepting the witness of the Spirit and getting on with it. In so doing, they are depriving themselves of a gold mine of beautiful truths which cannot be tapped by the mind alone.

Elder Faust describes this type of intellectual as "a person who continues to chase after a bus even after he has caught it." We invite everyone to get on the bus before it's out of sight and you are left forever trying to figure out the infinite with a finite mind. In the words of Elijah, "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him" (1 Kings 18:21).

Inappropriate intellectualism sometimes leads one to testify that he knows the *gospel* is true but believes the *Brethren* are just a little out of touch. Out of touch with what? Don't confuse a decision to abstain from participating in a trend with a lack of awareness about its existence. These Brethren "prove all things" and "hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21). To accomplish this, they are in constant touch with Him who created this earth and knows the world from beginning to end.

There are some of our members who practice selective obedience. A prophet is not one who displays a smorgasbord of truth from which we are free to pick and choose. However, some members become critical and suggest the prophet should change the menu. A prophet doesn't take a poll to see which way the wind of public opinion is blowing. He reveals the will of the Lord to us. The world is full of deteriorating churches that have succumbed to public opinion and have become more dedicated to tickling the ears of their members than obeying the laws of God.

In 1831 some converts wanted to bring a few of their previous beliefs into the Church with them. Our problem today is with members who seem very vulnerable to the trends in society (and the pointing fingers which attend them) and want the Church to change its position to accommodate them. The doctrinal grass on the other side of the fence looks very green to them.

The Lord's counsel in 1831 is relevant today: "Behold, I say unto you, that they desire to know the truth in part, but not all, for they are not right before me and must needs repent" (D&C 49:2).

We need to accept the full truth—even all of it—"put on the whole armour of God" (Ephesians 6:11), and get to work building up the kingdom. Each of us might ask ourselves, Am I a positive contributor to building up the kingdom in our day of this dispensation of the fulness of times?

There was a time in my life when I fantasized about how valiant I would have been had I been born at another time. If I had been born of Adam, I would have saved Cain. If I had been born of Noah, the ark would have been larger in order to carry all of my converts. If I had been with Moses, we could have cut the forty years in the wilderness down to twenty. If I had been with Joseph Smith, we would still be in Jackson County living the united order. I had some wonderful fantasies. One time, as I was winning another imaginary battle, a question was placed in my mind. "You say you would have died for the Prophet Joseph Smith. What are you doing for President Spencer W. Kimball?" I was crushed by the answer to that question and made up my mind things were going to be different.

Why do we sometimes find it easier to accept and follow past prophets? It is partly because history has proven their counsel to be sound. Future generations will find the same to be true of the prophets of our day. Each of us might ask

ourselves, What am I doing for President Ezra Taft Benson?

Testimony of today's prophets

As a Presiding Bishopric, we work closely with our current prophets, seers, and revelators. Based on that physical observation as well as a spiritual confirmation, I testify that these men have no desire or goal other than to assist the Lord in his purpose "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). I can also tell you firsthand they are highly intelligent individuals. They understand the current problems facing members of the Church throughout the world and are not naive to the major issues and trends of society. I testify to you that Ezra Taft Benson is a prophet of God and is surrounded by other special witnesses of the Savior. Jesus the Christ stands at the head of this church, and he has personally called these servants who preside over us.

In the Lord's wisdom, he has not left any of us dependent on another's testimony. May the Lord bless each of us to obtain and retain our personal witness and then follow the Brethren. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Bishop Glenn L. Pace, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, has spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks

The voice of the Good Shepherd

Last summer, at a Pioneer parade in Wyoming, I saw a young colt separated from its mother. The lost youngster whinnied and trotted about, listening to a chorus of voices as it sought the voice that would guide it back to the side of the one it loved.

At other times I have seen lambs lost in a moving herd of sheep. A great chorus of voices rises from the herd, but each lamb listens for the one voice that can guide it. The Savior used this ageless example in the allegory of the Good Shepherd. "The sheep hear his voice: . . . and

the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, . . . for they know not the voice of strangers" (John 10:3-5).

From among the chorus of voices we hear in mortality, we must recognize the voice of the Good Shepherd, who calls us to follow him toward our heavenly home.

Many alternate voices

As Paul said to the Corinthians, "There are . . . so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification" (1 Corinthians 14:10).

Some voices speak of the things of the world, providing the useful information we need to make our way in mortality. I will make no further reference to these voices. My remarks will refer to those voices that speak of God, of his commandments, and of the doctrines, ordinances, and practices of his church. Some of those who speak on these subjects have been called and given divine authority to do so. Others, whom I choose to call alternate voices, speak on these subjects without calling or authority.

In the five years since I was called as a General Authority, I have seen many instances where Church leaders and members have been troubled by things said by these alternate voices. I am convinced that some members are confused about the Church's relationship to the alternate voices. As a result, members can be misled in their personal choices, and the work of the Lord can suffer.

Some alternate voices are those of well-motivated men and women who are merely trying to serve their brothers and sisters and further the cause of Zion. Their efforts fit within the Lord's teaching that his servants should not have to be commanded in all things, but "should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness" (D&C 58:27).

Other alternate voices are pursuing selfish personal interests, such as property, pride, prominence, or power. Other voices are the bleatings of lost souls who cannot hear the voice of the Shepherd and

trot about trying to find their way without his guidance. Some of these voices call out guidance for others — the lost leading the lost.

Some alternate voices are of those whose avowed or secret object is to deceive and devour the flock. The Good Shepherd warned, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15; see also 3 Nephi 14:15). In both the Bible and the Book of Mormon the Savior charged his shepherds to watch over and protect the flock from such wolves (see Acts 20:28-29; Alma 5:59).

There have always been alternate voices whose purpose or effect is to deceive. Their existence is part of the Plan. The prophet Lehi taught that there "must needs be . . . an opposition in *all* things" (2 Nephi 2:11; italics added). And there have always been other alternate voices whose purpose or effect is unselfish and wholesome.

In most instances, alternate voices are heard in the same kinds of communications the Church uses to perform its mission. The Church has magazines and other official publications, a newspaper supplement, letters from Church leaders, general conferences, and regular meetings and conferences in local units. Similarly, alternate voices are heard in magazines, journals, and newspapers and at lectures, symposia, and conferences.

The Church's position

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints does not attempt to isolate its members from alternate voices. Its approach, as counseled by the Prophet Joseph Smith, is to teach correct principles and then leave its members to govern themselves by personal choices.

Of course, the Church does have a responsibility to point out what is the voice of the Church and what is not. This is especially necessary when some alternate voice, deliberately or inadvertently, communicates a message in a way that implies Church sponsorship or acquiescence.

For the same reason, the Church does approve or disapprove those publications that are to be published or used in the official activities of the Church, general or local. For example, we have procedures to ensure approved content for materials published in the name of the Church or used for instruction in its classes. These procedures can be somewhat slow and cumbersome, but they have an important benefit. They provide a spiritual quality control that allows members to rely on the truth of what is said. Members who listen to the voice of the Church need not be on guard against being misled. They have no such assurance for what they hear from alternate voices.

Local Church leaders also have a responsibility to review the content of what is taught in classes or presented in worship services, as well as the spiritual qualifications of those they use as teachers or speakers. Leaders must do all they can to avoid expressed or implied Church endorsement for teachings that are not orthodox or for teachers who will use their Church position or prominence to promote something other than gospel truth.

Church leaders are sometimes invited to state the Church's position at a debate or symposium about some doctrine, ordinance, or practice of the Church. This kind of presentation gives an audience the benefit of whatever illumination results from the adversarial clash of opposing viewpoints. Representatives of a business organization, a political party, or a social action group might welcome such an invitation. But the Church is directed to avoid disputation and contention. Moreover, if a representative of the Church participated in such an event, this could have the unwanted effect of encouraging Church members to look to the sponsors of alternate voices to bring them information on the positions of the Church.

Members of the Church are free to participate or to listen to any alternate voices they choose, but Church leaders should avoid official involvement, directly or indirectly.

There are disadvantages to official nonparticipation in events where Church doctrines, ordinances, or practices are

discussed. In some instances, the overall presentation will be decidedly inaccurate or unfair because the position of the Church and the knowledge of its leaders are not presented. In other instances, a volunteer will step forward to present what he or she considers to be the Church's position. Sometimes these volunteers are well-informed and capable, and they contribute to a balanced presentation. Sometimes they are not, and their contribution makes matters worse. When attacked by error, truth is better served by silence than by a bad argument.

In any case, volunteers do not speak for the Church. As long as Church leaders feel they should not participate in an event where the Church or its doctrines are discussed, the overall presentation will be incomplete and unbalanced. In such circumstances, no one should think that the Church's silence constitutes an admission of facts asserted in that setting.

Church members' relationship to alternate voices

Individual members of the Church may also confront difficult questions when they are invited to participate. The question is more complicated when the invitation does not relate to a publication or a lecture on a single subject, but to a group of articles, a series of publications, or a conference or symposium with a large number of subjects. One article or one issue of a publication or one session of a conference may be edifying and uplifting, something a faithful Latter-day Saint would wish to support or enjoy. But another article or another session may be destructive, something a faithful Latter-day Saint would not wish to support or promote.

Some of life's most complicated decisions involve mixtures of good and evil. To what extent can one seek the benefit of something good one desires when this can only be done by simultaneously promoting something bad one opposes? That is a personal decision, but it needs to be made with a sophisticated view of the entire circumstance and with a prayer for heavenly guidance.

There are surely limits at which every faithful Latter-day Saint would draw the line. For example, in my view a person who has made covenants in the holy temple would not make his or her influence available to support or promote a source that publishes or discusses the temple ceremonies, even if other parts of the publication or program are unobjectionable. I would not want my support or my name used to further a public discussion of things I have covenanted to hold sacred.

Ways to acquire sacred knowledge

As Latter-day Saints consider their personal relationship to various alternate voices, they will be helped by considering the ways we acquire knowledge, especially knowledge of sacred things.

In modern revelation the Lord has told us to "seek learning . . . by study and also by faith" (D&C 109:7).

We seek learning by studying the accumulated wisdom of various disciplines and by using the powers of reasoning placed in us by our Creator.

We should also seek learning by faith in God, the giver of revelation. I believe that many of the great discoveries and achievements in science and the arts have resulted from a God-given revelation. Seekers who have paid the price in perspiration have been magnified by inspiration.

The acquisition of knowledge by revelation is an extra bonus to seekers in the sciences and the arts, but it is the fundamental method for those who seek to know God and the doctrines of his gospel. In this area of knowledge, scholarship and reason are insufficient.

A seeker of truth about God must rely on revelation. I believe this is what the Book of Mormon prophet meant when he said, "To be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God" (2 Nephi 9:29). It is surely what the Savior taught when he said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 16:17).

The way to revelation is righteousness. Marveling at the Master's teachings, his enemies asked:

"How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"

"Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John 7:15-17).

The Book of Mormon teaches that those who diligently seek shall have "the mysteries of God . . . unfolded unto them, by the power of the Holy Ghost" (1 Nephi 10:19; see also 1 Corinthians 2:4-16; Alma 18:35; D&C 121:26). The prophet Jacob declared the impossibility of uninspired man's understanding God: "No man knoweth of his ways save it be revealed unto him; wherefore, brethren, despise not the revelations of God" (Jacob 4:8).

The Lord's prescribed methods of acquiring sacred knowledge are very different from the methods used by those who acquire learning exclusively by study. For example, a frequent technique of scholarship is debate or adversarial discussion, a method with which I have had considerable personal experience. But the Lord has instructed us in ancient and modern scriptures that we should not contend over the points of his doctrine (see 3 Nephi 11:28-30; D&C 10:63). Those who teach the gospel are instructed not to preach with "wrath" or "strife" (D&C 60:14; see also 2 Timothy 2:23-25), but in "mildness and in meekness" (D&C 38:41), "reviling not against revilers" (D&C 19:30). Similarly, techniques devised for adversary debate or to search out differences and work out compromises are not effective in acquiring gospel knowledge. Gospel truths and testimony are received from the Holy Ghost through reverent personal study and quiet contemplation.

How to learn by faith

In the scriptures, the Lord has specified how we learn by faith. We must be humble, cultivate faith, repent of our

sins, serve our fellowmen, and keep the commandments of God (see Ether 12:27; D&C 1:28; 12:8; 50:28; 63:23; 136:32–33). As the Book of Mormon says, “Yea, he that repenteth and exerciseth faith, and bringeth forth good works, and prayeth continually without ceasing—unto such it is given to know the mysteries of God” (Alma 26:22).

I have seen some persons attempt to understand or undertake to criticize the gospel or the Church by the method of reason alone, unaccompanied by the use or recognition of revelation. When reason is adopted as the only—or even the principal—method of judging the gospel, the outcome is predetermined. One cannot find God or understand his doctrines and ordinances by closing the door on the means He has prescribed for receiving the truths of his gospel. That is why gospel truths have been corrupted and gospel ordinances have been lost when left to the interpretation and sponsorship of scholars who lack the authority and reject the revelations of God.

That is what the Savior told his professional critics, as recorded in the eleventh chapter of Luke. He was confronted by a group who had hypocritically built monuments to the prophets their predecessors had murdered, while personally rejecting the living prophets God was sending them (see Luke 11:47–49). In what I understand to be a condemnation of their rejection of revelation, the Savior pronounced woe upon these worldly professionals: “For ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered” (Luke 11:52).

The early leaders of the restored church had to learn that same truth. In several revelations the Lord rebuked Joseph Smith, David Whitmer, and others for not having their minds on the things of God, for yielding to “the persuasions of men” (D&C 3:6; 5:21), and for being “persuaded by those whom I have not commanded” (D&C 30:2).

The correct relationship between study and faith in the receipt of sacred knowledge is illustrated in Oliver Cowdery’s attempt to translate ancient records. He failed because he “took no

thought,” but only asked God (D&C 9:7). The Lord told him he should have “stud[ied] it out in [his] mind” and then asked if it was right (9:8). Only then would the Lord reveal whether the translation was correct or not. And only on receiving that revelation could the text be written, because “you cannot write that which is sacred save it be given you from me” (9:9). In the acquisition of sacred knowledge, scholarship and reason are not alternatives to revelation. They are a means to an end, and the end is revelation from God.

God has promised that if we ask him, we will “receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that [we may] know the mysteries and peaceable things—that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal” (D&C 42:61).

Seek sacred knowledge

In our day we are experiencing an explosion of knowledge about the world and its people. But the people of the world are not experiencing a comparable expansion of knowledge about God and his plan for his children. On that subject, what the world needs is not more scholarship and technology but more righteousness and revelation.

I long for the day prophesied by Isaiah when “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord” (Isaiah 11:9; 2 Nephi 21:9). In an inspired utterance, the Prophet Joseph Smith described the Lord’s “pouring down knowledge from heaven upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints” (D&C 121:33). This will not happen for those whose “hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men” (121:35). Those who fail to learn and use “principles of righteousness” (121:36) will be left to themselves to kick against those in authority, “to persecute the saints, and to fight against God” (121:38). In contrast, the Lord makes this great promise to the faithful:

“The doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.

"The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow into thee forever and ever" (D&C 121:45-46).

I testify of these things in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have just heard from Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve will be our concluding speaker.

Elder James E. Faust

I rejoice in the historic action taken at this session of conference, and with all my heart I welcome the new Seventies into the brotherhood of the General Authorities.

As President Hunter noted this morning, it is spring in the Northern Hemisphere. All nature is stirring. The grass is growing. The leaves are budding. The fruit trees are straining to blossom. Lambs are being born. Flowers are coming forth. We have celebrated the Easter season, and we have joined all Christians to rejoice in the resurrection of the Savior from the tomb of death.

The Comforter

It was a profoundly moving event those centuries ago when the Savior led his beloved disciples into the favored Garden of Gethsemane for the last time. Jesus was mindful of the great ordeal ahead of him. He agonized, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch" (Mark 14:34). He was ready for the unspeakable agony. Said he, "The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak" (Mark 14:38).

The eleven Apostles no doubt sensed — but could not understand — that some portentous event would happen. Jesus had spoken of leaving them. They knew that the Master whom they loved and depended upon was going somewhere, but where, they did not know. They had heard him say, "I will not leave you comfortless. . . . But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the

Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:18, 26).

It is of this Comforter that I wish to speak today. I do so because I am persuaded that there is a greater need for divine oversight in our lives today than ever before. I wish to testify that, by the power and gift of the Holy Ghost, we can know what to do and what not to do to bring happiness and peace to our lives.

The Spirit of God

Elder LeGrand Richards stated, "It must . . . be understood that the Holy Ghost is the medium through whom God and his Son, Jesus Christ, communicate with men [and women] upon the earth" (*A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, rev. ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976], p. 119). All men are enlightened by the Spirit of God, or Light of Christ — sometimes called conscience. Job stated, "But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (Job 32:8). This is the Spirit of God emanating from Deity. This power of God is the means by which, as President Joseph F. Smith stated, "every man is enlightened, the wicked as well as the good, the intelligent and the ignorant, the high and the low, each in accordance with his capacity to receive the light" (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939], p. 62; see also D&C 88:3-13).

The gift of the Holy Ghost

The gift of the Holy Ghost, however, in distinction from the Spirit of God, does not come to all men and women. The ministrations of the Holy Ghost are, however, limited without receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that "there is a difference between the Holy Ghost and the gift of the Holy Ghost" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, ed. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 199). Many outside the Church have received revelation from the Holy Ghost, convincing them of the truth of the gospel. Cornelius, as well as many in attendance on the day of Pentecost, received the Holy Ghost before baptism (see Acts 2:1-12; 10:30-44). It is through this power that seekers after truth acquire a testimony of the Book of Mormon and the principles of the gospel.

The gift of the Holy Ghost comes after one repents and becomes worthy. It is received after baptism by the laying on of hands by those who have the authority. On the day of Pentecost, Peter instructed those who had previously been touched spiritually by the Holy Ghost, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). Those possessing the gift of the Holy Ghost can come to a greater light and testimony. The Holy Ghost bears witness of the truth and impresses upon the soul the reality of God the Father and the son Jesus Christ so deeply that no earthly power or authority can separate him from that knowledge (see 2 Nephi 31:18).

A sure compass

The Book of Mormon, the Bible, and other scriptures, along with the guidance of modern prophets, provide true standards of conduct. In addition, the gift of the Holy Ghost is available as a sure guide, as the voice of conscience, and as a moral compass. This guiding compass is personal to each of us. It is unerring. It is unfailing. However, we must listen

to it in order to steer clear of the shoals which will cause our lives to sink into unhappiness and self-doubt.

We need a sure compass because many of the standards, values, vows, and obligations which have helped us preserve our spirituality, our honor, our integrity, our worth, and our decency have little by little been assaulted and discarded. I speak, among other values, of the standards of chastity, parental respect, fidelity in marriage, and obedience to God's laws—such as Sabbath observance—which have been weakened, if not destroyed. Society has been misled.

Evil is often accepted gradually

Thomas R. Rowan, commenting on the lowering of television standards, said: "Author and commentator Malcolm Muggeridge once told a story about some frogs who were killed without resistance by being boiled alive in the cauldron of water. Why didn't they resist? Because when they were put in the cauldron, the water was tepid. Then the temperature was raised ever so slightly, and the water was warm, then a tiny bit warmer, then a bit warmer still, and on and on and on. The change was so gradual, almost imperceptible, that the frogs accommodated themselves to their new environment—until it was too late. The point that Mr. Muggeridge was making was not about frogs but about us and how we tend to accept evil as long as it is not a shock that is thrust on us abruptly. We are inclined to accept something morally wrong if it is only a shade more wrong than something we are already accepting" (*National Press Club Forum*).

This gradual process was foretold by ancient prophets. Nephi tells us that the hearts of the children of men would be stirred up "to anger against that which is good. And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well—and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell" (2 Nephi 28:20-21).

I have always been fascinated that people are led carefully down to hell.

Alexander Pope expressed a similar thought concerning the acceptance of evil:

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien
As to be hated needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her
face,
We first endure, then pity,
then embrace.
(*Essay on Man*, epistle 2, lines
217-20)

The Holy Ghost can strengthen us

The gift of the Holy Ghost will prompt us to resist temptation by reminding us of the gospel law in the very moment of temptation. Said B. H. Roberts, "By having the Holy Spirit as one's prompter in the moments of temptation, . . . this law of the Gospel . . . may be complied with" (*The Gospel: An Exposition of Its First Principles and Man's Relationship to Deity*, 10th ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1965], pp. 191-92).

I wish to alert young people to this special, transcendent gift of the Holy Ghost, which is available to all. This Comforter is a personage of spirit and a member of the Godhead. The Doctrine and Covenants explains why the Holy Ghost is a personage of spirit: "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us" (D&C 130:22).

The gift of the Holy Ghost entitles a person who is desirous and worthy to enjoy "the power and light of truth of the Holy Ghost" (*Gospel Doctrine*, p. 61).

The comforting Spirit of the Holy Ghost can abide with us twenty-four hours a day: when we work, when we play, when we rest. Its strengthening influence can be with us year in and year out. That sustaining influence can be with

us in joy and sorrow, when we rejoice as well as when we grieve.

The Comforter brings peace

I believe the Spirit of the Holy Ghost is the greatest guarantor of inward peace in our unstable world. It can be more mind-expanding and can make us have a better sense of well-being than any chemical or other earthly substance. It will calm nerves; it will breathe peace to our souls. This Comforter can be with us as we seek to improve. It can function as a source of revelation to warn us of impending danger and also help keep us from making mistakes. It can enhance our natural senses so that we can see more clearly, hear more keenly, and remember what we should remember. It is a way of maximizing our happiness.

The Spirit—the Holy Ghost—will help us work out our insecurities. For instance, it can help us learn to forgive. There comes a time when people must move on, seeking greater things rather than being consumed by the memory of some hurt or injustice. Dwelling constantly on past injuries is, by its nature, limiting to the Spirit. It does not promote peace.

A confirming witness

The Holy Ghost will also help us solve crises of faith. The Spirit of the Holy Ghost can be a confirming witness, testifying of heavenly things. Through that Spirit, a strong knowledge distills in one's mind, and one feels all doubt or questions disappear.

The Apostle Paul said, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17). He added elsewhere that true Saints are the "temple of the Holy Ghost" (1 Corinthians 6:19).

The Holy Ghost's sealing power

I wish to say a word about the Holy Spirit of Promise, which is the sealing and ratifying power of the Holy Ghost.

To have a covenant or ordinance sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise is a compact through which the inherent blessings will be obtained, provided those seeking the blessing are true and faithful (see D&C 76:50-54).

For example, when the covenant of marriage for time and eternity, the culminating gospel ordinance, is sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise, it can literally open the windows of heaven for great blessings to flow to a married couple who seek for those blessings. Such marriages become rich, whole, and sacred. Though each party to the marriage can maintain his or her separate identity, yet together in their covenants they can be like two vines wound inseparably around each other. Each thinks of his or her companion before thinking of self.

One of the great blessings available through the Holy Spirit of Promise is that all of our covenants, vows, oaths, and performances, which we receive through the ordinances and blessings of the gospel, are not only confirmed but may be sealed by that Holy Spirit of Promise. However, that sealing may be broken by unrighteousness. It is also important to remember that if a person undertakes to receive the sealing blessing by deceit, "then the blessing is not sealed, notwithstanding the integrity and authority of the person officiating" (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954-56], 2:98-99).

To have a covenant or ordinance sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise means that the compact is binding on earth and in heaven.

"I will not leave you comfortless"

It is always gratifying to hear of prayers being answered and miracles occurring in the lives of those who need them. But what of those noble and faithful souls who receive no miracles, whose prayers are not answered in the way they wish? What is their solace? From whence will their comfort come? Said the Savior of the world: "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. . . . But the

Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, . . . the Father will send in my name" (John 14:18, 26).

In simple terms, the gift of the Holy Ghost is an enhanced spiritual power permitting those entitled thereto to receive it, to receive a greater knowledge and enjoyment of the influence of Deity.

Joseph's counsel to Brigham Young

In the marvelous experience of Brigham Young in February of 1847, when the Prophet Joseph appeared to him in a dream or vision, Brigham pleaded to be reunited with the Prophet. Brigham Young asked the Prophet if he had a message for the Brethren. The Prophet said:

"Tell the people to be humble and faithful, and to be sure to keep the spirit of the Lord and it will lead them right. Be careful and not turn away the still small voice; it will teach them what to do and where to go; it will yield the fruits of the kingdom. Tell the Brethren to keep their hearts open to conviction, so that when the Holy Ghost comes to them, their hearts will be ready to receive it."

The Prophet further directed Brigham Young as follows: "They can tell the Spirit of the Lord from all other spirits; it will whisper peace and joy to their souls; it will take malice, hatred, strife and all evil from their hearts; and their whole desire will be to do good, bring forth righteousness and build up the kingdom of God" (*Manuscript History of Brigham Young: 1846-47* [Historical Dept., The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints], pp. 528-31).

A constant companion

If in this life we cannot live in the presence of the Savior as did Simon Peter, James, John, Mary, Martha, and the others, then the gift of the Holy Ghost can be our Comforter and sure compass.

I testify that as we mature spiritually under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, our sense of personal worth, of belonging, and of identity increases. I further testify that I would rather have every person enjoy the Spirit of the Holy Ghost than any

other association, for they will be led by that Spirit to light and truth and pure intelligence, which can carry them back into the presence of God.

I pray that the promise of the Lord will be fulfilled for each of us, that "the Holy Ghost shall be [our] constant companion, and [our] scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and [our] dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto [us] forever and ever" (D&C 121:46). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has been our concluding speaker.

We remind the brethren of the general priesthood meeting which will convene in the Tabernacle this evening at 6:00 P.M.

The nationwide CBS Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will

be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those desiring to attend this broadcast must be in their seats in the Tabernacle no later than 9:15 A.M.

We call your attention to the fact that because of the change to daylight saving time tonight, you should move your clocks ahead one hour before you retire; otherwise, you may come at the wrong time.

We express gratitude to the BYU combined choirs for the beautiful music we have heard this afternoon. They will sing in closing, "How Beautiful upon the Mountain." Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder L. Aldin Porter of the Second Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "How Beautiful upon the Mountain."

Elder L. Aldin Porter offered the benediction.

GENERAL PRIESTHOOD SESSION

The general priesthood session, the third session of the 159th Annual General Conference, convened in the Tabernacle at 6:00 P.M. on Saturday, April 1, 1989. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for this session was provided by the Ricks College centennial priesthood choir. The choir was directed by Richard Robison and Mike Belnap, with Clay Christiansen at the organ.

President Monson opened the meeting with the following remarks:

President Thomas S. Monson

Brethren, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked that I conduct this general priesthood session. We extend our love

and best wishes to all of the brethren participating in this session.

These services are being relayed by closed-circuit and satellite transmission to holders of the priesthood gathered in the Assembly Hall, the BYU Marriott Center, and locations in many countries around the world. We note that Elders Angel Abrea and Glenn L. Rudd are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall, and Elders James M. Paramore and Gardner H. Russell are seated on the stand in the BYU Marriott Center.

For the information of the brethren in outlying areas, we announce that at the session this afternoon, the following were sustained as additional members of the First Quorum of the Seventy: Joe J. Christensen, W. Eugene Hansen, Jeffrey R. Holland, and Marlin K. Jensen.

Announcement was also made of the establishment of the Second Quorum of

the Seventy, with the initial membership of the Second Quorum of the Seventy comprising those General Authorities presently serving under a five-year call. The following were sustained as additional members of the Second Quorum of the Seventy: Carlos H. Amado, Benjamin B. Banks, Spencer J. Condie, F. Melvin Hammond, Malcolm S. Jeppsen, Richard P. Lindsay, Merlin R. Lybbert, and Horacio A. Tenorio.

The singing during this session will be furnished by the Ricks College centennial priesthood choir, under the direction of Brothers Richard Robison and Mike Belnap, with Brother Clay Christiansen at the organ.

We shall begin by the choir singing "Come, Let Us Anew." Following

the singing, Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "Come, Let Us Anew."

Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi offered the invocation.

President Monson

The choir will now sing the hymn "Jesus, Once of Humble Birth."

The choir sang "Jesus, Once of Humble Birth."

Presentation of Scouting Award to President Benson

President Thomas S. Monson

Brethren, we are honored this evening to have present with us on the stand Mr. Edward C. Joullian III, international commissioner of the Boy Scouts of America and past president of the Boy Scouts of America, and Mr. Eugene F. "Bud" Reid, chairman of the International Committee of the Boy Scouts of America and member of the World Scout Committee. Both Mr. Joullian and Mr. Reid are members of the National Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America.

Also in attendance is Mr. Julian L. Dyke, national director of public affairs, representing Ben H. Love, chief Scout executive of the Boy Scouts of America, who is on assignment abroad.

They have flown a long way to be here, and we welcome them. I now invite these three men to come to the stand.

It is my privilege to call on Mr. Reid to make a most important presentation to President Ezra Taft Benson.

Eugene F. "Bud" Reid

Thank you, Mr. Monson. There are more than sixteen million Scouts in over 150 countries and territories around the world. In the eighty years since the Scout movement was founded, some 250 million Scouts have benefited from its programs designed to help educate young people to take a constructive place in their society.

The Boy Scouts of America is the largest single Scout association in the world, with almost four million members. The Bronze Wolf is an award instituted by the founder of the world Scout movement, Robert Baden-Powell, and is the only international award given by the World Scout Committee. The award is made for outstanding services given by the individual to Scouting in his own country and internationally.

I request that President Ezra Taft Benson come forward. I am going to read a citation for the award of the Bronze Wolf:

"President Ezra Taft Benson, President of The Church of Jesus Christ of

Latter-day Saints, member of the Boy Scouts of America Advisory Council.

"President Ezra Taft Benson first joined Scouting as an assistant Scoutmaster and served subsequently as Scoutmaster before graduating through the ranks of adult leadership in a number of regional and national committees and boards.

"He has served with distinction on the National Executive Committee, National Executive Board, and National Council International Committee of the Boy Scouts of America.

"As President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Ezra Taft Benson has exerted vast influence regarding the Church's strong support of Scouting throughout the world. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is today the largest sponsor of

Scouting in the United States, and its relationship with Scouting in other countries is also strong.

"The World Scout Committee confers on President Ezra Taft Benson the award of the Bronze Wolf for outstanding services to the Scout movement."

President Benson, here is your certificate, together with a copy of the citation. Thank you for your leadership and your devotion and commitment to Scouting. It is a well-deserved recognition.

President Monson

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now address us. He will be followed by Elder John H. Groberg, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Richard G. Scott

I speak to you who want to do right, to you who have had those stirrings in your heart to live worthily no matter what others may say, and to you who want to have such feelings. You are the finest generation that has ever come to earth. We're proud of you. I have a burning desire to communicate truths which, if understood and lived, will fundamentally change your life. I ask you to help me. Will you listen with your mind and your heart, so that my prayer that you will be helped can be answered?

Your spiritual flame

For a piece of wood to catch fire, it must first be heated to a temperature at which it ignites, then burns by itself. The initial heating requires energy from outside. When it is ignited, it becomes self-sustaining and gives beneficial light and heat.

For you, the early years of life are often spent in absorbing help from parents and others as you prepare for the time you

can be more self-sufficient. I want to help you catch fire spiritually, that you may enjoy the marvelous experience of radiating strength to others while you continue to grow and develop yourself.

There is a more intense fire than that of burning wood. It is produced from a mixture of aluminum powder and metal oxide. By itself, it is cold and lifeless, but when heated to the ignition temperature, it becomes a self-sustaining source of brilliant light and intense heat.

Once it ignites it cannot be put out by ordinary means. It will burn under water or in other environments that extinguish an ordinary flame. When it burns, it does not depend on its surroundings for support. It is self-sustaining.

The spiritual flame in some is easily quenched by the world around them. Yet others live so as to be strengthened and nurtured by the Lord. They not only overcome the temptations of the world, their unquenchable spirit enriches the lives of others around them.

Trust the Lord to help resolve problems

Two missionaries who were aflame spiritually had spent an active day establishing a branch of the Church in a remote village. At 5:30 that morning, they had taught a family before the husband left for the fields. Later they had struggled to plaster their adobe walls to keep out blood-sucking insects. During the week they had laid a small cement floor and had hung a five-gallon can with a shower head to keep clean. They had begun a sanitation facility and put new gravel and sand in their water filter. For part of the day they had worked beside men in the fields to later teach them. They were exhausted and ready for welcome rest.

There came an anxious knock at the crude wooden door. A small girl was crying. She had been running and was gasping for air. They struggled to piece together her message, delivered amid sobs in a torrent of words. Her father had suffered a severe head injury while riding his donkey in the darkness. She knew he would die unless the elders saved his life. Men of the village were at that moment carrying him to the missionaries. She pled for her father's life, then ran to help him.

The seriousness of their desperate situation began to engulf them. They were in a village with no doctors or medical facilities. There were no telephones. The only means of communication was a rough road up a riverbed, and they had no vehicle.

The people of the valley trusted them. The missionaries were not trained in medicine. They did not know how to care for a serious head wound, but they knew someone who did. They knelt in prayer and explained their problem to an understanding Father in Heaven. They pled for guidance, realizing that they could not save a life without His help.

They felt impressed that the wound should be cleansed, closed, and the man given a blessing. One companion asked, "How will he stand the pain? How can we cleanse the wound and bless him while he is in such suffering?"

They knelt again and explained to their Father, "We have no medicine. We have no anesthetic. Please help us to know what to do. Please bless him, Father."

As they arose, friends arrived with the injured man. Even in the subdued candlelight, they could see he had been severely hurt. He was suffering greatly. As they began to cleanse the wound, a very unusual thing occurred. He fell asleep. Carefully, anxiously, they finished the cleansing, closed the wound, and provided a makeshift bandage. As they laid their hands on his head to bless him, he awoke peacefully. Their prayer had been answered, and his life saved. The trust of the people increased, and a branch of the Church flourished.

The missionaries were able to save a life because they trusted the Lord. They knew how to pray with faith for help with a problem they could not resolve themselves. Because they were obedient to the Lord, the Lord trusted them and answered their prayer. They had learned how to recognize the answer when it came as a quiet prompting of the Spirit. You have that same help available to you if you live for it.

The Savior said, "And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you" (3 Nephi 18:20).

Trust the Lord to protect you

Two young missionaries were walking down a dusty road. In their hands they carried the scriptures, and in each heart burned a desire to share truth. They saw on the ridge of a hill a group of horsemen laughing and pointing toward them. They sensed they were in severe danger. Each prayed for help as a huge man on a powerful horse galloped down the hill toward them. His menacing whip slashed the air and cracked threateningly. He thundered closer. The sneer on his face communicated his cruel intent to harm them. Suddenly, he reined in his horse,

paused, whirled, and disappeared down the valley.

These elders trusted in the Lord and were living worthily. He therefore could protect them against the danger they were helpless to avoid. Your determination to live righteously will make it possible for you to be protected from the dangers that surround you.

Don't face the world alone

I know that each one of you faces overwhelming challenges. Sometimes they are so concentrated, so unrelenting, that you may feel they are beyond your capacity to control.

Don't face the world alone. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5).

In many ways, the world is like a jungle, with dangers that can harm or mutilate your body, enslave or destroy your mind, or decimate your morality. It was intended that life be a challenge, not so that you would fail, but that you might succeed through overcoming. You face on every hand difficult but vitally important decisions. There is an array of temptations, destructive influences, and camouflaged dangers, the like of which no previous generation has faced. I am persuaded that today no one, no matter how gifted, strong, or intelligent, will avoid serious problems without seeking the help of the Lord.

I repeat: Don't face the world alone. Trust in the Lord.

Repent and become clean

If one of you has seriously sinned, repent — now. It is not good to violate the commandments of the Lord. It is worse to do nothing about it. Sin is like cancer in the body. It will never heal itself. It will become progressively worse unless cured through the medicine of repentance. You can be made completely whole, new, purified, and clean every whit, through the miracle of repentance.

Trust in the Lord. He knows what He is doing. He already knows of your

problems. And He is waiting for you to ask for help.

The dangers of selfishness

Has one of you ever had the feeling you are walking alone down a dark tunnel that gets ever more depressing? No one seems to care? Life gets more and more complicated and discouraging? You may have been following a path many others have trod. It often begins with self-pity, then self-indulgence, and, if not checked, leads to gross selfishness.

Unless overcome by serving others, selfishness leads to serious sin, with its depressing feelings and binding chains. It is the crowbar Satan uses to open a heart to temptation in order to destroy agency. He would bind mind and body through crippling habits and separate us from our Father in Heaven and His Son by cultivating selfishness.

If you have had such feelings of depression, turn around — literally turn your life around. The other end of the tunnel is filled with light. No matter where you have been or what you have done, that light is always available to you. Satan will try to convince you that you have gone too far to be saved. That is a lie. You will need some help to get started. The scriptures are a good place to begin. A father, mother, brother, sister, bishop, or friend will help. As you move nearer the light through repentance, you will feel better about yourself and more confident in your future. You will rediscover how wonderful life really is.

The Savior gave his life that you and I can correct mistakes, even the most serious ones. His plan is perfect. It always works for each one who follows the rules.

Build righteous character

Getting through the hazards of life requires understanding, skill, experience, and self-assurance like that required to sink a difficult basket under pressure. In the game of life, that is called righteous character. Such character is not developed in moments of great challenge or temptation. That is when it is used. Char-

acter is woven quietly from the threads of hundreds of correct decisions (like practice sessions). When strengthened by obedience and worthy acts, correct decisions form a fabric of character that brings victory in time of great need.

Righteous character provides the foundation of spiritual strength that enables you to make difficult, extremely important decisions correctly when they seem overpowering.

Righteous character is what you *are*. It is more important than what you own, what you have learned, or what you have accomplished. It allows you to be trusted. It opens the door to help from the Lord in moments of great challenge or temptation.

Act with integrity

Be honest. Righteous character is based on integrity.

Never lie to yourself. A lie can give temporary advantage, but it brings with it long-term difficulties. Make no premeditated plans to do wrong, no lies to gain advantage, no falsehood to cover mistakes. When you are completely honest with yourself and measure your acts against what you know is right, you will not be dishonest with anyone. Moreover, you will make sure the Lord can bless you when you need it.

When you are tempted to break a commandment and hide it from others, don't do it. It will always hurt you. Satan will see to that. He'll make it known because he wants to destroy you.

You have observed how some of your friends try to live a double standard of life. They want to appear to their parents and church leaders as though they are doing the right things, but secretly they do otherwise. They may have moments of excitement they consider pleasure, but they can never be at peace or truly happy. They fight against themselves internally and run the risk of destroying mind and body.

Be the leader in doing right

When you are alone with your friends, talk about doing good and being good. The feelings you will have, the promptings that will come to you, will powerfully motivate you for good. Those who do wrong and scheme to get away with it will never know such feelings. If you don't feel comfortable with the thought of discussing good with your friends, they are not your friends. Change them.

Each one of us has a natural, powerful desire to be accepted, to be liked, to be somebody.

Years ago, I learned something of the price paid for trust and worthy recognition. During a summer break, I found a job on an oyster boat in Long Island Sound. Four of us lived together in an area not much larger than the cab of a big semitrailer tractor. At first, I was considered a spy for the owner, then a kid who didn't have courage to live like a man. They really gave me a bad time. Finally, when they understood I would not abandon my principles, we became friends. Then privately, one by one, they asked for help.

You know what is right and wrong. Be the leader in doing right. At first, you may not be understood. You may not have the friends you want right away, but in time, they will respect you, then admire you. Many will come privately to receive strength from your spiritual flame. You can do it. I know you can do it.

Follow the Spirit's promptings

When your life complies with the will of the Lord and is in harmony with His teachings, the Holy Ghost is your companion in need. You will be able to be inspired by the Lord to know what to do. When needed, your efforts will be fortified with divine power. Like the missionaries, you can be protected and strengthened to do what alone would be impossible.

As we have talked, some of you have been prompted by the Spirit about

private things the Lord wants you to do something about. You have been impressed to know what to do. Those feelings are the very most important part of our time together. They are a personal message of the Lord to you. Remember that message. Follow it precisely, now, for your happiness.

We love you and trust you. The Lord needs you for His purposes. Live His commandments. Learn to follow the promptings of the Spirit. Keep your spiritual flame burning brightly.

Live to have trust in the Lord. Live to be trusted and helped by Him.

I testify that the Lord lives. He loves you and will help you. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have just listened to Elder Richard G. Scott, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder John H. Groberg, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now speak to us.

Elder John H. Groberg

Come unto Christ through the sacrament

One of the most important invitations ever issued to us and to all mankind is to "come unto Christ and be perfected in him" (Moroni 10:32). How do we do that? One of the most beautiful and important ways is through the ordinance of the sacrament.

The Lord instituted the sacrament, as we know it today, during what we commonly call the Last Supper. In one sense, it was the last supper, but in another, it was the first supper—the beginning of many spiritual feasts.

The resurrected Lord instructed the Book of Mormon people:

"[Ye] shall break bread and bless it and give it unto the people of my church, unto all those who shall believe and be baptized in my name.

"And this shall ye always observe to do, even as I have done. . . .

"And this shall ye do in remembrance of my body, which I have shown unto you. And it shall be a testimony unto the Father that ye do always remember me. And if ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you" (3 Nephi 18:5–7).

The moving tenderness and deep significance of this transcendent event are still available to us today. But we must do as the early disciples did and follow the

doctrine of Christ, which is to believe in Jesus, rely on him, repent of our sins, take his name upon us by being baptized in his church, receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, and faithfully follow Christ all of our lives.

He knows we need much help to do this, so he provides that the ordinance of the sacrament be repeated often.

This invitation of the Savior to come unto him is issued regularly and is universal. Everyone is included—men, women, and children. Old and young alike participate. No one is barred except by himself.

The Lord said, "And ye see that I have commanded that none of you should go away, but rather have commanded that ye should come unto me" (3 Nephi 18:25).

Partake of the sacrament worthily

But the Lord, who knows the terrible consequences of hypocrisy, also warned:

"Ye shall not suffer any one knowingly to partake of my flesh and blood unworthily, . . .

"For whoso eateth and drinketh my flesh and blood unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation to his soul" (3 Nephi 18:28–29).

What does it mean to partake of the sacrament worthily? Or how do we know if we are unworthy?

If we desire to improve (which is to repent) and are not under priesthood restriction, then, in my opinion, we are worthy. If, however, we have no desire to improve, if we have no intention of following the guidance of the Spirit, we must ask: Are we worthy to partake, or are we making a mockery of the very purpose of the sacrament, which is to act as a catalyst for personal repentance and improvement? If we remember the Savior and all he has done and will do for us, we will improve our actions and thus come closer to him, which keeps us on the road to eternal life.

If, however, we refuse to repent and improve, if we do not remember him and keep his commandments, then we have stopped our growth, and that is damnation to our souls.

The sacrament is an intensely personal experience, and we are the ones who knowingly are worthy or otherwise.

Blessings of partaking worthily

Do you remember the feeling you had when you were baptized—that sweet, clean feeling of a pure soul, having been forgiven, washed clean through the merits of the Savior? If we partake of the sacrament worthily, we can feel that way regularly, for we renew that covenant, which includes his forgiveness.

Those who would deny themselves the blessing of the sacrament by not attending sacrament meeting or by not thinking of the Savior during the services surely must not understand the great opportunity to be forgiven, to have his Spirit to guide and comfort them! What more could anyone ask?

Repent to become worthy

As we worthily partake of the sacrament, we will sense those things we need to improve in and receive the help and determination to do so. No matter what our problems, the sacrament always gives hope.

Most of these problems we must work out ourselves. For example, if we aren't paying our tithing, we simply de-

termine to start doing so. But for some problems, we must see our bishop—the Spirit will let us know which. Doing what the Spirit dictates always results in blessings.

Let me give an example. Some years ago, a young couple we will call the Joneses visited with their bishop about a problem the wife had. The details are not important, but through the direction of the Spirit, the bishop's decision was that, among other things, Sister Jones would not partake of the sacrament for a period of time while she worked out some attitudes and problems.

With lots of love and support, she continued to attend meetings with her family, and few but her husband and the bishop were aware of the situation or even noticed that week after week she did not partake of the sacrament. At first she didn't feel much difference; but as time went on, she became more and more desirous to be worthy to partake of the sacrament. She thought she had repented before, but as the real soul-searching deepened and as her desire to worthily partake of the sacrament increased, true fundamental changes began to take place in her life and in her actions and in her thinking.

More time passed. Finally, during one sacrament meeting, the Spirit bore witness to the bishop and to Brother and Sister Jones that the time had come for her to again partake of the sacrament. "Next Sunday," the bishop said.

Next Sunday came, and Sister Jones sat again with her family, nervous, yet excited and full of anticipation. "Am I really worthy? How I want to be!" she thought. The sacrament hymn was more meaningful than ever. She sang with such feeling that it was difficult to hold back the tears. And the sacrament prayers—how profound! She listened so intently that every word sank deep into her soul—to take his name, always remember him, keep his commandments, always have his Spirit (see D&C 20:77, 79). "Oh, how I desire this," she thought.

The deacons began to move up and down the aisles, and the trays were passed from person to person across the rows. As

one young deacon got closer and closer to her row, her heart began to pound harder and harder. Then the tray was coming down her very row. Now her husband was holding the tray in front of her! Tears streamed down her face. There was a barely audible sob of joy, "Oh!" as she reached for the emblem of the Lord's love for her. The congregation did not hear the sob, but they did notice the tears in the bishop's eyes.

Life and hope and forgiveness and spiritual strength had been given and received. No one could be more worthy. Sister Jones truly *wanted* to have his Spirit. She *wanted* to take his name upon her. With all her heart, she *wanted* to remember him and keep his commandments. She *wanted* to repent, to improve, and to follow the guidance of his Spirit.

Becoming a people pure in heart

Think of it. Think of what could and should happen in your life, in your ward, in your stake, in the whole Church, in the whole world, if every Sunday individuals — hundreds, thousands, even millions — under the authority of the priesthood of God, took the sacrament worthily and thus repented and sincerely determined to better follow the guidance of the Lord's Spirit.

The life that would be given, the forgiveness that would be obtained, the spiritual strength that would be received! The light that would thus be generated would cause Zion to shine forth brilliantly and would prepare a people pure in heart, ready for the Lord's second coming in a way that would be marvelous to behold.

Responsibilities of priesthood bearers

Brethren, as leaders we must do more to have more people attend sacrament meeting and partake of the sacrament with more worthiness! We must teach more fully, with deeper feeling and greater power, the doctrine of Christ as embodied in the sacrament.

You young men must be worthy and realize what a privilege you have to pass the bread and water, the emblems of

the Lord's love for all of us. Think of the blessings you offer — hope, love, joy, forgiveness, freedom, and everlasting life. What a contrast to so many youth who today pass other types of white substances and other kinds of liquids that bring gloom and failure, captivity and death in the deceitful guise of happiness! Oh, the goodness and mercy of our God as he overcomes the cunning of the evil one!

Emblems of the Lord's love

I testify from the depths of my soul that these principles are true. Jesus did suffer and die for us. Through him, and only through him, can we have life and the joy thereof, both in time and in eternity.

I love the Savior. I feel that as he hung upon the cross and looked out over the dark scene, he saw more than mocking soldiers and cruel taunters. He saw more than crying women and fearful friends. He remembered and saw even more than women at wells or crowds on hills or throngs by seashores. He saw more, much more. He, who knows all and has all power, saw through the stream of time. His huge, magnanimous, loving soul encompassed all eternity and took in all people and all times and all sins and all forgiveness and all everything. Yes, he saw down to you and to me and provided us an all-encompassing opportunity to escape the terrible consequences of death and sin.

And even as he suffered for all of us, he voiced that most beautiful of all requests, "Father, forgive them" (Luke 23:34).

We must do our part and cry with full fervor of soul, "Father, forgive me through the merits of thy Beloved Son as I partake of these emblems of his broken body and spilt blood for me. Please, Father, through him, forgive me! Help me to do better."

All life as we know it comes about through the joining of two separate elements — each necessary. The Savior, through his infinite atonement, provides that vital element for us. He asks us to

provide the other element—even a broken heart and a contrite spirit—for he will not force us.

Think of the symbolism. Think of the power for bringing about a newness of life by worthily partaking of the sacrament.

I testify that God our Father lives. I testify that Jesus is the Christ. I know he lives. I know he forgives. I know he loves. I know he smiles tenderly, pleadingly. I know he stands ready to help us—always. I know he guides and directs and blesses with unutterable blessings and unspeakable treasures of eternity. I know he gives knowledge of eternally important things if we desire. I know that worthily partaking of the sacrament is of eternal importance to him and to us.

Yes, I know he gives life—in all of its depth of meaning. As the emblems of

his love are regularly presented before us, please let us hear, “Father, forgive them,” and respond, “Father, forgive me.” This leads to life—eternal life—in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder John H. Groberg, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing “High on the Mountain Top,” following which we shall hear from Elder Russell C. Taylor, a member of the Second Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation sang “High on the Mountain Top.”

Elder Russell C. Taylor

My message tonight is directed to the young men of the Aaronic Priesthood. I will admit before all of you: get me to a good football or basketball game, and I’m a happy man. I have four favorite teams. Three of them are professional, and one is a college team. When they win, my wife has a hard time keeping me in my seat. When one of these teams loses, I’m not very friendly (and with some of these teams, I’ve had a lot of practice being unfriendly this year). But, after a night’s sleep, I find it doesn’t really matter—not really.

But when a young man loses in his preparation for life, that really matters—because that has lasting consequences.

Making points for righteousness

Playing ball is a great deal like life. You want to do your best, to be committed, to be a team player. You want to follow the rules so you don’t foul out. You want to make points.

The rules in real life are different from those in a game. Our rules are the commandments of God. You make points when you serve your mission, draw close to the Lord, live the Word of Wisdom, stay morally clean, and live a life of service and Church activity.

How many points are you making in your life? Are you winning?

When you make a basket in a basketball game or kick a goal in soccer, there’s a great feeling of accomplishment and excitement. The same thing happens when you make gospel points. You feel good about yourself. You also feel closer to the Lord. You feel the excitement of knowing you’re doing what God wants you to do.

You’re in a different league when you’re shooting for gospel points. It’s a celestial league. You’re one of the Lord’s own sons, and he’s depending on you to do your very best. There are forces of good and forces of evil in the world. You represent the Lord as a force for good.

You have come to earth at this time for a special purpose. He has a mission for you to accomplish, a *lifetime* mission.

You're probably going to have a tough opponent to overcome. Sometimes the media, friends, or other influences will try to pull you away from what is right. Choose to stand with the Lord. Join with the valiant prophet Joshua, who declared, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

To win this most important game of all, you need to make *five points*. Let me be your coach for a few minutes. We will talk about plays and assignments—making points for righteousness.

Serve a mission

The first point to be made is to *serve your mission*.

Be determined to serve a mission. Prepare well for it.

The prophet has asked each young man to serve a mission. That usually involves sacrifice. Ofttimes it means you give up something good for something better. It may mean postponing schooling or an athletic scholarship. It means saving money—for a mission instead of a car.

It also means sacrificing the things of the world. The prophet Moroni tells us, "Come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and *deny yourselves of all ungodliness*" (Moroni 10:32; italics added).

The hymn tells us, "Sacrifice brings forth the blessings of heaven" ("Praise to the Man," *Hymns*, no. 27). Do you know that sacrifice purifies our spirits and brings us closer to the Lord?

Serving your mission is more than being called and sharing the gospel with your brothers and sisters for two years. That is important, but your mission is also doing what the Lord wants you to do throughout *all* your life.

A mission can change the quality of your life in ways that you can barely imagine. You will find out what that is only as you serve the Lord.

Serve your mission. Make a point for righteousness.

Draw close to the Lord

The second point to be made is to *draw close to the Lord*.

How do you make that point? You make it by taking appropriate time to *read the scriptures daily*, having earnest prayer, and fasting. These practices will help your testimony grow.

A seminary student said, "I used to think the scriptures were boring—until I started to read them." At a recent stake conference, a beautiful young woman said in her testimony, "If you think the scriptures are boring, then you are boring." They discovered that the scriptures provide answers to the problems they may face—with friends, at home, or at school. Gospel principles apply to any time period—Old Testament times or today.

The Lord will speak to you through the words of the scriptures. Draw close to the Lord through the scriptures.

Take a *time-out* to *pray each morning* and night and as often in between as needed. That's one of the wonderful gifts the Lord has given you—he's accessible by prayer any time, any place. He's always there for you. Tell him your goals, your troubles. Give him thanks for your blessings. Ask him to teach you how you can help do his work. He hears your prayers. He cares about you. He wants you to succeed in living the gospel. Draw close to the Lord through prayer.

Fast the first Sunday of each month and also when you need special help from the Lord. Make it a true fast. Fasting is more than abstaining from food. It is more than helping the needy through fast offerings, important as that is. It is a spiritual law as well, just as is the law of tithing or the Word of Wisdom.

In a sincere fast, we are given an open invitation by the Lord to draw close to him, to open our hearts to him, to feel his Spirit and pure love. It's a time to recommit to obeying his commandments.

You'll find there are points to make as you draw close to the Lord through scripture study, prayer, and fasting. Your

testimony will grow. While many young men today are starving spiritually, you can grow spiritually.

Live the Word of Wisdom

The third point: this is a tough two-pointer; the defense is all over you. *Live the Word of Wisdom.*

Choose not to use drugs or alcohol before you're tempted. They are destructive to your physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Using them is wrong. They can destroy you. With drugs there is a high—but, oh, the risk; for you come down harder and lower after each experience. You can truly end up in the depths of hell. Young men, may you know now that drugs dull your conscience so that you discern less clearly between good and evil.

President David O. McKay said, "Sin can stun the conscience as a blow on the head can stun the physical senses" (*Gospel Ideals* [Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1953], p. 146).

In the Word of Wisdom, the Lord tells us, "In consequence of evils and designs which do and will exist in the hearts of conspiring men in the last days, I have warned you, and forewarn you, by giving unto you this word of wisdom by revelation" (D&C 89:4).

Conspiring, evil men want to make money by selling drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. They don't care how much death and pain come as a result. Beware of these merchants of death. Say no to those mind- and body-destroying drugs and chemicals that are ravaging the youth throughout the world. Why indulge when you know they destroy and promise nothing but sorrow? Young men, the ball is in your hands. Make that important goal for righteousness. Live the Word of Wisdom.

Stay morally clean

Point number four: This is a three-point basket that could win the game. *Stay morally clean.*

Your mission call, your mission in life, and who and where you marry will be influenced by whether you lead a pure and chaste life.

Alma taught his son Shiblon the importance of being morally clean. He said, "See that ye bridle all your passions, that ye may be filled with love" (Alma 38:12). That is an interesting paradox—true love comes when you bridle your passions, when you use self-control.

You should avoid anything that causes you to lose control of yourself or to lose concern for the welfare of another person.

Sharing affection can be a very positive, pleasing experience and was given to us by the Lord to strengthen the bonds between men and women. It is part of the force that leads us to marriage. The feelings generated can be very strong, but if you don't control them, they'll control you.

To be prepared for your life's mission, you must purify your thoughts and feelings. *You* have the power to decide, deliberately and intentionally, what images you entertain in your mind and what emotions you feel in your heart.

Movies and television often portray premarital sex as an appropriate expression of love between a man and a woman. This is a lie. Sex outside of marriage becomes an expression of selfishness, lack of self-control, and lack of concern for the other person. These actions will bring you unhappiness and are condemned by God.

Protect the chastity of young women as you would protect your own life. We hold you priesthood bearers responsible, first and foremost.

Live a morally clean life. Make that winning point for righteousness.

Live a life of service and Church activity

Point number five is to *live a life of service and Church activity.*

Be committed to activity in the Church and balance this with service. Service opens windows in your life instead of just mirrors that always reflect yourself.

Do more than just attend your meetings—get involved in living and enjoying the gospel. Be a loyal and supportive member of your Aaronic Priesthood

quorum and prepare well for the day when you will hold the Melchizedek Priesthood, the priesthood after the order of the Son of God.

Of deepest concern in all of your activities is whether you have private prayer, whether you read the scriptures daily as the prophet, President Benson, has asked you to do, and whether you agree with your parents and leaders about important spiritual matters. These are the kinds of things that really determine whether or not you have a testimony and the spiritual stamina to finish the game of life.

Now, my young friends, there will be other points you can make for righteousness, too; but I ask you, can you make these five points? Do you have the determination to do your best, to live by the rules, to strengthen your courage and testimony? I know you can. But please, wake up! You are the youth of the noble birthright.

The Lord will help when we err

There may be some among you who have fouled out. You've broken the rules, gotten offside, moved before the snap,

fumbled the ball. The ball — the gospel — is in your hands. Know that a loving Heavenly Father understands your weaknesses and wants you back on his team. Talk to your bishop. He will help you come back. You are needed and loved.

Now, young men, I speak as your friend, not as your judge. Practice these five points in your life. Write them down. Put them where you can see them daily. Check your progress frequently. There are points to win and blessings to obtain.

You priesthood leaders and fathers, you are the home-field coaches. Review these points with these, your sons. Discuss them in depth. Help these young men work on them. Making these points will help lead them to joy and happiness and exaltation. Of this I testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Russell C. Taylor, a member of the Second Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

President Benson has asked that I take the opportunity to address you at this time.

President Thomas S. Monson

Great expectations

Brethren, you are an inspiring sight to behold. It is awesome to realize that in thousands of chapels throughout the world at this hour, your fellow holders of the priesthood of God are receiving this broadcast by way of satellite transmission. Your nationalities vary, and your languages are many, but a common thread binds us together. We have been entrusted to bear the priesthood and to act in the name of God. We are the recipients of a sacred trust. Much is expected of us.

Long ago, the renowned author Charles Dickens wrote of opportunities that await. In his classic volume entitled *Great Expectations*, Dickens described a boy by the name of Philip Pirrip, more commonly known as "Pip." Pip was born

in unusual circumstances. He was an orphan. He never met his mother or father. He never saw a picture of them. Yet he had all the normal desires of a boy. He wished with all his heart that he were a scholar. He wished that he were a gentleman. He wished that he were less ignorant. Yet all of his ambitions and all of his hopes seemed doomed to failure. Do you young men sometimes feel that way? Do those of us who are older entertain these same thoughts?

Then one day a London lawyer by the name of Jaggers approached little Pip and told him that an unknown benefactor had bequeathed to him a fortune. The lawyer put his arm around the shoulder of Pip and said to him, "My boy, you have great expectations."

Tonight, as I look at you young men and realize who you are and what you may become, I say to you, as that lawyer said to Pip, "My boy, you have great expectations"—not as the result of an unknown benefactor, but as the result of a known Benefactor, even our Heavenly Father, and great things are expected of you.

Remember from whence you came

All of us, before the period known as mortality, lived as spirit children of our Heavenly Father. In His wisdom, He has given us a record, in the book of Abraham, which tells us something of that existence:

"Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones; . . .

"And there stood one among them that was like unto God, and he said unto those who were with him: We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell;

"And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them;

"And they who keep their first estate shall be added upon; and they who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate; and they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever" (Abraham 3:22, 24–26).

As we journey through mortality, let us remember from whence we came; let us be true to the trust vested in us. Let us remember who we are and what God expects us to become.

Children of promise, men of might

Ned Winder, a lifelong friend and formerly the executive secretary of the Missionary Department, tells of an amusing and humbling encounter which he experienced.

Two of the General Authorities, accompanied by Brother Winder, were

walking down a staircase in view of a mother and her son, who were sitting on a couch facing the staircase. Seeing the brethren approach, the boy said to his mother, "Who is that first man?"

She replied, "He is Elder Marvin J. Ashton, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles."

The boy continued, "Who is the man next to him?"

Mother replied, "He is Elder Loren Dunn of the First Quorum of the Seventy."

Then the boy concluded, "Who is the other man?"

The mother spoke more softly, yet she was still audible to Brother Winder: "Oh, he's nobody."

Remember, my young friends, you are somebody! You are a child of promise. You are a man of might. You are a son of God, endowed with faith, gifted with courage, and guided by prayer. Your eternal destiny is before you. The Apostle Paul speaks to you today as he spoke to Timothy long years ago: "Neglect not the gift that is in thee. . . . O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust" (1 Timothy 4:14; 6:20).

Overcome the enemy of self-defeat

As you define your goals and plan for their achievement, ponder the thought: The past is behind—learn from it; the future is ahead—prepare for it; the present is here—live in it.

At times, all of us let that enemy of achievement—even the culprit, self-defeat—dwarf our aspirations, smother our dreams, cloud our vision, and wreck our lives. The enemy's voice whispers in our ears, "I can't do it." "I'm too little." "Everyone is watching." "I'm nobody." This is when we need to reflect on the counsel of Maxwell Maltz, who declared that "the most . . . realistic self-image of all is to conceive of yourself as 'made in the image of God.'" You cannot sincerely hold this conviction without experiencing a profound new sense of strength and power (*Psycho-Cybernetics* [Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1960], p. 245).

This is good medicine for all of us — young and old. After all, men are but boys grown older. One wife said of her husband, as he admiringly gazed at his new boat, “The bigger the boy, the bigger the toy!”

Life was never intended to consist of a glut of luxury, to be an easy course or filled only with success. There are those games which we lose, those races in which we finish last, and those promotions which never come. Such experiences provide an opportunity for us to show our determination and to rise above disappointment.

I read the other day about an athlete who is a member of LaSalle University’s wrestling team. Due to a shooting accident which occurred many years ago, he has but one leg. Does he complain? Does he curse God? Does he withdraw from the match? On the contrary, he competes with the best of them. His record this year is ten wins and eight losses. A teammate said of him, “He inspires us.”

Like some of you, I know what it is to face disappointment and youthful humiliation. As a boy, I played team softball in elementary and junior high school. Two captains were chosen, and then they, in turn, selected the players they desired on their teams. Of course, the best players were chosen first, then second and third. To be selected fourth or fifth was not too bad, but to be chosen last and relegated to a remote position in the outfield was downright awful. I know. I was there.

How I hoped that the ball would never be hit in my direction, for surely I would drop it, runners would score, and teammates would laugh.

As though it were just yesterday, I remember the moment when all that changed in my life. The game started out as I have described: I was chosen last. I made my sorrowful way to the deep pocket of right field and watched as the other team filled the bases with runners. Two batters then went down on strikes. Suddenly, the next batter hit a mighty drive. The ball was coming in my direction. Was it beyond my reach? I raced for the spot where I thought the ball would drop, uttered a silent prayer as I ran, and

stretched forth my cupped hands. I surprised myself. I caught the ball! My team won the game.

This one experience bolstered my confidence, inspired my desire to practice, and led me from that last-to-be-chosen place to become a real contributor to the team.

We can experience that burst of confidence. We can feel that pride of performance. A three-word formula will help us: *Never give up.*

Choose the right

Opposition is ever with us. The temptation to detour from our chosen path is at times a daily confrontation. Joseph L. Townsend wrote the words of a hymn which we sing frequently:

Choose the right when a choice is
placed before you.
In the right the Holy Spirit guides;
And its light is forever shining o’er
you,
When in the right your heart confides.
 (“Choose the Right,” *Hymns*, no. 239)

A wise father, speaking to his son, placed the question of choice in a direct setting. He counseled, “Son, if you ever find yourself in a place you shouldn’t ought to be — *get out!*” Good advice for a son. Good advice for a father, too.

Altogether too frequently we are prone to place the blame on Lucifer for every temptation we encounter or every sin we commit. The words of the Apostle Paul place in perspective such thinking. To the Corinthians, Paul counseled,

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Importance of prayer

As priesthood holders, we have a responsibility to “stand up and be counted.” Some years back, when David Kennedy was appointed as secretary of the trea-

sure, a reporter attempted to entrap him with the question, "Mr. Kennedy, do you believe in prayer?"

The response was, "I do."

Then the clever question, "Mr. Kennedy, do you pray?"

Came the firm reply, "I believe in prayer, and I pray!"

Just this past month, a mammoth 747 jetliner, while flying over the Pacific, sustained a gigantic tear in its side, ejecting nine passengers to their deaths and threatening the lives of all. When the pilot, Captain David Cronin, was interviewed, having brought the craft back safely to Honolulu, he was asked, "What did you do when the plane ripped open? How did you cope?"

Captain Cronin replied, "I prayed, then went to work."

My brethren, this is an inspired plan for each of us to follow: Pray, and then go to work.

The commitment to serve

In the helter-skelter competitiveness of life, there is a tendency to think only of ourselves. To succumb to this philosophy narrows one's vision and distorts a proper view of life. When concern for others replaces concern for self, our own progress is enhanced.

Tonight we have witnessed the highest honor Scouting is able to bestow, conferred upon our President, Ezra Taft Benson. This recognition is not a response to a single deed or a temporary commitment to service. Rather, it recognizes a lifetime of constant and selfless service to youth. It was said of our Lord, "He went about doing good." President Ezra Taft Benson daily exemplifies this example of the Lord.

At the February meeting of the National Executive Board of Scouting, young men were recognized who had saved the lives of others during the past year. One of those so honored was an Aaronic Priesthood bearer — fifteen-year-old Thomas T. Nelson from Lacey, Washington. Tom had rescued two boys from a raging river which could have carried them to their deaths. I love his

humble-yet-powerful response to the recognition: "I jumped in and pulled them out!"

Thousands of Scouts became heroes by blessing the lives of others during the campaign noted as "Scouting for Food." On a given Saturday, with the campaign having been previously publicized, the homemakers of America were asked to contribute canned food to feed the hungry. Scouts became the facilitators of this objective. Hundreds of tons of food were collected, stored, and distributed. Those who gave were blessed. Those who received were fed. Those Scouts who helped to achieve the objective will never again be the same. They went about doing good.

Serving throughout the world is a great missionary force going about doing good. Missionaries teach truth. They dispel darkness. They spread joy. They bring precious souls to Christ.

A modern miracle

Just a few weeks ago, in Guatemala City, Guatemala, I witnessed a modern miracle — even the result of God's guidance given to His servants and the blessing of His people.

At a regional conference, almost twelve thousand members filled the Estadio del Ejercito, the local soccer stadium. The sun bathed with its rays the large gathering, while the Spirit of the Lord filled every heart. This was a day of thanksgiving, marking the forty-second anniversary of the arrival of the first missionaries to that land. John Forbes O'Donnal spoke to the vast throng. He it was who, in 1946, stood alone as the only member of the Church in that nation. Personally importuning then President George Albert Smith, Brother O'Donnal facilitated the entry of the first missionaries. His wife, Carmen Galvez de O'Donnal, became the first convert and was baptized on November 13, 1948. This day of conference, as throughout the years of their marriage, she sat by her husband's side.

While President O'Donnal spoke, my thoughts drifted back to the many

missionaries who had come to this land and the hardships they endured, the sacrifices they made, and the lives they blessed. The experience of one describes the devotion of all. While I have, on a previous occasion, mentioned the experience of this missionary, following my recent visit to Guatemala I felt impressed to share it with you once again.

While serving in Guatemala as a missionary for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Randall Ellsworth survived a devastating earthquake, which hurled a beam down on his back, paralyzing his legs and severely damaging his kidneys. He was the only American injured in the quake, which claimed the lives of some eighteen thousand persons.

After receiving emergency medical treatment, Elder Ellsworth was flown to a large hospital near his home in Rockville, Maryland. While he was confined there, a newscaster conducted with him an interview that I witnessed through the miracle of television. The reporter asked, "Can you walk?"

The answer, "Not yet, but I will."

"Do you think you will be able to complete your mission?"

Came the reply: "Others think not, but I will. With the President of my church praying for me, and through the prayers of my family, my friends, and my missionary companions, I will walk, and I will return to Guatemala. The Lord wanted me to preach the gospel there for two years, and that's what I intend to do."

There followed a lengthy period of therapy, punctuated by silent yet heroic courage. Little by little, the feeling began to return to the almost lifeless limbs. More therapy, more courage, more prayer.

At last Randall Ellsworth walked aboard the plane that carried him back to the mission to which he had been called, back to the people whom he loved. He left behind a trail of skeptics and a host of doubters, but also hundreds amazed at the power of God, the miracle of faith, and the reward of determination.

In Guatemala, Randall pursued his responsibilities. He walked with the use of two canes. His walk was slow and de-

liberate. Then one day, as he stood before his mission president, Randall Ellsworth heard him speak the almost unbelievable words, "You have been the recipient of a miracle. Your faith has been rewarded. If you have the necessary confidence, if you have abiding faith, if you have supreme courage, place those two canes on my desk — and walk."

Slowly, Randall placed one cane and then the other on the mission president's desk, turned toward the door and toward his future — and walked.

Today, Randall Ellsworth is a practicing physician. He is a stalwart husband and a loving father. His mission president was none other than John Forbes O'Donnal — the man who helped bring to Guatemala the word of the Lord, the leader who on Sunday, March 5, 1989, addressed the throng assembled for regional conference.

Forbes O'Donnal visited my office not long ago and, in his modest manner, recounted his experience with Randall Ellsworth. He then said to me, "Together we have witnessed a miracle. I have kept one of the two canes placed upon my desk that day when I challenged Elder Ellsworth to walk without them. I would like you to have the other." With a friendly smile, he departed the office and returned home to Guatemala.

This is the cane given to me. It serves as a silent witness of our Heavenly Father's ability to hear our prayers and to bless our lives. It is a symbol of faith. It is a reminder of courage.

Strive to attain eternal life

Brethren of the priesthood, like the Charles Dickens character Philip Pirrip, we have great expectations. The goal of eternal life awaits. May we strive unflinchingly to attain it. In the language of the young men assembled tonight, "Let's go for it!" In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

We shall now be privileged to listen to President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, who will be our concluding speaker.

Before President Hinckley speaks, we note that the nationwide CBS Tabernacle Choir Broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 Sunday morning. Those desiring to attend must be in their seats before 9:15 A.M.

Because daylight saving time begins at 2:00 A.M. tonight, we encourage you to move your clocks ahead one hour before you retire this evening.

As you leave this priesthood meeting tonight, we ask you to obey traffic rules, to use caution, to be courteous in driving.

We express our gratitude to you young men of the Ricks College centen-

nial priesthood choir for your beautiful presentation of the music this evening. President Benson turned to President Hinckley and then to me and said, "This is a powerful choir." I said, "President, they are from Idaho." He said, "I know it!"

Following President Hinckley's closing remarks, the choir will sing "Rise Up, O Men of God." The benediction will be offered by Elder Lynn A. Sorensen of the Second Quorum of the Seventy.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My brethren, this has been a great meeting. I add my congratulations to our beloved President, Ezra Taft Benson, on the recognition he has received. It is an honor well deserved, and it compliments not only him but also the entire Church.

It is a great tribute to the consistency of his life. I congratulate the Scout organizations in selecting a man whose entire life has been a shining example of the finest teachings of Scouting. He is now in his ninetieth year, and as I think of his life, I see an undeviating pattern of adherence to principle. He has kept the faith. He has lived the commandments. He has been persuasive with all of us in his urging that we do likewise.

Reflection on Scout meetings

It has been a long time since I have been in a Scout troop meeting. I am not familiar with the present agenda for those meetings. But I do have vivid recollections of the way in which they were conducted when I was a boy. I became a Scout in 1922, nearly sixty-seven years ago. At that time there was no Cub program. A boy had to be twelve before he could enroll in Scouting. We met in our troop meeting on Tuesday evening. We were a noisy group as we assembled. Our

Scoutmaster, Charlie Robinson, would blow his whistle, and we would all fall in line. We would raise our right arm to the square and repeat together the Scout Oath: "On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight."

It was something of a ritual each Tuesday. We did not think about it very deeply, but the words of that oath became fixed in our minds. They have remained with me through all of these years.

Pledge to magnify the priesthood

Now, this is not a Scout meeting tonight, although some wonderful things have been said about Scouting. It is a priesthood meeting. For the purposes of this meeting, I should like to suggest another pledge for every man and boy assembled in this great gathering wherever you may be: "On my honor I will do my best to magnify the priesthood of God which has been conferred upon me."

That word *magnify* is interesting. As I interpret it, it means to enlarge, to make more clear, to bring closer, and to strengthen.

A comparison to binoculars

I have here a pair of binoculars. I treasure them not only for their practical value, but also for sentimental reasons. They are useful in enlarging objects at which I might look. They are also a reminder of a good and great man who magnified his priesthood. They were given to me in 1962, at the conclusion of a wonderful series of meetings with all of our missionaries then in Europe and the British Isles, by President Henry D. Moyle, who was a Counselor in the First Presidency. Whenever I use them, I think of the gift as well as the giver.

All of you, of course, are familiar with binoculars. When you put the lenses to your eyes and focus them, you magnify and in effect bring closer all within your field of vision. But if you turn them around and look through the other end, you diminish and make more distant that which you see.

So it is with our actions as holders of the priesthood. When we live up to our high and holy calling, when we show love for God through service to fellowmen, when we use our strength and talents to build faith and spread truth, we magnify our priesthood. When, on the other hand, we live lives of selfishness, when we indulge in sin, when we set our sights only on the things of the world rather than on the things of God, we diminish our priesthood.

Lift, strengthen, serve, and give

Jacob, the brother of Nephi, in speaking of the call which he and his brother Joseph had received, said, "And we did magnify our office unto the Lord, taking upon us the responsibility, answering the sins of the people upon our own heads if we did not teach them the word of God with all diligence" (Jacob 1:19).

To every officer, to every teacher in this Church who acts in a priesthood office, there comes the sacred responsibility of magnifying that priesthood calling. Each of us is responsible for the welfare and the growth and development of others. We do not live only unto ourselves. If

we are to magnify our callings, we cannot live only unto ourselves. As we serve with diligence, as we teach with faith and testimony, as we lift and strengthen and build convictions of righteousness in those whose lives we touch, we magnify our priesthood. To live only unto ourselves, on the other hand, to serve grudgingly, to give less than our best effort to our duty, diminishes our priesthood just as looking through the wrong lenses of binoculars reduces the image and makes more distant the object.

Teach the word of God

Jacob said further, "Now, my beloved brethren, . . . according to the responsibility which I am under to God, to magnify mine office with soberness, [I] declare unto you the word of God" (Jacob 2:2).

Every missionary has the responsibility to magnify his calling in teaching the plan of God. Every teacher has the responsibility to magnify his calling in teaching the word of God. Every officer has the responsibility to magnify his calling in teaching the order of God.

Said the Lord in this dispensation to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, "Magnify thine office" (D&C 24:3).

Further, "Attend to thy calling and thou shalt have wherewith to magnify thine office" (D&C 24:9).

In that same revelation the Lord said concerning Oliver Cowdery some interesting and remarkable things:

"In me he shall have glory, and not of himself, whether in weakness or in strength, whether in bonds or free;

"And at all times, and in all places, he shall open his mouth and declare my gospel as with the voice of a trumpet, both day and night. And I will give unto him strength such as is not known among men" (D&C 24:11-12).

Experiences of Oliver Cowdery

Oliver, with Joseph Smith, received the Aaronic Priesthood under the hands of John the Baptist, and subsequently the

Melchizedek Priesthood under the hands of Peter, James, and John. He magnified that priesthood as a witness to the Book of Mormon, as a Counselor to the Prophet, as one to select the Twelve Apostles and to instruct them, as a missionary in moving the Church across the frontiers of the western territories, and as a teacher and speaker whose voice rang with great and persuasive power.

But he turned and began to look through the wrong end of the lens. He found fault. He complained. His calling shrank, he diminished his priesthood, he distanced himself from those in authority in the Church.

Gone was the voice of persuasion, gone was the power of the priesthood of God which he once held and magnified. For eleven years, he walked almost alone, without friends. He walked in poverty and in sickness.

Then in the fall of 1848, he and his family made their way to Council Bluffs and found themselves again among many of the Saints who at that time were moving to the West. At a conference held in Kanesville on the 24th of October, 1848, he stood and said:

"Friends and Brethren:

"My name is Cowdery—Oliver Cowdery. In the history of the Church I stood . . . in her councils. Not because I was better than other men was I called . . . to fill the purposes of God. He called me to a high and holy calling. I wrote with my own pen the entire Book of Mormon (save a few pages) as it fell from the lips of the Prophet Joseph Smith, and he translated it by the power and gift of God, by means of the Urim and Thummim, or as it is called by that book, 'Holy Interpreter'.

"I beheld with my eyes and handled with my hands, the gold plates from which it was translated. . . . That book is true, Sidney Rigdon did not write it; Mr. Spaulding did not write it; I wrote it myself as it fell from the lips of the Prophet. . . .

"I was present with Joseph when an Holy Angel from Heaven came down and conferred upon us . . . the Aaronic Priesthood, and said to us, at the same time,

that it should remain on earth while the earth stands. I was also present with Joseph when the Higher or Melchizedek Priesthood was conferred by the Holy Angels from on high. . . .

"Brethren, for a number of years, I have been separated from you. I now desire to come back. I wish to come humble and be one in your midst. I seek no station. I only wish to be identified with you. I am out of the Church, but I wish to become a member. I wish to come in at the door: I know the door, I have not come here to seek precedence. I come humbly and throw myself upon the decision of the body, knowing as I do, that its decisions are right" (in Stanley R. Gunn, *Oliver Cowdery: Second Elder and Scribe* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1962], pp. 203-4).

He was accepted. He was baptized again. He longed to gather with the Saints in the valleys of the mountains, but he died March 3, 1850, without ever realizing that dream.

His is one of the most touching, pathetic stories in the history of this great work. So long as he magnified his calling, he was magnified. When he diminished that calling, he shrank to oblivion and poverty. He came back, but he never regained his previous stature. He never regained the incomparable promise given him by the Lord that, conditioned upon his faithfulness, he should have glory and be given "strength such as is not known among men" (D&C 24:12).

The Lord's promises

Magnificent and moving is the promise to every man and boy who magnifies his calling as a holder of the priesthood. Said the Lord concerning you, they are to be "sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies. They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God" (D&C 84:33-34).

Further, all that the Father hath shall be given unto them.

There is no greater promise than this. I have seen and known such men. I

met some such the other day when I was at the St. George Temple. I have known and watched these brethren for many years. Their hair is now white, and they do not walk with that vitality which was once their characteristic. Those of whom I speak have never had much of wealth. But they have had much of wisdom, and they have had much of faith. They are men who since the days of their youth have held the priesthood of God, have walked in its light, and have magnified their callings. They have left home at personal sacrifice to serve as missionaries and as mission presidents. They have served as bishops and presidents of stakes. Wherever they have gone, whether in their vocational or ecclesiastical callings, they have touched a candle with the flame of their own faith and brought light where before there was darkness.

In season and out of season, in sunshine and in storm, in defeat as well as in victory, they have kept their eyes at the right end of the lens, magnifying their callings and bringing closer, as it were, the sacred and eternal things of God.

Teach true and sound doctrine

How do we do this? How do we enlarge the power of the priesthood with which we have been endowed? We do it when we teach true and sound doctrine. The Lord has said, "And I give unto you a commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom" (D&C 88:77).

We diminish that calling, we shrink that mission when we spend our time speculating about or advocating that which is not set forth in the scripture or that which is not espoused by the prophet of the Lord. Rather, ours is the responsibility, as set forth in revelation, "to bind up the law and seal up the testimony, and to prepare the saints for the hour of judgment which is to come; That their souls may escape the wrath of God, the desolation of abomination which awaits the wicked, both in this world and in the world to come" (D&C 88:84-85).

Serve with diligence and enthusiasm

We magnify our priesthood and enlarge our calling when we serve with diligence and enthusiasm in those responsibilities to which we are called by proper authority. I emphasize the words *diligence* and *enthusiasm*. This work has not reached its present stature through indifference on the part of those who have labored in its behalf. The Lord needs men, both young and old, who will carry the banners of His kingdom with positive strength and determined purpose.

Who's on the Lord's side? Who?

Now is the time to show.

We ask it fearlessly:

Who's on the Lord's side? Who?

("Who's on the Lord's Side?"

Hymns, no. 260)

Reach out and give strength

We magnify our calling, we enlarge the potential of our priesthood when we reach out to those in distress and give strength to those who falter. To you and to me, who have been clothed with the authority of the holy priesthood, the Lord has said, "Wherefore, be faithful; stand in the office which I have appointed unto you; succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees" (D&C 81:5).

There is so much of distress in this world. There are those, so many of them, who cry out in loneliness and fear with a desperate need for listening ears and understanding hearts. There are single parents struggling to rear families. There are houses that need painting, yards that need cleaning, whose owners have neither the strength nor the means to get it done. There are strong young men among us. There are thousands of you in these congregations tonight, young men of the Aaronic Priesthood, who can bless others and be blessed while giving such service.

Walk in honesty and virtue

We magnify our calling when we walk with honesty and integrity. We

shrink it when we stoop to devious acts and selfishness, disregarding the interests and well-being of others as we spend all of our time to accumulate that which we cannot take with us from this life to the next.

We honor our priesthood and magnify its influence when we walk in virtue and fidelity. Immorality and infidelity are totally inconsistent with the priesthood of God. The boy who has the strength to say no to drugs, the youth who has the strength to say no to beer and other forms of alcohol, the young man who has the strength to say no to immorality, magnifies his calling as a deacon, or teacher, or priest. The older man who can do likewise, the husband who is absolutely true, undeviatingly so, to the companion to whom he is married; the father who never abuses a child, sexually or in any other way—these are men who magnify the priesthood to which they have been ordained with power from on high. Those who do otherwise shrink that power. They may have been ordained, but as the Lord has declared:

“When we undertake to cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man.

“Behold, ere he is aware, he is left unto himself, to kick against the pricks, to

persecute the saints, and to fight against God” (D&C 121:37–38).

Strong words, those—but as true as the sunlight in the morning. I have seen such men. I have seen them fall and shrivel until today they wallow in a slough of misery and evil with hate-filled hearts.

Work from the godly perspective

To each of us the Lord has said, “Magnify your calling.” It is not always easy. But it is always rewarding. It blesses him who holds this divine authority. On the other hand, looking through the wrong lens shrinks and shrivels our power and diminishes our contribution. In working from the opposite perspective, the true and the natural and the godly perspective, we enlarge and lift, we grow in strength and gladness, we bless the lives of others now and forever.

My brethren, I bear witness and testimony of these things. I bear testimony of this divine power which you and I hold. It comes from God our Eternal Father and is exercised in the name of His Beloved Son. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang “Rise Up, O Men of God.”

Elder Lynn A. Sorensen offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY MORNING SESSION

The fourth session of the 159th Annual General Conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 2, 1989. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music, with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducting and John Longhurst at the organ.

Before the session, the choir sang “Come, Rejoice” without announcement.

President Hinckley opened the meeting with the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

We welcome you this morning from the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, Utah, in this, the fourth general session of the 159th annual conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Our beloved prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this and all sessions of the conference, has asked that I conduct this meeting.

We acknowledge the large audience assembled in the Tabernacle and in the overflow gathering in the nearby Assembly Hall, where Elders John K. Carmack and Douglas H. Smith are seated on the stand. We extend our greetings to those of you participating by radio, television, cable, or satellite transmission. We are grateful to the owners and operators of the stations that are broadcasting this conference.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders, and officers and members of the Church from many lands who have

assembled to worship and to counsel together.

The Tabernacle Choir is providing the music for this session under the direction of Brothers Jerold D. Ottley and Donald H. Ripplinger, with Brother John Longhurst at the organ.

The choir opened by singing "Come, Rejoice" and will now sing "Cast Thy Burden upon the Lord," following which Elder H. Burke Peterson, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "Cast Thy Burden upon the Lord."

Elder H. Burke Peterson offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will be our first speaker.

President Thomas S. Monson

In the first section of the Doctrine and Covenants, we read the Lord's promise:

"Hearken, O ye people of my church, saith the voice of him who dwells on high. . . . Hearken ye people from afar. . . .

"For verily the voice of the Lord is unto all men, and there is none to escape; and there is no eye that shall not see, neither ear that shall not hear, neither heart that shall not be penetrated. . . .

"And the voice of warning shall be unto all people, by the mouths of my disciples, whom I have chosen in these last days.

"And they shall go forth and none shall stay them, for I the Lord have commanded them" (D&C 1:1-2, 4-5).

Exactly fifty years ago, in 1939, the heads of state in Europe solemnly returned their position papers to leather

briefcases, arose from their chairs at the conference table, and returned to their respective countries. Peace had perished. Mighty armies crossed international borders. Warplanes droned overhead; giant tanks lumbered forward. World War II had begun.

Hundreds of missionaries were withdrawn from Europe and reassigned elsewhere in the world. The membership of the Church in those areas, now deprived of missionary leadership, carried on valiantly. Carnage, suffering, and death enveloped Europe.

After six terrible years, the conflict ceased and a mammoth rebuilding effort was commenced. Missionaries returned to some nations, the gospel was taught, and the Church began to grow.

In other countries, new political boundaries sprang up, borders bristled with armaments, and missionaries were

denied entry. Our members there endured a period marked by patient waiting, fervent praying, and faithful living.

Ministry to the German Democratic Republic

In October 1988, as my plane droned onward to Berlin, my thoughts were upon these nations and my heart felt concern for their people, particularly our own members who had unflinchingly borne their burdens and suffered in silence. I sat back somewhat in reverie, contemplating my lengthy assignment to the German Democratic Republic. For twenty years this had been a vital part of my ministry. My mind filled with memories. My heart overflowed with gratitude to God. I reflected on the history of the Church in the land to which I was going.

Effects of World War II

Prior to World War II, the nation we now know as the German Democratic Republic, and which some erroneously term East Germany, was the most productive area of the German-speaking world as pertained to missionary success. The city of Chemnitz, now Karl-Marx-Stadt, had as many as six large branches of members and was the greatest concentration of Latter-day Saints outside of North America. Then came the terrible destruction of World War II. After the bombs ceased and the artillery fell silent, the land was left devastated. Then, like moles from the earth came the people, bedraggled, hungry, frightened, lost. In memory one could hear the cry, "Mother, where are you? Father, where have you gone?" They were greeted by nothing but a moonscape of shell holes, jagged buildings, giant craters, and mountains of rubble. A nation lay desolate and destroyed.

Elder Benson's rescue mission

About that time, the prophet of the Lord determined that one named Ezra Taft Benson would undertake a rescue mission to the struggling people. Elder

Benson left his dear wife, whom he loves with all his heart, left his precious children, who were tiny at the time, and went on a mission, the length of which was uncertain. He traversed the land of German-speaking Europe—east and west. He fed the people. He clothed the people. He blessed the people. And he gave them hope. His record of service was a foundation for the progress which followed.

Another great benefactor of our German-speaking members is Walter Stover. Freely he has shared his life and generously given of his means to lift the people.

A prophetic promise

In 1968 when I made my first visit to the German Democratic Republic, tensions were high. Trust and understanding did not exist. No diplomatic relations had been established. On a cloudy and rain-filled day I journeyed to the city of Görlitz, situated deep in the German Democratic Republic near the Polish and Czech borders. I attended my first meeting with the Saints. We assembled in a small and ancient building. As the members sang the hymns of Zion, they literally filled the hall with their faith and devotion.

My heart was filled with sorrow when I realized the members had no patriarch, no wards or stakes—just branches. They could not receive temple blessings—either endowment or sealing. No official visitor had come from Church headquarters in a long time. The members could not leave their country. Yet they trusted in the Lord with all their hearts.

I stood at the pulpit, and with tear-filled eyes and a voice choked with emotion, I made a promise to the people: "If you will remain true and faithful to the commandments of God, every blessing any member of the Church enjoys in any other country will be yours." Then I realized what I had said. That night, I dropped to my knees and pleaded with my Heavenly Father, "Father, I'm on Thy errand; this is Thy Church. I have spoken words that came not from me but from

Thee and Thy Son. Wilt Thou fulfill the promise in the lives of this noble people." Thus concluded my first visit to the German Democratic Republic.

The Lord's promise began to unfold. A patriarch was named: Brother Percy K. Fetzner, who also was assigned as a Regional Representative for the area. Then Walter Krause, a native of that country, was ordained a patriarch. To date he has given 989 patriarchal blessings, and his wife has typed every one of them.

Time and again I paid visits to that nation. I recall leadership meetings in which the priesthood leaders eagerly ran to the front when their names were called to obtain printed instructions concerning how a quorum should operate or how a branch should function.

I remember going to a conference in the city of Annaberg. There, a sweet, older sister came forward and asked, "Are you an Apostle?"

When I answered, "Yes," she reached in her purse and brought forth a picture of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. She asked, "Which one are you?"

I looked at the picture. The junior member of the Quorum of the Twelve in that picture was Elder John A. Widtsoe. She had not seen a member of the Twelve for a very long time!

Soon a member mission organization was established, the first high priest ordained, and district councils organized. In Freiberg there was created a stake of Zion and then another stake in Leipzig. Each member of the Church in the German Democratic Republic now belonged to a stake of the Church. One branch president whom I interviewed had served in this capacity for twenty-one years. He was only forty-two years of age. Half his life he had been a branch president, yet he was willing to carry on in any assignment. The members eagerly accepted their calls.

A special dedication of the land

These remarkable events were preceded by a special dedication of the land.

On a Sunday morning, April 27, 1975, I stood on an outcropping of rock

situated between the cities of Dresden and Meissen, high above the Elbe River, and offered a prayer on the land and its people. That prayer noted the faith of the members. It emphasized the tender feelings of many hearts filled with an overwhelming desire to obtain temple blessings. A plea for peace was expressed. Divine help was requested. I spoke the words: "Dear Father, let this be the beginning of a new day for the members of Thy Church in this land."

Suddenly, from far below in the valley, a bell in a church steeple began to chime and the shrill crow of a rooster broke the morning silence, each heralding the commencement of a new day. Though my eyes were closed, I felt a warmth from the sun's rays reaching my face, my hands, my arms. How could this be? An incessant rain had been falling all morning.

At the conclusion of the prayer, I gazed heavenward. I noted a ray of sunshine which streamed from an opening in the heavy clouds, a ray which engulfed the spot where our small group stood. From that moment I knew divine help was at hand.

The Freiberg Temple: a miracle

The work moved forward. The paramount blessing needed was the privilege of our worthy members to receive their endowments and their sealings.

We explored every possibility. A trip once in a lifetime to the temple in Switzerland? Not approved by the government. Perhaps mother and father could come to Switzerland, leaving the children behind. Not right. How do you seal children to parents when they cannot kneel at an altar? It was a tragic situation. Then, through the fasting and the prayers of many members, and in a most natural manner, government leaders proposed: Rather than having your people go to Switzerland to visit a temple, why don't you build a temple here in the German Democratic Republic? The proposal was accepted, a choice parcel of property obtained in Freiberg, and ground broken for a beautiful temple of God.

The day of dedication was an historic occasion. President Gordon B. Hinckley offered the dedicatory prayer. Heaven was close that day.

For its size, this temple is one of the busiest temples in the Church. It is the only temple where one makes an appointment to participate in an endowment session. It is the only temple I know of where stake presidents say, "What can we do? Our home teaching is somewhat down because everyone is in the temple!" When I heard that comment, I thought, "Not bad — not bad at all!"

The need for missionaries

A miracle of miracles had taken place. One more was needed. How can the Church grow without missionaries? How can our numbers increase despite an aging population? Beautiful new buildings grace the land: stake centers at Leipzig and Dresden, and chapels in Freiberg and Zwickau, with others to follow, such as a chapel under construction in the city of Plauen. A faithful brother from Plauen wrote me this poignant letter: "My parents and grandparents have served before us in this branch, but never thus far has it been possible to have our own meeting-house. Now a long-cherished wish is being fulfilled." After reading this touching account, the thought crossed my mind, "But what use are buildings if there are not sufficient members to occupy them?"

Permission granted for missionary work

Such was the dilemma uppermost on my mind as my plane landed in Berlin that October afternoon. We went forward with the vital assignment to visit with the leaders of the German Democratic Republic. Our ultimate goal was to seek permission for the doorway of missionary work to open. Elder Russell M. Nelson, Elder Hans B. Ringger, and I, along with our local German Democratic Republic church leaders, headed by President Henry Burkhardt, President Frank Apel, and President Manfred Schutze, initially met with State Secretary for Religious Af-

fairs Kurt Löffler as he hosted a lovely luncheon in our honor. He addressed our group by saying, "We want to be helpful to you. We've observed you and your people for twenty years. We know you are what you profess to be: honest men and women."

Government leaders and their wives attended the dedication of a stake center at Dresden and a chapel at Zwickau. As the Saints sang "God be with you till we meet again" — "Auf Wiedersehen, Auf Wiedersehen" — we remembered Him, the Prince of Peace, who died on the cross at Calvary. I contemplated our Lord and Savior, when He walked the path of pain, the trail of tears, even the road of righteousness. His penetrating declaration came to mind: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

Then it was back to Berlin for the crucial meetings with the head of the nation, even Chairman Erich Honecker.

That special morning the sunlight bathed the city of Berlin. It had been raining all night, but now beauty prevailed. We were driven to the chambers of the chief representatives of the government.

Beyond the exquisite entry to the building, we were greeted by Chairman Honecker. We presented to him the statuette *First Step*, depicting a mother helping her child take its first step toward its father. He was highly pleased with the gift. He then escorted us into his private council room. There, around a large round table, we were seated. Others at the table included Chairman Honecker and his deputies of government.

Chairman Honecker began, "We know members of your Church believe in work; you've proven that. We know you believe in the family; you've demonstrated that. We know you are good citizens in whatever country you claim as home; we have observed that. The floor is yours. Make your desires known."

I began, "Chairman Honecker, at the dedication and open house for the temple in Freiberg, 89,890 of your countrymen stood in line, at times up to four hours,

frequently in the rain, that they might see a house of God. In the city of Leipzig, at the dedication of the stake center, 12,000 people attended the open house. In the city of Dresden there were 29,000 visitors; in the city of Zwickau, 5,300. And every week of the year 1,500 to 1,800 people visit the temple grounds in the city of Freiberg. They want to know what we believe. We would like to tell them that we believe in honoring and obeying and sustaining the law of the land. We would like to explain our desire to achieve strong family units. These are but two of our beliefs. We cannot answer questions, and we cannot convey our feelings, because we have no missionary representatives here as we do in other countries. The young men and young women whom we would like to have come to your country as missionary representatives would love your nation and your people. More particularly, they would leave an influence with your people which would be ennobling. Then we would like to see young men and young women from your nation who are members of our Church serve as missionary representatives in many nations, such as in America, in Canada, and in a host of others. They will return better prepared to assume positions of responsibility in your land."

Chairman Honecker then spoke for perhaps thirty minutes, describing his objectives and viewpoints and detailing the progress made by his nation. At length, he smiled and addressed me and the group, saying, "We know you. We trust you. We have had experience with you. Your missionary request is approved."

My spirit literally soared out of the room. The meeting was concluded. As we left the beautiful government chambers, Elder Russell Nelson turned to me and said, "Notice how the sunshine is penetrating this hall. It's almost as though our Heavenly Father is saying, 'I am pleased.'"

The black darkness of night had ended. The bright light of day had dawned. The gospel of Jesus Christ would now be carried to the millions of people in that nation. Their questions

concerning the Church will be answered, and the Kingdom of God will go forth.

Thanks be to God

As I reflect on these events, my thoughts turn to the Master's words, "In nothing doth man offend God, or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all things" (D&C 59:21). I confess the hand of God in the miraculous events pertaining to the Church in the German Democratic Republic.

The faith and devotion of our members in that nation have not gone unnoticed by God. The excellent service of other General Authorities, Regional Representatives, and mission presidents has been of inestimable help. The understanding cooperation of government leaders is most appreciated. Assignments have been made to the first ten missionaries from the German Democratic Republic to serve abroad; and just three days ago, on Thursday, March 30, the first full-time missionary representatives in exactly fifty years entered the German Democratic Republic. Their mission president was there to greet them. The long period of preparation is past. The future of the Church unfolds. Thanks be to God.

God's purposes will not fail

From the heavens we hear anew the Lord's declaration:

"Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth, and rejoice ye inhabitants thereof, for the Lord is God, and beside him there is no Savior.

"Great is his wisdom, marvelous are his ways, and the extent of his doings none can find out.

"His purposes fail not, neither are there any who can stay his hand. . . .

"For thus saith the Lord—I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto those who fear me, and delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end.

"Great shall be their reward and eternal shall be their glory" (D&C 76:1-3, 5-6).

May this be our universal blessing,
I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Arise, Shine, Thy
Light Is Come" without announcement.

President Hinckley

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has addressed us, followed by the choir singing "Arise, Shine, Thy Light Is Come."

Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now speak to us.

Elder Boyd K. Packer

President Monson has reminded us that this is a worldwide church. I once received a clipping from a newspaper in India reporting something I had said to young people at this pulpit. Among those who now listen, or who may later read what we say, are young men and women, in many lands, struggling through those wonderful, worrisome teenage years. I meet teenagers all over the world, in perhaps seventy countries by now. I have stayed in the homes where you live—from tiny houses propped up on poles in the jungle to luxury city apartments.

I am about fifty years farther down the road of life than you are, but my memory is pretty good and I haven't forgotten entirely how it felt to be where you are. And my children and grandchildren renew my memory of how it feels to be a teenager.

Some years ago we stopped at a small restaurant. The young woman who served our meal was courteous but very sober. When she handed me the check, I said, "Can you tell us which road we take to get out of town?" Suddenly she burst into tears and said, "Mister, I don't even know how I got into this town."

I have wished more than once that we could have gone to a table in the corner and talked. Perhaps we could have helped her.

Teenage wishes

Teenagers, even young men, sometimes feel like bursting into tears and say-

ing, "Mister, I don't even know how I got here." You wonder *who* you are and *why* you are and how you got to *where* you are.

I know that you sometimes feel that life isn't fair; why can't you have things that others have. You even wonder why you can't *be* somebody else and exchange your body with someone who appears to be more beautiful or handsome or talented or brighter or stronger or thinner; or change personalities with someone who is not so shy or blundering or frightened as you are.

Sometimes you wonder why you can't trade your parents for some better ones. No need to apologize; they sometimes wish they could trade you for someone easier to live with.

But parents and grandparents make allowances for those feelings. After all, we are just teenagers who have evened out a few of our frustrations so that they don't show as much as they did when we were your age. And someday, soon enough, *you* are going to be *us*!

A different world

I wish we could promise you that the world will be safer and easier for you than for us. But we cannot make that promise, for just the opposite is true.

There are temptations beckoning to you that were not there when we were teenagers. AIDS had not been invented when we were young, and drugs were something a doctor prescribed. We knew

about opium from reading mysteries, but steroids, pills, and crack and all the rest belonged to future imaginations.

Modesty was not mocked then. Morality and courtesy were fostered in books and films as much as their opposites are today. Perversion was not talked about, much less endorsed as a life-style. What was shunned then as pornographic, you see now on prime-time television.

Your challenge is *much* greater than was ours. Few of us would trade places with you. Frankly, we are quite relieved that we are not back where you are. Few of us would be equal to it.

But, oh, what a wonderful time to be young! You have knowledge of many more things than we needed to have. It is my conviction that your generation is better and stronger than was ours—better in many ways! I have faith that you young men and young women can meet the world on its own terms and conquer it!

The black knight

Alfred, Lord Tennyson told of Gareth, a prince and a knight of King Arthur's round table, and of his quest. The fair Lady Lyonors had been stolen away by the horrible black knight, who held her in his castle. Many young knights tried to rescue her but failed. They returned defeated and broken, with tales of the awesome power of the black knight; they begged Gareth not to go.

But Gareth went to the castle with the drawbridge, the tower, and the window where "Lady Lyonors wrung her hands and wept" ("Gareth and Lynette," *Idylls of the King*, line 1360). Then, "high on a night-black horse, in night-black arms, with white breast-bone, and barren ribs of Death," a laughing skull engraved upon his helmet, "in the half-light—thro' the dim dawn—advanced the monster," more awesome, more terrible even than Gareth had been told (lines 1346–47, 49–50).

The black knight lowered his lance and thundered forward. Gareth, who had been defeated in more than one tournament, sensed his terrible fate. Every logic and emotion shouted, "Flee for your life!"

But he could not turn away. Not, that is, and keep his honor. Gareth lowered his lance and met the charge.

And then, to his surprise, Gareth unseated the black knight and tore his helmet away. There in that black armor with the bones engraven on it sat a little boy who began to cry and beg for mercy.

Young women, young men, no matter how many tournaments you lose along the way, no matter how monstrous your challenges may be, if you will learn a few simple lessons, it can be with you as it was with Gareth on that bridge before the castle of the black knight.

Of royal birth

Gareth was only a prince. You are more than that. You are a child of God. He is the father of your spirit. Spiritually you are of noble birth, the offspring of the King of Heaven. Fix that truth in your mind and hold to it. However many generations in your mortal ancestry, no matter what race or people you represent, the pedigree of your spirit can be written on a single line. You are a child of God!

You are a dual being, a spirit clothed in a mortal body. Your body is the instrument of your mind and the foundation of your character. Take nothing into your body which may harm it or disturb the functions of your mind and spirit. Anything that is addictive is dangerous.

Within your body is the power to begot life, to share in creation. The only legitimate expression of that power is within the covenant of marriage. The worthy use of it is the very key to your happiness. Do not use that power prematurely, not with anyone. The misuse of it cannot be made right by making it popular.

Your spirit operates through your mind, but cultivating your intellect is not enough. Reason alone will neither protect nor redeem you. Reason nourished by faith can do both.

The dark side

A warning: there is a dark side to spiritual things. In a moment of curiosity

or reckless bravado some teenagers have been tempted to toy with Satan worship. Don't you ever do that! Don't associate with those who do! You have no idea of the danger! Leave it alone! And there are other foolish games and activities that are on that dark side. Leave them alone!

There is a courage far greater than Gareth needed to face the black knight. It is the courage to run away from unworthy things when you will be mocked for doing so. That courage is laced with wisdom. We had to gain it from experience; you need it now.

You have an alarm system built into both body and spirit. In your body it is pain; in your spirit it is guilt—or spiritual pain. While neither pain nor guilt is pleasant, and an excess of either can be destructive, both are a protection, for they sound the alarm “Don't do that again!”

Be grateful for both. If the nerve endings in your hands were altered so that you couldn't feel pain, you might put them in fire or machinery and destroy them. In your teenage heart of hearts, you know right from wrong (see 2 Nephi 2:5). Learn to pay attention to that spiritual voice of warning within you. Even then, you will not get by without some mistakes.

Forgiveness

Those who make one serious mistake tend to add another by assuming that it is then too late for them. It is never too late! Never!

While your temptations are greater than were ours, that will be considered in the judgments of the Lord. He said that “his mercies [are suited] according to the conditions of . . . men” (D&C 46:15). That is only just.

A great contribution to Christian doctrine is the explanation in the Book of Mormon of how *justice* and *mercy* and *repentance* and *forgiveness* work together to erase transgressions (see Alma 42).

The discouraging idea that a mistake (or even a series of them) makes it everlastingly too late, does not come from the Lord. He has said that *if* we will repent, not only will He forgive us our transgres-

sions, but He will forget them and remember our sins no more (see Isaiah 43:25; Hebrews 8:12; 10:17; Alma 36:19; D&C 58:42). Repentance is like soap; it can wash sin away. Ground-in dirt may take the strong detergent of discipline to get the stains out, but out they will come.

The end of the world

Teenagers also sometimes think, “What's the use? The world will soon be blown all apart and come to an end.” That feeling comes from fear, not from faith. No one knows the hour or the day (see D&C 49:7), but the end cannot come until all of the purposes of the Lord are fulfilled. Everything that I have learned from the revelations and from life convinces me that there is time and to spare for you to carefully prepare for a long life.

One day you will cope with teenage children of your own. That will serve you right. Later, you will spoil your grandchildren, and they in turn spoil theirs. If an earlier end should happen to come to one, that is more reason to do things right.

However limited your body may be, it is a precious gift.

One of you may be well-born and well-formed while another is not. In either case, there is a testing. That is what mortality is all about. The poorly born may lack self-esteem, or the well-born infected with pride. Pride is the most deadly spiritual virus. In the eternal scheme of things, who is to say which is the most favored?

Listen carefully from the Book of Mormon: “If men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them” (Ether 12:27).

There may be more justice in who we are and what we have or do not have than we ever suppose.

You are a *child* of God!

What a wonderful time to be young. You will see events in your lifetime that will test your courage and extend your faith. If you will face the sunlight of truth, the shadows of discouragement and sin and error will fall behind you. You must never give up! It is never too late! There is no knight in black armor with such power as you may have if you live righteously.

He calls to you: "Wherefore, lift up your hearts and rejoice, and gird up your loins, and take upon you my whole armor, that ye may be able to withstand the evil day, having done all, that ye may be able to stand.

"Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, which I have sent mine angels to commit unto you;

"Taking the shield of faith wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked;

"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of my Spirit, which I will pour out upon you, and my word which I reveal unto you, and be agreed as touching all things whatsoever ye ask of me, and be faithful until I come, and ye shall be caught up, that where I am ye shall be also" (D&C 27:15-18).

God bless you young women and young men who struggle through the worrisome teenage years. Some of you may not yet have found yourselves, but you are *not* lost, for Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, our Savior and Redeemer. The gospel has been revealed and restored. Of Him I bear witness as I pray His blessings upon you, our youth, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Jesus, Savior" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has addressed us, followed by the choir singing "Jesus, Savior."

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Come, Come, Ye Saints," following which we shall hear from Elder J. Richard Clarke, a member of the Presidency of the Quorums of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation sang "Come, Come, Ye Saints."

Elder J. Richard Clarke

Importance of family history work

My brothers and sisters, since last October it has been my blessing to be associated with the Family History Department of the Church. It enables each of us to experience the joy of the covenants and the ordinances of the temple as we make them available to our loved ones.

Famous *Roots* author, Alex Haley, once said: "In all of us there is a hunger, marrow-deep, to know our heritage—to know who we are and where we have come from. Without this enriching knowledge, there is a hollow yearning. No matter what our attainments in life,

there is still . . . an emptiness, and the most disquieting loneliness."

Through family history we discover the most beautiful tree in the forest of creation—our family tree. Its numerous roots reach back through history, and its branches extend throughout eternity. Family history is the expansive expression of eternal love. It is born of selflessness. It provides opportunity to secure the family unit forever.

Families of heaven

Moroni told young Joseph Smith that Elijah the prophet would come and reveal

anew the purposes, powers, and blessings of the holy priesthood which had been lost to the world. Through the keys he would restore, promises made earlier to the fathers would be planted in the hearts of their latter-day children. Our hearts would then turn to our fathers, and, through this impelling promise, the sacred relationships of mortality could be extended forever. Families of the earth could become families of heaven.

Dr. Krister Stendahl, bishop of the Lutheran Church in Stockholm, expressed this profound sentiment about our temple in Sweden: "Isn't it wonderful!" he said. "Only the Mormons are extending the blessings of the atonement of Jesus Christ to those beyond the grave." He is right. The blessings of the Atonement do extend beyond the grave. Jesus suffered and died to preserve and unify our Father's family.

The kindred family

In earliest biblical culture, the family was more than a parent-and-child unit. It included all who were related by blood and marriage. This kindred family, as I prefer to call it, was strongly linked by natural affection and the patriarchal priesthood. The elderly were venerated for their experience and wisdom. There were strength and safety in numbers, and, through love and support, members established solidarity and continuity.

Many social and economic conditions in today's world militate against such a kindred family. Throughout the ages, evil forces have attacked the family. Why do you suppose Satan is so obsessed with its dissolution? Because it stands for everything he wants and cannot have. He cannot be a husband, a father, or a grandfather. He cannot have posterity now or ever. Satan cannot even keep those he has led away from God. He has no eternal kingdom or inheritance.

Society's most important institution

Nevertheless, the family is society's strongest and most important institution. Where it has survived, it has done so as

a matter of highest priority. Individual interests have been subordinated to the interests of the group. Sacrifice has exceeded selfishness. Loyalty, respect for the family name, pride in one another's achievements, and shared quality time have been pre-eminent.

I had the good fortune of marrying into such a family. I have marveled as relatives have traveled great distances to support a family activity, a missionary farewell, or a wedding. An elderly aunt still invites cousins of four generations, who are attending Brigham Young University, into her home for family home evenings. Through this association, the cousins strengthen each other in keeping the covenants of the gospel.

If the kindred family system were working as it could, our hearts would encompass each family member in time of need. Shared resources would make the family self-reliant. Children would consider it a blessing, not a burden, to care for aged parents.

I know of a widowed father who was reluctant to live with his daughter who resided in another state. She thanked him for the privilege of taking him into her home, insisting that she now would be able to demonstrate her love for all she had received from her parents. She felt selfish in finally having him to herself. Upon his death, she told me how blessed she was to have had those last precious years with her father.

The priesthood solidifies families

The priesthood is the vital power which solidifies the kindred family. One of the most sacred privileges of fatherhood is the blessing of one's children.

Many years ago in this Tabernacle, I heard Elder Sterling Sill recognize the men who had performed the essential priesthood ordinances listed on his membership record. I suddenly realized that my father's name did not appear on my record. He had not been active in the Church while I was growing up but had since become a faithful high priest.

Returning home from conference, I brooded about this, feeling deprived. I

telephoned my father and said, "Dad, I'd like to ask you a favor. You can do something for me that no other living person can do. I would like a father's blessing." He hesitated and said, "Well, we'll see, the next time you come to Rexburg."

I persisted. To my knowledge, he had never given a father's blessing before, and he was nervous. At the age of eighty-four, he placed his quivering hands upon my head. And this son will never forget the supreme joy of hearing a proud father pour out his heart in a blessing—a blessing which will be held sacred and cherished not because of its eloquence but because it came from my father. I hope, brethren, that you will not deny your children this choice experience.

Single-parent families

Now, I realize there are numerous single-parent families in the Church who do not have a priesthood bearer to preside in the home and bless them. They are reluctant to impose on others and are frequently offended by insensitive remarks regarding their family status. This is also true of single adults who have yet to marry. They often feel cut off from the mainstream of Mormon family life. They especially need to be part of a gospel kindred family, where blessings can be obtained from worthy priesthood bearers and role models can be found in quorum brotherhood and Relief Society sisterhood. Families in the ward can reach out and share loving concern. Within the Lord's design, no one should be ignored. We are all members of the body of Christ.

Joys of family history work

As we learn to be loving, caring families in mortality, our hearts will naturally turn to members of our kindred family in the spirit world. As they continue to live beyond the veil, they wait—they wait for us, their family, to share the blessings of the ordinances of the priesthood. They yearn to belong to the eternal family circle. They are anxious for us to

make this possible. Are we not compelled to do so?

I was impressed by the testimony of a single adult in Washington, D.C., who, as a recent convert, found herself suddenly immersed in the pursuit of her family history. After her first sacred experience of participating in the temple ordinance work for several of her kindred family, she expressed her feelings with tears of joy. "Now," she exclaimed, "I am no longer the only member of the Church in my family!"

Our family research and temple ordinances make it possible for us to be forever families. The process of compiling family history records need not be expensive or complicated. We may not be able to do everything; but we can do something.

With her permission, I would like to share part of a sweet letter I received from Sister Linda Seamon of the Flagstaff Arizona Stake.

"We are a young family. My husband and I are 33. We have three small children. This is a busy 'family time' for us in our lives. For months, Diana, our ward genealogy person, would call us on a regular basis to ask if there was anything she could do to help us get started on our family history.

"We of course thanked her for the call, but firmly replied that 'Aunt Leona, Cousin Nellie, and Aunt Bertha have done all there is to do on our families.' Then, intrigued by an article in the *Ensign* about the new 8½-by-11 forms for family history, I mentioned this to Diana and a week later she was at my door with the forms! I took a look and thought how neat it would be to fill in the forms with our own names in the blanks. This simple experience of a loving, persistent family history representative was what got us started.

"We both come from Mormon families several generations back. We thought the ordinance work for our ancestors had been completed. We were wrong! In the short months we have been collecting copies of family group records, we have had so many experiences that confirmed

to us the Lord's hand in this work: 44 baptisms, 45 endowments, 29 children sealed to parents, 16 marriage sealings. All of these from records that were supposedly 'all done.'

"Words cannot express the joy we have felt in the temple performing ordinances for our ancestors. Family relationships, some estranged since childhood, have been healed. Our extended families have also become involved. We have sent names to five different temples so that we could be united in helping to complete the temple work.

"We believe that it takes just one temple experience for one's ancestor to convince a person of the importance of this work. It is possible to become involved in this exciting work at any age. We're committed to it!"

In partnership with God

The Prophet Joseph Smith gave us this sober warning: "The earth will be smitten with a curse unless there is a welding link . . . between the fathers and the children. . . . For we without them cannot be made perfect; neither can they without us be made perfect" (D&C 128:18).

In the councils of heaven before the world began, we made a solemn agreement with the Lord to assist in bringing to pass the eternal life of man. Elder John A. Widtsoe reminds us that the least of us, the humblest, is in partnership with the Almighty in achieving the purpose of the eternal plan of salvation. It is man's duty, his pleasure and joy, his labor and ultimately his glory. By that doctrine, with the Lord at the head, we become saviors on Mount Zion.

I bear witness that this work is true. I testify that we may anticipate a glorious reunion with our kindred family through the covenant blessings of the priesthood. I pray that we will heed the prophets and inherit the supreme joy which comes from performing this marvelous work of salvation, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder J. Richard Clarke, a member of the Presidency of the Quorums of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

Irony: the crust on the bread of adversity

What I now read is a most wintry verse indeed: "Nevertheless the Lord seeth fit to chasten his people; yea, he trieth their patience and their faith" (Mosiah 23:21).

This very sobering declaration of divine purpose ought to keep us on spiritual alert as to life's adversities.

Irony is the hard crust on the bread of adversity. Irony can try both our faith and our patience. Irony can be a particularly bitter form of such chastening because it involves disturbing incongruity. It involves outcomes in violation of our

expectations. We see the best laid plans laid waste.

An individual is visibly and patiently prepared for an important role amid widespread expectation of his impending promotion or election. What follows, however, lasts only a very narrow moment in time. A political victory seems so near, recedes, and finally vanishes altogether.

Without meekness, such ironic circumstances are very difficult to manage.

In a marriage, a careless declaration hardens into a position, which position then becomes more important than communication or reconciliation. An intellectual stand is proudly and stubbornly

defended even in the face of tutoring truth or correcting counsel. Yet occasionally, as we all know, backing off is really going forward. Sometimes it takes irony to induce that painful but progressive posture.

The challenges of irony

With its inverting of our anticipated consequences, irony becomes the frequent cause of an individual's being offended. The larger and the more untamed one's ego, the greater the likelihood of his being offended, especially when tasting his portion of vinegar and gall.

Words then issue, such as, Why me? Why this? Why now? Of course, these words may give way to subsequent spiritual composure. Sometimes, however, such words precede bitter insolubility, and then it is a surprisingly short distance between disappointment and bitterness.

Amid life's varied ironies, you and I may begin to wonder, Did not God notice this torturous turn of events? And if He noticed, why did He permit it? Am I not valued?

Our planning itself often assumes that our destiny is largely in our own hands. Then come intruding events, first elbowing aside, then evicting what was anticipated and even earned. Hence, we can be offended by events as well as by people.

Irony may involve not only unexpected suffering but also undeserved suffering. We feel we deserved better, and yet we fared worse. We had other plans, even commendable plans. Did they not count? A physician, laboriously trained to help the sick, now, because of his own illness, cannot do so. For a period, a diligent prophet of the Lord was an "idle witness" (Mormon 3:16). Frustrating conditions keep more than a few of us from making our appointed rounds.

Customized challenges are thus added to that affliction and temptation which Paul described as "common to man" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Jesus' example of coping with irony

In coping with irony, as in all things, we have an Exemplary Teacher in Jesus. Dramatic irony assaulted Jesus' divinity almost constantly.

For Jesus, in fact, irony began at His birth. Truly, He suffered the will of the Father "in all things from the beginning" (3 Nephi 11:11). This whole earth became Jesus' footstool (see Acts 7:49), but at Bethlehem there was "no room . . . in the inn" (Luke 2:7) and "no crib for his bed" ("Away in a Manger," *Hymns*, no. 206).

At the end, meek and lowly Jesus partook of the most bitter cup without becoming the least bitter (see 3 Nephi 11:11; D&C 19:18-19). The Most Innocent suffered the most. Yet the King of Kings did not break, even when some of His subjects did unto Him "as they listed" (D&C 49:6). Christ's capacity to endure such irony was truly remarkable.

You and I are so much more brittle. For instance, we forget that, by their very nature, tests are unfair.

In heaven, Christ's lofty name was determined to be the only name on earth offering salvation to all mankind (see Acts 4:12; 2 Nephi 25:20; see also Abraham 3:27). Yet the Mortal Messiah willingly lived so modestly, even, wrote Paul, as a person "of no reputation" (Philippians 2:7).

What a contrast to our maneuverings over relative recognition and comparative status. How different, too, from the ways in which some among us mistakenly see the size and response of their audiences as the sole verification of their worth. Yet those fickle galleries we sometimes play to have a way of being constantly emptied. They will surely be empty at the Judgment Day, when everyone will be somewhere else, on their knees.

As the Creator, Christ constructed the universe, yet in little Galilee He was known merely as "the carpenter's son" (Matthew 13:55). In fact, the Lord of the universe was without honor even in His own Nazarene countryside. Though astonished at His teachings, his neighbors "were offended at him" (Mark 6:3). Even meek Jesus "marvelled because of their unbelief" (6:6).

As Jehovah, Jesus issued the original commandment to keep the Sabbath day holy, but during His mortal Messiahship, He was accused of violating the Sabbath, because on that day He gave healing rest to the afflicted (see John 5:8-16).

Can we absorb the irony of being hurt while trying to help? Having done good, when we are misrepresented, can we watch the feathers of false witness scatter on the winds?

Christ, long, long ago, as Creator, provided habitable conditions for us on this earth, generously providing all the essential atmospheric conditions for life, including essential water (see Moses 1:33; D&C 76:24). When he was aflame with thirst on the cross, "they gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink" (Matthew 27:34; see also Psalm 69:21). Even so, there was no railing but a forgiving Christ (see Luke 23:34).

Christ was keenly aware of the constant irony: "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Luke 9:58). He asked a treacherous Judas, "Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" (Luke 22:48). And then there was the soulful lament, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matthew 23:37). Yet the repeated ritual of rejection was happening to Jesus all over again.

We all know what it is like not to be listened to, but how about disdain or even contempt? Furthermore, there is a difference between noticing rejection, as Jesus did, and railing against rejection, as He did not.

As the Creator, Christ fashioned "worlds without number" (Moses 1:33), yet with His fingers He fashioned a little clay from spittle, restoring sight to one blind man (see John 9:6). The Greatest meekly ministered "unto one of the least of these" (Matthew 25:40).

Do you and I understand that the significance of our service does not depend upon its scale?

Within hours Christ would rescue all mankind, yet he heard the manipulated

crowd cry, "Barabbas," thereby rescuing a life-taking murderer instead of life-giving Jesus (see Mark 15:7-15).

Can we remain true amid false justice? Will we do our duty against the roar of the crowd?

Instructive irony

As the Master Teacher, Christ tailored His tutoring, depending upon the spiritual readiness of His pupils. We see instructive irony even in some of these episodes.

To the healed leper returning with gratitude, Jesus' searching but simple query was, "Where are the [other] nine?" (Luke 17:17). To a more knowledgeable mother of Apostles, desiring that her two sons sit on Jesus' right and left hands, Jesus reprovably but lovingly said: "Ye know not what you ask. . . . [This] is not mine to give" (Matthew 20:22-23). To a grieving but rapidly maturing Peter, still burning with the memory of a rooster's crowing, thrice came the directive, "Feed my sheep," but also a signifying of "by what death" the great Apostle would later be martyred (John 18:25-27; 21:15-19). How much more demanding of Peter than of the leper!

Irony can strip corrosive pride

If a sudden, stabbing light exposes the gap between what we are and what we think we are, can we, like Peter, let that light be a healing laser? Do we have the patience to endure when one of our comparative strengths is called into question? A painful crisis may actually be the means of stripping corrosive pride off of that virtue.

To the humbly devout woman of Samaria who expected the Messiah, Jesus quietly disclosed, "I that speak unto thee am he" (John 4:26). Yet an anxious Pilate "saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer" (John 19:9).

Can we remain silent when silence is eloquence — but may be used against us? Or will we murmur, just to let God know we notice the ironies?

The grand and glad irony

Yet, even with all the ironies, sad ironies, there is the grand and glad irony of Christ's great mission. He Himself noted that precisely because He was "lifted up upon the cross," He was able to "draw all men unto [him]," and being "lifted up by men," even so should "men be lifted up by the Father" (3 Nephi 27:14).

Be more loving

But how can we fortify ourselves against the irony in our lives and cope better when it comes?

By being more like Jesus, such as by loving more. "And the world, because of their iniquity, shall judge him to be a thing of naught; wherefore they scourge him, and he suffereth it; and they smite him, and he suffereth it. Yea, they spit upon him, and he suffereth it, [Why?] because of his loving kindness and his long-suffering towards the children of men" (1 Nephi 19:9).

Exercise self-denial

There are other significant keys for coping. "And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23). Wise self-denial shrinks our sense of entitlement.

Live in thanksgiving

Another cardinal key is to "live in thanksgiving daily, for the many mercies and blessings which [God] doth bestow upon you" (Alma 34:38).

Life's comparatively few ironies are much more than offset by heaven's many mercies. We cannot count all our blessings every day, but we can carry over the reassuring bottom line from the last counting.

Do not heed temptations

Another vital way of coping was exemplified by Jesus. Though He suffered

all manner of temptations (see Alma 7:11), yet He "gave no heed unto them" (D&C 20:22). Unlike some of us, He did not fantasize, reconsider, or replay temptations. How is it that you and I do not see that while initially we are stronger and the temptations weaker, dalliance turns things upside down?

Manage irony with meekness

Jesus' marvelous meekness prevented any "root of bitterness" from "springing up" in Him (Hebrews 12:15). Ponder the Savior's precious words about the Atonement *after* He passed through it. There is no mention of the vinegar, no mention of the scourging, no mention of having been struck, no mention of having been spat upon. He does declare that He "suffer[ed] both body and spirit" in an exquisiteness which we simply cannot comprehend (D&C 19:18; see also 19:15).

Do the will of the Father

We come now to the last and most terrible irony of Jesus: His feeling forsaken at the apogee of His agony on Calvary. The apparent withdrawal of the Father's spirit then evoked the greatest soul cry in human history (see James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1916], p. 613). This deprivation had never happened to Christ before—never. Yet, thereby, Jesus became a fully comprehending Christ and was enabled to be a fully succoring Savior (see Alma 7:11–12). Moreover, even in that darkest hour, while feeling forsaken, Jesus submitted Himself to the Father.

No wonder the Savior tells us that the combined anguish in Gethsemane and on Calvary was so awful that He would have shrunk. Nevertheless, He finished His preparations (see D&C 19:18–19; 3 Nephi 11:11). The word *nevertheless* reflects deep, divine determination.

Furthermore, even after treading the winepress alone (see D&C 76:107), which ended in His stunning, personal triumph and in the greatest victory ever—

majestic Jesus meekly declared, "Glory be to the Father"! (D&C 19:19). This should not surprise us. In the premortal world, Jesus meekly volunteered to be our Savior, saying, "Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever" (Moses 4:2). Jesus was true to His word.

Glory be to the Father

Now, in closing, I humbly declare, "Glory be to the Father"—first, for rearing such an Incomparable Son. Second, "Glory be to the Father" for allowing His special Son to suffer and to be sacrificed for all of us. On Judgment Day, brothers and sisters, will any of us want to rush forward to tell our Father how we, as parents, suffered when we watched our children suffer?

Glory be to the Father, in the name of Him who can succor us amid all

our ironies and adversities (see Alma 7:11–12), even Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "A Marvelous Work" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just addressed us. The choir then sang "A Marvelous Work."

At the conclusion of my remarks, the choir will sing "Go Forth with Faith," and the benediction will be offered by Elder Hans B. Ringger, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

We shall then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Expression of optimism

We've had a wonderful morning where the Spirit of the Lord has been felt. I pray for a continuation of that Spirit.

A distinguished Protestant minister called on us the other day. In the course of our conversation he asked, "How do you feel about things?"

I replied, "I feel very optimistic. Things are happening in the world that are salutary and good. There are wars, yes. There is conflict, yes. But there also is much of peace among the nations of the earth. Something of tremendous significance is happening in the USSR and the People's Republic of China. There is growing freedom of expression and activity. A new openness is developing. I feel the spirit of Christ is brooding over the nations of the earth.

"Of course there are problems, many and serious. We sorrow over the plague of drugs with its bitter harvest. We deplore the terrible scourge of pornography. We grieve over the wicked flood of immorality and abortion. We are concerned with the epidemic of infidelity, of divorce

and broken homes. We are disturbed over the plight of the homeless and over stark hunger in many parts of the earth.

"But the remarkable thing is that so many people care. More than at any time in the history of the world, I believe, there are men and women by the tens of thousands who are reaching out with their strength and their substance to help those in distress. Modern science and medicine are doing wonders to alleviate pain and prolong life. There is greater fulfillment in the lives of millions.

"Concerning our own work—that is, the work of this church—I feel even more optimistic. We are growing stronger. I hope our people are growing better. I think they are. There is increased activity, increased devotion, increased faithfulness."

I told him that two or three weeks earlier I was in an area where the percentage of members regularly attending their Sunday meetings was 70 to 75 percent. I think that is wonderful. In fact, I believe it is unique. These are wards of ordinary, faithful Latter-day Saints.

I concluded by saying, "I repeat, I feel optimistic—guardedly so, yes, because of the extent of evil in the world. But, on the basis of what I see, goodness is gaining, and the work of the Lord is growing in strength and power."

Church growth since 1981

After he had left, I reflected on what I had said. I recalled an experience I had in January when I heard President Ronald Reagan give his farewell address to the people of this nation. He spoke of what had been achieved during the eight years of his presidency. As he spoke, I wondered what had happened in the Church during those eight years. I asked our record keepers for some statistics. You may be interested in a few highlights.

It so happens that during these same eight years I have served as a Counselor in the First Presidency and have had an opportunity to see the picture of the entire Church worldwide in its many activities and ramifications. Remarkable things have happened during this period. I do not speak in any sense of boasting. Nor do I claim any credit.

Yesterday, Brother Michael Watson, secretary to the First Presidency, presented the 1988 statistical report of the Church. Let me draw on that for a moment, using some comparisons.

At the beginning of 1981, the membership of the Church stood at 4,600,000. At the close of 1988, the membership had reached 6,720,000, an increase of over two million from January 1, 1981, to January 1, 1989. The number of stakes increased during that period from 1,218 to 1,707, or approximately 500. The number of congregations increased from 12,591 to 16,558, or approximately 4,000 new wards and branches. The number of missions grew from 188 to 222. The number of political entities—nations or territories—in which we are working grew from 83 to 125. The number of temples more than doubled, from 19 to 41.

These are only statistics, but behind all of them are men and women, boys and girls. We are speaking of sons and daughters

of God into whose lives has come greater knowledge and into whose hearts has come increased faith in the things of eternity. There has likewise been greatly increased consecration and dedication.

At the close of 1988, there were 36,132 missionaries in the field or under call. There were likewise thousands of volunteers serving in the Family History program, working in various Church offices, and teaching in our seminary system. The value of their consecrated time would run into the tens of millions of dollars.

Love is like the lodestar

The Church is moving forward because it is true. It is growing because there is a broadening love for that truth. It is growing because of a love for God, a love for the Savior, a love for neighbor, and a strengthening spirit of love in the homes of the people. It is this love which is the great constant in all of our work. It stems from that love which is divine:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

I wish to say a few words about that love, that constant, never-failing quality that has the power to lift us above the evil, the conflict, and the trouble of the world in which we live.

When I was a boy, we lived on a farm in the summer. It was in the country, where the nights were dark. There were no streetlights or anything of the kind. My brother and I slept out-of-doors. On clear nights—and most of those nights were clear and the air was clean—we would lie on our backs and look at the myriads of stars in the heavens. We could identify some of the constellations and other stars as they were illustrated in our encyclopedia. Each night we would trace the Big Dipper, the handle and the cup, to find the North Star.

We came to know of the constancy of that star. As the earth turned, the others appeared to move through the night. But the North Star held its position in line with the axis of the earth. And so it had

come to be known as the Polar Star, or the Polestar, or the Lodestar. Through centuries of time, mariners had used it to guide them in their journeys. They had reckoned their bearings by its constancy, thereby avoiding traveling in circles or in the wrong direction, as they moved across the wide, unmarked seas.

Because of those boyhood musings, the Polar Star came to mean something to me. I recognized it as a constant in the midst of change. It was something that could always be counted on, something that was dependable, an anchor in what otherwise appeared to be a moving and unstable firmament.

Love is like the Polar Star. In a changing world, it is a constant. It is of the very essence of the gospel. It is the security of the home. It is the safeguard of community life. It is a beacon of hope in a world of distress.

God's great love for us

Back in 1984 we participated in the dedicatory services of the Sydney Australia Temple. There were many talks and much music and many prayers to open and close the various sessions. I confess I do not remember much of what was said or sung. But I have never forgotten the words spoken by a man who offered one of the opening prayers. He said, "Dear Father, we thank Thee that Thou hast loved us." These words, among the very many heard on those occasions, have fastened themselves upon my mind.

Great beyond comprehension is the love of God. He is our loving Eternal Father. Out of His love for us, He has given an eternal plan which, when followed, leads to exaltation in His kingdom. Out of His love for us, He sent His Firstborn into the world, who, out of His own divine love, gave Himself as a sacrifice for each of us. His was an incomparable gift of love to a world that largely spurned Him. He is our great exemplar. We should let love become the lodestar of our lives, with the absolute assurance that, because of the love of God our Eternal Father and His own beloved Son, our salvation from

the bonds of death is sure and our opportunity for eternal exaltation is certain. Let that divine love, shed on us, be reflected from our lives onto others of our Father's children.

Love and help the poor

As we look across the broad spectrum of humanity at the masses who walk in hunger and poverty and in whose lives are the constant afflictions of disease and misery, let us be generous with our substance to assist. We did a significant thing back in 1985 when we held two special fast days. In a great outpouring of love, our people contributed on those two days more than 10½ million dollars to help in bridging the gap between life and death for uncounted starving and underprivileged people. The Church continues to have a program, a Hunger Fund, to which we may contribute with love-filled hearts to assist those not of our faith who are in misery in many parts of the world.

Out of a sense of love for the less fortunate among our own, let us observe the law of the fast, going without a little food — which we do not need — and contributing the value thereof and even more to help those who are in desperate circumstances.

Serve through temple work

Let love become the lodestar of our lives. Surely we are a blessed people. We are blessed with the good things of earth, and we are blessed with the precious things of heaven. The holy priesthood is among us; its powers extend beyond the veil of death. In the sacred houses which we call temples, there is opportunity to do for others that which they cannot do for themselves. As surely as Christ offered Himself a vicarious sacrifice for *all* mankind, so we can engage in vicarious service in behalf of *some* of mankind, thus affording them the opportunity to move forward on the road of immortality and eternal life. Great is this work of love which goes on in these holy houses. Legion are the men and women who, with

total unselfishness, labor day and night in this work which speaks of divinity.

Reach out to the distressed

Let love be the Polar Star of our lives in reaching out to those who need our strength. There are many among us who lie alone in pain. Medicine helps, but kind words can bring to pass miracles. Many there are who walk in frightening circumstances, fearful and unable to cope. There are good bishops and Relief Society officers who are available to help, but these cannot do it all. Each of us can and must be anxiously engaged. It was said of the Savior, "[He] went about doing good" (Acts 10:38).

Said Isaiah: "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.

"Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you" (Isaiah 35:3-4).

Declared Micah, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8).

And the divine voice of revelation speaks, "Therefore, strengthen your brethren in all your conversation, in all your prayers, in all your exhortations, and in all your doings" (D&C 108:7).

Such are the injunctions — these and many more — to reach out to those in distress with a measure of that love which was epitomized in the life and works of the Savior.

Love and forgive enemies

There are even those among us whose lives are torn with hate. They lash out at one thing and another, including the Church. They manufacture and spread vile falsehoods behind which there is not a shred of truth. There is nothing new about this, except that there have been those in each generation, including this generation, who appear to be possessed of a sickness that so manifests itself. In such circumstances, we draw comfort from the words of the Master: "Blessed

are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake" (Matthew 5:11).

We think also of the mandate of modern revelation: "I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men" (D&C 64:10).

We think of a public figure who, when driven from office, said, "Those who hate you don't win unless you hate them — and then you destroy yourself."

It is not always easy to follow the Polar Star of love. It requires a discipline almost beyond the power of many to observe. I think it is the most difficult and also the most important of all commandments. But out of its observance comes a remarkable discipline and a refining influence that are wonderful to experience. It savors of the sweet, all-encompassing love of Christ.

Strengthen family love

To those of you who live in troubled homes, may I suggest that you let love become the lodestar of your family life. There is too much of shouting, too much of recrimination, so many tears in the homes of some of our people. Love is the only remedy. It is the very basis of marriage. It can be nurtured and strengthened, or it can be starved and weakened. The power lies within ourselves. Bridle your tempers, husbands. Wives, hold your tongues. Revive the wondrous feeling that brought you to the marriage altar.

Love is the very essence of family life. Why is it that the children we love become so frequently the targets of our harsh words? Why is it that these children who love their fathers and mothers sometimes speak as if with daggers that cut to the quick? "There is beauty all around," *only* "when there's love at home" (*Hymns*, no. 294).

Love never faileth

The word *love* is often used in place of the word *charity* in Paul's great declaration. I so read it:

"[Love] never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. . . .

"And now abideth, faith, hope, [love], these three; but the greatest of these is [love]" (1 Corinthians 13:8, 13).

Speaking to us in this dispensation, the Lord has said, "And faith, hope, charity and love, with an eye single to the glory of God, qualify [us] for the work" (D&C 4:5).

Few of us see the Polar Star anymore. We live in urban centers, and the city lights affect our vision of the wondrous firmament above us. But, as it has been for centuries, the star is there, in its place, its constancy a guide and an an-

chor. So likewise is love — unyielding, unchanging, "the pure love of Christ," as Moroni declared, "and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him" (Moroni 7:47).

I leave with you my love and extend my blessing and pray that there may be peace in your hearts and in your homes, in the name of Him whose life was the supreme offering of love, even the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Go Forth with Faith."

Elder Hans B. Ringger offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY AFTERNOON SESSION

The fifth session of the 159th Annual General Conference commenced at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, April 2, 1989. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music, with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducting and Robert Cundick at the organ.

President Monson made the following remarks as the meeting began:

President Thomas S. Monson

President Ezra Taft Benson, who has presided at all sessions of this conference, has asked that I conduct this fifth and concluding session of the 159th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We extend a sincere welcome to all assembled in the Tabernacle and to those seated in the Assembly Hall, where Elders Adney Y. Komatsu and Francis M. Gibbons are seated on the stand. We also

send our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and friends everywhere who are participating in these proceedings by radio, television, cable, or satellite transmission. We had a wire which indicated that this morning's conference session was received clearly and with great excitement by overflowing audiences in Manchester, England; Frankfurt, Germany; and San Jose, Costa Rica.

The Tabernacle Choir, directed by Jerold D. Ottley and accompanied by Robert Cundick, will begin this service by singing "Praise to the Man." The invocation will then be offered by Elder Douglas J. Martin of the Second Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Praise to the Man."
Elder Douglas J. Martin offered the invocation.

President Monson

The choir will now sing "A Song of Peace." Following the singing, Elder

Russell M. Nelson of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will address us.

The choir sang "A Song of Peace."

Elder Russell M. Nelson

The canker of contention

Some months ago my esteemed colleague Elder Carlos E. Asay and I stood atop Mount Nebo, where Moses once stood (see Deuteronomy 34:1-4). We saw what he saw. In the distance to our right was the Sea of Galilee. The river Jordan flowed from there to the Dead Sea on our left. Ahead was the promised land into which Joshua led the Israelite faithful so long ago.

Later we were permitted to do what Moses could not. We were escorted from the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan to its western border with Israel. From there, we and our associates walked over the Allenby Bridge. We felt the tension as armed soldiers nearby guarded both sides of the international boundary.

After safely enduring this experience, I thought of the irony of it all. Here in the land made holy by the Prince of Peace, contention has existed almost continuously from that day to this.

Prior to His ascension from the Holy Land, the Savior pronounced a unique blessing: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you" (John 14:27).

His peace is not necessarily political; His peace is personal. But that spirit of inner peace is driven away by contention. Contention does not usually begin as strife between countries. More often, it starts with an individual, for we can contend within ourselves over simple matters of right and wrong. From there, contention can infect neighbors and nations like a spreading sore.

As we dread any disease that undermines the health of the body, so should we deplore contention, which is a corroding canker of the spirit. I appreciate the counsel of Abraham Lincoln, who said:

"Quarrel not at all. No man resolved to make the most of himself can spare

time for personal contention. . . . Better give your path to a dog than be bitten by him" (Letter to J. M. Cutts, 26 Oct. 1863, in *Concise Lincoln Dictionary of Thoughts and Statements*, comp. and arr. Ralph B. Winn [New York: New York Philosophical Library, 1959], p. 107).

President Ezra Taft Benson in his keynote address yesterday described contention as "another face of pride."

My concern is that contention is becoming accepted as a way of life. From what we see and hear in the media, the classroom, and the workplace, all are now infected to some degree with contention. How easy it is, yet how wrong it is, to allow habits of contention to pervade matters of spiritual significance, because contention is forbidden by divine decree:

"The Lord God hath commanded that men should not murder; that they should not lie; that they should not steal; that they should not take the name of the Lord their God in vain; that they should not envy; that they should not have malice; that they should not contend one with another" (2 Nephi 26:32).

The creator of contention

To understand why the Lord has commanded us not to "contend one with another," we must know the true source of contention. A Book of Mormon prophet revealed this important knowledge even before the birth of Christ:

"Satan did stir them up to do iniquity continually; yea, he did go about spreading rumors and contentions upon all the face of the land, that he might harden the hearts of the people against that which was good and against that which should come" (Helaman 16:22).

When Christ did come to the Nephites, He confirmed that prophecy:

"He that hath the spirit of contention is not of me [saith the Lord], but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another.

"Behold, this is not my doctrine, to stir up the hearts of men with anger, one against another; but this is my doctrine, that such things should be done away" (3 Nephi 11:29-30).

The origin of contention

Contention existed before the earth was formed. When God's plan for creation and mortal life on the earth was first announced, sons and daughters of God shouted for joy. The plan was dependent on man's agency, his subsequent fall from the presence of God, and the merciful provision of a Savior to redeem mankind. Scriptures reveal that Lucifer sought vigorously to *amend* the plan by destroying the agency of man. Satan's cunning motive was unmasked in his statement:

"Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor" (Moses 4:1).

Satan's selfish efforts to alter the plan of God resulted in great contention in heaven. The Prophet Joseph Smith explained:

"Jesus said there would be certain souls that would not be saved; and the devil said he could save them all, and laid his plans before the grand council, who gave their vote in favor of Jesus Christ. So the devil rose up in rebellion against God, and was cast down" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 357).

This war in heaven was not a war of bloodshed. It was a war of conflicting ideas—the beginning of contention.

Scriptures repeatedly warn that the father of contention opposes the plan of our Heavenly Father. Satan's method relies on the infectious canker of contention. Satan's motive: to gain personal acclaim even over God Himself.

Targets of the adversary

The work of the adversary may be likened to loading guns in opposition to the work of God. Salvos containing germs of contention are aimed and fired at strategic targets essential to that holy work. These vital targets include—in addition to the individual—the family, leaders of the Church, and divine doctrine.

The family

The family has been under attack ever since Satan first taunted Adam and Eve (see Genesis 3; Moses 4). So today, each must guard against the hazard of contention in the family. It usually begins innocently. Years ago when our daughters were little girls who wanted to be big girls, the style of the day was to wear multiple petticoats. A little contention could have crept in as the girls soon learned that the one to get dressed first was the one best dressed.

In a large family of boys, those with the longest reach were the best fed. In order to avoid obvious contention, they adopted a rule that required them at mealtime to leave at least one foot on the floor.

The home is the great laboratory of learning and love. Here parents help children overcome these natural tendencies to be selfish. In rearing our own family, Sister Nelson and I have been very grateful for this counsel from the Book of Mormon:

"Ye will not suffer your children that they go hungry, or naked; neither will ye suffer that they transgress the laws of God, and fight and quarrel one with another, . . .

"But ye will teach them to walk in the ways of truth and soberness; ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve one another" (Mosiah 4:14-15).

And I might add, please be patient while children learn those lessons.

Parents should be partners to cherish and protect one another, knowing that the aim of the adversary is to destroy the integrity of the family.

Leaders of the Church

Leaders of the Church are targets for attack by those who stir contention. This is true even though not a single leader has called himself or herself to a position of responsibility. Each General Authority, for instance, chose another path to pursue as his life's occupation. But the reality is, as with Peter or Paul, each was surely "called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority" (Articles of Faith 1:5). With that call comes the commitment to emulate the patterns of the Prince of Peace.

That goal is shared by worthy servants of the Master, who would not speak ill of the Lord's anointed nor provoke contention over teachings declared by ancient or living prophets.

Certainly no faithful follower of God would promote any cause even remotely related to religion if rooted in controversy, because contention is not of the Lord.

Surely a stalwart would not lend his or her good name to periodicals, programs, or forums that feature offenders who do sow "discord among brethren" (Proverbs 6:19; see also 6:14).

Such agitators unfortunately fulfill long-foretold prophecy: they "take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed" (Psalm 2:2).

Yet, mercifully, the anointed pray for those who attack them, knowing the sad fate prophesied for their attackers (see D&C 121:16–22).

Throughout the world, Saints of the Lord follow Him and His anointed leaders. They have learned that the path of dissent leads to real dangers. The Book of Mormon carries this warning:

"Now these dissenters, having the same instruction and the same information . . . , having been instructed in the same knowledge of the Lord, nevertheless, it is strange to relate, not long after their dissensions they became more hardened and impenitent, and more wild, wicked and ferocious . . . ; giving way to indolence, and all manner of lascivi-

ousness; yea, entirely forgetting the Lord their God" (Alma 47:36).

How divisive is the force of dissension! Small acts can lead to such great consequences. Regardless of position or situation, no one can safely assume immunity to contention's terrible toll.

Thomas B. Marsh, once one of the Twelve, left the Church. His spiritual slide to apostasy started because his wife and another woman had quarreled over a little cream! After an absence from the Church of nearly nineteen years, he came back. To a congregation of Saints, he then said:

"If there are any among this people who should ever apostatize and do as I have done, prepare your backs for a good whipping, if you are such as the Lord loves. But if you will take my advice, you will stand by the authorities" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 5:206; see also Gordon B. Hinckley, in Conference Report, Apr. 1984, pp. 109–12; or *Ensign*, May 1984, pp. 81–83).

Of course the authorities are human. But to them God has entrusted the keys to His divine work. And He holds us accountable for our responses to the teachings of His servants. These are the words of the Lord:

"If my people will hearken unto my voice, and unto the voice of my servants whom I have appointed to lead my people, behold, verily I say unto you, they shall not be moved out of their place.

"But if they will not hearken to my voice, nor unto the voice of these men whom I have appointed, they shall not be blest" (D&C 124:45–46).

Divine doctrine

Divine doctrine of the Church is the prime target of attack by the spiritually contentious. Well do I remember a friend who would routinely sow seeds of contention in church classes. His assaults would invariably be preceded by this predictable comment: "Let me play the role of devil's advocate." Recently he passed away. One day he will stand before the Lord in judgment. Then, I wonder, will my friend's predictable comment again be repeated?

Such contentious spirits are not new. In an epistle to Timothy, the Apostle Paul gave this warning, "that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed" (1 Timothy 6:1).

"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to [his] doctrine, . . . doting about questions and strifes of words, . . . supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself" (1 Timothy 6:3-5; see also Isaiah 29:21; 2 Nephi 27:32; D&C 19:30; 38:41; 60:14).

Dissecting doctrine in a controversial way in order to draw attention to oneself is not pleasing to the Lord. He declared:

"Bring to light the true points of my doctrine, yea, and the only doctrine which is in me.

"And this I do that I may establish my gospel, that there may not be so much contention; yea, Satan doth stir up the hearts of the people to contention concerning the points of my doctrine; and in these things they do err, for they do wrest the scriptures and do not understand them" (D&C 10:62-63).

Contention fosters disunity. The Book of Mormon teaches the better way:

"Alma, having authority from God, . . . commanded them that there should be no contention one with another, but that they should look forward with one eye, having one faith and one baptism, having their hearts knit together in unity and in love one towards another" (Mosiah 18:18, 21; see also 23:15).

Steps to supplant contention

What can we do to combat this canker of contention? What steps may each of us take to supplant the spirit of contention with a spirit of personal peace?

To begin, show compassionate concern for others. Control the tongue, the pen, and the word processor. Whenever tempted to dispute, remember this proverb: "He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbour: but a man of understanding

holdeth his peace" (Proverbs 11:12; see also 17:28).

Bridle the passion to speak or write contentiously for personal gain or glory. The Apostle Paul thus counseled the Philippians, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" (Philippians 2:3).

Such high mutual regard would then let us respectfully disagree without being disagreeable.

But the ultimate step lies beyond beginning control of expression. Personal peace is reached when one, in humble submissiveness, truly loves God. Heed carefully this scripture:

"There was no contention in the land, *because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people*" (4 Nephi 1:15; italics added; see also 1:2).

Thus, love of God should be our aim. It is the first commandment—the foundation of faith. As we develop love of God and Christ, love of family and neighbor will naturally follow. Then will we eagerly emulate Jesus. He healed. He comforted. He taught, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9; see also 3 Nephi 12:9).

Through love of God, the pain caused by the fiery canker of contention will be extinguished from the soul. This healing begins with a personal vow: "Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me" (Sy Miller and Jill Jackson, "Let There Be Peace on Earth" [Beverly Hills, Calif.: Jan-Lee Music, 1972]). This commitment will then spread to family and friends and will bring peace to neighborhoods and nations.

Shun contention. Seek godliness. Be enlightened by eternal truth. Be like-minded with the Lord in love and united with Him in faith. Then shall "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7), be yours, to bless you and your posterity through generations yet to come. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder F. Enzo Busche, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder F. Enzo Busche

Temple service awakens the soul

I am overwhelmed with feelings of joy and deep gratitude to be able to participate in this gathering of the Saints of the latter days in this great conference. It is impossible to describe with words the feelings that Sister Busche and I share as we are now serving in the second year in one of the temples of the Lord. The dimensions of its sacredness and holiness continue to inspire us every day.

Since our first visit to the temple thirty years ago, we have always revered and cherished the temple as a sacred place—a place of learning and a place of service—but now, after having been permitted to concentrate our minds and hearts for two years solely upon the purposes and holiness of the house of the Lord, it seems as if our souls have come to a new awakening. Our first awakening came when the gospel of Jesus Christ was manifested to us through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, giving us an understanding of faith, repentance, and baptism. This time it is as if a veil has been removed from our spiritual minds and we see the same gospel, but in sharper focus, with clearer colors, and with added dimensions of understanding.

The university for eternal life

This is not the time or the occasion for me to speak at any length or depth about the meaning and purpose of the temple, but I feel I should share some feelings with you that have grown during many quiet hours in the house of the Lord.

It is certainly true that after we members have received our own endowment,

we usually return to the house of the Lord to dedicate our time for the salvation of our ancestors. But, in the light of my experiences in being close to the house of the Lord, I have come to know that the Lord is urgently inviting *all* members of His church to prepare and to go to the temple, not only for their own ordinances for salvation and for their ancestors, but also for additional reasons. It has become my conviction that the temple is the only “university” for men to prepare spiritually for their graduation to eternal life. The temple is the place where the Lord wants us to make a sincere evaluation of our mortal lives. He wants us to know the consequences of the fact that this life is a probationary time, for it has been revealed to men of our day through the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. We read, for instance, in Alma 12:24:

“And we see that death comes upon mankind, . . . which is the temporal death; nevertheless there was a space granted unto man in which he might repent; therefore this life became a probationary state; a time to prepare to meet God.”

Wickedness never was happiness

Understanding this, it seems to be imperative to ask ourselves these questions: How are we really doing? Is there a way to find out or to know where we are and whether we are on the right track?

Again, I feel the answers to these questions are to be found in the Book of Mormon, in the forty-first chapter of Alma, verses 10 and 11:

“Behold, I say unto you, wickedness never was happiness.

"... All men that are in a state of nature, or I would say, in a carnal state, are in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity; ... they are in a state contrary to the nature of happiness."

We all are prone, once in a while, to be in a state contrary to the nature of happiness, and not necessarily because we have pursued wickedness or iniquity to a full extent. But so long as we are in this earthly probationary state, the adversary can influence us. We may have become a little careless. We may have neglected our relationships with those closest to us—those who are our first responsibility—our spouse, our children, or our parents. Perhaps we may have permitted small bad habits or attitudes to enter into our lives; or perhaps we have even lost to some degree an understanding of the importance of keeping a covenant with exactness. If so, we are in a dangerous state. We must become aware of it. We cannot afford to ignore the situation. We may observe that for some time we are not really happy, that we must constantly force ourselves to smile, or perhaps that we are in a state close to depression. One may not yet have formally broken a covenant, or may even still manage to hide behind a facade of happiness. Although we might deceive others, we cannot deceive ourselves, and we cannot deceive the Lord.

An essential awareness

When the Spirit of the Lord is withdrawn even in part, we feel it, though we may know little or nothing about the gospel of Jesus Christ or the plan of salvation. When any child of God breaks any of the laws of God, which are the laws of righteousness, the Spirit of Christ, which, according to the scriptures, gives "light to every man" will be withdrawn to some degree (D&C 84:46; see also D&C 93:2; 121:37; John 1:9). Shadows of darkness will fall upon the soul, and, in this state, an *awareness* of what is happening to us is essential.

Study scriptures to gain awareness

The gospel in its fulness is being preached throughout the world by the Lord's anointed servants, that everyone may come to an awareness of his state. In order to be close to the words of the Lord's anointed, it is necessary to read and study the scriptures with commitment and dedication. What we have seen or felt, or what we have learned from the lessons others have learned after much tribulation can make it possible for us to avoid going through the same suffering ourselves.

For instance, we of this day and age can today feel and learn from the teachings of the prophet Alma in the Book of Mormon, as though we were listening to him preach more than two thousand years ago:

"If our hearts have been hardened, yea, if we have hardened our hearts against the word, insomuch that it has not been found in us, then will our state be awful, for then we shall be condemned.

"For our words will condemn us, yea, all our works will condemn us; we shall not be found spotless; and our thoughts will also condemn us; and in this awful state we shall not dare to look up to our God; and we would fain be glad if we could command the rocks and the mountains to fall upon us to hide us from his presence.

"But this cannot be; we must come forth and stand before him in his glory, and in his power, and in his might, majesty, and dominion, and acknowledge to our everlasting shame that all his judgments are just; that he is just in all his works, and that he is merciful unto the children of men, and that he has all power to save every man that believeth on his name and bringeth forth fruit meet for repentance" (Alma 12:13–15).

Become our own judges

My dear brothers and sisters, the Lord does not want us to become aware of our state of nothingness and misery (see Mosiah 4:11; Alma 26:12; Helaman 12:7;

Moses 1:10) only at the Day of Judgment. Now and every day in our mortal lives, He wants to sharpen our awareness, that we may become our own judges, as He calls us to a continuous process of repentance.

After Alma had spoken about repentance and desires of righteousness until the end of life, he said, "They . . . are redeemed of the Lord; . . . for behold, they are their own judges" (Alma 41:7). The Apostle Paul also explained, as stated in 1 Corinthians 11:31, "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged."

It seems that we can effectively go through the process of continuous repentance only if we literally learn to become our own judges. We ourselves and the Lord are the only ones who really know us. We do not even know ourselves unless we have learned to walk the lonely and most challenging road toward self-honesty, as constantly prompted by the Spirit.

This is the sacrifice we have to learn to offer. Nobody will ever be able to understand or even to accept principles of truth unless he or she, to some degree, has developed a painful awareness of the dimensions of self-honesty. Without the capability to recognize truth, we will not be really free; we will be slaves to habits or prejudices heavily covered with excuses. But learning to become aware of the depth of the dimensions of truth will make us free. We cannot remove a stumbling block unless we see it first. We cannot grow unless we know what is holding us back.

Understanding gained in the temple

My dear brothers and sisters, I know of no better place where we can grow in

the understanding of the principles of honesty than in the house of the Lord. I know of no better place to learn to grow in the dimensions of becoming our own judge than in the house of the Lord. We have reason to rejoice because the understanding that this life is a time for men to prepare to meet God has come to us while we still have time to consider the consequences of this message. We are still alive, and our probationary state is not yet over. Temples have been erected as houses of the Lord. They are standing ready to serve as instruments to our own gradual awakening to the full dimensions of truth on our inevitable road to eternity.

I personally have been humbled deeply in these days of quietness in the temple as I have been granted a deeper understanding of the nothingness of man, the need for a process of continuous repentance, and the need for temple covenants, which are based upon the principles of the atonement of Christ.

I know that the Lord Jesus Christ lives. I know that this is His church. I know that He stands at the helm of this work. It is a great joy to see the continuously increasing numbers of members who are understanding the importance of the temple for their own spiritual education and, therefore, for their own spiritual preparation for eternal life.

I leave you this testimony as your brother and your servant, and I do this in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder F. Enzo Busche, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us.

We shall now hear from Sister Joy F. Evans, First Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency.

Sister Joy F. Evans

Ministering to the sick and needy

We read in the book of Matthew that when the Son of Man shall come in his

glory, all the nations of the earth shall be gathered before him and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats. Those on

his right hand shall be blessed and shall inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. (See Matthew 25:31-34.) And the King shall say unto them:

"For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

"Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

"Then shall the righteous answer . . . , Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

"When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

"Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

"And the King shall answer . . . , Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:35-40).

Almost every day we have the opportunity to feed the hungry, to visit the sick, to help bear one another's burdens, even as the Savior taught. Sometimes the service is given to our family, our children, our husbands or wives, our parents, our loved ones. Sometimes it is a neighbor or a friend in need, sometimes a stranger.

Having compassion on those who are hurting for whatever reason and then translating the response of the heart into the needed act is truly ministering as God would have us do.

Relief Society service

At the time of the organization of the Relief Society, the Prophet Joseph Smith told the sisters that they were now in a position to act according to those sympathies which God had placed in their bosoms (see *History of the Church*, 4:605).

Today, countless women in the Church reach out to others through visiting teaching and compassionate service, which are still the heart of Relief Society. They bless the lives of others and buoy up those who may be discouraged or homesick, frightened or disheartened. They remember the counsel given us by a

prophet that "God does notice us, and he watches over us. But it is usually through another person that he meets our needs. Therefore, it is vital that we serve each other in the kingdom" (Spencer W. Kimball, "Small Acts of Service," *Ensign*, Dec. 1974, p. 5). The book of Proverbs admonishes us to "withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it" (3:27).

Perhaps a personal experience will help to illustrate this loving, watchful care that we are to extend to one another.

My husband and I have been blessed with ten wonderful children. Seven of them are living, which means, of course, that three of them are not. During the times that I was pregnant I had to stay in bed much of the time, and it was always a great worry that I carry those precious babies until they were big enough to survive. During many weeks, my visiting teachers came with lunch for me or dinner for my family. They tended our toddlers and sent library books for me to read.

When our twins were born, we were totally surprised by having two babies! How wonderful to have two little people with only one pregnancy! It was not to be for long, however—at least in this life. Our baby boy lived two days; our baby girl lived three. The sisters were there again, not only with food, but with a beautiful rose bush called "Duet" which flourished and grew. It was a sweet reminder of a tender time. The lovely blossoms helped us to remember our little ones, our friends, our gratitude for the gospel and for the Church.

Reaching out in love

We must take seriously our responsibility to reach out in love to those among us who may be lonely or unhappy—who are struggling with problems or temptations. They will find friends somewhere; they will find comfort somewhere. What is our failure if they find it elsewhere because we were not there, were not welcoming?

"I needed you—I couldn't find you—I don't need you anymore." We

must not let this happen if there is any way for us to be there when we are needed.

Responding to chronic and terminal illness

Response to the needs of the sick, and especially the terminally ill and their families, has been a part of the work of love assigned to the Relief Society since its very beginning. Times have changed greatly since those early days in Nauvoo when the sisters gave much of the only care given to the sick and dying, when they sewed the casket linings, made the burial clothes, cared tenderly for the bodies of the dead, and comforted the living. Life is not so hard now in our time and generation and has been lengthened for most of us and made infinitely more comfortable.

But chronic and terminal illness still exist—sometimes for the young, sometimes for the elderly—and death must still be faced. We still are to help “bear . . . one another’s burdens” (Galatians 6:2), “comfort those that stand in need of comfort,” and “mourn with those that mourn” (Mosiah 18:9).

Compassionate service can be a sweet, sustaining help to the patient and the family during such times. “I was sick, . . . and ye came unto me” (Matthew 25:36).

Many times people do nothing in such a situation simply because they do not know what to do. They are afraid of intruding or of saying the wrong thing. Perhaps they do not know how to relate to a dying person or to the family. They may feel emotions of anger, sadness, or confusion. Nevertheless, even they can find many ways to help.

One woman tells the story of a tragedy she experienced when five of her close family members from another state were killed in a fiery automobile accident. She herself was struggling to absorb the news, trying to pack for her own little family to leave the following day for the funeral. A good friend and neighbor ar-

rived at her door with the announcement that he had come to clean their shoes. She had not even thought about shoes.

He knelt on their kitchen floor with a pan of soapy water, a sponge, shoe polish, and a brush and soon had everyday shoes and Sunday shoes gleaming and spotless. He quietly slipped away when he finished, leaving the shoes ready to pack; even the soles were washed.

The mother says, “Now, whenever I hear of an acquaintance who has lost a loved one, I no longer call with the vague offer, ‘If there’s anything I can do . . .’ Now I try to think of one specific task that suits that person’s need—such as washing the family car, taking the dog to the boarding kennel, or house-sitting during the funeral. And if the person says to me, ‘How did you know I needed that done?’ I reply, ‘It’s because a man once cleaned my shoes.’” (Madge Harrah, “I’ve Come to Clean Your Shoes,” *Reader’s Digest*, Dec. 1983, pp. 21–24).

Total care of a patient with serious chronic or terminal illness is not an easy, short-term project. It is most often a profound emotional and physical experience. The sick person and the family usually welcome regular emotional and spiritual support.

Giving respite to those who care for the chronically or terminally ill can allow them to regain their strength and coping skills. The length of such care depends upon individual circumstances; even an hour or two can make a great difference to an overburdened family.

The mother who cannot spend needed time with a teenage daughter because of the demands of caring for a grandmother who has had a stroke, the family that feels guilty because it expresses the desire to be away from the problem for a little while, the parents who are too fatigued to care properly for their little ones, the mother who spends so much time with a handicapped child that other children in the family feel (and sometimes are) neglected—all need loving support and relief from overwhelming responsibilities.

Helping others through a time of special challenge requires understanding and patience. People respond to grief in different ways. Not everyone recovers in the same period of time, and not everyone acts the same. The griever might be irritable, depressed, quiet, or withdrawn, but through kindness and friendship, he or she will almost always recover and will come to acceptance.

A testimony of the reality of Jesus Christ and of his resurrection is the knowledge that sustains and comforts in times of trial. This assurance guides those bowed down with grief out of the shadow and into the light. This knowledge we can share with one another: "I know that my Redeemer lives. What comfort this sweet sentence gives!" ("I Know That My Redeemer Lives," *Hymns*, no. 136).

Being sensitive to such needs helps everyone find joy in the precious reality of everyday living and look forward with faith to the future, knowing that sorrow and struggle and endurance to the end are necessary parts of mortality.

Being sensitive to special problems

It is said that love is tested and proved in the fire of suffering and adversity. How sensitive we should be to those who are suffering or hurting, to those with special problems—the sister who has had a miscarriage or a stillbirth, a premature or handicapped child; the one whose beloved husband has died; the lovely woman to whom marriage and family have not yet come; the new convert whose family has rejected her because of her baptism.

What we do or say is not as important as that we do or say something—"I care about you," or "Let me help." Where love is, heart will respond to heart and burdens will be lightened.

We must never feel that we have done our share or had our turn. I love something Dag Hammarskjöld once said when he was secretary general of the United Nations: "You have not done enough, you have never done enough as long as there is something more that you can contribute" (in Richard L. Evans, Jr., *Richard L. Evans—The Man and the*

Message [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1973], p. 256).

Pouring down your calm light

For those among us who, for some reason, such as age or health, cannot give the kind of service we've been discussing, we would say, as someone said: "Among the people whom we know, it is not necessarily those who, meteor-like, are ever on the rush after some visible charge and work to whom we owe the most. It is often the lives, like the stars, which simply pour down on us the calm light of their bright and faithful being, up to which we look and out of which we gather the deepest calm and courage. It is good to know that even when we can no longer do something for our fellowmen, we can still be something for them; to know, and this surely, that no man or woman of the humblest sort can really be strong, gentle, and good without the world's being better for that goodness."

Almost everyone can do or be something for someone else in need.

Helping those whose faith is weak

Perhaps there are days or times when, faced with overwhelming problems, we want to believe. We may worry or fret or doubt, yet we want to believe. It is comforting to me to know that the Lord knew even that this would be so and gave us in the book of Mark a wonderful story of a distraught father who brought his son to the Savior to be healed of a condition which sounds perhaps like epilepsy (see 9:14–29).

Jesus said: "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth."

"And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:23–24).

We can help each other, also, on our days of unbelief. We can strengthen and lift and bless those whose faith might be weak. As Alma said, "Even if ye can no more than desire to believe, let this desire work in you" (Alma 32:27). This is the planting of the seed of faith.

On the right hand of the Lord

We must recognize that life is a precious gift (Florence Nightingale called it a "splendid gift"), that trust and tenderness are fragile, that we must love and serve one another, must encourage one another, forgive one another—all this not once, but over and over again. Then perhaps we shall be remembered among those on the right hand of the Lord when he shall come in his glory.

"Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

"Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

"And the King shall answer . . . , Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these

my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:37–40).

That we may do so, brothers and sisters, each of us, as we have the opportunity, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Excellent instruction and a sweet spirit. We have just heard from Sister Joy F. Evans, First Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet," following which Elder Royden G. Derrick, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will speak to us.

The choir and congregation sang "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

Elder Royden G. Derrick

The way to perfection

In October of 1833, the Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation in which the Lord said, "I will raise up unto myself a pure people, that will serve me in righteousness" (D&C 100:16). The Lord was speaking of our pioneer forefathers, and also of the Saints of this day. In view of that implied responsibility, I would like to discuss with you today the way to perfection, which not only applies to this life but to the next one as well.

A fortnight ago I received an interesting letter from a member of the Church who grew up in a country located high in the Himalaya Mountains of southern Asia. He wrote: "I was brought up in a royal, aristocratic, Hindu priest family. I was taught to work but not to hope for a reward. I thought, Why should I work if there is no reward? Am I following the right way? I was offended with polytheistic and pantheistic philosophy. I wanted to know the *real* truth and the [right] way." He told how he had found the truth and the only right way through

the Mormon missionaries in Seoul, Korea. He bore a powerful testimony of the divinity of Jesus Christ that brought tears to my eyes.

I was intrigued by his statement concerning the need for a reward. The Lord has promised us resurrection and immortality, but these are not a reward. According to Webster's dictionary, a reward is "something that is given for some service or attainment."

Resurrection is the reuniting of the body and the spirit. As Jesus was resurrected, eventually every person who was ever born into this world will be resurrected, whether he wants to be or not. When a person is resurrected, he receives immortality, which is to live forever in the resurrected state. Likewise, every person who was ever born into this world will receive immortality regardless of his or her behavior in this life. Thus, *resurrection* and *immortality* are synonymous. They are not a reward—they are a gift—for we have rendered no service nor attained any accomplishment to warrant

these as a reward. The gift is from the Savior; it comes through His atoning sacrifice.

The scriptures teach us that there *is* promise beyond—that there *is* a reward for service rendered and for attainment. The reward is exaltation in the celestial kingdom of God. Exaltation is the highest of three degrees of glory in the celestial kingdom. The celestial kingdom is the highest of three kingdoms in the realm of immortality. Exaltation is earned by accepting Jesus Christ and His divine sonship and following His precepts.

The Beatitudes: steps for coming to Christ

Jesus showed us the way. Its simplicity is encompassed in His Beatitudes, which have echoed down through the centuries of time and will yet echo through the millennia of time: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3). In repeating the Sermon on the Mount to the people in ancient America, He said it differently: "Blessed are the poor in spirit *who come unto me*, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (3 Nephi 12:3; italics added). This addition, "*who come unto me*," enables one to better understand the meaning of this verse. The Lord said he is angered with the inhabitants of the earth, for "they seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god" (D&C 1:16). The Beatitudes are steps we can take to come to Christ.

Step 1. To come unto Christ, one's first step is to come forth with a broken heart and a contrite spirit that results in overcoming unrighteous pride and becoming submissive to His will.

Step 2. "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted" (Matthew 5:4). The Apostle Paul spoke of a godly sorrow for our sins that is essential to our spiritual growth.

Step 3. "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5). The dictionary defines *meek* as "enduring injury with patience and without resentment." This is an important virtue that one must develop in preparation for

entrance into the celestial kingdom, which kingdom the earth will become when it is celestialized.

Step 4. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6). The scripture from ancient America adds, "shall be filled with the Holy Ghost" (3 Nephi 12:6).

A young man approached Socrates and asked him to be his tutor and to teach him what he knew. Socrates took the young man to the seaside and out into the water. Then he pushed his head under the water for almost too long. The young man struggled, came up gasping for air, and demanded the meaning of such an unwarranted action. The great Socrates responded, "When you want to learn as badly as you want a breath of air, only then can I teach you what you want to know." To understand the gospel of Jesus Christ, one must first have a strong desire to learn and a willingness to study.

Step 5. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew 5:7). Webster's dictionary defines *mercy* as "compassion or forbearance shown to an offender." Such is the by-product of gospel living.

Step 6. When one extends mercy to others, he develops purity of heart. The Savior said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). The dictionary has twenty-two different definitions for the word *see*, one of which is "to understand." When one develops purity of heart, he will come to understand God. As one develops an understanding of God, he comes to know Him. The Savior said, addressing the Father, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

Step 7. Once one has gained purity of heart, he receives peace in his mind and peace in his heart. The Savior continued, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9). Having gained inner peace, we have put on the full armor of God. Now we can more easily withstand persecution, which leads to —

Step 8. "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

"Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matthew 5:10-12).

The Savior concluded His sermon by encouraging us to become perfect, as our Heavenly Father is perfect. While these steps follow one another in a natural sequence, we should always be striving to perfect ourselves in each of these virtues. We should always help others as they strive to improve. Disparagement of others should not exist within our ranks, for each of us is struggling to move forward. A helping hand should be extended to lift one another over the shoals along the rocky shore near which our ship must sail.

Repentance and the sacrament

In our state of imperfection, sin often occurs. The Lord has told us that if we truly repent, He will forgive us. Repentance involves recognition of our imperfections, remorse for having strayed, restitution where appropriate, and resolve that the transgression will never be repeated.

It is important that we partake of the sacrament regularly. When we do so, in sincere repentance, our baptismal covenants are renewed, the Lord forgives us, and we start anew. It is truly a marvelous and a merciful process, one which enables us to grow and progress.

"Tried in all things"

When we partake of the sacrament, we witness unto God that we are willing to take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ (see D&C 20:77). What does that mean?

The Savior said to Peter, "Come, follow me" (see Matthew 4:19; Mark 1:17). Peter walked in His footsteps for

three years. He went where Jesus went. He did what Jesus instructed him to do. Then the Savior said to Peter and to His other Apostles also:

"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2-3).

And where did Jesus go? He went to His Father. But before He went to His Father, He went someplace else. He went to Gethsemane. We are not required to go through His trials, but we are required to be *willing* to go through them. To prove that we are willing to do so, we must go through our own trials and remain faithful.

The Lord said, "My people must be tried in all things, that they may be prepared to receive the glory that I have for them, even the glory of Zion; and he that will not bear chastisement is not worthy of my kingdom" (D&C 136:31).

Strive for perfection

At the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount in the Holy Land, the Savior said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). But when the Savior repeated the Sermon on the Mount to the people of ancient America, He said, "Therefore I would that ye should be perfect *even as I*, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect" (3 Nephi 12:48; italics added).

Something important occurred between the time He taught this sermon to the people in the Holy Land and when He taught it to the people of ancient America. In the meantime, He went through His Gethsemane, where He drank the bitter cup and did not shrink. We too should strive for perfection, bear up under our problems and our sorrows, remain faithful to the end, and not shrink.

My friend from the Himalayas will have his trials and tribulations as he returns to his homeland to share this important message with his people: that Jesus

Christ is our Redeemer and our Savior and our Exemplar who will direct them along the right path that leads to exaltation; that there *is* a reward, but it *must be earned*; and that the reward is glorious beyond description. He tasted of that reward when he asked the Lord, "Is it true?" and the Holy spirit bore witness to him that truly it is.

I testify that this restored gospel which we espouse is indeed the real truth and the *right* way to a glorious and eternal

reward. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Royden G. Derrick, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our next speaker.

Elder M. Russell Ballard

This has been another wonderful conference, brothers and sisters. I am sure we all appreciate the inspired and timely messages we have heard. They have been translated simultaneously into twenty-nine languages, many of which have been broadcast via satellite and television to millions of people.

Benefits and challenges of television

The wonder of television causes me to believe that Philo T. Farnsworth, back in 1927, must surely have been inspired of the Lord to develop this remarkable medium of communication. As you know, Brother Farnsworth was a member of the Church. Applying his scientific skills, he brought to the world this marvelous invention, which I believe is to be used for the primary purpose of furthering the work of the Lord.

In the past sixty years, television has become a major industry in the world. It is estimated that more than 750 million television sets are owned by people living in 160 countries. Approximately 2.5 billion people view television broadcasting every day.

Most of us recognize both the many benefits and the many challenges that come from television in our modern, fast-paced world. Some of the benefits, besides listening to the teaching of the gospel, we can receive by merely touching a button include receiving instant reports of local and world events and

updates on weather; watching fantasy; exploring geography; living history; enjoying good theater, dance, and music; and experiencing culture from almost every country in the world.

For these kinds of programs we praise the industry. Unfortunately, however, far too much programming is not wholesome and uplifting but is violent, degrading, and destructive to moral values. This kind of television offends the Spirit of the Lord; therefore, I express a word of warning and caution about such programming.

Controlling the use of television

Good families face very significant challenges in controlling the use of television and videotapes in their homes. I agree with Dr. Victor B. Cline when he said, "I am convinced by a vast amount of research that the images, fantasies, and models which we are repeatedly exposed to in advertisements, entertainment, novels, motion pictures, and other works of art can and do . . . affect the self-image and, later, the behavior of nearly all young people and adults too" (address at Tidewater Assembly on Family Life, Norfolk, Virginia).

On another occasion, Dr. Cline said that the mental diet is as important as the nutritional diet. "The amount of violence a child sees at 7 predicts how violent he will be at 17, 27 and 37. . . . Children's minds are like banks—whatever you put

in, you get back 10 years later with interest." He said that violent television teaches children, step-by-step, "how to commit violent acts, and it desensitizes them to the horror of such behavior and to the feelings of victims." Dr. Cline said that America is suffering from "an explosion of interpersonal violence like we have never seen before. . . . The violence is because of violence in our entertainment" ("Therapist Says Children Who View TV Violence Tend to Become Violent," *Deseret News*, 24 Mar. 1989, sec. B, p. 2).

Television now establishes values

Some may be surprised to know that in the average American home, the television set is on just under seven hours each day, and more than sixty-six million Americans who are under age nineteen live in these homes. A recent magazine article included this statement: "Once, television's 'window on the world' mirrored solid *family ties*, heroes drawn in bright primary colors, and a society of permanence and belonging. Now, . . . it's clear that our TV shows are showing quite a different picture. In fact, it's arguable that television is no longer a mere window on our world but the *value-setter itself*" (*Another View of the Window* [Triangle Publications, n.d.], p. 3).

Detrimental effects of television

Allow me to share highlights of some alarming findings from research studies conducted over the past eight to ten years on the effects of television when watched more than two hours a day *without* the careful selection of programs.

1. Before television, children played together more often, played outdoors more, spent more time being creative and inventive, and read more. Parents and children spent more time together, talked together more, shared more joint projects and chores, and ate more meals together. (See Ellen B. De Franco, *TV On-Off: Better Family Use of Television* [Santa Monica, Calif., Goodyear Publishing Co., 1980], pp. 5-6.)

2. Television is psychologically addictive (see *TV On-Off*, p. 4).

3. Television is a *physically* passive activity and generally discourages creative play. It can encourage a certain kind of passivity which leads to a "show me or entertain me" orientation by children. (See *Television and Behavior* [Rockville, Md.: National Institute of Mental Health, 1987], pp. 45-46.)

4. Television tends to overpower and desensitize a child's sense of sympathy for suffering (see Kate Moody, *Growing Up on Television: The TV Effect—A Report to Parents* [New York: Times Books, 1980], pp. 91-92).

5. Some children lose the ability to learn from reality because life's experiences are more complicated than those seen on the screen. Teachers and parents, therefore, suffer by comparison when they cannot solve problems in thirty to sixty minutes. (See Ben Logan and Kate Moody, eds., *Television Awareness Training: The Viewer's Guide for Family and Community* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1979], p. 43.)

Pornography and violence in the media

Volumes of research data show the detrimental effects of television, but I just say that television and videocassette viewing by youngsters has a significant impact on their behavior. We must not take lightly the confession of a recently executed killer on the impact pornography and violence in media had on his life. The Apostle Paul warned that men can become "past feeling . . . [giving] themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness" (Ephesians 4:19). In Proverbs we read, "As [a man] thinketh . . . , so is he" (23:7). A mind exposed to violence and immorality cannot escape the negative impact of such exposure.

President Gordon B. Hinckley said: "A survey of influential television writers and executives in Hollywood has shown that they are far less religious than the general public. . . . While nearly all of the 104 Hollywood professionals inter-

viewed had a religious background, 45 percent now say they have no religion, and of the other 55 percent only 7 percent say they attend a religious service as much as once a month.

"This group has had a major role in shaping the shows whose themes and stars have become staples in our popular culture" (*Los Angeles Times*, 19 Feb. 1983, part 2, page 5).

"These are the people [TV script writers and executives] who, through the medium of entertainment, are educating us in the direction of their own standards, which in many cases are diametrically opposed to the standards of the gospel" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1983, p. 67; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1983, pp. 45-46).

A *Time* magazine article states:

"This upsurge in openness has been linked by some critics to cutbacks in the network departments of standards and practices—the censors who review shows and commercials for offensive . . . material. . . . The ranks of these watchdogs were drastically reduced: from a peak of 75 to 80 per network during the 1970s to 35 to 40 today at ABC and fewer than 30 each at CBS and NBC" ("Where Are the Censors?" 12 Dec. 1988, p. 95). Televised violence has become so pervasive that the average high school student by graduation has seen eighteen thousand murders and many other acts of violence and sin. This being the case today, more parental review and monitoring is needed to protect our families from the current flood of TV violence and the effect it has on us.

Randal A. Wright in his book *Families in Danger* wrote:

"It is possible to trace the decline in American television from its original programs. As an example, a prime-time (7:00 to 10:00 P.M.) schedule check going back thirty years found that in 1955, no violent, crime-oriented programs were offered. . . . By 1986, twenty-nine hours of violent programs were being offered" ([Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1988], pp. 45-46).

I believe that the number of violent programs has increased substantially since 1986.

Mr. Wright continued: "Not only is violence increasing on TV, but every form of immorality, vice, and corruption is also being paraded before our family's eyes in ever-increasing amounts. Ask yourself if the same kinds of sexually related scenes and messages of all too many programs of today were found in the programs of twenty years ago. We are being exposed to growing amounts of inappropriate material if we choose to watch TV without being selective" (*Families in Danger*, p. 46).

Be in the world but not of it

In the Church, we often state the couplet, "Be in the world but not of the world." As we observe television shows that make profanity, violence, and infidelity commonplace and even glamorous, we often wish we could lock out the world in some way and isolate our families from it all.

Perhaps the proper response to outrageous behavior is outrage, or, more to the point, the proper response to outrageous television is outrage. I express my own and this church's disappointment, disagreement, and even outrage with television that turns our attention and sometimes our inclinations toward violence, self-serving greed, profanity, disrespect for traditional values, sexual promiscuity, and deviance.

Nephi predicted that in our day Satan would "rage in the hearts of the children of men, and stir them up to anger against that which is good" (2 Nephi 28:20). Satan's evil use of television contributes to the increased wickedness in our society.

Perhaps we should state the couplet previously mentioned as two separate admonitions. First, "*Be in the world.*" Be involved; be informed. Try to be understanding and tolerant and to appreciate diversity. Make meaningful contributions to society through service and involvement. Second, "*Be not of the world.*" Do not follow wrong paths or bend to accommodate or accept what is not right.

We should strive to change the corrupt and immoral tendencies in television and in society by keeping things that offend and debase *out* of our homes. In spite of all of the wickedness in the world, and in spite of all the opposition to good that we find on every hand, we should *not* try to take ourselves or our children *out* of the world. Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven," or yeast (Matthew 13:33). We are to lift the world and help all to rise above the wickedness that surrounds us. The Savior prayed to the Father:

"I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (John 17:15).

Members of the Church need to influence more than we are influenced. We should work to stem the tide of sin and evil instead of passively being swept along by it. We each need to help solve the problem rather than avoid or ignore it. I like this simple little poem:

All the water in the world
No matter how it tried
Could never sink the smallest ship
Unless it got inside.
All the evil of the world
And every kind of sin
Could never damn a human soul
Unless we let it in.

We can live in the world, brothers and sisters, without letting the world into us. We have the gospel message that can carry men and women buoyantly through the "mist of darkness" (1 Nephi 8:23) to the source of all light. We can raise children who have been taught to discern and to make personal righteous decisions.

The Lord does not need a society that hides and isolates itself from the world. Rather, he needs stalwart individuals and families who live exemplary lives *in* the world and demonstrate that joy and fulfillment come not of the world but through the spirit and the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

Reversing negative trends of television

Now, what can we as individuals and families do to reverse the negative trends of television? Let me review with you some suggestions.

Research data indicates that families that limit television viewing to a *maximum* of two hours a day of *carefully selected* programs may see the following significant changes in family relationships:

1. Value setting will be taught and reinforced by the family. Families will learn how to establish values and how to reason together.

2. Relationships between parents and youth will increase in families.

3. Homework will be completed with less pressure of time.

4. Personal conversations will increase substantially.

5. Children's imaginations will come back to life.

6. Each family member will become a discriminating selector and evaluator of programs.

7. Parents can become family leaders again.

8. Good reading habits may be substituted for television viewing.

Brothers and sisters, we can write to local radio and television stations and to cable and national networks to express our concerns. The sponsors and advertisers who pay for programs and advertising that are offensive would most likely appreciate hearing from us also.

In my opinion, we must make our influence felt by joining with other concerned people who oppose television programming that tears down and destroys the *values* that have made our families and our countries strong. Latter-day Saints are not alone in this concern. Many individuals, churches, and other organizations are raising their voices. Let us join with them, brothers and sisters, to persuade TV script writers, executives, and sponsors to use their talents and resources to help build a better and safer world.

President George Bush, in his inaugural address, called for a kinder face of the nation and a gentler face of the world (see *Investor's Daily*, 23 Jan. 1989, p. 11). Let it begin by a kinder and gentler television throughout the world.

A simple test

The prophet Mormon said that each of us is given the Spirit of Christ to know good from evil; everything that invites us to do good is of God. On the other hand, anything that persuades us to do evil is of the devil, for he and those who follow him persuade no one to do good. (See Moroni 7:16–18.) This simple test will guide us in judging television and other media programs.

May the Lord bless us and help us protect ourselves, our families, and the spirit of our homes, and help us improve our world through working for improved television programming.

I leave you my testimony that we have only one sure way to secure our homes and our families, and that is through learning and living the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. May the Lord bless you and help you prevent anything of an evil nature from entering your homes, I pray humbly, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have just heard from Elder M. Russell Ballard, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

President Ezra Taft Benson

(Read by President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency)

My dear brethren and sisters, how I have rejoiced in the messages I have heard delivered from this pulpit at this great general conference of the Church.

The messages are true. They are important. They are vital to our personal

Before hearing President Benson's concluding remarks, we express our sincere appreciation to the Mormon Youth Chorus, Brigham Young University combined choirs, Ricks College centennial priesthood choir, and the Tabernacle Choir and to their conductors and their organists for the beautiful and inspiring music during this conference.

We thank our city officials for the cooperation given the conference, the Relief Society and Church Health Unit nurses who have been on hand to render service, and the ushers and the interpreters.

We express appreciation to local and national press representatives for the coverage of the conference and to the owners and operators of the many radio and television stations and cable and satellite systems who have given time and made facilities available to carry sessions of this conference in many countries.

We shall now be pleased to listen to the closing remarks of President Ezra Taft Benson, our beloved prophet, which he has asked me to read. Following the presentation of his message, we shall see a delightful video clip of President Benson singing to the youth whom he loves.

Following these remarks, the Tabernacle Choir will sing "I Am a Child of God." The benediction will then be offered by Elder Waldo P. Call of the Second Quorum of the Seventy, and then this conference will stand adjourned for six months.

salvation, and with all my heart I commend them to you.

To the children of the Church

In previous general meetings of the Church, I have spoken specifically to the mothers and to the fathers, to the young men and to the young women, to the single adult sisters and to the single adult brethren.

For my closing message at this conference, I would now like to speak to the children of the Church — yes, to *you*, our precious children. And as you listen, I pray that you will know that this is a personal message just for you.

How I love you! How our Heavenly Father loves you!

Just like the beautiful Primary song you sing, each of you truly *is* a child of God. For you, rich blessings *are* in store, and if you learn to do His will, you *will* live with Him once more. I know this to be true. (See “I Am a Child of God,” *Hymns*, no. 301.)

Today I desire to teach you what our Heavenly Father wants you to know so that you can learn to do His will and enjoy true happiness. It will help you now and throughout your life.

Read the Book of Mormon

First, may I say how thrilled I am to know how you children are learning about the Book of Mormon. This is one of the very important things Heavenly Father wants you to do.

I know you are reading the Book of Mormon, for I have received hundreds of personal letters from you telling me that you are reading this sacred book. It makes me weep for joy when I hear this.

Many of you have read the Book of Mormon all the way through. In family home evening and in Primary you have dramatized Book of Mormon stories, you have sung songs about the Book of Mormon, you have learned the names of the books in the Book of Mormon, you have played Book of Mormon games, you have learned about wonderful Book of Mormon prophets. Some of you have even earned money to send copies of the Book of Mormon around the world.

How pleased I am to hear of your love for the Book of Mormon. *I* love it too, and Heavenly Father wants you to continue to learn from the Book of Mormon every day. It's Heavenly Father's special gift to you. By following its teachings, you will learn to do the will of our Father in Heaven.

I also hope your parents and leaders will give you opportunities to learn from the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, and the Bible as well.

Pray every day

Now, there are other important things Heavenly Father wants you to do.

He wants you to pray to Him every day. He wants to help you because He loves you, and He *will* help you if you pray to Him and ask Him for His help. In your prayers, also thank Him for your blessings. Thank Him for sending our oldest brother, Jesus Christ, into the world. He made it possible for us to return to our heavenly home. Thank Him for your family. Thank Him for the Church. Thank Him for this beautiful world you live in. Ask Him to protect you. In your prayers, ask Him to help you know what to do in your life. When you make mistakes, your Heavenly Father still loves you. So pray to Him, and He will help you try again to do right.

Pray to Heavenly Father to bless you with His Spirit at all times. We often call the Spirit the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is also a gift from Heavenly Father. The Holy Ghost helps you to choose the right. The Holy Ghost will protect you from evil. He whispers to you in a still, small voice to do right. When you *do* good, you *feel* good, and that is the Holy Ghost speaking to you. The Holy Ghost is a wonderful companion. He is *always* there to help you.

Be a true Latter-day Saint

My dear boys and girls, honor your fathers and mothers. They will help you make good decisions. Enjoy and respect your grandparents. Be a real friend to your brothers and sisters. Choose friends who have high ideals. Choose friends who will help you to be good.

Attend sacrament meeting. Listen carefully to what your bishop says. He is an important spiritual leader who has a special calling from Heavenly Father to help you.

Enjoy Primary, and attend every week. Bring your member and non-member friends to Primary. Learn the Primary songs well. They are wonderful. Memorize the Articles of Faith and earn the Gospel in Action Award.

Be honest. Do not lie nor steal. Do not cheat. Do not use profanity, but be clean in your thoughts and speech.

Be a *true* Latter-day Saint. Stand up for your beliefs. One of my favorite Primary songs is "Dare to Do Right." Some of the words are:

Dare to do right! dare to be true!
You have a work that no other can
do;
Do it so bravely, so kindly, so well,
Angels will hasten the story to tell.
(*Sing with Me*, B-81)

Remember, Satan does not want you to be happy. He does not want you to dare to do right. He wants you to be miserable, as he is. He has captured the hearts of wicked men and women who would have you participate in bad things such as pornography, drugs, profanity, and immorality. Stay away from these evils. Avoid books, magazines, videos, movies, and television shows that are not good. As the scriptures tell us, avoid the very *appearance* of evil (see 1 Thessalonians 5:22).

Dress modestly. Choose clothing that covers your body properly. Behave in a courteous and polite way. Live the Word of Wisdom. Keep the Sabbath day holy. Listen to good music. Do your best to be good.

Do well in your school work and strive to be a good student.

With help from your parents, begin your own library of favorite tapes, books, and pictures which are available at Church distribution centers. Enjoy reading each month in your home the *Friend* magazine or the international magazines.

Love the country in which you live. Be a good citizen. Be patriotic. Fly your country's flag on special holidays. Pray for your country's leaders.

Primary boys, plan and look forward to serving a full-time mission for the Lord. Young girls, be prepared for mis-

sionary service if you are called. But also, young girls, learn from your mothers the important homemaking skills you will use in your own home.

To children who do not feel safe

Now I want to say something to you children who do not feel safe and who are frightened or hurt and do not know what to do. Sometimes you may feel all alone. You need to know that even when it seems that no one else cares, your Heavenly Father does. He will always love you. He wants you to be protected and safe. If you are not, please talk to someone who can help you—a parent, a teacher, your bishop, or a friend. They will help you.

Angels will minister unto you

I am sure each of you has favorite stories from the scriptures. One of my favorite stories is found in the seventeenth chapter of 3 Nephi in the Book of Mormon. It tells about the visit of Jesus to the people on the American continent after His resurrection. It tells about Jesus healing the sick and teaching the people and praying to Heavenly Father for them.

Now, this is one of my favorite parts of that story:

"And it came to pass that when Jesus had made an end of praying unto the Father, he arose; but so great was the joy of the multitude that they were overcome.

"And it came to pass that Jesus spake unto them, and bade them arise.

"And they arose from the earth, and he said unto them: Blessed are ye because of your faith. And now behold, my joy is full.

"And when he had said these words, he wept, and the multitude bare record of it, and he took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them.

"And when he had done this he wept again;

"And he spake unto the multitude, and said unto them: Behold your little ones.

"And as they looked to behold they cast their eyes towards heaven, and they saw the heavens open, and they saw angels descending out of heaven as it were in the midst of fire; and they came down and encircled those little ones about, and they were encircled about with fire; and the angels did minister unto them" (3 Nephi 17:18-24).

I promise you, dear children, that angels will minister unto you also. You may not see them, but they will be there to help you, and you will feel of their presence.

Favored little ones were they,
Who towards him Jesus drew!
Who within his arms he took
Just as loving parents do,
Christ the Lord "Our living head."
This of little children said,
"Such shall of my kingdom be,
Suffer them to come to me."
Listen to the Savior's plea,
"Let the children come to me."
("Let the Little Children Come,"
Sing with Me, B-14)

Walk in the light

Dear children, our Heavenly Father sent you to earth at this time because you are some of His most valiant children. He knew there would be much wickedness in the world today, and He knew you could be faithful and obedient.

Dear child, you are God's gift to your parents, and the gift your parents can give God is to bring you back to Him sweet and pure and faithful.

He expects your parents and leaders to teach you, to walk beside you, and to be shining examples to you so that you will know the way you should go. They must spend time with you and love you and pray *with* you and *for* you.

Your leaders must call faithful men and women to teach you in Primary. We must provide experiences for you early in your life that will help you know how to live the gospel.

God bless the children of this Church. How I love you! How Heavenly Father loves you! And may we, as your parents, teachers, and leaders, be *more* childlike — more submissive, more meek, and more humble.

I close my message to you this day with the prayer that we may ever respond to your plea as *you* so sweetly sing,

Teach me to walk in the light of his
love;
Teach me to pray to my Father
above;
Teach me to know of the things that
are right;
Teach me, teach me to walk in the
light.

And then, as your parents, we sing to you,

Come, little child, and together we'll
learn
Of his commandments, that we may
return
Home to his presence, to live in his
sight —
Always, always to walk in the light.

And *together* we sing:

Father in Heaven, we thank thee this
day
For loving guidance to show us the
way.
Grateful, we praise thee with songs
of delight!
Gladly, gladly we'll walk in the light.
("Teach Me to Walk in the Light,"
Hymns, no. 304)

For this I fervently pray for the children of the Church, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

A video presentation was shown of President Benson singing "I Am a Mormon Boy" to a group of children.

The choir sang "I Am a Child of God."

Elder Waldo P. Call offered the benediction.

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE MUSIC

The Mormon Youth Chorus, conducted by Robert C. Bowden, furnished the choral numbers for the Saturday morning session of the conference.

Music for the Saturday afternoon session was provided by the Brigham Young University combined choirs, conducted by Ronald J. Staheli and Mack Wilberg.

At the general priesthood session, music was furnished by the Ricks College centennial priesthood choir. Richard

Robison and Mike Belnap conducted the choir.

The Tabernacle Choir, conducted by Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger, provided music for the Sunday morning and Sunday afternoon sessions.

Throughout the conference sessions, prelude, postlude, and interlude music and accompaniments on the Tabernacle organ were played by Robert Cundick, John Longhurst, and Clay Christiansen, Tabernacle organists.

F. Michael Watson

Clerk of the conference

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Thrive in the heat of adversity; Plant and nurture seeds of faith; Sow the seed of charity; Nourish the seed of harmony at home; Plant the seed of the work ethic; Take charge of teaching children; Do not rationalize sin; Counsel about television; Plant the seed of testimony; Testimony	

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY
SAINTS

Official Report of the
One Hundred Fifty-ninth
Semiannual General

CONFERENCE

of The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints

held in the Tabernacle
Salt Lake City, Utah

September 30 and October 1, 1989

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THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-NINTH SEMIANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The 159th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, September 30, 1989, at 10:00 A.M.

The general sessions of the conference were held at 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday, September 30 and October 1, 1989. The general priesthood session was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, September 30, 1989, at 6:00 P.M.

President Ezra Taft Benson presided at all sessions of the conference. President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday morning, general priesthood, and Sunday afternoon sessions. President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning sessions.

Television and radio stations carried portions or all of some of the conference sessions to large audiences throughout the world. In addition, the general sessions and priesthood session were carried via satellite transmission to more than one thousand stake centers. The general priesthood session was also carried by closed-circuit transmission to approximately nine hundred locations in many countries.

General Authorities present

The following General Authorities of the Church attended one or more of the general sessions:

The First Presidency: Ezra Taft Benson, Gordon B. Hinckley, and Thomas S. Monson

The Council of the Twelve: Howard W. Hunter, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, Joseph B. Wirthlin, and Richard G. Scott

The Presidency of the Seventy: Dean L. Larsen, Marion D. Hanks, Robert L. Backman, James M. Paramore, J. Richard Clarke, Rex D. Pinegar, and Carlos E. Asay

The First Quorum of the Seventy: Angel Abrea, William R. Bradford, Ted E. Brewerton, F. Enzio Busche, John K. Carmack, Joe J. Christensen, Gene R. Cook, Derek A. Cuthbert, Jacob de Jager, Charles Didier, Loren C. Dunn, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Jack H. Goaslind, John H. Groberg, W. Eugene Hansen, Jeffrey R. Holland, F. Burton Howard, Marlin K. Jensen, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Adney Y. Komatsu, H. Burke Peterson, Hugh W. Pinnock, Ronald E. Poelman, Hartman Rector, Jr., Hans B. Ringger, and Robert E. Wells

The Second Quorum of the Seventy: Carlos H. Amado, H. Verlan Andersen, Benjamin B. Banks, Monte J. Brough, Waldo P. Call, Helio da Rocha Camargo, George I. Cannon, Albert Choules, Jr., Spencer J. Condie, Lloyd P. George, Francis M. Gibbons, F. Melvin Hammond, George R. Hill III, Malcolm S. Jeppsen, L. Lionel Kendrick, John R. Lasater, Richard P. Lindsay, Merlin R. Lybbert, Douglas J. Martin, Gerald E. Melchin, Alexander B. Morrison, L. Aldin Porter, Glen L. Rudd, Gardner H. Russell, Robert E. Sackley, Douglas H. Smith, Lynn A. Sorensen, and Horacio A. Tenorio

The Presiding Bishopric: Robert D. Hales, Henry B. Eyring, and Glenn L. Pace

General Authorities Emeritus: Eldred G. Smith, Joseph Anderson, Wm. Grant Bangerter, Bernard P. Brockbank, Victor L. Brown, Theodore M. Burton, Royden G. Derrick, J. Thomas Fyans, Rex C. Reeve, Sr., Sterling W. Sill, and Robert L. Simpson¹

¹Elders Paul H. Dunn and John H. Vandenberg were excused due to illness.

Other authorities present

Other Church authorities in attendance included Regional Representatives, presidents of stakes and their counselors, presidents of temples, bishops of wards,

and presidencies and members of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood quorums.

Many general, stake, and ward auxiliary officers also attended.

FIRST DAY MORNING SESSION

The first general session of the 159th Semiannual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, September 30, 1989, at 10:00 A.M. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The music for the opening session was provided by the Mormon Youth Chorus with Robert C. Bowden conducting and Clay Christiansen at the organ.

To begin the meeting, the Mormon Youth Chorus sang "The Lord Is My Light" without announcement.

President Hinckley then made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

We welcome you this morning from the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City in this, the first general session of the 159th semiannual conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Our beloved prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked me to conduct this session.

We welcome all who are participating in the large audience assembled in the Tabernacle and the overflow gathering in the nearby Assembly Hall, where Elders L. Tom Perry and Wm. Grant Bangerter with Bishop Robert D. Hales are seated on the stand. We welcome also the many others who are receiving these conference

proceedings by satellite transmission, radio, cable, and television.

We acknowledge the General Authorities of the Church, all of whom are in attendance this morning except the following, who are excused: Elder Paul H. Dunn, who is at home on the advice of his physician following recent surgery, and Elder John H. Vandenberg, who has not been well. We also acknowledge the Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary general presidencies, who are seated on the stand. We extend a special welcome to government, education, and civic leaders who are present with us.

The Mormon Youth Chorus, under the direction of Brother Robert C. Bowden, with Brother Clay Christiansen at the organ, opened this session by singing "The Lord Is My Light." The chorus will now favor us with "Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee."

Following the singing, the invocation will be offered by Elder Theodore M. Burton of the Seventy.

The chorus sang "Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee."

Elder Theodore M. Burton offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

At the request of President Benson, our beloved prophet and President of the Church, Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will read President Benson's message.

President Ezra Taft Benson

(Read by President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency)

My beloved brethren and sisters, it is a joy to be able to meet with you again in another glorious general conference of the Church—to feel of your spirit and support and to know of your love of the Lord.

I look forward to hearing the inspiring messages of the General Authorities of the Church. I am so grateful for their sustaining power and in particular for the great help of my noble Counselors and the Quorum of the Twelve.

May I express to them and to all of you my deep appreciation for your kind remembrances to me on my recent ninety-second birthday.

To the elderly in the Church

In the past I have directed my remarks to the children of the Church, to the young men and young women, to the single adult brethren and sisters, and to the mothers and fathers in Israel. This morning I would like to speak to the elderly in the Church and to their families and to those who minister to their needs.

I hold special feelings for the elderly—for this marvelous group of men and women. I feel that in some measure I understand them, for I am one of them.

The Lord knows and loves the elderly among His people. It has always been so, and upon them He has bestowed many of His greatest responsibilities. In various dispensations He has guided His people through prophets who were in their advancing years. He has needed the wisdom and experience of age, the inspired direction from those with long years of proven faithfulness to His gospel.

The Lord blessed Sarah, in her old age, to bear Abraham a child. Perhaps King Benjamin's greatest sermon was given when he was very elderly and nigh unto death. He was truly an instrument in

the hands of the Lord as he was able to lead and establish peace among his people.

Many other men and women throughout the ages have accomplished great things as they went forth to serve the Lord and His children, even in their elderly years.

In our dispensation, of the thirteen prophets who have been called of the Lord, many were called when they were in their seventies or eighties, or even older. How the Lord knows and loves His children who have given so much through their years of experience!

We love you who are the elderly in the Church. You are the fastest-growing segment of our population in the world today, as well as within the Church.

Our desires are that your golden years will be wonderful and rewarding. We pray that you will feel the joy of a life well spent and one filled with fond memories and even greater expectations through Christ's atonement. We hope you will feel of the peace the Lord promised those who continue to strive to keep His commandments and follow His example. We hope your days are filled with things to do and ways in which you can render service to others who are not as fortunate as you. Older almost always means better, for your wealth of wisdom and experience can continue to expand and increase as you reach out to others.

May we suggest eight areas in which we can make the most of our senior years:

Temple work

1. *Work in the temple and attend often.* We who are older should use our energies not only to bless our predecessors, but to ensure that, insofar as possible, all of our posterity might receive the ordinances of exaltation in the temple. Work with your families; counsel with and pray for those who may yet be unwilling to prepare themselves.

We urge all who can to attend the temple frequently and accept calls to serve in the temple when health and strength and distance will permit. We rely on you to help in temple service. With the increasing number of temples, we need more of our members to prepare themselves for this sweet service. Sister Benson and I are grateful that almost every week we can attend the temple together. What a blessing this has been in our lives!

Family histories

2. Collect and write family histories.

We call on you to pursue vigorously the gathering and writing of personal and family histories. In so many instances, you alone have within you the history, the memory of loved ones, the dates and events. In some situations you *are* the family history. In few ways will your heritage be better preserved than by your collecting and writing your histories.

Missionary service

3. Become involved in missionary service. We need increasing numbers of senior missionaries in missionary service. Where health and means make it possible, we call upon hundreds more of our couples to set their lives and affairs in order and to go on missions. How we need you in the mission field! You are able to perform missionary service in ways that our younger missionaries cannot.

I'm grateful that two of my own widowed sisters were able to serve as missionary companions together in England. They were sixty-eight and seventy-three years of age when they were called, and they both had a marvelous experience.

What an example and a blessing it is to a family's posterity when grandparents serve missions. Most senior couples who go are strengthened and revitalized by missionary service. Through this holy avenue of service, many are sanctified and feel the joy of bringing others to the knowledge of the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Also, through the Family-to-Family Book of Mormon Program, send copies of the Book of Mormon on missions with your testimonies enclosed.

Family togetherness

4. Provide leadership by building family togetherness. We urge all senior members, when possible, to call their families together. Organize them into cohesive units. Give leadership to family gatherings. Establish family reunions where fellowship and family heritage can be felt and learned. Some of the sweetest memories I have are of our own family reunions and gatherings. Foster wonderful family traditions which will bind you together eternally. In doing so, we can create a bit of heaven right here on earth within individual families. After all, eternity will be but an extension of righteous family life.

Church callings

5. Accept and fulfill Church callings. We trust that all senior members who possibly can will accept callings in the Church and fulfill them with dignity. I am grateful to personally know brethren who are in their seventies and eighties who are serving as bishops and branch presidents. How we need the counsel and influence of you who have walked the pathway of life! We all need to hear of your successes and how you have risen above heartache, pain, or disappointment, having become stronger for experiencing them.

There are rich opportunities for you to serve in most of the organizations of the Church. You have the time and solid gospel foundation which enable you to render a great work. In so many ways you lead out in faithful service in the Church. We thank you for all that you have done and pray that the Lord will strengthen you to do more.

Finances

6. Plan for your financial future. As you move through life toward retirement

and the decades which follow, we invite all of our senior members to plan frugally for the years following full-time employment. Let us avoid unnecessary debt. We also advise caution in cosigning financial notes, even with family members, when retirement income might be jeopardized.

Be even more cautious in advancing years about "get-rich" schemes, mortgaging homes, or investing in uncertain ventures. Proceed cautiously so that the planning of a lifetime is not disrupted by one or a series of poor financial decisions. Plan your financial future early, then follow the plan.

Christlike service

7. *Render Christlike service.* Christlike service exalts. Knowing this, we call on all senior members who are able to thrust in their sickles in service to others. This can be part of the sanctifying process. The Lord has promised that those who lose their lives serving others will find themselves. The Prophet Joseph Smith told us that we should "wear out our lives" in bringing to pass the Lord's purposes (D&C 123:13).

Peace and joy and blessings will follow those who render service to others. Yes, we commend Christlike service to all, but it is especially sweet in the lives of the elderly.

Physical fitness

8. *Stay physically fit, healthy, and active.* We are thrilled with the efforts being made by so many of the elderly to ensure good health in advancing years. We see many walking in the early mornings. We hear of others who use exercise equipment in their own homes. Some even enter marathons and do remarkably well. Still others have swimming programs to keep them fit. Until recently our own beloved General Authority emeritus, Joseph Anderson, now in his one hundredth year, would swim a mile every day. I am not quite up to that, but I do enjoy a vigorous walk each day, which refreshes me.

How we love to see our elderly remain vigorous and active! Through keeping active, both the mind and the body function better. One stake president reported that one of his members went waterskiing on his eightieth birthday.

Overcome aloneness by serving others

To those who have lost your spouses, we should also like to express our love. Sometimes there is for some of you a feeling of uselessness and aloneness which can be almost overwhelming. In so many instances, this need not be so. In addition to the eight suggestions just mentioned, here is a sampling of activities that have proved helpful to others.

Some who are alone keep busy by quilting blankets for each new grandchild to be married or each new baby born into the family. Others write letters on birthdays or attend school and athletic events of grandchildren when they can. Some compile albums of pictures of each grandchild to give on birthdays. We know of one widowed great-grandmother who teaches piano to nearly thirty students. She has spoken to nearly five thousand youth in the last three years. One of them asked her, "Did you cross the plains with the pioneers?"

We see numerous others of our widows who volunteer as "pink ladies" at the hospitals or render other kinds of community service. So many find fulfillment helping in these ways.

The key to overcoming aloneness and a feeling of uselessness for one who is physically able is to step outside yourself by helping others who are truly needy. We promise those who will render this kind of service that, in some measure, you will be healed of the loss of loved ones or the dread of being alone. The way to feel better about your own situation is to improve someone else's circumstances.

Remain strong through illness

To those who are ill and suffering pain and the vicissitudes of this life, we

extend particular love and concern. Our hearts and prayers go out to you. Remember what father Lehi said in blessing his son Jacob, who had suffered at the hands of his older brothers Laman and Lemuel. He said, "Thou knowest the greatness of God; and he shall consecrate thine afflictions for thy gain" (2 Nephi 2:2). And so he will for you.

We pray that you will continue to strive to remain strong in attitude and spirit. We know it is not always easy. We pray that those who now do for you tasks that you no longer are able to do for yourself will do so in love, in gentleness, and with a caring spirit.

We hope that you will continue to generate good thoughts and feelings in your heart and mind and quickly dismiss those which are harmful and destructive to you. We trust your prayers are being offered daily and even hourly, if needed. As the Book of Mormon teaches, "Live in thanksgiving daily, for the many mercies and blessings which [God] doth bestow upon you" (Alma 34:38).

You will find that the daily reading of the Book of Mormon will lift your spirit, draw you nearer to your Savior, and help you to be a student of the gospel who can share great truths with others.

To the families of the elderly

Now for a few minutes may I speak to the families of the elderly. We repeat a scripture from Psalms: "Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth" (Psalm 71:9).

We encourage families to give their elderly parents and grandparents the love, care, and attention they deserve. Let us remember the scriptural command that we must care for those of our own house lest we be found "worse than an infidel" (1 Timothy 5:8). I am so grateful for my own dear family and for the loving care they have given their parents over so many years.

Remember that parents and grandparents are our responsibility, and we are to care for them to the very best of our ability. When the elderly have no families

to care for them, priesthood and Relief Society leaders should make every effort to meet their needs in the same loving way. We submit a few suggestions to families of the elderly.

"Honour thy father and thy mother"

Ever since the Lord etched the Ten Commandments into the tablets of stone, His words from Sinai have echoed down through the centuries to "honour thy father and thy mother" (Exodus 20:12).

To honor and respect our parents means that we have a high regard for them. We love and appreciate them and are concerned about their happiness and well-being. We treat them with courtesy and thoughtful consideration. We seek to understand their point of view. Certainly obedience to parents' righteous desires and wishes is a part of honoring.

Be grateful and forgiving

Furthermore, our parents deserve our honor and respect for giving us life itself. Beyond this they almost always made countless sacrifices as they cared for and nurtured us through our infancy and childhood, provided us with the necessities of life, and nursed us through physical illnesses and the emotional stresses of growing up. In many instances, they provided us with the opportunity to receive an education, and, in a measure, they educated us. Much of what we know and do we learned from their example. May we ever be grateful to them and show that gratitude.

Let us also learn to be forgiving of our parents, who, perhaps having made mistakes as they reared us, almost always did the best they knew how. May we ever forgive them as we would likewise wish to be forgiven by our own children for mistakes we make.

Allow freedom of choice

Even when parents become elderly, we ought to honor them by allowing them freedom of choice and the opportunity for

independence as long as possible. Let us not take away from them choices which they can still make. Some parents are able to live and care for themselves well into their advancing years and would prefer to do so. When they can, let them.

If they become less able to live independently, then family, Church, and community resources may be needed to help them. When the elderly become unable to care for themselves, even with supplemental aid, care can be provided in the home of a family member when possible. Church and community resources may also be needed in this situation.

Support care-givers and include the elderly

The role of the care-giver is vital. There is great need for support and help to be given to such a person. Usually this is an elderly spouse or a middle-aged daughter with children of her own to care for as well as caring for the elderly parent.

We also hope that you would include the elderly in family activities when possible. What a joy it is for us to see lively, sweet grandchildren with a loving grandparent in the midst of them. Children love such occasions. They love to have their grandparents visit them and to have them over for dinner, for family home evenings, and for other special events. This provides opportunities for teaching ways to honor, love, respect, and care for those who are in their later years.

Opportunities for grandparents

Grandparents can have a profound influence on their grandchildren. Their time is generally not as encumbered and busy as the parents', so books can be opened and read, stories can be told, and application of gospel principles can be taught. Children then obtain a perspective of life which not only is rewarding but can bring them security, peace, and strength. It is possible to send letters, tapes, and pictures, particularly where distances are great and it is not possible to see one another often. Those who are blessed with a closeness to grandparents

and other elderly people have a rich companionship and association. There might be times when they can attend graduations, weddings, temple excursions, missionary farewells and homecomings, and other special events with family members.

We enjoy watching our children and grandchildren grow and achieve in special ways as we share in many of their joys and rejoice in their victories. Happiness blesses our lives as our children strive and achieve in their own lives. In 3 John 1:4 we read, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." And knowing this can bring a renewal of love and courage to continue in our own struggles.

To the priesthood leaders of the elderly

Finally, we would urge priesthood leaders of the elderly to be sensitive to the Spirit of our Father in Heaven in assessing and meeting the spiritual, physical, emotional, and financial needs of the elderly. We trust you will utilize your counselors, Melchizedek Priesthood quorum leaders, and Relief Society leaders, home teachers, and visiting teachers in this great responsibility, for we must fulfill these duties without reluctance or hesitation.

Give church callings

We hope that priesthood and auxiliary leaders will continue to give the elderly callings in which they can use their reservoirs of wisdom and counsel. We hope, where possible, that each can be a home teacher or visiting teacher. Even those who are somewhat confined to their beds and homes can sometimes assist in this watch-care through telephone calls, writing notes, or other special assignments.

A priesthood leader can do much to assist and encourage individuals and couples as they prepare to serve missions. The temple extraction and welfare programs are blessed greatly by those who are in their senior years and have opportunities to serve in these areas.

Assign home teachers and visiting teachers

We hope each of the elderly individuals and couples has sensitive and caring home teachers and visiting teachers assigned to them. Great comfort and peace can come to those who know they have someone to whom they can turn in time of emergency or need. It is important that tact, diplomacy, and sincerity be evident in assessing and addressing such needs.

We hope you will involve the independent elderly in compassionate service assignments. Include them also in stake and ward social activities, especially single members and those with dependent spouses. So many times they are forgotten. Especially at the time of the death of a spouse, loving care can be given. This is a very tender time for most.

Help those who care for the elderly

At times temporary relief is very much needed and appreciated by family members who provide constant physical and emotional care to those with special needs. It is important to help the family maintain its functions as a family with periodic freedom from the heavy responsibilities that long-term or terminal illness can impose. All need loving support and relief from the overwhelming duties of serious illness or problems.

Transportation is often a great concern to the elderly. We can assist by providing a way for them to attend their Sunday meetings, visit loved ones, shop, and go to the doctor or clinic.

Again, we should prayerfully seek inspiration and direction in caring for the elderly. There is always a great diversity of individuals and individual needs.

Prophetic testimony and blessing

God bless the elderly in the Church. I love you with all my heart. I am one of you.

You have so much to live for. May these golden years be your very best years as you fully live and love and serve. And God bless those who minister to your needs—your family, your friends, and your fellow Church members and leaders.

I leave you my testimony of the joy of living—of the joys of *full* gospel living and of going through the Refiner's fire and the sanctification process that takes place. As the Apostle Paul so well said, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God" (Romans 8:28).

I leave my blessing upon you. The Savior lives. This is His church. The work is true, and in the words of our Lord and Savior, "Look unto me, and endure to the end, and ye shall live; for unto him that endureth to the end will I give eternal life" (3 Nephi 15:9), to which I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The chorus sang "I Believe in Christ" without announcement.

President Hinckley

It has been our privilege to listen to President Benson's opening message as read by his Second Counselor, President Thomas S. Monson, following which the Mormon Youth Chorus sang "I Believe in Christ."

Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now speak to us.

Elder James E. Faust

I wish to speak today of a special dimension of the gospel: the necessity for constant communication with God

through the process known as divine revelation. This principle is basic to our belief. President Wilford Woodruff declared,

"Whenever the Lord had a people on the earth that He acknowledged as such, that people were led by revelation" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 24:240). I affirm at the beginning that the inspiration of God is available to all who worthily seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This is particularly true of those who have received the gift of the Holy Ghost.

I wish to speak today, however, of God's communications to all of his children through prophets, as distinguished from personal revelation received by individual members of the Church and others. The prophets, seers, and revelators have had and still have the responsibility and privilege of receiving and declaring the word of God for the world. Individual members, parents, and leaders have the right to receive revelation for their own responsibility but have no duty nor right to declare the word of God beyond the limits of their own responsibility.

I use as my text the ninth article of faith: "We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God."

Past revelation

The first part states, "We believe all that God has revealed." Through the ages, God's messages to his children generally have been revealed through prophets. Amos tells us, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). These are the prophetic oracles who have tuned in over the centuries to the "celestial transmitting station," with a responsibility to relay the Lord's word to others. The principal qualifications of a prophet in any age are not wealth, title, position, physical stature, scholarship, or intellectual attainment. The two qualifications are that a prophet must be called as such by God, by open prophecy, and ordained by one known to have legal and spiritual authority, and he must receive and declare revelation from God (see D&C 42:11). No man knows the ways of God except they be revealed unto him (see Jacob 4:8).

Over the centuries revelation from prophets has come incrementally. The Lord stated, "For he will give unto the faithful line upon line, precept upon precept; and I will try you and prove you herewith" (D&C 98:12).

Revelations have come by different means. Among other ways, they have come by the guidance of the Holy Ghost (which is perhaps most common), by the spoken word, and by visits from holy messengers.

Present revelation

The ninth article of faith continues, "We believe . . . all that [God] does now reveal." For some strange reason it seems easier for many to believe the words of dead prophets rather than those of living prophets. The greatest revelator in our time has been Joseph Smith. In the difficult period between 1823 and 1843, just twenty years, 134 revelations were received, printed, and made public.

Each of the eighty-nine Apostles called since then has been sustained as a prophet, seer, and revelator. But the prophets, seers, and revelators succeeding Joseph as Presidents of the Church have been those Apostles in whom all of the keys of Christ's earthly kingdom have been active and functioning.

We now move forward nobly and boldly, with courage and conviction, led by our venerable prophet, Ezra Taft Benson. He is in every respect entitled to our sustaining action. For forty-six years he has been sustained as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is now the senior Apostle on the earth. He has been ordained and set apart as the prophet, seer, and revelator to the world. He has been sustained as the President of the Church. He has been given two inspired Counselors to help him. He is the presiding high priest over all the priesthood on the earth. He alone holds and exercises all of the keys of the kingdom under the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the head of this church and is the chief cornerstone. In his presidency, assisted by his two great Counselors and sustained by the Quorum of the Twelve, he is leading this work forward.

I do not believe members of this church can be in full harmony with the Savior without sustaining his living prophet on the earth, the President of the Church. If we do not sustain the living prophet, whoever he may be, we die spiritually. Ironically, some have died spiritually by exclusively following prophets who have long been dead. Others equivocate in their support of living prophets, trying to lift themselves up by putting down the living prophets, however subtly.

In our lifetime we have been favored with ongoing communication from the heavens, which have been open to the prophets of our time. Major divine pronouncements have included what we now know as section 138 of the Doctrine and Covenants, given in 1918. Surely one of the greatest divine disclosures came in 1978 when the blessings of the priesthood and temple became available to all worthy male members. Line upon line and precept upon precept, new knowledge and direction have been given to the Church.

Thus, by revelation in our day the Seventies have been given an expanded role as members of Area Presidencies and in general Church administration, helping the First Presidency and the Twelve "in building up the church and regulating all the affairs of the same in all nations" (D&C 107:34). Many other divine instructions have also been received. Much revelation received, in this time as well as anciently, has been doctrinal. Some of it has been operational and tactical. Much of it is not spectacular. President John Taylor reminds us: "Adam's revelation did not instruct Noah to build his ark; nor did Noah's revelation tell Lot to forsake Sodom; nor did either of these speak of the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt. These all had revelations for themselves" (*Millennial Star*, 1 Nov. 1847, p. 323).

In our time God has revealed how to administer the Church with a membership of over six million differently than when there were just six members of the Church. These differences include the use of modern technology such as films, computers, and satellite broadcasts to teach

and communicate new ways to conduct missionary work in various nations; the location and building of temples; and many others.

This process of continuous revelation comes to the Church very frequently. President Wilford Woodruff stated, "This power is in the bosom of Almighty God, and he imparts it to his servants the prophets as they stand in need of it day by day to build up Zion" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 14:33). This is necessary for the Church to fulfill its mission. Without it, we would fail.

Future revelation

A very encouraging portion of the ninth article of faith we have been considering is its conclusion: "We believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God." Elder Boyd K. Packer stated: "Revelation is a continuous principle in the Church. In one sense the Church is still being organized. As light and knowledge are given, as prophecies are fulfilled and more intelligence is received, another step forward can be taken" (*The Holy Temple* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980], p. 137).

This church constantly needs the guidance of its head, the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. This was well taught by President George Q. Cannon:

"We have the Bible, the Book of Mormon and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants; but all these books, without the living oracles and a constant stream of revelation from the Lord, would not lead any people into the Celestial Kingdom. . . . This may seem a strange declaration to make, but strange as it may sound, it is nevertheless true.

"Of course, these records are all of infinite value. They cannot be too highly prized, nor can they be too closely studied. But in and of themselves, with all the light that they give, they are insufficient to guide the children of men and to lead them into the presence of God. To be thus led requires a living Priesthood and constant revelation from God to the people according to the circumstances in

which they may be placed" (*Gospel Truth*, comp. Jerreld L. Newquist, 2 vols. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1957], 1:252).

When will this promised revelation come? Only God knows when. It will come as needed. To whom will it come? To obtain the answer to this, we must go back to the words of Amos: "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). This continuous revelation will not and cannot be forced by outside pressure from people and events. It is not the so-called "revelation of social progress." It does not originate with the prophets; it comes from God. The Church is governed by the prophet under the guidance and direction of God. Parley P. Pratt disclosed:

"The legislative, judicial, and executive power is vested in Him [the Lord]. He reveals the laws, and he elects, chooses, or appoints the officers; and holds the right to reprove, to correct, or even to remove them at pleasure. Hence the necessity of a constant intercourse by direct revelation between him and his church" (*Millennial Star*, Mar. 1845, p. 150).

We have been promised that the President of the Church will receive guidance for all of us as the revelator for the Church. Our safety lies in heeding that which he says and following his counsel.

The doctrine of this church was stated by Elder Stephen L. Richards: "They [the Presidency] are the supreme court here on earth in the interpretation of God's law.

"In the exercise of their functions and delegated powers they are controlled by a constitution, a part of which is written and a part of which is not. The written part consists in authenticated scripture, ancient and modern, and in the recorded utterances of our latter-day prophets. The unwritten part is the spirit of revelation and divine inspiration which appertain to their calling.

"In formulating their interpretations and decisions they always confer with the Council of the Twelve Apostles who by revelation are appointed to assist and act

with them in the government of the Church. When, therefore, a judgment is reached and proclaimed by these officers it becomes binding upon all members of the Church, individual views to the contrary notwithstanding. God's Kingdom is a kingdom of law and order" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1938, pp. 115-16).

How can we be so sure that, as promised, the prophets, seers, and revelators will never lead this people astray? (see Joseph Fielding Smith, in Conference Report, Apr. 1972, p. 99; or *Ensign*, July 1972, p. 88). One answer is contained in the grand principle found in the 107th section of the Doctrine and Covenants: "And every decision made by either of these quorums must be by the unanimous voice of the same" (107:27). This requirement of unanimity provides a check on bias and personal idiosyncrasies. It ensures that God rules through the Spirit, not man through majority or compromise. It ensures that the best wisdom and experience is focused on an issue before the deep, unassailable impressions of revealed direction are received. It guards against the foibles of man.

The responsibility for determining the divine validity of what one of the oracles of God states does not rest solely upon him. President J. Reuben Clark stated, "We can tell when the speakers are 'moved upon by the Holy Ghost' only when we, ourselves, are 'moved upon by the Holy Ghost'" (*J. Reuben Clark: Selected Papers on Religion, Education, and Youth*, ed. David H. Yarn, Jr. [Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1984], pp. 95-96).

This is in harmony with the counsel of Brigham Young: "I am more afraid that this people have so much confidence in their leaders that they will not inquire for themselves of God whether they are led by Him. I am fearful they settle down in a state of blind self-security, trusting their eternal destiny in the hands of their leaders with a reckless confidence that in itself would thwart the purposes of God in their salvation, and weaken that influence they could give to their leaders, did they know for themselves, by the revelations of Jesus, that they are led in the right

way. Let every man and woman know, by the whispering of the Spirit of God to themselves, whether their leaders are walking in the path the Lord dictates, or not" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 9:150).

Revelation was required to establish this church. Revelation has brought it from its humble beginnings to its present course. Revelation has come like flowing, living water. Continuing revelation will lead it forward to the windup scene. But as President Clark told us, we do not need more or different prophets. We need more people with "a listening ear" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1948, p. 82).

We make no claim of infallibility or perfection in the prophets, seers, and revelators. Yet I humbly state that I have sat in the company of these men, and I believe their greatest desire is to know and do the will of our Heavenly Father. Those who sit in the highest councils of this church and have participated as inspiration has come and decisions have been reached know that this light and truth is beyond human intelligence and reasoning. These deep, divine impressions have come as the dews from heaven and settled

upon them individually and collectively. So inspired, we can go forward in complete unity and accord.

I witness humbly that I know the Lord still guides his church through his servants, regardless of any individual imperfections. I pray that we may be responsive to his Spirit and be found listening to the oracles he has appointed. I so pray because I know that we mortals, without the aid of revelation, cannot know the purposes of God. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Put Your Shoulder to the Wheel," following which Bishop Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, will address us.

The chorus and congregation sang "Put Your Shoulder to the Wheel."

Bishop Henry B. Eyring

Being grateful and generous

Many of you have had the same experience I have had. And if you haven't, you will: you will go to a hospital or to a house to comfort someone, and instead they will comfort you. Or you will try to encourage someone who seems to you to have so little, and they will express gratitude for things you take for granted.

To find gratitude and generosity when you could reasonably find hurt and resentment will surprise you. It will be so surprising because you will see so much of the opposite: people who have much more than others yet who react with anger when one advantage is lost or with resentment when an added gift is denied.

A poem describes that contrast; it is called "How Different."

Some murmur when the sky is clear
And wholly bright to view,
If one small speck of dark appear
In their great heaven of blue:
And some with thankful love are
filled,

If but one streak of light,
One ray of God's good mercy, gild
The darkness of their night.
(Richard Chenevix Trench, in
Sourcebook of Poetry [Grand Rapids,
Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House,
1968], p. 396.)

You and I would like to know how to control our wants and increase our gratitude and generosity. We are going to need that change. Someday, in our families and as a people, we will live as one, seeking each other's good.

Living as one in Orderville

You know from studying Church history that we have tried to live as one in a variety of settings. A story from one of those tries, in Orderville, Utah, gives us a clue as to why it is so hard.

Orderville was founded in 1870 and 1871 by people who wanted to live the united order; in 1875 they began the order. They built housing units in a square, with a common dining hall. They built a storehouse, shoe shop, bakery, blacksmith shop, tannery, schoolhouse, sheep shed, and woolen factory. They grew and made nearly everything they needed, from soap to trousers. They had carpenters, midwives, teachers, artists, and musicians. They produced enough surplus that they could sell it in neighboring towns for cash: with that they built up a capital fund to buy more land and equipment.

The population rose to seven hundred people. One hundred and fifty of them gave Orderville a special advantage: they had come to Orderville from the mission on the Muddy River, where they had nearly starved. When those who had been called to the Muddy were released, they were in near destitution. Twenty-four of those families went to Long Valley, founded Orderville, and pledged all they had to the Lord. They didn't have much, but their poverty may have been their greatest contribution. Their having almost nothing provided a basis for future comparison that might have guaranteed gratitude: any food or clothing or housing that came to them in Orderville would be treasure compared to their privation on the Muddy mission.

But time passed, the railroad came, and a mining boom put cash in the hands of people in the neighboring towns. They could buy imported clothes, and they did. The people in Orderville were living better than they had in years, but the memory of poverty on the Muddy had faded. They now focused on what was in the next town. And so they felt old-fashioned and deprived.

One ingenious boy acted on the discontent he felt when he was denied a new pair of pants from the Orderville factory because his were not worn out yet. He secretly gathered the docked lambs' tails from the spring crop. He sheared the wool from them and stored it in sacks. Then, when he was sent with a load of wool to sell in Nephi, he took his sacks along and exchanged them for a pair of store pants. He created a sensation when he wore the new-style pants to the next dance.

The president of the order asked him what he had done. The boy gave an honest answer. So they called him into a meeting and told him to bring the pants. They commended him for his initiative, pointed out that the pants really belonged to the order, and took them. But they told him this: the pants would be taken apart, used as a pattern, and henceforth Orderville pants would have the new store-bought style. And he would get the first pair.

That did not quite end the pants rebellion. Orders for new pants soon swamped the tailoring department. When the orders were denied because pants weren't yet worn out, boys began slipping into the shed where the grinding wheel was housed. Soon, pants began to wear out quickly. The elders gave in, sent a load of wool out to trade for cloth, and the new-style pants were produced for everyone.

You know that isn't a happy ending. There were many challenges Orderville faced in the ten years they lived the order there. One of them they never really conquered. It was the problem of not remembering. That is a problem we must solve, too.

Just as they forgot poverty on the Muddy, we so easily forget that we came into life with nothing. Whatever we get soon seems our natural right, not a gift. And we forget the giver. Then our gaze shifts from what we have been given to what we don't have yet.

Affliction helps us remember

God has used one method over and over to help with that problem of remembering. A group of people in the Book of Mormon record lost their flocks, their herds, and their fields of grain. Some lost their lives. And then the survivors remembered. In Alma it says, "And so great were their afflictions that every soul had cause to mourn; and they believed that it was the judgments of God sent upon them because of their wickedness and their abominations; therefore they were awakened to a remembrance of their duty" (Alma 4:3).

The miracle of gratitude

Confronting death and difficulty does return memory and therefore gratitude to righteous people as well as the wicked. But there must be another way to remember, one we can choose.

There is. A servant of God named King Benjamin taught it to his people and to us.

He taught them that none of us is above another because we are all dust, to which God has given life and then sustained it. He described a fact which is true for every human being: unforgiven sin will bring us unending torment. And he described the gift we all have been offered: those whose faith in Jesus Christ leads them to repentance and forgiveness will live in never-ending happiness.

King Benjamin's teaching had a miraculous effect. Gratitude for what they had led to faith unto repentance. That led to forgiveness. That produced new gratitude. And then King Benjamin taught that, if we can remember and so remain grateful, we will retain a remission of our sins through all the losses and the gains of life. He taught it this way:

"And again I say unto you as I have said before, that as ye have come to the knowledge of the glory of God, or if ye have known of his goodness and have tasted of his love, and have received a remission of your sins, which causeth such exceedingly great joy in your souls, even so I would that ye should remember, and always retain in remembrance, the

greatness of God, and your own nothingness, and his goodness and long-suffering towards you, unworthy creatures, and humble yourselves even in the depths of humility, calling on the name of the Lord daily, and standing steadfastly in the faith of that which is to come, which was spoken by the mouth of the angel.

"And behold, I say unto you that if ye do this ye shall always rejoice, and be filled with the love of God, and always retain a remission of your sins; and ye shall grow in the knowledge of the glory of him that created you, or in the knowledge of that which is just and true" (Mosiah 4:11-12).

The Holy Ghost can help us remember

How can you and I remember, always, the goodness of God, that we can retain a remission of our sins? The Apostle John recorded what the Savior taught us of a gift of remembrance which comes through the gift of the Holy Ghost: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26).

The Holy Ghost brings back memories of what God has taught us. And one of the ways God teaches us is with his blessings; and so, if we choose to exercise faith, the Holy Ghost will bring God's kindnesses to our remembrance.

Prayer can help us remember

You could test that in prayer today. You could follow the command, "Thou shalt thank the Lord thy God in all things" (D&C 59:7). President Benson suggested prayer as a time to do that. He said:

"The Prophet Joseph said at one time that one of the greatest sins of which the Latter-day Saints would be guilty is the sin of ingratitude. I presume most of us have not thought of that as a great sin. There is a great tendency for us in our prayers and in our pleadings with the Lord to ask for additional blessings. But sometimes I feel we need to devote more

of our prayers to expressions of gratitude and thanksgiving for blessings already received. We enjoy so much" (*God, Family, Country* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1974], p. 199).

You could have an experience with the gift of the Holy Ghost today. You could begin a private prayer with thanks. You could start to count your blessings, and then pause for a moment. If you exercise faith, and with the gift of the Holy Ghost, you will find that memories of other blessings will flood into your mind. If you begin to express gratitude for each of them, your prayer may take a little longer than usual. Remembrance will come. And so will gratitude.

Writing can help us remember

You could try the same thing as you write an entry in your book of remembrance. The Holy Ghost has helped with that since the beginning of time. You remember in the record of Moses it says, "And a book of remembrance was kept, in the which was recorded, in the language of Adam, for it was given unto as many as called upon God to write by the spirit of inspiration" (Moses 6:5).

President Spencer W. Kimball described that process of inspired writing: "Those who keep a book of remembrance are more likely to keep the Lord in remembrance in their daily lives. Journals are a way of counting our blessings and of leaving an inventory of these blessings for our posterity" (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982], p. 349).

As you start to write, you could ask yourself, How did God bless me today? If you do that long enough and with faith, you will find yourself remembering blessings. And sometimes, you will have gifts brought to your mind which you failed to notice during the day, but which you will then know were a touch of God's hand in your life.

Remembering Jesus Christ

You can choose to remember the greatest gift of all. Next week, you can go

to a meeting where the sacrament is administered. You will hear the words "always remember him" (D&C 20:77, 79). You can pledge to do that, and the Holy Ghost will help you. President Marion G. Romney talked about the gift we will be helped to remember. He said:

"We should be thankful and express appreciation for all favors received—and surely we receive many. The chief objects of our gratitude, however, should be, and are, God, our Heavenly Father, and his son Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer. . . .

"To the Lord Jesus we owe an undying debt of gratitude, for he bought us with a great price. It is impossible for us, weak mortals as we are, to fully comprehend and appreciate the sufferings he endured on the cross that he might gain for us the victory over death" ("Thou Shalt Thank the Lord Thy God in All Things," *Ensign*, June 1974, p. 3).

I bear you my testimony that Jesus is the Christ, that he atoned for our sins, and that the keys which unlock the doors of eternal life were restored to the Prophet Joseph Smith and are on the earth today. I bear testimony that President Ezra Taft Benson now holds those keys.

Not long ago a man asked me, "Does your church still believe that when Christ comes you will be living as one, the way they did in the city of Enoch?" He put a spin on the word *still*, as if we might not believe such a thing anymore. I said, "Yes, we do." And then he said, "You are the people who could do it."

I do not know why he thought that, but I know why he was right. He was right because this is the kingdom of God. Your baptism for the remission of sins, your receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost were offered by priesthood servants recognized by God.

The seed of gratitude

And so the remembrance King Benjamin urged upon us can be ours. Remembrance is the seed of gratitude, which is the seed of generosity. Gratitude for the remission of sins is the seed of charity, the pure love of Christ. And so

God has made possible for you and me this blessing, a change in our very natures: "And the remission of sins bringeth meekness, and lowliness of heart; and because of meekness and lowliness of heart cometh the visitation of the Holy Ghost, which Comforter filleth with hope and perfect love, which love endureth by diligence unto prayer, until the end shall come, when all the saints shall dwell with God" (Moroni 8:26).

I pray that we may make the simple choices which will lead us there to dwell with Him. And I pray that we will remember and be grateful for the gift of the Atonement and the gift of the Holy

Ghost, which make that journey possible. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The chorus sang "Joy in the Morning" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Bishop Henry B. Eyring addressed us, after which the Mormon Youth Chorus sang "Joy in the Morning."

It will now be our pleasure to listen to Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve.

Elder Boyd K. Packer

Personal revelation

Following baptism, one is confirmed a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in a brief ordinance during which there is conferred the gift of the Holy Ghost. Thereafter, all through life, men, women, and even little children receive the right to inspired direction to guide them in their lives—personal revelation! (see Alma 32:23).

The Holy Ghost communicates with the spirit through the mind more than through the physical senses. This guidance comes as thoughts, as feelings, through impressions and promptings. It is not always easy to describe inspiration. The scriptures teach us that we may "feel" the words of spiritual communication more than hear them, and see with spiritual rather than with mortal eyes (see 1 Nephi 17:45).

The patterns of revelation are not dramatic. The voice of inspiration is a still voice, a small voice. There need be no trance, no sanctimonious declaration. It is quieter and simpler than that.

The Book of Mormon teaches that "angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost" (2 Nephi 32:3) and records that even though an angel spoke to some, they "were past feeling, that [they] could not feel his words" (1 Nephi 17:45; italics added).

If you have experienced inspiration, you understand.

Revelation and the Word of Wisdom

Our physical body is the instrument of our spirit. In that marvelous revelation the Word of Wisdom, we are told how to keep our bodies free from impurities which might dull, even destroy, those delicate physical senses which have to do with spiritual communication.

The Word of Wisdom is a key to individual revelation. It was given as "a principle with promise, adapted to the capacity of the weak and the weakest of all saints" (D&C 89:3).

The promise is that those who obey will receive "great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures" (D&C 89:19). If we abuse our body with habit-forming substances or misuse prescription drugs, we draw curtains which close off the light of spiritual communication.

Narcotic addiction serves the design of the prince of darkness, for it disrupts the channel to the Holy Spirit of Truth. At present the adversary has an unfair advantage. Addiction has the capacity to disconnect the human will and nullify moral agency. It can rob one of the power to decide. Agency is too fundamental a doctrine to be left in such jeopardy.

It is my conviction, and my constant prayer, that there will come through research, through inspiration to scientists if need be, the power to conquer narcotic addiction through the same means which cause it.

I plead with all of you to pray earnestly that somewhere, somehow, the way will be discovered to erase addiction in the human body.

It is not just human suffering, even human life, which is at risk; it is all of the personal and social and political and spiritual freedoms for which humanity has struggled for ages. At risk is all that was purchased by the blood of martyrs. Moral agency itself is in jeopardy! If we all pray fervently, the Lord will surely help us. And with those prayers, teach your children to obey the Word of Wisdom. It is their armor and will protect them from habits which obstruct the channels of personal revelation.

Spiritual things are like leavening

Things of the Spirit need not—indeed, should not—require our uninterrupted time and attention. Ordinary work-a-day things occupy most of our attention. And that is as it should be. We are mortal beings living in this physical world.

Spiritual things are like leavening. By measure they may be very small, but by influence they affect all that we do. Continuing revelation is fundamental to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And I assure you that revelation attends our prophet President and those ordained as Apostles, as prophets, seers, and revelators. But revelation is not limited to them. The Lord desires that “every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world” (D&C 1:20).

Promptings from evil sources

Not all inspiration comes from God (see D&C 46:7). The evil one has the power to tap into those channels of revelation and send conflicting signals which can mislead and confuse us. There are

promptings from evil sources which are so carefully counterfeited as to deceive even the very elect (see Matthew 24:24).

Nevertheless, we can learn to discern these spirits. Even with every member having the right to revelation, the Church can be maintained as a house of order.

Revelation and order

Revelation comes in an orderly way in the Church. We are entitled to personal revelation. However, unless we are set apart to some presiding office, we will not receive revelations concerning what others should do.

Revelation in the Church comes to those who have been properly called, sustained, ordained, or set apart. A bishop, for instance, will not receive any revelation concerning a neighboring ward, because that is out of his jurisdiction.

Occasionally someone will claim to have received authority to teach and bless without having been called and set apart. Less than a year after the Church was organized (February 1831), a revelation was received which the Prophet specified “embrac[ed] the law of the church.” It includes this verse:

“It shall not be given to any one to go forth to preach my gospel, or to build up my church, except he be ordained by some one who has authority, and *it is known to the church that he has authority* and has been regularly ordained by the heads of the church” (D&C 42:11; italics added).

That is why the process of sustaining those called to office is so carefully protected in the Church—that all might know who has authority to teach and to bless.

An unusual spiritual experience should not be regarded as a personal call to direct others. It is my conviction that experiences of a special, sacred nature are individual and should be kept to oneself.

Few things disturb the channels of revelation quite so effectively as those people who are misled and think themselves to be chosen to instruct others when they are not chosen.

Others, fearing they also might go astray, then hold back and do not seek the source of divine revelation. Obedience to constituted priesthood authority will protect us from going astray.

Revelation and change

There are those within the Church who are disturbed when changes are made with which they disagree or when changes they propose are not made. They point to these as evidence that the leaders are not inspired.

They write and speak to convince others that the doctrines and decisions of the Brethren are not given through inspiration.

Two things characterize them: they are always irritated by the word *obedience*, and always they question revelation. It has always been so. Helaman described those who “began to disbelieve in the spirit of prophecy and in the spirit of revelation; and the judgments of God did stare them in the face” (Helaman 4:23). “They were left in their own strength” (4:13), and “the Spirit of the Lord did no more preserve them; yea, it had withdrawn from them” (4:24).

Changes in organization or procedures are a testimony that revelation is ongoing. While doctrines remain fixed, the methods or procedures do not.

Changes in the scriptures

For instance, when the most recent editions of the scriptures were published, many corrections were made on the basis of original or printer’s manuscripts, some of which had not previously been available. For instance, in Alma chapter 16, verse 5, the word *whether* had appeared. The original manuscript for that verse does not exist. However, when we found the printer’s copy, we saw that the Prophet Joseph Smith had changed the word to *whither*. *Whether* means “if”; *whither* means “where.” The next verse verifies *whither* to be correct.

Another example: in Alma chapter 32, verse 30, the words “sprouteth and

beginneth to grow” occurred three times. An obvious typesetting error left one of them out. In the 1981 edition, thirty-five words were restored. It now conforms to the original text.

There were many such changes. None altered the doctrine. Each change, however small in detail, was carefully and prayerfully considered and approved by the Council of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in a meeting in the temple.

Guidance through authorized servants

All such matters are determined that way. The Lord established that process when He gave revelations relating to temple ordinances.

In 1841 the Saints were commanded to build a temple in Nauvoo in which to perform baptisms for the dead, and they were given time to do it. They would be rejected if they failed. The Lord said:

“I command you, all ye my saints, to build a house unto me; . . .

“And if you do not these things at the end of the appointment ye shall be rejected as a church, with your dead, saith the Lord your God” (D&C 124:31–32).

The Saints did not fail. However impossible it may have seemed to them, given the terrible opposition they faced, the Lord promised to guide them through His appointed servants:

“If my people will hearken unto my voice, *and unto the voice of my servants whom I have appointed to lead my people*, behold, verily I say unto you, they shall not be moved out of their place.

“But if they will not hearken to my voice, *nor unto the voice of these men whom I have appointed*, they shall not be blest” (D&C 124:45–46; italics added).

Later, speaking on the same subject of temple ordinances, the Lord affirmed again that He will reveal His will to His authorized servants:

“For him to whom these keys are given there is no difficulty in obtaining a knowledge of facts in relation to the salvation of the children of men” (D&C 128:11).

Changes come through revelation

That principle of revelation has been with the Church ever since. Those who hold the keys have obtained knowledge of what to do. When changes have come, they have come through that process. The Lord does as He said He would do:

"I, the Lord, command and revoke, as it seemeth me good" (D&C 56:4).

"I command and men obey not; I revoke and they receive not the blessing" (D&C 58:32).

He told the Saints that when enemies prevented them from keeping a commandment, He would no longer require them to do so. And He said, "The iniquity and transgression of my holy laws and commandments I will visit upon the heads of those who hindered my work, unto the third and fourth generation, so long as they repent not" (D&C 124:50).

The gospel plan was revealed line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, and there a little. And it goes on: "We believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God" (Articles of Faith 1:9).

There will be changes made in the future as in the past. Whether the Brethren make changes or resist them depends entirely upon the instructions they receive through the channels of revelation which were established in the beginning.

The doctrines will remain fixed, eternal; the organization, programs, and procedures will be altered as directed by Him whose church this is.

Revelation continues today

We who have been called to lead the Church are ordinary men and women with ordinary capacities struggling to administer a church which grows at such a pace as to astound even those who watch it closely. Some are disposed to find fault with us; surely that is easy for them to do. But they do not examine us more search-

ingly than we examine ourselves. A call to lead is not an exemption from the challenges of life. We seek for inspiration in the same way that you do, and we must obey the same laws which apply to every member of the Church.

We are sorry for our inadequacies, sorry we are not better than we are. We can feel, as you can see, the effect of the aging process as it imposes limitations upon His leaders before your very eyes.

But this we know. There are councils and counselors and quorums to counter-balance the foibles and frailties of man. The Lord organized His church to provide for mortal men to work as mortal men, and yet He assured that the spirit of revelation would guide in all that we do in His name.

And in the end, what is given comes because the Lord has spoken it, "whether by [His] own voice or by the voice of [His] servants, it is the same" (D&C 1:38). We know His voice when He speaks.

Revelation continues with us today. The promptings of the Spirit, the dreams, the visions and the visitations, and the ministering of angels all are with us now. And the still, small voice of the Holy Ghost "is a lamp unto [our] feet, and a light unto [our] path" (Psalm 119:105). Of that I bear witness, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The chorus sang "True to the Faith" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Elder Boyd K. Packer has addressed us, and the Mormon Youth Chorus has sung "True to the Faith."

It will now be our pleasure to listen to President Howard W. Hunter, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, who will be our concluding speaker for this session.

President Howard W. Hunter

I am honored to greet a vast audience of members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, many of whom are gathered here on Temple Square in Salt Lake City. However, I am aware that by means of modern television technology and the courtesy of a number of television stations, I am privileged also to speak to many who are not members of our church and who may not be familiar with all of its doctrines and beliefs.

The divine right to choose

Today, I would like to address both groups, members of our church as well as others, about one of the most important tenets of our faith and one of the most precious of God's gifts to mankind. It is our freedom, our agency, our inalienable and divine right to choose what we will believe and what we will not believe, and to choose what we want to be and what we want to do. I wish to speak of our responsibility and our opportunity to choose God, and the good, and eternal life, or to select evil, and the destructive, and that which leads to painful misery and despair.

Abraham Lincoln once asked, "What constitutes the bulwark of our own liberty and independence?" He then answered, "It is not our frowning battlements, our bristling sea coasts, our army and our navy. . . . Our reliance is in the love of liberty which God has planted in us" (in John Bartlett, ed., *Familiar Quotations* [Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1968], p. 636).

There are, of course, those who, in bitterness and disbelief, have rejected the idea of an independent spirit in man that is capable of free will and choice and true liberty.

We declare a bright and glorious view of God and man to all who will hear, a view revealed in and illuminated by the restored light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We testify of God's loving goodness and of his eternal respect for each of

us, for us as individual children of God and for what each of us may become.

As our prophet leader, President Ezra Taft Benson has declared:

"The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints proclaims that life is eternal, that it has purpose. . . . [God has a] plan . . . for the benefit and blessing of us, His children. . . .

"Basic to [that] all-important plan is our free agency. . . .

"The right of choice . . . runs like a golden thread throughout the gospel . . . for the blessing of His children" (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], pp. 80-81).

Our premortal existence

Part of our reassurance about the free, noble, and progressing spirit of man comes from the glorious realization that we all existed and had our identities, and our agency, long before we came to this world. To some that will be a new thought, but the Bible teaches clearly just such an eternal view of life, a life stretching back before this world was and stretching forward into the eternities ahead.

God said to Jeremiah, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jeremiah 1:5). At another time God reminded Job that "all the sons of God shouted for joy" before there was yet any man or woman on the earth God was creating (Job 38:7). The Apostle Paul taught that God the Father chose us "before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians 1:4).

Where and when did all of this happen? Well, it happened long before man's mortal birth. It happened in a great premortal existence where we developed our identities and increased our spiritual capabilities by exercising our agency and making important choices. We developed our intelligence and learned to love the truth, and we prepared to come to earth to continue our progress.

The battle for freedom of choice

Our Father in Heaven wanted our growth to continue in mortality and to be enhanced by our freedom to choose and learn. He also wanted us to exercise our faith and our will, especially with a new physical body to master and control. But we know from both ancient and modern revelation that Satan wished to deny us our independence and agency in that now-forgotten moment long ago, even as he wishes to deny them this very hour. Indeed, Satan violently opposed the freedom of choice offered by the Father, so violently that John in the Revelation described "war in heaven" (Revelation 12:7) over the matter. Satan would have coerced us, and he would have robbed us of that most precious of gifts if he could: our freedom to choose a divine future and the exaltation we all hope to obtain.

Through Christ and his valiant defense of our Father's plan, the course of agency and eternal aspirations prevailed. In that crucial, premortal setting, a major milestone was passed, a monumental victory was won. As a result, we would be allowed to continue to pursue what President David O. McKay once described as the "eternal principle of progress." Later Christ himself would come to earth, President McKay noted, "to perfect society by perfecting the individual, and only by the exercising of Free Agency can the individual even approach perfection" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1940, p. 118).

So we came to our mortality, like Jeremiah, known by God as his literal spirit children, having the privilege to choose our personal path on matters of belief and religious conviction. With Christ's triumph in heaven in overcoming Lucifer, and later his triumph on earth in overcoming the effects of Adam's fall and the death of all mankind, "the children of men" continue "free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not be acted upon. . . .

"Wherefore, men are free . . . to choose liberty and eternal life, through [Christ] the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the

devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself" (2 Nephi 2:26-27).

God will not violate our agency

To fully understand this gift of agency and its inestimable worth, it is imperative that we understand that God's chief way of acting is by persuasion and patience and long-suffering, not by coercion and stark confrontation. He acts by gentle solicitation and by sweet enticement. He always acts with unfailing respect for the freedom and independence that we possess. He wants to help us and pleads for the chance to assist us, but he will not do so in violation of our agency. He loves us too much to do that, and doing so would run counter to his divine character.

Brigham Young once said: "The volition of [man] is free; this is a law of their existence, and the Lord cannot violate his own law; were he to do that, he would cease to be God. . . . This is a law which has always existed from all eternity, and will continue to exist throughout all the eternities to come. Every intelligent being must have the power of choice" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 11:272).

To countermand and ultimately forbid our choices was Satan's way, not God's, and the Father of us all simply never will do that. He will, however, stand by us forever to help us see the right path, find the right choice, respond to the true voice, and feel the influence of his undeniable Spirit. His gentle, peaceful, powerful persuasion to do right and find joy will be with us "so long as time shall last, or the earth shall stand, or there shall be one man upon the face thereof to be saved" (Moroni 7:36).

Repent of wrong choices

Given the freedom to choose, we may, in fact, make wrong choices, bad choices, hurtful choices. And sometimes we do just that, but that is where the mission and mercy of Jesus Christ comes into full force and glory. He has taken upon himself the burden of all the world's risk.

He has provided a mediating atonement for the wrong choices we make. He is our advocate with the Father and has paid, in advance, for the faults and foolishness we often see in the exercise of our freedom. We must accept his gift, repent of those mistakes, and follow his commandments in order to take full advantage of this redemption. The offer is always there; the way is always open. We can always, even in our darkest hour and most disastrous errors, look to the Son of God and live.

Choose God's blessings

When the children of Israel returned from Egypt and stood on the threshold of the promised land, they faced the clear choice of what was before them. Of the future that was about to be theirs, the Lord said to them:

"Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse;

"A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day:

"And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 11:26-28).

That is the choice the Lord puts before us as we face our own promised lands and our own bright futures. We are given the knowledge, the help, the enticement, and the freedom to choose the

path of eternal safety and salvation. The choice to do so is ours. By divine decree before this world was, the actual choice is and always has been our own.

Let us be conscious of the fact that our future is being fashioned by the decisions we make. May we exercise our faith and our agency in choosing the blessings God has set before us in the great gospel plan of our Savior, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

President Howard W. Hunter of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just addressed us.

We express appreciation to the many who have offered facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this conference to a very large audience in many areas of the world.

The Mormon Youth Chorus will now sing "How Great Thou Art," following which the benediction will be pronounced by Elder Jack H. Goasland of the Seventy, and we will be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The chorus sang "How Great Thou Art."

Elder Jack H. Goasland offered the benediction.

FIRST DAY AFTERNOON SESSION

The second general session of the 159th Semiannual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, September 30, 1989, at 2:00 P.M. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

Music for this session was provided by a Polynesian choir from the Salt Lake Valley. Kuinise V. Matagi conducted, and Clay Christiansen was at the organ.

At the beginning of the meeting, President Monson made the following remarks:

President Thomas S. Monson

My beloved brethren and sisters, President Ezra Taft Benson has asked that I conduct this second general session of the 159th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We welcome all who are in attendance or who are participating by means of television, cable, or radio, and many who are watching in stake centers throughout the various parts of the world where the conference is being carried by satellite transmission. We express appreciation to the owners and operators of many radio and television stations and cable and satellite systems for their co-operation in making these proceedings available to members and friends of the Church in many countries.

We acknowledge the General Authorities of the Church, all of whom are in attendance except the following, who are excused: Elders Paul H. Dunn (who is at home on the advice of his physician following recent surgery), Sterling W. Sill, Joseph Anderson, and John H. Vandenberg.

We note that Elders Neal A. Maxwell, H. Verlan Andersen, and L. Lionel Kendrick are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall.

The music for this session will be provided by a Polynesian choir from the

Salt Lake Valley, under the direction of Brother Kuinise V. Matagi, with Brother Clay Christiansen at the organ.

The choir will open this session by singing "Joseph Smith's First Prayer." The invocation will then be offered by Elder Jacob de Jager of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Joseph Smith's First Prayer."

Elder Jacob de Jager offered the invocation.

President Monson

The choir will now sing "The Morning Breaks." President Gordon B. Hinckley will then present the General Authorities and general officers of the Church for your sustaining vote.

The choir sang "The Morning Breaks."

The Sustaining of Church Authorities and Officers

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My brothers and sisters, as requested by President Benson, I shall now present to you the General Authorities and general officers of the Church for your sustaining vote.

It is proposed that we sustain President Ezra Taft Benson as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Gordon B. Hinckley as First Counselor in the First Presidency; and Thomas S. Monson as Second Counselor in the First Presidency. Those in favor may manifest it. Those opposed may manifest it.

It is proposed that we sustain President Howard W. Hunter as President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles and the following as members of that council: Howard W. Hunter, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry, David

B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, Joseph B. Wirthlin, and Richard G. Scott. Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed may so manifest it.

It is proposed that we sustain the Counselors in the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

It is proposed that we release Elders Wm. Grant Bangerter and Hugh W. Pinnock as members of the Presidency of the Quorums of Seventy. Those who wish to extend a vote of appreciation to these Brethren for their faithful service may do so by the uplifted hand.

It is proposed that we sustain as Presidents of the Quorums of the Seventy Elders Dean L. Larsen, Marion D.

Hanks, Robert L. Backman, James M. Paramore, J. Richard Clarke, Rex D. Pinegar, and Carlos E. Asay. All in favor may manifest it. Any opposed.

At the October 1978 general conference, several of the General Authorities were given emeritus status. At that time the announcement was also made that additional members of the General Authorities would be so designated from time to time.

Today, in consideration of factors of age and health, it is proposed that we sustain the following as emeritus members of the First Quorum of the Seventy with a vote of thanks for their faithful and effective service: Elders Theodore M. Burton, Robert L. Simpson, Victor L. Brown, Paul H. Dunn, J. Thomas Fyans, Wm. Grant Bangerter, Royden G. Derrick, and Rex C. Reeve. Those in favor, please manifest it.

When the Second Quorum of the Seventy was established in April 1989, the initial membership of the Second Quorum of the Seventy was composed of General Authorities currently serving under a five-year call. It is accordingly proposed that we release with sincere appreciation for their devoted service the following members of the Second Quorum of the Seventy: Elders Russell C. Taylor, Robert B. Harbertson, Devere Harris, Spencer H. Osborn, Philip T. Sonntag, John Sonnenberg, F. Arthur Kay, and Keith W. Wilcox. Those in favor of an expression of gratitude to these Brethren, please indicate by the uplifted hand.

It is proposed that we release with a vote of thanks Elders Robert L. Simpson,

Devere Harris, and Derek A. Cuthbert as the Sunday School General Presidency. Those in favor, with an expression of appreciation, may indicate.

It is proposed that we sustain Elders Hugh W. Pinnock, Derek A. Cuthbert, and Ted E. Brewerton as the Sunday School General Presidency. Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed, by the same sign.

It is proposed that we release with a vote of thanks Elder Rex D. Pinegar as First Counselor and Elder Robert B. Harbertson as Second Counselor in the Young Men General Presidency. Those who wish to voice their appreciation may so indicate it.

It is proposed that we sustain Elder Jeffrey R. Holland as First Counselor and Elder Monte J. Brough as Second Counselor in the Young Men General Presidency. All in favor may manifest it. Any opposed.

It is proposed that we sustain the other General Authorities and general officers of the Church as presently constituted. All in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed may manifest it.

President Benson, it appears that the voting has been unanimous in the affirmative.

President Monson

Elder Russell M. Nelson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our first speaker at this session. He will be followed by Elder W. Eugene Hansen of the Seventy.

Elder Russell M. Nelson

Words are inadequate to express the gratitude we feel for these brethren who have just been released from active assignment as General Authorities of the Church. We appreciate their marvelous ministry and powerful influence for good in the world.

Our privilege of sustaining leaders is granted by the Lord (see D&C 20:63-66;

26:2; 28:13; 38:34; 93:51; 104:21; 124:144). Sustaining makes known to the Church who has authority (see D&C 42:11) and enables each of us to show support. We honor all our leaders, both men and women, and are grateful for brothers and sisters so united in this kingdom of God on earth.

Woman — of infinite worth

At a recent news conference in an Eastern European country, I was asked about the potential for women in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I replied that perhaps the Church does more to enlighten understanding about and to lift the cause of women than any other institution on earth. It provides the path to her eternal destiny.

A worthy woman personifies the truly noble and worthwhile attributes of life. A faithful woman can become a devoted daughter of God — more concerned with being righteous than with being selfish, more anxious to exercise compassion than to exercise dominion, more committed to integrity than to notoriety. And she knows of her own infinite worth.

Each faithful young woman in the Church proclaims that *individual worth* is one of her most cherished values. She declares, "I am of infinite worth with my own divine mission which I will strive to fulfill" (*Personal Progress* [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989], p. 7). Each daughter of God is of infinite worth because of her divine mission.

Important lessons about her divine mission may be learned from women of the scriptures. Mother Eve was a great example. She labored beside her husband as a partner. They both knew the plan of salvation. They both heeded commandments of obedience to God. Likewise, she prayed for divine guidance. She bore children. She taught the gospel to them (see Moses 5:1–12; D&C 138:38–39).

Sarah, in becoming the mother of Isaac in her advanced years, verified that nothing is "too hard for the Lord" (Genesis 18:14).

Mary, mother of our Redeemer, was the perfect example of complete submission to the will of God (see Luke 1:38). She kept confidences (see Luke 2:19). In faith, she endured grief (see John 19:26–27).

The stories of these and other scriptural heroines show that women are

essential in God's plan for His children. Likewise, men have important but different assignments. We learn from the scriptures that men are to hold priesthood responsibilities and, as husbands and fathers, provide for and protect their families (see Romans 12:17; 1 Timothy 5:8; D&C 75:28; 83:2, 4; 134:6, 11). From the beginning, the priesthood has been conferred only upon men, coming through the "lineage of the fathers" (see D&C 84:6–16; 86:8; 107:40–41; Abraham 1:3–4).

Equal blessings and opportunities

Blessings of the priesthood are shared by men and women. All may qualify for baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost. All may take upon themselves the name of the Lord and partake of the sacrament. All may pray and receive answers to their prayers. Gifts of the Spirit and testimonies of the truth are bestowed regardless of gender. Men and women receive the highest ordinance in the house of the Lord together and equally, or not at all (see D&C 131:1–3).

Opportunities for development of spiritual and intellectual potential are equal. Masculinity has no monopoly on the mind, and femininity has no exclusive dominion over the heart. The highest titles of human achievement — teacher, educated professional, loyal employee, faithful friend, student of the scriptures, child of God, disciple of Christ, trusted companion, loving parent — are earned under a uniform requirement of worthiness.

The great role of mother

Loving parent. What a noble title! There are no greater roles in life for a man than those of husband and father. Likewise, there are no greater roles for a woman than those of wife and mother.

As I have watched my beloved companion and our dear daughters stretch to meet the challenging demands of these sacred roles, I have truly been inspired.

I have marveled at Mother's forecast that a child would break out with measles or chicken pox well before my trained medical eye would have so predicted. I have watched the incredible calm of Mother when her child experienced a convulsive seizure.

So much is expected of a mother. Often she is a detective; she must search for lost articles and solve on a daily basis baffling "who done it" mysteries.

Frequently, her eager audience requests her talent as a musician by calling on her to sing — any time, any place. She is an artist, using crayons and coloring books, needles and thread, or other means to create works of art by her own hands (see Psalm 90:17; D&C 42:40).

During the early life of most children, a woman is the principal disciplinarian. She treads the tightrope of judgment between being too strict or too permissive.

Mother is "secretary of labor" for her home. She teaches the work ethic with its responsibilities and rewards. Father, too, shares that duty. I remember a hot Saturday afternoon years ago when one of our little daughters heard the chimes of an approaching ice-cream wagon. She asked me for some money. A bit heartlessly, I replied, "Sweetheart, why don't you *earn* your money like everyone else does?" I'll never forget her reply.

"But, Daddy," she said, "I don't like to work!" (Things are different now with four children of her own.)

A woman is a master communicator. And she communicates best in humble prayer. How many of us first learned to pray beside the bended knees of our mothers? Surely she knows that her children can walk alone only when they have found their pathway to Father in Heaven through prayer.

Certainly, a woman is a teacher. Someone said, "When you teach a boy, you teach an individual, but when you teach a girl, you teach a whole generation."

J. Edgar Hoover said that "the cure of crime is not the electric chair but the

high chair" (in Emerson Roy West, comp., *Vital Quotations* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1968], p. 78).

Honor for women who are not mothers

I honor women who are not mothers. They know that motherhood is but one of the realms of womankind. The virtue and intelligence of women are uniquely applicable to other realms as well, such as compassionate service and teaching.

I am indebted to so many wonderful men and women who were my teachers. From grade school I remember Miss Crow, Miss McLean, Miss Starr, and others. Later, Miss Bradford, Miss Cunningham, and Miss Snow were among my favorites. They were modest, gracious, and moral examples. They were not concerned with what I was to acquire, but with what I was to become. These marvelous unmarried teachers exerted an influence distinct from that of my angel mother. Their gleaming hopes, vicarious ambitions, and exacting demands were vitally important to my preparation for life.

Wise and righteous women

A wise woman renews herself. In proper season, she develops her talents and continues her education. She musters the discipline to reach her goals. She dispels darkness and opens windows of truth to light her way.

A woman teaches priorities by precept and example. Recently I watched a television program in which a female lawyer was being interviewed. She was at home with her child on a full-time basis. When asked of her decision, she replied, "Oh, I may go back to the law sometime, but not now. For me, the issue is simple. Any lawyer could take care of my clients, but only I should be the mother of this child."

Such a decision is made not in terms of rights but in terms of obligations and responsibilities. She knows that as she

risers to meet responsibilities, rights will take care of themselves.

The Prophet Joseph Smith was taught this lesson while unjustly incarcerated in Liberty Jail—scene of so few rights, so little freedom, and so much abusive authority. As the Master tutored His Prophet regarding rights, those instructions were surrounded by schooling about obligations and responsibilities (see D&C 121).

A righteous woman is a student of the scriptures. Many apply uniquely to her life (see Genesis 27:46; Psalm 113:9; Proverbs 31:10–31; Ephesians 5:22–33; Colossians 3:18; Titus 2:3–5; Jacob 3:7; D&C 25). In the scriptures she finds “great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures” (D&C 89:19).

She need not have majored in physics to know divine truths, as “there is no such thing as immaterial matter” (D&C 131:7). She need not have graduated in astronomy to learn lessons taught by God to Abraham—the relation of the earth to the sun, the sun to the planets, the planets to the center of the universe, and more (see Abraham 3). When she sings “Twinkle, twinkle, little star, how I wonder what you are,” she knows scriptural answers.

Well do I remember attending an important international symposium. The speaker was one of the world’s leading scholars, addressing a learned society with faculty representatives from major universities near and far. He said, in effect, that libraries of the world are being filled with case histories and anecdotal research. He pled for a significant change in direction. “What we need,” he said, “is research in things that *really* matter. We need to learn more about why we are here, where we have come from, and where we are going!”

That unforgettable address comes to mind each time I hear teachers at Primary and mothers at home enlighten children with revealed answers to these same questions. While so doing, they bear firm testimonies of the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Feeling a sense of infinite worth

Of course, there are times when a woman’s ability to endure is taxed to the limit. A teacher may have had enough of childish pranks, or a mother might be heard to say she’s “ready to resign.” She could become discouraged, especially if comparing herself unrealistically to others or focusing on what she is to do instead of on what she is to be.

Her self-esteem cannot be based on physical features, possession or lack of a particular talent, or comparative quantities of anything. Her self-esteem is earned by individual righteousness and a close relationship with God. Her outward glow is generated by goodness within. And her patience is much more apparent than any imperfection (see D&C 67:13).

Sweet serenity is found in fervent prayer. Then, we forget ourselves and remember the reaching hands of the Savior, who said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). As our burdens are shared with Him, they do become lighter.

Feelings of worth come when a woman follows the example of the Master. Her sense of infinite worth comes from her own Christlike yearning to reach out with love, as He does.

When her husband, children, grandchildren, nieces, or nephews return from a day marred by the world’s rude realities, a loving woman can say, “Come unto me. I will give you rest.” Wherever she is can become a sanctified place, safe from the storms of life. Refuge is there because of her ability to nurture and to love unconditionally.

Sometimes this true love necessarily takes the tone of tough love. Her lessons of obedience and accountability must resemble those of her Master, who said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15; see also Exodus 20:6; Deuteronomy 5:10; Mosiah 13:14; D&C 46:9; 124:87).

In partnership with God

The Good Shepherd said, “Feed my lambs” (John 21:15). So a woman feeds

her loved ones, providing succor and sustenance just as the Savior would do. Her divine gift is to nurture, to help the young, to care for the poor, to lift the brokenhearted.

The Lord said, "My work and my glory [is] to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). So His devoted daughter-disciple may truly say, "My work and my glory is to help my loved ones reach that heavenly goal."

To help another human being reach one's celestial potential is part of the divine mission of woman. As mother, teacher, or nurturing saint, she molds living clay to the shape of her hopes. In partnership with God, her divine mission is to help spirits live and souls be lifted. This is the measure of her creation. It is ennobling, edifying, and exalting.

Satan's efforts to demean women

Her saintly calling is opposed by Satan. He would shatter the family unit and demean the worth of woman. He would triumph if one man would offend or fail to honor her, or if one woman would deny her infinite worth and behave beneath her dignity. The vulgar portrayal of her beauty as an object of lust, the vile invasion of her private purity, should provoke righteous indignation from all caring people.

The gospel has been restored in these latter days so that the light of the Lord can

prevail over efforts of the adversary. This day has long been prophesied. The Lord has promised worthy Saints of our time, "Upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit" (Joel 2:29).

Women's divine potential

A woman's richest rewards will come as she rises to fulfill her destiny as a devoted daughter of God. To all faithful Saints He has promised thrones, kingdoms, principalities, glory, immortality, and eternal lives (see Romans 2:7; D&C 75:5; 128:12, 23; 132:19). That is the potential for women in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is exalting, everlasting, and divine.

God bless us to honor each woman in her divine mission as a woman of infinite worth, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us.

Elder W. Eugene Hansen, who was sustained last conference as a member of the Seventy, will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, also sustained last conference as a member of the Seventy.

Elder W. Eugene Hansen

My beloved brothers and sisters, since this is my first opportunity to address you since the call to this new assignment, I want you to know how grateful I am for the privilege of serving the Lord and dedicating my life to the building of the kingdom.

The Savior's mission of love

There is no single word that better characterizes the life and mission of the Savior than the word *love*.

The Savior's mission was begun out of love which the Father had for His children. In John we read, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Thus, the greatest mission in the history of the world was ordained and begun because of the love of our kind and caring Eternal Father.

The need for love in the world

You will recall that the Pharisees, in their effort to ensnare the Master, had the lawyer put the question to him, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" (I wish it had been someone other than a lawyer who had asked that question, but there is some comfort in the fact that the Pharisees put him up to it.)

You will remember the response:

"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

"This is the first and great commandment.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

"On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:36-40).

Elder James E. Talmage has commented that these two commandments "are so closely related as to be virtually one: . . . 'Thou shalt love.' He who abideth one of the two will abide both; for without love for our fellows, it is impossible to please God" (*The Articles of Faith*, 12th ed. [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1968], p. 431).

As we approach what seem like insurmountable problems facing mankind today, there has never been a greater need for love in the world — not only of God, but love of all mankind.

Showing love through Church service

As a church, we are fortunate to be able to show love and render service in an organized way.

Our missionary program is an expression of love for our neighbors as we share the message of the gospel. It is out of love and concern for others that our missionaries spend up to two years, largely at their own expense, living in all parts of the world. Many experience hardship, deprivations, and danger as they share the blessings of the gospel.

Our tithes and offerings, when given with the right spirit, are an expression of love and concern that we have for the

Lord's work and for those in need of material assistance.

The brotherhood and warmth of our priesthood quorums, Relief Society, and youth organizations are available to all who will "come unto Christ, and be perfected in him" (Moroni 10:32).

Countless thousands of hours are spent in meaningful Christian service by bishops, stake presidents, Relief Society presidents, home teachers, nursery leaders, and all who have accepted callings to do their part. They render this service not just out of a sense of duty, but out of genuine love for those they serve.

Showing love in personal relationships

But for all of the good that is being accomplished, much remains to be done. Perhaps the greatest opportunity for improvement is in our individual relationships with one another.

As the Savior was closing His ministry in preparation for the sacrifice that was to be the greatest of all gifts of love, He gave the powerful admonition, "Love one another; as I have loved you" (John 13:34).

May I offer four suggestions to help focus on principles that will make us kinder, gentler, more harmonious, and loving persons.

First, be considerate. Be sensitive to the thoughts and feelings of others, always careful not to demean or belittle by either word or act. Be encouraging, uplifting, careful not to break down a person's confidence. It was my experience even in the legal profession — combative as it can sometimes be — that there was still much room to show consideration and respect.

Second, be complimentary. Look for attributes and acts of others that you can be genuinely complimentary of. Everyone is lifted by sincere and deserved commendation.

Third, be charitable. The prophet Moroni counsels us with respect to the need for charity: "For if he have not charity he is nothing" (Moroni 7:44). In his epistle to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul sums up the importance of charity in

that familiar verse: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal" (1 Corinthians 13:1).

What does it mean to be charitable? Charity is the opposite of selfishness. It means being generous and giving of both one's means and one's time in the service of others.

We should have an element of sacrifice in our offerings and in the consecration of our time. We should strive to lift those within our reach who are forlorn or who despair. We should take a special interest in the youth around us.

"Charity is the pure love of Christ" (Moroni 7:47).

Fourth, be grateful. If we would show our love to our Heavenly Father, we would be grateful. We would show our gratitude by the way we live, not just by what we say or profess.

It has been said that the sin of ingratitude is more serious than the sin of revenge. With revenge, we return evil for evil, but with ingratitude, we return evil for good.

An example of love

Years ago, when it was the practice to hold baccalaureate services at graduation time, President Harold B. Lee related a story to a group of college graduates that has always stayed with me.

He told of a woman who was widowed early in life and left with several children to support and care for. Money was scarce. The children had to work hard to supplement the meager amounts that the mother was able to earn doing laundry and cleaning houses.

But as the children took top academic honors and went on to notable achievements in the community and business world, the family attracted the attention of the local newspaper. A reporter was sent to the home to interview this remarkable mother who, by then, was somewhat stooped and gray.

Several questions were asked by the reporter in an attempt to learn the secret of her success. She had accomplished so much with so little.

The reporter asked his final question: "With such a wonderful family of children, which one did you love the most?" With a tear softly moistening her eye she replied:

"I loved most the one who was sick until she was better.

"I loved most the one who was away until he returned.

"I loved most the one who was failing until he succeeded.

"I loved most the one who was sad until she was happy."

Emulate Christlike love

In closing, may I quote from Solomon Bennett Freehof:

"Years ago I preferred clever people. There was a joy in beholding . . . a mind . . . bearing thoughts quickly translated into words, or ideas expressed in a new way. I find now my taste has changed. Verbal fireworks often bore me. They seem motivated by self-assertion and self-display. I now prefer another type of person; one who is considerate, understanding of others, careful not to break down another person's self-respect. . . . My preferred person today is one who is always aware of the needs of others, or their pain and [their] fear and [their] unhappiness, and their search for self-respect. . . . I once liked clever people. Now I like good people" (in Richard L. Evans, comp., *Richard Evans' Quote Book* [Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1971], p. 166).

May we all strive more diligently to show our love of the Lord by the way we emulate Christlike love in our relationships with others, that we may lay claim to the "crown of life" referred to by James, "which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" (James 1:12), I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland

Expressions of gratitude

I join with Elder Hansen and all of my Brethren newly called to the quorums of the Seventy in expressing gratitude to the Lord for the privilege of this holy calling and opportunity to serve. There is no sufficient way to express either the sense of responsibility or feelings of inadequacy one has in being called to such a ministry. In these many weeks of self-examination, I have repeatedly felt, as Paul once wrote, “pressed out of measure, [and stretched] above strength” (2 Corinthians 1:8).

I also wish to express appreciation to my family, who have loved me, prayed for me, comforted and sustained me all of my life—as only a family can. They alone know how deeply I love them. I alone know how much they will mean to me forever.

This afternoon I wish to thank you, the faithful members of the Church, for your sustaining vote last April and again this day. It is no small thing to “sustain” another person. The word literally means to “uphold” or, if you prefer, to “hold up.” When we sustain life, we nourish it, we keep it going. When we sustain a friend or a neighbor or a stranger in the street, we give support, we share strength, we provide help. We hold each other up under the weight of present circumstance. We bear one another’s burdens under the heavy personal pressures of life.

Jesus provides sustenance

As with all else in our experience, the Lord Jesus Christ is our exemplar and ideal in this very important matter of providing sustenance. His is the ultimate arm of strength and his the endurance which endures all things. At no time did he demonstrate that unflinching devotion more clearly than during the final moments of his earthly life, hours when he might well have wished that others could have been sustaining him.

As the sacred supper of that ultimate Passover was being prepared, Jesus was

under the strain of deep and profound emotion. Only he knew what lay immediately ahead, but perhaps even he did not fully anticipate the depth of pain to which he must go before it could be said, “The Son of Man hath descended below them all” (D&C 122:8).

In the midst of this meal and such thoughts, Christ quietly arose, girded himself as a slave or servant would, and knelt to wash the Apostles’ feet (see John 13:3–17). This small circle of believers in this scarcely founded kingdom were about to pass through their severest trial, so he would set aside his own increasing anguish in order that he might yet once more serve and strengthen them. It does not matter that no one washed his feet. In transcendent humility he would continue to teach and to cleanse them. He would to the final hour—and beyond—be their sustaining servant. As John wrote, who was there and watched the wonder of it all, “Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end” (John 13:1).

So it had been, and so it was to be—through the night, and through the pain, and forever. He would *always* be their strength, and no anguish in his own soul would ever keep him from that sustaining role.

In the moonlit silence of that Near Eastern night, every acute pain, every heartfelt grief, every crushing wrong and human hurt experienced by every man, woman, and child in the human family was to be heaped upon his weary shoulders. But in such a moment, when someone might have said it to him, he rather says to us, “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27).

“Ye shall be sorrowful,” he said—sad, lonely, frightened, and sometimes even persecuted, “*but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. . . . Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world*” (John 16:20, 33; italics added).

How can he speak that way? Of good cheer and joy? On a night like this? With the pain he knew was just ahead? But

those are the blessings he always brought, and that is how he always spoke — to the very end.

Jesus endured and triumphed

We cannot know to what extent his disciples fully understood the approaching events, but we do know that Christ faced his final moments alone. In one of the truly candid comments he would make to his brethren, he said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (Matthew 26:38). And he left them to do what only he could do. The Light of the World stepped away from human company and entered the garden grove to wrestle with the prince of darkness alone. Moving forward, kneeling, falling forward on his face, he cried with an anguish you and I will never know, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me" (Matthew 26:39). But he knew, for our sakes, that it could not pass and that he must drink that bitter cup to the dregs!

His disciples, understandably, were weary and soon fell asleep. What of Christ's sleep? What of his fatigue? What rest or slumber will sustain him through such an agonizing ordeal? That is simply not his concern here, nor does it ever seem to be. He will endure. He will triumph. He will not falter nor fail us.

Even in crucifixion he would reign with the benevolence and bearing of a King. Of those who rend his flesh and spill his blood he says, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). And to the penitent thief at his side he gently promises paradise. To his beloved mother he is unable to make any caring gesture with his hands. So he simply looks at her and says, "Woman, behold thy son!" Then commending to John her future care, he declares, "Behold thy mother!" (John 19:26-27). He would be concerned for others — but especially for her — to the very end.

Because he must ultimately tread this winepress of redemption unaided, can he endure the darkest moment of them all, the shock of the greatest pain? This comes not with thorns and with nails, but with the terror of feeling utterly

alone: "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? . . . My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34). Can he bear all of our sins and our fear and loneliness too? He did and he does and he will.

We do not know how such great sorrow can be borne, but it is no wonder the sun hid its face in shame. No wonder the veil of the temple was rent. No wonder the very earth convulsed at the plight of this perfect child. And at least one Roman centurion who saw all of this sensed something of what it had meant. In awe, he uttered the declaration for all eternity, "Truly this was the Son of God" (Matthew 27:54).

Pure love of Christ never faileth

Life has its share of some fear and some failure. Sometimes things fall short, don't quite measure up. Sometimes in both personal and public life, we are seemingly left without strength to go on. Sometimes people fail us, or economies and circumstance fail us, and life with its hardship and heartache can leave us feeling very alone.

But when such difficult moments come to us, I testify that there is one thing which will never, ever fail us. One thing alone will stand the test of all time, of all tribulation, all trouble, and all transgression. One thing only never faileth — and that is the pure love of Christ.

"I remember," Moroni cries to the Savior of the world, "that thou hast said that thou hast loved the world, even unto the laying down of thy life for the world. . . ."

"Now I know," he writes, "that this love which thou hast had for the children of men is charity" (Ether 12:33-34).

Having watched a dispensation die and an entire civilization destroy itself, Moroni quotes his father for any who will listen in some later ("latter") day, "If ye have not charity, ye are nothing" (Moroni 7:46). Only the pure love of Christ will see us through. It is Christ's love which suffereth long, and is kind. It is Christ's love which is not puffed up nor easily provoked. Only his pure love enables him — and us — to bear all things, believe

all things, hope all things, and endure all things (see Moroni 7:45).

Oh, love effulgent, love divine!
What debt of gratitude is mine,
That in his offering I have part
And hold a place within his heart.
("God Loved Us, So He Sent His
Son," *Hymns*, no. 187.)

I testify that having loved us who are in the world, Christ loves us to the end. His pure love never fails us. Not now. Not ever. Not ever.

Of that divine sustaining vote for all of us I testify in this, his true and living

Church, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elders W. Eugene Hansen and Jeffrey R. Holland of the Seventy have just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet." Elders Marlin K. Jensen and Carlos Amado, sustained at April conference as members of the Seventy, will then speak to us.

The choir and congregation sang
"We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

Elder Marlin K. Jensen

Expressions of gratitude

Brothers and sisters, I am grateful for the opportunity to greet all of you and to tell you how thankful I am to have been called as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. My wife, Kathy, says she always knew I would receive a life sentence of some type, but neither of us dreamed it would be something so rewarding!

No one can stand at this pulpit for the first time — where so many truly great men and women have stood over the years — without experiencing a strong sense of personal inadequacy and an overwhelming desire to express appreciation. I feel both today.

I want to express appreciation to my friends and neighbors in the little mountain valley where I was born and where I have chosen to live my life thus far — also, to my noble ancestors and my living extended family. I am constantly aware of their goodness and their interest in me. I sincerely thank my parents, who continue to work on a project that began at my birth forty-seven years ago. I am especially indebted to my companion. Her support, love, and cheerful disposition make my life very enjoyable. She would

want you to know of her own strong conviction of the truthfulness of the restored gospel. Together we have been blessed with eight delightful children, whose development and happiness are our primary concerns. I love each one of them very much.

I am also very grateful for the blessing of daily association with the General Authorities of the Church. I pledge to these dedicated men my loyalty, my love, and my untiring efforts in building up God's kingdom. I promise them also that I will always heed the Lord's admonition in the Doctrine and Covenants: "Therefore, strengthen your brethren in all your conversation, in all your prayers, in all your exhortations, and in all your doings" (D&C 108:7).

Finally, I am very grateful for each of you, my brothers and sisters all over the world, who have come to a knowledge of the Redeemer and are part of His Church. I appreciate your goodness and devotion and look forward to meeting you and serving at your side in the years ahead. With you, in the words of the Apostle Paul, I am humbled to know that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height,

nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39). For this knowledge I am most grateful of all.

An eye single to God's glory

As I have searched the scriptures in recent months for guidance in my new calling, I have become aware of the importance to our eternal welfare of our motives, our desires, and our attitudes. I speak of one of these today: the necessity of performing our earthly labors with "an eye single to the glory of God" (D&C 4:5).

The temptation to seek personal recognition and reward from our service to others is ever-present. The pattern was established in the pre-earth life by Satan himself. There, when the Father explained His plan of salvation for the inhabitants of this earth and the need for a redeemer, Satan responded by saying, "Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor" (Moses 4:1). In contrast, Christ showed us for all time that God's work is to be done with an attitude of *Thine*, not *mine*. Said He, "Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever" (4:2).

Those who seek honor and gain for themselves in doing the Lord's work are guilty of what the scriptures call priest-crafts. Of this sin, Nephi stated, "Priest-crafts are that men preach and set themselves up for a light unto the world, that they may get gain and praise of the world; but they seek not the welfare of Zion" (2 Nephi 26:29).

Blessings of giving glory to God

Latter-day Saints whose eyes are single to God's glory see life from a vastly different perspective than those whose attention is directed elsewhere. Such members, for instance, care little about receiving credit or recognition for their good deeds. They are more interested in feeding the Lord's sheep than in

counting them. In fact, they frequently find their greatest happiness in serving anonymously, thereby leaving the beneficiaries of their kindness with no one to thank or praise except the Lord. In this regard, we can perhaps learn a lesson from our Christian brothers and sisters in the Amish communities of Pennsylvania. It is reported that their writers frequently compose and publish poetry and religious literature anonymously, so as to deflect attention from themselves and ensure that only God receives the glory.

There is something particularly noble about the good works of those who act without restraint or compulsion and with no expectation of reward or recognition. Their goodness has its source in the "desires of their hearts" (Alma 41:3) and is the result of pure motives.

Our second-youngest daughter illustrated this principle in a simple way a year or so ago when she was three. Without special occasion, except the joy of doing something nice for someone, she hid a tasty bedtime treat under my pillow. When I thanked her and asked her the next morning why she had done such a good deed, she said, "Just because I love you, Daddy—just because I love you."

The least shall be great

Considerations of church position and title are also of little consequence to Latter-day Saints whose eyes are directed toward God's glory. Their concern is focused on the opportunities for service that church callings present, rather than on gaining personal notoriety. Such members, who serve competently and quietly, regardless of whether they are the "highest" or the "least" in the kingdom, are probably those that the Apostle Paul had in mind when he wrote, "And those members of the body [meaning the Church], which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour" (1 Corinthians 12:23).

The merit of rendering faithful service, regardless of one's position in the Church, was tenderly brought to my attention several years ago during the funeral service of a man who had done

much good in his life without ever being recognized with a high church office. I was touched as I heard the deceased's brother-in-law describe him as a man who had never served as an elders quorum president, as a bishop, or as a stake president, but who "had made a lot of them look awfully good."

All of us who have observed a loving Primary nursery leader ministering patiently to her flock of two-year-olds or who have felt the gentle spirit of those wonderful white-haired men and women who faithfully serve in the temples of the Lord will understand perfectly the Savior's comment, "For he that is least among you all, the same shall be great" (Luke 9:48).

Sacrificing our vain ambitions

When our eyes are fixed on God's glory, we feel the majesty of His creations and the grand scope of His work on this earth. We feel humble to be participants in His latter-day kingdom. If we pause and quietly reflect on our role in all of this, we will come to know that placing our egos and our vain ambitions on the sacrificial altar is one of the most important offerings we can ever make. Well might we acknowledge, as did Moses after beholding in vision God's glory, "Now, for this cause I know that man is nothing, which thing I never had supposed" (Moses 1:10).

Paul demonstrated a similar attitude and recognition in his first letter to the Corinthians, in which he asked rhetorically:

"Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?"

"I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

"So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase" (1 Corinthians 3:5-7).

Brothers and sisters, I testify that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is God's kingdom on the earth today. This kingdom will roll forward with or without us as individuals. Men and women who even momentarily take their eyes off of God's glory and seek to exalt themselves, or who become entangled in the vain things of this world, will find that the kingdom quickly moves on without them. Unfortunately, none of us is immune from this all-too-human tendency. In the final dramatic hours of the Savior's life, even His Apostles — those stalwart men who certainly should have known better — argued with one another about who should be accounted the greatest (see Luke 22:24).

The Lord's promise

To those faithful Latter-day Saints whose view of their own importance in God's plan is in perspective, the Lord has promised:

"And if your eye be single to my glory, your whole bodies shall be filled with light, and there shall be no darkness in you; and that body which is filled with light comprehendeth all things.

"Therefore, sanctify yourselves that your minds become single to God, and the days will come that you shall see him; for he will unveil his face unto you, and it shall be in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will" (D&C 88:67-68).

Of these truths I testify, adding my own humble witness of the reality and goodness of God and His Son. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Carlos H. Amado

Seeking God's comfort in adversity

The day I arrived in Mexico City as a General Authority with my family, I received a telephone call from a former missionary companion who wanted to talk to me that night. His oldest son, who was just starting his first semester of college, had died in a tragic accident. He was only seventeen years old and full of enthusiasm for life. He was faithful in the Church and a seminary graduate. Just two weeks before, he had talked to his parents about desires and goals in life. Now he was gone. They understand the plan of salvation well and are sealed for eternity, but the physical separation affects them.

Those who have gone through this kind of trial recognize that there are tragedies that are so difficult we cannot understand them. We do not have an answer in this life for every adversity. When trials come, it is time to turn our souls to God, who is the author of life and the only source of comfort. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you" (John 14:27).

Changing tragedy into a blessing

Some months ago I heard that the wife of a friend was again threatening miscarriage. I hurried, along with others who were concerned about the baby, to make sure that things would be well. While arrangements were still being made, we were told that it was too late. This was the third time she had gone through this painful experience. I asked myself, What can I say to comfort them? How will the Lord help them overcome this new blow?

The day she left the hospital she heard about another sister from her stake who was going through the same experience. Full of trust in the Lord, she went to visit the sister and give her support. She changed her own tragedy into a blessing of comfort for others.

Thinking about her attitude, I remembered a lesson I learned many years

ago when my father died. He died suddenly, leaving my mother a widow with fifteen children, ten of whom were dependent on her. This was a great tragedy in her life. Of course, the gospel, the fellowship of the Church, and our own testimonies gave us a solid base which comforted us and helped us to accept this loss with dignity. In spite of the fact that we never left her alone, it affected her deeply. Although she accepted the will of God, her soul did not find inner peace.

One morning as we were traveling downtown on a bus, she began to feel her loneliness. I noticed it, but also knew that I couldn't give her the comfort she needed. She cried in silence, but with dignity. A lady passenger came up and said, "You seem to be very sad." My mother answered, "I have just lost my husband." Then the lady asked, "Do you have children?" and my mother answered, "I have fifteen children, and each one of them has some trait that reminds me of their father. So I am constantly reminded of him."

When she heard this, the woman said, "You are truly blessed because you lost only your husband. I lost my husband, too, and my two daughters in an automobile accident, and I am living alone. So I do understand your pain and sorrow." Then she added, "Only God can help us overcome trials like this."

Those who suffer great adversity and sorrow and go on to serve their fellowmen develop a great capacity to understand others. Like the prophets, they have acquired a higher understanding of the mind and will of Christ. To me, this woman was like an angel. She gave comfort and raised my mother's thoughts toward God in a time of great trial. From that day on, each time my mother felt lonely or abandoned, she would say to me, "Son, pity the woman who lost all. I am grateful that the Lord has blessed me with fifteen children to be my companions in life."

Christ understands our suffering

This personal experience has helped me understand the importance of what

God revealed to Joseph Smith in the Doctrine and Covenants:

"Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit — and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink —

"Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men" (D&C 19:18–19).

Christ has suffered more than any of us, and He knows the intensity of our afflictions. There is no suffering we have that He did not undergo in Gethsemane and on Calvary. That is why He understands and can help us.

Christ stated, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25). The greatest tragedy that can happen to a person is not the loss of his possessions, or his intellect, or his mortal life, but rather to lose eternal life, which is the free gift of God.

The true trial of our faith

The scriptures are a witness of the various prophets — ordinary people, with extraordinary callings — who faced great tribulation and opposition. Father Lehi was commanded to abandon his gold, his silver, and his country. The sons of Mosiah had to renounce the throne. Job lost his lands, his cattle, and even his children, while Abinadi, Stephen, and Christ's Apostles were killed in His service.

For some, the true trial of our faith is to remain faithful, without murmuring against the Lord, when we lose earthly position, family members, or even when we are required to give our very lives.

There is evidence in the scriptures that these great men trusted fully in the Savior, even without a full understanding of His purposes. The Prophet Joseph Smith learned, as he established the kingdom of God in this last dispensation, that the more he struggled to bless the lives of

others, the greater was his opposition. He went to the Lord seeking justice. Christ did understand Joseph and suggested to him that he might have to suffer more. The Lord told him: "The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he?" (D&C 122:8).

Later, Joseph, with more understanding of the will and purposes of his Savior, accepted his glorious destiny by offering his life. It is not important to know the trials we may be required to go through in this mortal life. What is essential is our attitude in facing these trials and the lessons and experiences that we learn from them. These will help to refine our understanding and increase our spirituality.

The eternal perspective

Basically, we limit our vision to the events that happen in this life with the greatest emphasis placed on the present. Only when we fix our gaze on the heavenly things do we begin to understand the eternities. Only with the help of Christ can we fully overcome tragedy. It is necessary to develop our faith in Him as the Redeemer of the world. He taught us, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). It is my prayer that when we have afflictions we will follow the pattern that He taught during His bitter experience in Gethsemane. He said, "If thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). This I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have just heard the remarks of Elders Marlin K. Jensen and Carlos Amado of the Seventy.

Elder Richard G. Scott, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our next speaker. He will be followed by Elder M. Russell Ballard, also of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Richard G. Scott

Recognizing answers to prayer

Across from me a woman sat sobbing. With tear-filled eyes, she told me, "I don't know what I believe anymore." She spoke of having struggled and prayed many days to know how to make a vitally important decision in her life, without success. She anguished, "I don't know what to do. If you'll tell me what to do, I'll do it." With her hand on the scriptures, she said, "God told us He would help us. He answers everybody else's prayers. Why won't He answer mine?"

When one is caught in a whirlpool of emotion, it is difficult to find a way out alone. My prayer is to help you who have similar feelings.

When answers to urgent prayer don't seem to come, it may be that we don't understand some truths about prayer, or because we don't recognize answers when they come.

Our Heavenly Father did not put us on earth to fail but to succeed gloriously. It may seem paradoxical, but that is why recognizing answers to prayer can sometimes be very difficult. Some face life with only their own experience and capacity to help them. Others seek, through prayer, divine inspiration to *know* what to do. When it is required, they qualify for power beyond their own capacity to do it.

Communication with our Father in Heaven is not a trivial matter. It is a sacred privilege. It is based on unchanging principles. When we receive help from our Father in Heaven, it is in response to faith, obedience, and the proper use of agency.

It is a mistake to assume that every prayer we offer will be answered immediately. Some prayers require considerable effort on our part. True, sometimes impressions come when we have not specifically sought them. They generally concern something we need to know and are not otherwise able to find out.

Apply truths that God has revealed

We are here on earth to gain experience we can obtain in no other way. We

are given the opportunity to grow, to develop, and to gain spiritual maturity. To do that, we must learn to apply truth. How we face challenges and resolve difficult problems is crucially important to our happiness.

To better understand prayer, I have listened to the counsel of others, pondered the scriptures, and studied the lives of prophets and others. Yet what seems most helpful is seeing in my mind a child approaching trustingly a loving, kind, wise, understanding Father, who wants us to succeed.

Don't worry about your clumsily expressed feelings. Just talk to your Father. He hears every prayer and answers it in His way.

When we explain a problem and a proposed solution, sometimes He answers yes, sometimes no. Often He withholds an answer, not for lack of concern, but because He loves us — perfectly. He wants us to apply truths He has given us. For us to grow, we need to trust our ability to make correct decisions. We need to do what we *feel* is right. In time, He will answer. He will not fail us.

I have described the absolute reality of our relationship with our Father. There is nothing about us He does not know. He is conscious of our every need and could provide all of the answers. Yet, because His purpose is our eternal happiness, He encourages us to make the correct choices.

Sometimes, like a child, we misbehave, act unwisely, and feel we cannot approach our Father with a problem. When communication is strained, how wonderful it is to have a Mediator who works things out when we obey His counsel and repent. Such is our Elder Brother, the Savior.

Ask in faith with an honest heart

Perhaps Oliver Cowdery's experiences were recorded for us to understand how to pray and how to recognize answer to prayer. Oliver was told:

"Assuredly as the Lord liveth, . . . even so surely shall you receive a knowledge of whatsoever things you shall *ask in faith, with an honest heart, believing that you shall receive* . . .

"I will tell you in your *mind* and in your *heart*, by the Holy Ghost" (D&C 8:1-2; italics added).

When we receive an impression in our *heart*, we can use our *mind* either to rationalize it away or to accomplish it. Be careful what you do with an impression from the Lord.

Oliver was further taught: "Remember that without *faith* you can do nothing; therefore ask in *faith*. Trifle not with these things; do not ask for that which you ought not. . . .

"According to your *faith* shall it be done unto you" (D&C 8:10-11; italics added).

"Ask in faith" means ask with confidence in our holy Father. Like many of us, Oliver did not recognize the evidence of answers to prayers already given by the Lord. To open his eyes and ours, this revelation was given through Joseph Smith:

"Blessed art thou for what thou hast done; for thou hast inquired of me, and behold, *as often as thou hast inquired thou hast received instruction* of my Spirit. If it had not been so, thou wouldst not have come to the place where thou art at this time.

"Behold, thou knowest that thou hast inquired of me and I did *enlighten thy mind*; and now I tell thee these things that thou mayest know that thou hast been enlightened by the Spirit of truth" (D&C 6:14-15; italics added).

If you feel that God has not answered *your* prayers, ponder these scriptures—then carefully look for evidence in your own life of His having already answered you.

Answers reach the heart and mind

To help each of us recognize answers given, the Lord said:

"If you desire a further witness, cast your mind upon the night that you cried

unto me in your heart, that you might know concerning the truth of these things.

"*Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter?*" (D&C 6:22-23; italics added).

The Lord provides further insight by counseling us to study a problem out in our mind and then to ask if it be right:

"If it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall *feel* that it is right.

"But if it be not right you shall have no such *feelings*, but you shall have a stupor of thought" (D&C 9:8-9; italics added).

When the Lord withholds an answer

It is vitally important to recognize that the Lord also responds a third way to prayer by *withholding an answer* when the prayer is offered. Why would He do that?

He is our perfect Father. He loves us beyond our capacity to understand. He knows what is best for us. He sees the end from the beginning. He wants us to act to gain needed experience.

When He answers *yes*, it is to give us confidence.

When He answers *no*, it is to prevent error.

When He *withholds an answer*, it is to have us grow through faith in Him, obedience to His commandments, and a willingness to act on truth. We are expected to assume accountability by acting on a decision that is consistent with His teachings without prior confirmation. We are not to sit passively waiting or to murmur because the Lord has not spoken. We are to act.

Be spiritually sensitive

Most often what we have chosen to do is right. He will confirm the correctness of our choices His way. That confirmation generally comes through packets of help found along the way. We discover them by being spiritually sensitive. They are like notes from a loving Father as evidence of His approval. If, in trust, we

begin something which is not right, He will let us know before we have gone too far. We sense that help by recognizing troubled or uneasy feelings.

Nephi followed the spiritual law

Nephi's efforts to obtain the plates of brass show how the principles work. When the older brethren were asked to go, they murmured and received no help. Nephi was assured, "Thou shalt be favored of the Lord, because thou hast not murmured" (1 Nephi 3:6). Nephi's words "I will go and do" reveal a positive commitment to act and to succeed by using spiritual law (1 Nephi 3:7).

After two unsuccessful attempts, Nephi remained confident. He crept into the city toward the house of Laban without all the answers. He observed, "I was led by the Spirit, not knowing beforehand the things which I should do," significantly adding, "*Nevertheless I went forth*" (1 Nephi 4:6-7; italics added).

Nephi was willing to try time and again, using his best efforts. He expressed faith that he would be helped. He refused to be discouraged. But because he acted, had confidence in the Lord, was obedient, and properly used his agency, he received guidance. He was inspired step after step to success, and in his mother's words was "given . . . power [to] accomplish the thing which the Lord hath commanded" (1 Nephi 5:8; italics added).

Nephi knew he was required to confide in God, to exercise faith, and to act so that he could receive help, step by step. He did not murmur nor ask for a full explanation. But, observe particularly, he did not wait passively for help. He acted! By following spiritual law, he was inspired and given power to act.

Seek God's will

Sometimes answers to prayer are not recognized because we are too intent on wanting confirmation of our own desires. We fail to see that the Lord would have

us do something else. Be careful to seek His will.

I confess I don't know how to make a correct decision except where there is righteousness and trust in a Heavenly Father. The principles simply will not work when agency is intentionally used at variance with the will of God. If there is unrepented sin, we are left to our own devices to flounder and struggle on our own. We can be rescued through our own repentance.

Answers may come gradually

When we seek inspiration to help make decisions, the Lord gives gentle promptings. These require us to think, to exercise faith, to work, to struggle at times, and to act. Seldom does the whole answer to a decisively important matter or complex problem come all at once. More often, it comes a piece at a time, without the end in sight.

Express gratitude in prayer

I have saved the most important part about prayer until the end. It is gratitude! Our sincere efforts to thank our beloved Father generate wondrous feelings of peace, self-worth, and love. No matter how challenging our circumstances, honest appreciation fills our mind to overflowing with gratitude.

Why is it that the most impoverished seem to know best how to thank the Lord? In the highlands of Guatemala, members barely subsist. Going to the temple requires *great* sacrifice. A visit takes a year of preparation. There is hard work, sacrifice to save money and food, the spinning, dyeing, and weaving of new clothing. There is the long, barefoot walk out of the mountains, the crossing of Lake Isabel, the bus rides with little food. Tired and worn, they arrive at the temple. They scrub until they shine, dress in their new clothing, and enter the house of the Lord.

Reclothed in white, they are taught by the Spirit, receive ordinances, and make covenants. One highland woman was greatly touched by the spirit and

meaning of the endowment. Entering the celestial room, she saw others seated, with heads reverently bowed. Innocently, she knelt at the entrance to the room, oblivious to others. She bowed her head, sobbed, and for twenty minutes poured out her heart to her Father in Heaven. Finally, with her dress soaked with tears, she raised her head. The sensitive temple matron asked, "May I help?" She responded, "Oh, would you? This is my problem: I've tried to tell Father in Heaven of my gratitude for all of my blessings, but I don't feel that I've communicated. Will you help me tell Him how grateful I am?"

Trust God and be clean

The counsel about prayer is true. I have tested it thoroughly in the laboratory

of my own personal life. I have discovered that what sometimes seems an impenetrable barrier to communication is a giant step to be taken in trust.

If you seek His help, be sure your life is clean, your motives are worthy, and you're willing to do what He asks—for He *will* answer your prayers. He is your loving Father; you are His beloved child. He loves you perfectly and wants to help you.

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have just heard from Elder Richard G. Scott of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our concluding speaker for this session.

Elder M. Russell Ballard

Sorrow for deaths of missionaries

My brothers and sisters, since April's general conference, some of our missionaries have found themselves in increasingly more difficult circumstances. As the adviser to the South America North Area Presidency, I was saddened, as I know you were, at the news that two faithful missionaries, Elder Todd Ray Wilson and Elder Jeffrey Brent Ball, lost their lives in Bolivia. The deaths of these two righteous young men while they were in the service of the Lord caused the entire Church membership to mourn. We grieve also for other missionaries who have died from illness or accident since the first of the year.

Our sorrow at the loss of any faithful missionary can be tempered by this declaration from the Lord himself: "And whoso layeth down his life in my cause, for my name's sake, shall find it again, even life eternal" (D&C 98:13). To all parents, family members, and friends of missionaries who have lost their lives while in the service of the Master, we

extend to you our love, gratitude, and prayers for comfort and peace.

President Stephen Wright's dream

With the permission of President Steven B. Wright of the Bolivia La Paz Mission, I share this special experience that came to him in a dream: "I saw these two elders dressed in white, standing at the doors of a beautiful building. They were greeting numerous people, who also were dressed in white as they entered the building. It was obvious from their dress that those who entered were Bolivians. I envisioned the temple that will someday be built in Bolivia. Elders Wilson and Ball were ushering those they had prepared to receive the gospel in the spirit world into the temple to witness the vicarious ordinances being performed in their behalf. This dream has been a great comfort to me and has helped me to understand and accept their deaths."

This glimpse by President Wright of the work of redemption beyond mortality is consistent with the heavenly vision

given to President Joseph F. Smith more than seven decades ago. He declared, "I beheld that the faithful elders of this dispensation, when they depart from mortal life, continue their labors in the preaching of the gospel . . . in the great world of the spirits" (D&C 138:57).

"By Him shall we remain"

Trials and tribulations have confronted the Church ever since the beginning. The Prophet Joseph Smith said: "Hell may pour forth its rage like the burning lava of Mount Vesuvius, or of Etna, or of the most terrible of the burning mountains; and yet shall 'Mormonism' stand. Water, fire, truth and God are all realities. Truth is 'Mormonism.' God is the author of it. He is our shield. It is by Him we received our birth. It was by His voice that we were called to a dispensation of His Gospel in the beginning of the fullness of times. It was by Him we received the Book of Mormon; and it is by Him that we remain unto this day; and by Him we shall remain, if it shall be for our glory; and in His Almighty name we are determined to endure tribulation as good soldiers unto the end" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 139).

So far this year, more than thirty-seven thousand faithful missionaries have been instrumental in bringing tens of thousands of people to a knowledge of the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. These new members have experienced a mighty change in their hearts and have "humbled themselves and put their trust in the true and living God" (Alma 5:13).

Risks of missionary service

Our missionaries have not participated in this great work without serious challenges, tribulations, and difficulties. Parents of missionaries have always known the risk of losing a loved one serving in the mission field due to accident or illness. Now, we must add to the risk of missionary service the possibility of acts

of terrorism. Terrorism is centuries old but perhaps has never before been so open and blatant nor had such extensive news coverage.

Terrorism has many victims. They include the innocent and law-abiding people who are residing in a troubled region and are striving to provide for their families and to do what is right. Missionaries live among the peoples of the world; and even with the protection of the members, they also can become innocent victims of acts of violence. We must not judge the people of any nation or region because of the irresponsible, cowardly acts of terrorism perpetrated by a few.

Sometimes terrorists attack Church members or Church property because they believe, mistakenly, that the Church represents the interests of a country. Contrary to such misguided beliefs, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has no past or present affiliation with any government agency of any country, including the United States of America. In genuine Christian kindness and loving concern, missionaries and other Church members offer to all sincere and law-abiding peoples nothing more or less than the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Sad experience has taught us that not all people accept these assurances of fact. Therefore, leaders and members must be prepared for any event that may occur in the future.

Low death rate among missionaries

The increased visibility of the Church in the world brings a variety of new challenges. However, you parents and prospective missionaries have *no* reason to be fearful and to feel that serving a mission is unusually dangerous or risky. Our records since 1981 reveal that the total number of missionaries who have lost their lives through accident, illness, or other causes is very small. The life-style of Latter-day Saint missionaries before and during their missions contributes to their health and safety. For example, the death rate of young male missionaries from the United States serving worldwide is one-fifth the rate of young males of

comparable age living in Utah. It is one-seventh the rate of young males of comparable age in the general population of the United States. I do not imply that missionary service is a guarantee of increased longevity, but missionaries obviously have a much lower risk of death than others of comparable age.

Efforts to ensure safety

The Church is making great efforts to safeguard the health and safety of missionaries by decreasing the likelihood of illness and accident. In the past year, a highly qualified team of LDS doctors visited many of the missions in developing nations and made important recommendations that have been adopted to improve missionary health. We are doing and will continue to do all within our power to reduce any risks that could harm the missionaries. However, in a world of free agency, the Church cannot eliminate all risk nor guarantee absolutely that a missionary never will be ill, injured, or harmed.

The Missionary Department employs six former mission presidents who are on 24-hour-a-day call to serve mission presidents and their missionaries. They respond immediately with the resources of the Church to ensure the well-being of missionaries and their families.

When a problem occurs, such as the recent unrest in Colombia, the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve, through the able leadership of the General Authority Area Presidencies, monitor conditions daily and even hourly, if necessary.

Be assured that the safety and protection of missionaries always is a paramount concern. At the same time, however, the Church cannot retreat from areas of the world that are in turmoil unless absolutely necessary. Brothers and sisters, the charge from the Lord to "go ye therefore, and teach all nations" is a difficult one to fulfill (Matthew 28:19).

Battle fought with faith and love

The battle to bring souls unto Christ began in the premortal world with the war

in heaven (see Revelation 12:7). That same battle continues today in the conflict between right and wrong and between the gospel and false principles. The members of the Church hold a front-line position in the contest for the souls of men. The missionaries are on the battlefield fighting with the sword of truth to carry the glorious message of the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the peoples of the earth. No war has ever been free of risk. The prophecies of the last days lead me to believe that the intensity of the battle for the souls of men will increase and the risks will become greater as we draw closer to the second coming of the Lord.

Preparing ourselves and our families for the challenges of the coming years will require us to replace fear with faith. We must be able to overcome the fear of enemies who oppose and threaten us. The Lord has said, "Fear not, little flock; do good; let earth and hell combine against you, for if ye are built upon my rock, they cannot prevail" (D&C 6:34).

When I visited the missionaries in Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador immediately after the tragedy, I was extremely impressed with the deep love our missionaries feel for the people they are called to teach. Their intense desire to continue serving the precious people of their mission is beyond description. Sometimes parents and family members understandably voice worry, anxiety, or even feel alarm about the safety of their missionary sons or daughters, but rarely, if ever, do we hear the missionaries express such concerns. They love and care deeply about the people they are serving, and generally they want to continue in the service of the Lord. These dedicated missionaries illustrate so powerfully for the rest of us that "there is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John 4:18).

In many ways, brothers and sisters, the past sixty years in the Church have been relatively calm, compared to the beginnings of the Restoration. Persecutions and tribulations have been minimal. Perhaps some of these recent events are a

toughening process to help us learn how to shoulder and not shrink from our responsibilities to preach the gospel to all the peoples of the earth.

We parents need to begin early to prepare our children to have a strong, fervent testimony of the gospel. We must possess the faith, the courage, and the commitment that our pioneer forefathers had if we are to continue building up the kingdom of God on the earth.

Remember also that membership in the Church requires an understanding of the principle of sacrifice in the service of the Lord. The Prophet Joseph Smith put it this way: "When a man has offered in sacrifice all that he has for the truth's sake, not even withholding his life, and believing before God that he has been called to make this sacrifice because he seeks to do his will, . . . he can obtain the faith necessary for him to lay hold on eternal life" (*Lectures on Faith*, comp. N. B. Lundwall [Salt Lake City: N. B. Lundwall, n.d.], 6:7).

We must continue moving forward

You remember what the Prophet Joseph wrote to Mr. John Wentworth, the editor of the *Chicago Democrat* newspaper: "The Standard of Truth has been erected; no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done" (*History of the Church*, 4:540).

The Lord has not yet said the work is done, so we must continue moving forward. It is good to know that during the four years that President Ezra Taft Benson has presided over the Church, more than eighty thousand missionaries

have been set apart to proclaim the glad tidings of the Restoration.

The work will continue to grow and prosper throughout the world. In recent years the Lord's servants have unlocked the door and opened the work in the German Democratic Republic, Poland, Hungary, and Yugoslavia. They have opened many nations of Africa, including Nigeria, Ghana, Zaire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Ivory Coast, and Namibia; they have also opened Papua New Guinea. Thirteen nations and territories have been opened for missionary work in just the past four years. Many others will be opened to the preaching of the gospel. Truly, no unhallowed hand can stop the sacred work of proclaiming life and salvation to all nations and peoples, but this work will not continue without challenges and risks.

The work of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ in all the world will require knowledge, faith, sacrifice, and the best efforts of every member of the Church. As the Prophet Joseph Smith said to the Saints in Nauvoo in 1842, "Shall we not go on in so great a cause? . . . Courage, . . . and on, on to the victory!" (D&C 128:22). Today the leaders of the Church echo these words of the Prophet Joseph.

Brothers and sisters, the missionaries need our faith and prayers. Pray fervently every day for their safety and protection, for this is one very important way we all can support them in accomplishing their essential assignment of proclaiming the gospel to all the world. I bear testimony that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. We are engaged in his work. I testify that through the faith and prayers of all members of the Church, we will continue moving this great work forward to the final victory. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us.

We remind the brethren of the general priesthood meeting that will convene in the Tabernacle this evening at 6:00 P.M. mountain daylight time.

The nationwide CBS Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those desiring to attend this broadcast and the Sunday morning session, which immediately follows, must be in their seats no later than 9:15 A.M.

We express gratitude to this Polynesian choir from the Salt Lake Valley for

the beautiful music we have heard this afternoon. This wonderful choir composed of sons and daughters of Father Lehi will now sing in closing, "Come, O Thou King of Kings." Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder Helio R. Camargo of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Come, O Thou King of Kings."

Elder Helio R. Camargo offered the benediction.

GENERAL PRIESTHOOD SESSION

The general priesthood session, the third session of the 159th Semiannual General Conference, convened in the Tabernacle at 6:00 P.M. on Saturday, September 30, 1989. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for this session was provided by a combined men's choir from the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth Chorus. The choir was directed by Robert Bowden and Donald Ripplinger, and John Longhurst was at the organ.

President Hinckley opened the meeting with the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Brethren, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked that I conduct this general priesthood session. We extend our love and best wishes to all of the brethren who are participating.

These services are being relayed by closed-circuit and satellite transmission to holders of the priesthood gathered in the Assembly Hall, the BYU Marriott Center, and locations in many countries around the world. We note that Elders Boyd K. Packer, Robert E. Sackley, and Richard P. Lindsay are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall, and Elders George I. Cannon and Albert Choules, Jr.,

are seated on the stand in the BYU Marriott Center.

For the information of the brethren in outlying areas, we announce that at the session this afternoon the following members of the First Quorum of the Seventy were given emeritus status: Elders Theodore M. Burton, Robert L. Simpson, Victor L. Brown, Paul H. Dunn, J. Thomas Fyans, Wm. Grant Bangerter, Royden G. Derrick, and Rex C. Reeve.

Elders Wm. Grant Bangerter and Hugh W. Pinnock were released as members of the Presidency of the Quorums of the Seventy. Elders Rex D. Pinegar and Carlos E. Asay were sustained as Presidents of the Quorums of the Seventy.

The following members of the Second Quorum of the Seventy, who have served for five years, were honorably released: Russell C. Taylor, Robert B. Harbertson, Devere Harris, Spencer H. Osborn, Philip T. Sonntag, John Sonnenberg, F. Arthur Kay, and Keith W. Wilcox.

Elders Hugh W. Pinnock, Derek A. Cuthbert, and Ted E. Brewerton were sustained as the Sunday School General Presidency, and Elders Jeffrey R. Holland and Monte J. Brough were called as Counselors in the Young Men General Presidency.

The singing during this session will be furnished by a combined men's choir

from the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth Chorus, under the direction of Brothers Robert Bowden and Donald Ripplinger, with John Longhurst at the organ.

We shall begin by the choir singing "Saints, Behold How Great Jehovah." Following the singing, Elder Robert E. Wells of the Seventy will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "Saints, Behold How Great Jehovah."

Elder Robert E. Wells offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

The choir will now favor us with "Secret Prayer." Following the choir number, Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve will speak to us.

The choir sang "Secret Prayer."

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

Finishing the job

Many years ago I had the opportunity of witnessing a state championship high school track meet at Brigham Young University. The lesson I learned as I watched the mile run was most impressive. I know I shall never forget it. About a dozen young men had qualified to represent their schools. The starting gun was fired, and these young men who had trained so long and so hard took off. Four fellows, closely bunched together, took the early lead. Suddenly the runner in second place spiked the first runner's foot with his shoe. As the leader was about to make the next stride forward, he found that he was without a shoe.

As I noticed this, I wondered what the leader would do because of what his competitor had unintentionally done to him. It seemed to me he had a number of choices. He could take a few extra quick sprints and catch up to the fellow who had put him out of first position, double up his fist, and hit him to get even. He could run over to the coach and say, "This is what you get—I have trained all my life for this big day, and now look what's happened!" He could run off into the stands and say to his mother, father, or girlfriend, "Isn't this horrible?" Or he could sit down on the track and cry. But

to my pleasure, he did none of these things. He just kept running.

This was halfway around the first lap, and I thought to myself, "Good for him; he'll finish this first lap of the four and retire gracefully." But after he had completed the first lap, he just kept running. He completed the second lap, then the third lap—and every time he took a stride, cinders were coming up through his stocking, hurting his foot. They ran on cinder tracks in those days. But he didn't quit. He just kept running.

I thought, "What an outstanding display of courage and self-discipline! What parents! What a coach! What leaders who have affected his life enough so that in a situation like this he would not stop running!" He finished the job he had to do. He did not place first, but he was a real winner. When I walked over to him at the completion of the race and congratulated him on his courageous performance, he was composed and in complete control. He was able to carry on when it would have been much easier to quit.

Carry on

Just before our esteemed, honored Apostle and special friend of Aaronic Priesthood and their leaders worldwide,

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, passed away nearly 4½ years ago, with his sweetheart and eternal companion, Amelia, at his bedside, some very significant words were shared. As Sister McConkie held his hand during his final earthly minutes, she asked, "Bruce, do you have a message for me?" Though weak and expiring, he responded in a firm voice his last words, "Carry on."

Here was one of God's choicest servants, who had studied, pondered, and written as extensively on the life and mission of Jesus Christ as anyone else in his time, using these two powerful words for direction and encouragement. Sister McConkie has since shared with me the great importance and strength of "carry on" as time has passed. Elder McConkie knew as a special witness the importance of, "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32). Salvation and exaltation are here emphasized as being based primarily upon commitment and enduring.

To endure joyfully

Enduring, or carrying on, is not just a matter of tolerating circumstances and hanging in there, but of pressing forward. I know that's what most of us find difficult—to endure joyfully.

One weekend I had the opportunity of attending a stake quarterly conference in Idaho. As a group of Primary children stood before the congregation and sang "I Am a Child of God," I noticed three young Primary members on the front row singing but saying nothing vocally. They were deaf; they sang with their hands. No one heard them audibly, but we received their message. They touched my spirit deeply, and it was my privilege to tell them in front of the members of that stake that our Heavenly Father heard them. Even though vocally they had said nothing, they transmitted a memorable message. In moving silence they taught of the spirit, they taught of the mind, and they

taught of the heart. They had not given up singing just because they had no voice. They had been taught to carry on.

Let me now share with you the text of the song "Carry On."

Firm as the mountains around us,
Stalwart and brave we stand
On the rock our fathers planted
For us in this goodly land—
The rock of honor and virtue,
Of faith in the living God.
They raised his banner triumphant—
Over the desert sod.
And we hear the desert singing:
Carry on, carry on, carry on!
Hills and vales and mountains
ringing:
Carry on, carry on, carry on!
Holding aloft our colors,
We march in the glorious dawn.
O youth of the noble birthright,
Carry on, carry on, carry on!

We'll build on the rock they planted
A palace to the King.
Into its shining corridors,
Our songs of praise we'll bring,
For the heritage they left us,
Not of gold or of worldly wealth,
But a blessing everlasting
Of love and joy and health.
And we hear the desert singing:
Carry on, carry on, carry on!
Hills and vales and mountains
ringing:
Carry on, carry on, carry on!
Holding aloft our colors,
We march in the glorious dawn.
O youth of the noble birthright,
Carry on, carry on, carry on!
(*Hymns*, no. 255.)

Fifty-nine years ago, when this beautiful number, "Carry On," was first shared with the Church in general, to say that it was timely is an understatement. Today it should be a way of life, our top priority and clarion call for young and old. Young people, boys and girls, and leaders worldwide, I encourage you to carry on. Do not give up, falter, or become weary. Do not yield to the ways of the world that can bring only unhappiness and discouragement. I love and respect

young people who stand firm when outside influences would make it easy for them to fail or fall.

Youth of the Church are pioneers

I thank God continually for the young men and young women of this generation. I firmly believe that the finest young people that have ever lived in the history of the entire Church are with us today. The great majority are pioneers on the move in righteousness and truth. Most of our youth are true to the faith despite conditions of the day and are avoiding the temptations and subtleties of misconduct that tempt them on every hand. What a joy it is to reflect upon the fact that we have more young men and young women than ever before serving in the mission field today—young people who have great commitment and are enjoying unusual success.

As we have experienced harassment, destruction, vandalism, and even the loss of lives, the attitude of our missionaries is not one of being afraid but of marching forward in a spirit of "carry on." Few, if any, have asked for releases or transfers as the winds of fire, destruction, and danger have blown in their paths. It is a joy to see them stand firm as the mountains around us. God will continue to help them carry on, and their work will not be thwarted but will be enhanced and fruitful.

Be true to your foreordained mission

I share with you a statement that President Benson made to a gathering of youth in Southern California after he became President of the Church:

"For nearly six thousand years, God has held you in reserve to make your appearance in the final days before the Second Coming. Every previous gospel dispensation has drifted into apostasy, but ours will not. . . . God has saved for the final inning some of his strongest children, who will help bear off the kingdom triumphantly. And that is where you come in, for you are the generation that

must be prepared to meet your God. . . . Make no mistake about it—you are a marked generation. There has never been more expected of the faithful in such a short period of time as there is of us. . . . Each day we personally make many decisions that show where our support will go. The final outcome is certain—the forces of righteousness will finally win. What remains to be seen is where each of us personally, now and in the future, will stand in this fight—and how tall we will stand. Will we be true to our last-days, foreordained mission?"

Winning the victory

A number of years ago Peter Snell of New Zealand was the best in the world in the one-mile race and the 880-yard race. I had the opportunity of meeting him in Wellington, New Zealand. Later on in the week someone said to me, "Would you like to see where Peter Snell does his training and his running?" I answered yes. I was shocked when I was taken down to the beach—not to a track, but to the beach. I asked, "Where does he run?" My friends said, "He runs out close to the water where the sand comes up over his feet. There it is difficult to pull his feet out of the sand after each stride." I had an idea why, but I said to my friends, "Why does he run there?" They answered, "When he gets on a track in competition, he feels like he's floating because he doesn't have to pull his feet up out of the wet sand."

In my mind I could see him running on that difficult track. I learned from him. A little later my friends took me to another place where Peter Snell trained, up in the mountains. When I looked for a track again, they said, "No, he runs up the steep hills. Then, when he is on the level at track meets, it is pretty easy to run." That is why he breaks records, and that is why I remember his example. They told me he ran every day regardless of the weather conditions or how tired he was.

I've always been very impressed with some of the statements Winston Churchill made as he served as prime

minister during England's darkest days of war. Among other things, he said the following:

"It is no use saying, 'We are doing our best.' You have got to succeed in doing what is necessary" (in *Reader's Digest*, July 1964, p. 247).

Also, "We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. . . .

"You ask, what is our policy? I will say: It is to wage war, by sea, land, and air, with all our might and with all our strength that God can give us. . . . That is our policy.

"You ask, What is our aim? I can answer in one word: It is victory, victory at all costs, victory in spite of all the terror; victory, however long and hard the road may be" (quoted by Louis L. Snyder, *The War: A Concise History, 1939-1945* [New York: Julian Messner, Inc., 1961], p. 89).

Young people, bearers of the priesthood, God wants us to be victorious. He wants you to triumph over all of your foes. Stalwart and brave we must stand. God is at the helm. There is no reason for defeat.

Stand strong in all circumstances

It should be inspiring to all of us to constantly review and reread the message of the Prophet Joseph Smith given in Doctrine and Covenants, section 121, verses 7 and 8:

"My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment;

"And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes."

Here was God conveying to the noble prophet the importance of carrying

on under all circumstances and situations.

"Thy God shall stand by thee"

We promise the youth of today with the same conviction the Lord shared with the Prophet Joseph in Doctrine and Covenants, section 122, verse 4, "Thy God shall stand by thee forever and ever." As we carry on today, this promise is in force and is everlasting.

I am proud that we have a President, even Ezra Taft Benson, who loves and encourages the youth of the noble birthright to work, carry on, and live close to God. The youth programs of the Church today are stronger because of his influence presently and over the past years.

Jesus is the Christ. He is our Redeemer, our Lord and Savior and friend. We constantly give thanks through deeds and prayer for his unmatched example of carrying on under circumstances that caused him to bleed from every pore and anguish in the misunderstanding and misconduct of his associates. Joy and happiness come through determination and the practice of carrying on under all conditions. May God help us to so do and reap the rewards in this present day, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have heard Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Robert L. Backman of the Presidency of the Quorums of the Seventy will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder Benjamin B. Banks, who was sustained as a member of the Seventy at April conference.

Elder Robert L. Backman

Chastity is not outdated

One day I sat with a handsome, young, prospective missionary as he poured out his sad story through sobs of

sorrow, anguish, and remorse. I wanted to cry with him. Pressured by his so-called friends, he found himself at a party where liquor was served. Against every-

thing he knew to be right, he succumbed to the taunts and jeers of all those present, became drunk, and before the evening was over lost his virtue.

Unable to resist the peer pressure he faced, his resolution to stay chaste being dissipated by the circumstances he found himself in, he had seen his lifelong dream of a mission and a temple marriage change to a nightmare — and now he felt ashamed, unclean, unworthy.

"Have I forfeited my opportunity for a mission, for marriage in the temple?" he asked. "How can my Father in Heaven forgive me for what I have done? I wish the earth would open up and swallow me!" My heart ached for him.

Almost overriding my sympathy for him was the anger I felt toward those who had led him down that "primrose path," seemingly oblivious to the pain they had caused, listening to Satan's siren song that chastity is outdated.

"Thou shalt not commit adultery," Jehovah commanded, "and he that committeth adultery, and repenteth not, shall be cast out" (D&C 42:24).

My beloved young brethren, despite what the world would have us believe, God has never changed that law.

Immorality brings punishments

The First Presidency of the Church, in another time of moral crisis, declared:

"To the youth of the Church we . . . plead with you to live clean, for the unclean life leads only to suffering, misery, and woe physically, — and spiritually it is the path to destruction. How glorious and near to the angels is youth that is clean. . . . Sexual purity is youth's most precious possession; it is the foundation of all righteousness. . . .

"Times approach when we shall need all the health, strength, and spiritual power we can get to bear the afflictions that will come upon us" (in James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965–75], 6:150).

"You youths of Zion, you cannot associate in non-marital, illicit sex relationships, which is fornication, and escape the punishments and the judgments which the Lord has declared against this sin. The day of reckoning will come just as certainly as night follows day" (in *Messages of the First Presidency*, 6:176).

The full force of his actions was obvious to my tearful friend, who understood, at last, the reality of Alma's words, "Wickedness never was happiness" (Alma 41:10).

Cleanliness leads to eternal life

As I shared those sad moments with that sorrowing young man, I could not help contrasting his feelings with those of another whose sealing I had performed in the house of the Lord.

There, in the presence of their families, the happy couple expressed their joy at the solemn covenants they had made with God and with each other as they knelt at that sacred altar, looking into each other's souls with complete trust and confidence, approaching their marriage clean and worthy of the celestial blessings pronounced on their heads.

Their happiness was unrestrained.

My beloved Aaronic Priesthood brethren, with all you are learning as you progress toward virile manhood, I pray that you will get understanding of the vital truth that chastity is the ultimate and perfect standard underlying all spiritual progression.

Righteousness is happiness.

The Lord has declared, "And no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end" (3 Nephi 27:19).

I challenge you to be *clean*, be *worthy*, be *strong*, be *happy*! How? What can you do to withstand "the fiery darts of the wicked [one]" (D&C 27:17), to resist temptation and walk uprightly before the Lord?

Be patient

First, be patient. Don't be too anxious to grow up. Bask in the pleasure of anticipating what it will be like to be an adult. Remember, you are only young once, and you are going to be old for a long time.

Our impatience often causes us to flirt with the forbidden, forgetting the consequences of our foolish experimenting. President Harold B. Lee painted a vivid picture of the pain suffered through flirting, then succumbing to temptation:

"I've seen beautiful young human butterflies playing with the tempting fires of sin. . . .

"Many of these beautiful human butterflies winged for heavenly flight have fallen with wings singed and badly seared because of their curiosity about the forbidden. The more I see of life, the more I am convinced that we must impress you young people with the awfulness of sin rather than to content ourselves with merely teaching the way of repentance. I wish that someone could warn you of the night of hell that follows the committing of a moral sin . . . , as one who has sinned has described it in these words: 'No one knew anything about it. You told no one, and no one found out, no one condemned. But your face flushed, your heart beat against your ribs. Perspiration broke out upon your brow. You went to bed that night, you tied a bandage around the eyes of your soul, you built a little shelter in which to hide, you tried to sleep, but no sleep came. You said to yourself, "Other people do it," or "I had to do it," or "No one else can ever find it out." But there were hands from the unseen world that came through the darkness and tore the bandage from the eyes of the soul, and smashed down the little shelter you had made for your cowering spirit.' " (*Youth and the Church* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1970], pp. 87-88).

My young friends, please be patient.

Focus on your eternal destiny

Second, focus on your eternal destiny. The Lord has promised the faithful, "All that my Father hath shall be given

unto him" (D&C 84:38). Think what that means to you as a son of God.

Brethren, set limits to your actions — bounds you will not pass — far from the line which separates good from evil. Be prepared for the experiences that lie ahead. Plan in advance how you will face temptations — weigh the consequences, now and forever. Be sure you understand the situation confronting you. If someone, perhaps a friend, asks you to do something you are not sure about, restate what he has said, "You want me to do what?"

Next, ask yourself, "Will doing what my friend says break my rules, or the law, or hurt someone I respect or love, or make someone distrust me?" Then look at both sides of the question. What good things will happen if you do this, and what bad things will happen? Now that you have assessed all the results, you are prepared to make a decision. If everything is positive, you will probably want to go along with your friend; if not, you have the responsibility to say No. (Adapted from John W. Larsen, *Youth's Frontier, Making Ethical Decisions* [Irving, Texas: Boy Scouts of America, 1985] p. 14.)

Get tough with yourself. President Spencer W. Kimball gave us a powerful example in a talk to the youth of Stockholm, Sweden. Describing his own boyhood, he said:

"As I was out alone, milking the cows, or putting up the hay, I had time to think. I mulled it over in my mind and made this decision: 'I, Spencer Kimball, will never taste any form of liquor. I, Spencer Kimball, will never touch tobacco. I will never drink coffee, nor will I ever touch tea — not because I can explain why I shouldn't, except that the Lord said not to.' He said those things were an abomination. There are many other things that are, too, that are not in the Word of Wisdom. But I made up my mind.

"That's the point I am trying to make. I made up my mind then, as a little boy: 'I will never touch those things.' And so, having made up my mind, it was easy to follow it, and I did not yield.

There were many temptations that came along, but I did not even analyze it; I did not stop and measure it and say, 'Well, shall I or shall I not?' I always said to myself: 'But I made up my mind I would not. Therefore, I do not.'

"I'm a little older than any of you here tonight, and I want to just say that I will soon go into another year and that I have never tasted tea, nor coffee, nor tobacco, nor liquor of any kind, nor drugs. Now that may sound very presumptuous and boasting to you, but I am only trying to make this point: that if every boy and girl—as he or she begins to grow a little more mature and becomes a little more independent of his friends and his family and all—if every boy and girl would make up his or her mind, 'I will not yield,' then no matter what the temptation is: 'I made up my mind. That's settled.'" (in Conference Report, Stockholm Sweden Area Conference 1975, pp. 86–87).

Stand by your convictions

Third, stand by your convictions. Take control of your life. It is *your* body—the clothing of *your* spirit—you are dealing with. Don't become a slave to your appetites or passions. Be mature enough to have your spirit control your body. Self-control is vital when you are resisting what you know is wrong, especially when a friend insists. This self-control comes with practice, so it's important to build your inner strength. Constantly remind yourself that you are a son of God with great things to do.

Winston Churchill, that courageous World War II statesman, gave sound advice to all of us. He thundered his conviction: "Never give in, never give in, never, never, never—in nothing, great or small, large or petty—never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense" (in John Bartlett, comp., *Familiar Quotations*, 15th ed. [Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1980], p. 745).

Repent of your mistakes

Fourth, repent. Some of us are held back in our development by mistakes

we have made, sins we have committed, regrets that we let weigh on our consciences until they burden us down to the breaking point.

In the comic strip *Peanuts*, Charlie Brown told Lucy about his New Year's resolutions. He said, "You're going to be proud of me, Lucy. . . . I've decided that this next year is going to be my year of decision! This is a list of things in my life that I'm going to correct. . . . I'm going to be a better person!"

Lucy's reply was, "Not me. . . . I'm going to spend this whole year regretting the past. . . . It's the only way, Charlie Brown. . . . I'm going to cry over spilt milk, and sigh over lost loves. . . . It's a lot easier. . . . It's too hard to improve. . . . I tried it once. . . . It drove me crazy. . . . 'Forget the future' is my motto. . . . Regret the past! Oh, how I regret the past! Why did I do this? Why did I do that? Why? I regret it all! Oh, what regrets! What remorse! What anguish! What . . ." Charlie Brown sighs and throws away his resolutions. (Ellipses in the original.)

Our loving Father in Heaven is only interested in what you are going to do with your future, conditioned on your repentance from your past sins. Coming back to the questions posed by my distraught young friend and to those of you who may have transgressed as he did, I assure you that you are still dearly loved by your Father in Heaven and by the Lord's church. The second principle of the gospel is repentance, that beautiful saving principle without which all of us imperfect people would be lost. The Lord has made the promise, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18).

Isn't that a glorious promise? And it is conditioned only on your repentance. Though the roadway may be long and difficult, though the pain and sorrow may be acute, though the Church may have to take loving action to balance justice and mercy, the repentance process can cleanse your soul, and you can walk in the light of the Holy Spirit again—the transgression forgiven, the soul purified and sanctified.

You know the steps! Don't delay. Forget the past — except to use it to build a better life. Begin now to be worthy of the eternal blessings God has promised the faithful and the true.

My precious young brothers, may you understand that chastity is the source

of virile manhood, the crown of beautiful womanhood, the foundation of a happy home, and the ultimate and perfect standard underlying all spiritual progression. May we who have been called be worthy to be chosen, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, amen.

Elder Benjamin B. Banks

To prospective missionaries

I would like to address my remarks this evening to you young men of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods who are planning on or contemplating serving a mission, and to those young men of the Aaronic or Melchizedek priesthoods who perhaps might be struggling as to whether or not they want to serve a mission.

Preparing for a bicycle trip

I would like to share with you the following story. Nine years ago this spring, my son Ben came to me and said, "Dad, we are going to hold our family reunion this summer at Flaming Gorge recreation area" (a distance of 220 miles east of Salt Lake City). "Why don't you, myself, and any of the boys in our family that would like to leave a few days early, ride our bikes to Flaming Gorge, and meet the rest of the family there?"

I said, "That sounds great, but we have only one motorcycle!"

Ben said, "No, Dad, you misunderstand. I mean pedal bicycles." I thought he was kidding. He said, "I will outline and prepare a training schedule for us. We'll get up early Saturday mornings and for three hours we'll go out and ride over the courses I will outline, so that when the time comes we will be prepared to go."

I said, "Okay," not really knowing what I was in for. I didn't own a bicycle and knew I would have to use my daughter's old, heavy, ten-speed bicycle with what seemed like bent wheels and a seat that was terribly hard. I also knew that

getting up early on Saturday mornings was not one of my favorite things. But knowing that some of my sons wanted me to go with them, I said, "Okay."

As the time for training and preparation came, I found all kinds of excuses not to go on the training rides. However, one Saturday I rode with them to the top of Parleys Canyon and back. It was hard, but I thought I would be okay. Little did I know!

The time for the trip came. I joined my boys the second day of the trip, as I had meetings the first day. The journey that second day took us from Heber City to Roosevelt (approximately one hundred miles).

As we checked into the motel that evening, I called my wife at home and told her I had never hurt so badly in my life. Every muscle, bone, and fiber in my body hurt from my head to my feet. I implored her, "When you come tomorrow with the rest of the family, please bring all the ointment and lotion you can find."

She said, "Honey, you sound terrible."

I told her, "I look and feel worse than I sound."

The next day I hated to see the dawn come, knowing what it would be like to sit on that hard seat and pedal all day once again to reach our destination — especially the stretch from Vernal to Flaming Gorge, which would include approximately thirty-six-plus miles with grades up to 9 percent and ninety-degree-plus temperatures. Needless to say, for me the whole trip was a very trying and arduous task. But for my sons, who spent a lot of

time waiting at the top of the hills for their slow, unprepared dad, it was exciting, fun, and rewarding.

That evening as we arrived at our destination, I came to an easy, yet profound recognition of how poorly prepared I was for what should have been a great experience with my sons, but was not because I did not take the time to prepare properly. I resolved that night that I would never again be that unprepared. I went home and bought bicycles for myself and my two youngest sons, and started training and preparing so that by the time the next summer came, my sons and I could ride our bikes to Lake Powell, a distance of three hundred miles, which we did. The next year we cycled to St. George, and every year thereafter we rode our bikes to Lake Powell until our mission call to Scotland two years ago.

Preparing for a mission

If it is important to prepare for a bike ride, my young friends, it is much more important for you in this life to prepare to serve as missionaries. Why? Because of the eternal significance of a mission in your life and in the lives of others. We learn of the responsibility we have to preach the gospel when Jesus said: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19). Paul to the Corinthians counseled, "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" (1 Corinthians 9:16).

I plead with you, my young friends, to never be "ashamed of the gospel of Christ" (Romans 1:16). Prepare yourselves and make yourselves worthy to receive a mission call. Live clean, pure lives. Study the scriptures — not just read, but study the scriptures — especially the Book of Mormon, as President Benson has counseled us to do. Be strong enough to live the Word of Wisdom and follow the counsel of your parents and priesthood leaders.

Blessings of missionary service

I know you young men are growing up in a challenging world with all kinds of peer pressure. You may even be struggling with the decision of going on a mission because of your educational and vocational desires, or because of a budding musical or athletic career, or a serious girlfriend you may find hard to leave. I understand, because I have seven sons, as well as a son-in-law, who have had to make similar decisions. Yet each has made that decision to serve.

If you wonder or struggle as to what will be of most worth to you, listen to the direction given by the Lord:

"For many times you have desired of me to know that which would be of the most worth unto you. . . .

"And now, behold, I say unto you, that the thing which will be of the most worth unto you will be to declare repentance unto this people, that you may bring souls unto me, that you may rest with them in the kingdom of my Father" (D&C 15:4, 6).

I promise you young men that if you will commit and prepare to serve a mission, it will be the most rewarding and exciting experience of your lives. Yes, there will be many and varied experiences — yes, even humorous experiences, like the elder who shared with me how he and his companion got on the bus, and as they sat down, in the seat in front of them was a grandfather with a young grandson who was having a temper tantrum. Missionaries being as ingenious as they are, these two elders decided they would see what they could do to quiet the little boy down and help the grandfather.

The boy had a baseball cap on. The elders proceeded to take the cap off his head and made a gesture like they threw it out of the window, but instead they quickly hid it under their seat. They then told the boy, as he felt his head, that if he wished hard enough he could wish it back on his head. The boy looked at his grandpa, wondering what was going on, and as he did the elders quickly put the cap back on his head. The boy immediately felt the cap on his head, took it off,

looked at it again, and then he proceeded to throw it out the window, saying, "Do it again, Grandpa!" I think the elders got off at the next stop.

Blessing others with the gospel

Yes, you may have many humorous experiences on your mission, but those experiences which will be the most joyful and rewarding to you, and which will be with you throughout eternity, will be the times when the Spirit will work through you to touch the lives of others, such as Sister Ciardo from Sardinia, Italy, who joined the Church and came to Scotland on a mission. As Sister Ciardo left for her mission, her mother would hardly speak to her and her father said she would never be welcome back home again. But the faith of this young lady brought forth a miracle.

Approximately a year after Sister Ciardo had been on her mission, she came to see me one day with tears running down her face. She had a letter in hand from her mother. I, too, had tears come to my eyes as I read the letter telling her daughter she had been baptized and that her father was attending church and was going to listen to the discussions.

I think of a Tony Ridden and a Tracy McFall from Scotland who were baptized a couple of years ago, coming from backgrounds that you would never have thought this possible. Yet both stood and spoke just a few months ago at their own missionary farewells with tears in their eyes, expressing love and gratitude for the elders who brought the gospel into their lives.

"The worth of souls is great"

Just how important is a Sister Ciardo, a Tony Ridden, a Tracy McFall, and many others just like them? The Lord gives us the answer to that question:

"Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God;

"For, behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; where-

fore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him. . . .

"Wherefore, you are called to cry repentance unto this people.

"And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!" (D&C 18:10-11, 14-15).

The angels will rejoice over you

O youth of noble birthright, I bear witness to you this night that if you will commit, prepare, and with a willing heart go forth to serve Jesus Christ and preach his gospel, great will be your blessings and reward. Listen to the words of our Savior:

"Ye are blessed, for the testimony which ye have borne is recorded in heaven for the angels to look upon; and they rejoice over you, and your sins are forgiven you" (D&C 62:3).

"Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9).

Stay on the Lord's side and you will find eternal joy and fulfillment. I bear my witness to you that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. This is His church. President Ezra Taft Benson is our living prophet, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have appreciated listening to Elders Robert L. Backman and Benjamin B. Banks of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Israel, Israel, God Is Calling." Following that, Elder Joe J. Christensen, sustained at the April conference as a member of the Seventy, will speak to us.

The choir and congregation sang "Israel, Israel, God Is Calling."

Elder Joe J. Christensen

Good memories are real blessings

Brethren, it's a marvelous privilege to be with you this evening. I've appreciated so much the messages that we have heard.

Someone who was a little more poetic than theological said, "Memory is the one Garden of Eden out of which one need never be cast." Good memories are real blessings. Tonight I would like to share a few memories that have made a real difference in my life.

Memory of a general priesthood session

When I was a young man about the age of some of you deacons here, my dad was bishop of the ward in our little farming town of Banida in southeastern Idaho. I remember the first time he brought me with him to Salt Lake City to attend a general priesthood meeting. In those years, Dad always seemed to me to be really old. As I recognize now, he must have been around thirty-eight years of age. I was happy to be with him.

I remember we sat in the balcony — there on the north side. Before the meeting started, Dad pointed out which one of the Brethren on the stand was President Heber J. Grant and which were his Counselors. I saw the Twelve Apostles and the other Brethren. And that night, a warm feeling of love and respect for the leaders of the Church came over me and has continued to grow to this day.

That night, I decided I wanted to do everything I could to support my dad as bishop. I didn't want to do anything that would embarrass or disappoint him. To this day, I am grateful for those feelings that came to me that night.

Memory of a good friend

None of us knows how long we are going to live. In the Book of Mormon, Alma asked the question, "Can ye look up to God at that day with a pure heart and clean hands?" (Alma 5:19). I remember

when the need to have "clean hands, and a pure heart" (Psalm 24:4) became very meaningful to me.

It was just after my friend David Carlson and I had graduated from Preston High School. We were happy with the fact that it was the same school that Presidents Ezra Taft Benson and Harold B. Lee had attended when they were growing up. Even though they had changed the name from the Oneida Stake Academy to Preston High School, we still had some of our classes in the same building.

We thought that 1946 was the "golden year" of athletics at Preston High. That year our teams won the district championship in every sport, and in basketball our team won the state championship — and that was in the days when the small high schools played against the big ones.

David was a good friend to me and, I think, to everybody in the school. He was a fine student. He worked hard and received excellent grades. He achieved in Scouting and seminary and was a well-coordinated athlete. David was a member of the basketball team, and his playing was one of the reasons our team won the state championship.

Soon after high school graduation, David went to the hospital for what everyone thought was a routine operation, but there were some complications. Infection set in, and the next thing we heard was that he had died. We could not believe it. At age eighteen, David had died. What a shock! I still remember how painful it was to lose a good friend.

His funeral was held in the stake center. Everyone seemed to come. It was like a crowded stake conference with standing room only.

Bishop Eberhard included a statement in his remarks that made a powerful impression on me. He pointed over to the sacrament table and said, "When David knelt to bless the sacrament, I knew that he knelt there with 'clean hands and a pure heart.' I never had to worry about what he had been doing the Saturday night before."

I thought that was one of the finest compliments he could have paid to my friend, and I wanted to live in such a way that my bishop would not have to worry about what I had been doing the night before. I'm sure that all of us could benefit from making a similar decision.

Memory of a determined missionary

Another memory taught me more about the value and importance of fulfilling a mission.

A few years ago, while serving as president of the Missionary Training Center in Provo, Utah, I had a delightful visit with one of the missionaries who came into my office. He was obviously older than the average young elder. He was about twenty-five years of age. He told me of his conversion.

When he was sixteen, he was baptized into the Church in Europe along with his mother. His father did not object to his wife's and son's joining the Church, even though he was not interested. He was a banker and wanted his son to prepare himself for a profession in the same area.

The young man loved studying the scriptures, but occasionally had some difficulty when his father would interrupt him when he was studying his seminary course and say, "Don't waste your time studying those things. Study your regular school courses so that you can be accepted at the university."

The elder said, "One night later on, when I was about eighteen, I had a dream. I dreamed that I had been called on a mission to Japan. I felt so good about it. I really wanted to go. The next day, when I told my parents about my dream, my dad strongly objected. He said, 'Oh, no! Don't waste two years of your life on a mission. You need to get on with your university studies.'"

Since he was too young to leave for a mission at that time anyway, he did go on with his university studies. He chose to come to Brigham Young University. He majored in finance and banking for his undergraduate degree and stayed to

complete a master's degree in business administration.

He was hired by an international banking firm in Germany and was doing very well as a promising junior executive, but the idea of filling a mission would not leave his mind, and so he went to visit with his bishop and stake president. When he told his stake president of the vivid dream he had years before about going on a mission to Japan, his stake president chuckled and said, "Well, I don't think you will be going to Japan. Missionaries from here generally are called to some other country on the continent, and a few go over to the British Isles."

When he received his call and his father heard of it, he came and tried to change his son's mind because he thought that a two-year interruption would be a disaster for his son's professional career. One of the bank executives came down from Frankfurt and tried to discourage him from leaving, saying something like, "My boy, do you know how much this will cost you in salary and opportunity loss? You ought to sit down and figure it out."

The elder said that he did that, and he had determined that the mission would cost him a very large amount of money—more than 150,000 dollars. Then tears came to his eyes, and he said, "But President, if it were to cost several times that amount, I would still be here, because I know that serving a mission is what the Lord wants me to do."

That elder was one of the few I remember who left the Missionary Training Center speaking what Japanese he had learned with a German accent. He was called to Japan. He served a successful mission, and I am confident that when he finished he found many international businesses that would like to hire a junior executive who can speak English, German, and Japanese—the major languages of the economic free world. Even if he didn't earn an extra cent, he still knew that he had done what the Lord wanted him to do.

Through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord revealed the scripture which we have already heard from Elder Banks this evening — “that the thing which will be of the most worth unto you will be to declare repentance unto this people, that you may bring souls unto me” (D&C 15:6; 16:6).

Over the years we have been so impressed by the thousands of missionaries we have seen at the Missionary Training Center, at Ricks College, and elsewhere, who have demonstrated their willingness to serve their missions—and some of them, at great personal sacrifice.

Make more good memories

Brethren, may it be that in our lives generally, and in our priesthood responsibilities specifically, we, like David, my good friend, will set the kind of example so that our bishops will not have to wonder or worry about what we have been doing the Saturday night before.

I am grateful for sons who still come with me to general priesthood sessions. You young brethren who are not with your fathers tonight, for whatever reason, can decide right now that when you are blessed with sons of your own, you will bring them to the general priesthood sessions wherever they may be broadcast.

As I look up into the balcony tonight, I see some of you young men who are seated with your fathers, and I remember—I remember that first time so long ago. Dad passed away four years ago, and especially at general priesthood session time I am reminded more forcefully of how much we miss him. May we strive never to do anything that would embarrass or disappoint our Father in Heaven or our parents, and it will help make more of our memories to be good ones, because good memories constitute the “one Garden of Eden out of which we need never be cast.”

Young brethren, we respect you. We have confidence that you will rise to the best that is in you, and we love you.

Our Heavenly Father lives. He also loves you and even knows you by name. Jesus is the Christ, and this is His church, led by the living prophets who are presiding at this general priesthood session. I share this testimony in the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Joe J. Christensen of the Seventy has just spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to hear President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency.

President Thomas S. Monson

The service that counts

While driving to the office one morning, I passed a dry-cleaning establishment which had a sign by the side of the front door. It read, “It’s the Service That Counts.” I suppose in a highly competitive field such as the dry-cleaning business and many others, the factor which distinguishes one store from another is, in actual fact, service.

The message from the small sign simply would not leave my mind. Suddenly I realized why. In actual fact it *is* the service that counts—the Lord’s service.

All of us admire and respect that noble king of Book of Mormon fame—even King Benjamin. How respected he must have been for the people to gather in such great numbers to hear his words and receive his counsel. I think it most interesting that the multitude “pitched their tents round about the temple, every man having his tent with the door thereof towards the temple, that thereby they might remain in their tents and hear the words which king Benjamin should speak unto them” (Mosiah 2:6). Even a high tower had to be erected that the people might hear his words.

In the true humility of an inspired leader, King Benjamin recounted his desire to serve his people and lead them in paths of righteousness. He then declared to them:

"Because I said unto you that I had spent my days in your service, I do not desire to boast, for I have only been in the service of God.

"And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God" (Mosiah 2:16-17).

This is the service that counts, brethren—the service to which all of us have been called, the service of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As He enlists us to His cause, He invites us to draw close to Him. He speaks to you and to me:

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

"For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

To all who go forth in His service, He provides this assurance: "I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up" (D&C 84:88).

Remember the worth of souls

Many assembled tonight have responsibility to provide leadership to those holding the Aaronic Priesthood. To you I say, The finest teaching you can provide is that of a good example. Youth need fewer critics and more models to follow. All of us who are engaged in the Lord's work have the responsibility to reach out to those who are less active and bring them to the service of the Lord. Their souls are ever so precious.

In a revelation to Joseph Smith the Prophet, Oliver Cowdery, and David Whitmer, the Lord taught:

"Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God;

"For, behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him. . . .

"And how great is his joy in the soul that repenteth!

"Wherefore, you are called to cry repentance unto this people.

"And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!

"And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!" (D&C 18:10-11, 13-16).

Some years ago while I was attending a priesthood leadership session of the Monument Park West Stake conference, this scripture became the theme for the visitor from the Welfare Committee, my former stake president, Paul C. Child. In his accustomed style, Brother Child left the stand and began to walk down the aisle among the assembled priesthood brethren. He quoted the verse, "Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God" (D&C 18:10). Then he asked the question, "Who can tell me the worth of a human soul?"

Every man in attendance began to think of an answer in the event Brother Child were to call on him. I had grown up under his leadership, and I knew he would never call on a high councilor or a member of a bishopric; rather, he would select one who would least expect to be called. Sure enough, he called from a list he carried the name of an elders quorum president. Thunderstruck, the brother stammered as he asked, "Would you repeat the question, please?" The question was repeated, followed by an even longer pause. Suddenly the response came forth, "The worth of a human soul is its capacity to become as God."

Brother Child closed his scripture, walked back to the pulpit, and while passing me whispered, "A profound reply; a profound reply."

With this perspective firmly in our minds, we are prepared to serve in the great mission of bringing souls unto Him.

Learn the joy of service

Many of you hold the Aaronic Priesthood. You are preparing to serve as missionaries. Begin now to learn in your youth the joy of service in the cause of the Master.

Following Thanksgiving time a year or so ago, I received a letter from a widow whom I had known in the stake where I served in the presidency. She had just returned from a dinner sponsored by her bishopric. Her words reflect the peace she felt and the gratitude which filled her heart:

"Dear President Monson,

"I am living in Bountiful now. I miss the people of our old stake, but let me tell you of a wonderful experience I have had. In early November all the widows and older people received an invitation to come to a lovely dinner. We were told not to worry about transportation since this would be provided by the older youth in the ward.

"At the appointed hour a very nice young man rang the bell and took me and another sister to the stake center. He stopped the car, and two other young men walked with us to the chapel where the young ladies took us to where we removed our wraps—then into the cultural hall, where we sat and visited for a few minutes. Then they took us to the tables, where we were seated on each side by either a young woman or a young man. Then we were served a lovely Thanksgiving dinner and afterward provided a choice program.

"After the program we were given our dessert—either apple or pumpkin pie. Then we left, and on the way out we were given a plastic bag with sliced turkey and two rolls. Then the young men took us home. It was such a nice, lovely evening. Most of us shed a tear or two for the love and respect we were shown.

"President Monson, when you see young people treat others like these young

people did, I feel the Church is in good hands."

I reflected on my association with this lovely widow, now grown old but ever serving the Lord. There came to mind the words from the Epistle of James: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

I add my own commendation: God bless the leaders, the young men, and the young women who so unselfishly brought such joy to the lonely and such peace to their souls. Through their experience they learned the meaning of service and felt the nearness of the Lord.

Joseph Millett's experience

One of the great missionaries of pioneer times was Joseph Millett, who served a mission to the Maritime Provinces of Canada when but eighteen years of age. His mission was marked by discouragement, yet punctuated by faith-promoting experiences—even miraculous intervention by the Lord. This lifelong servant of the Lord, who learned on his mission, and never forgot, what it is like to be in need and how to give, leaves us with this final picture of himself, taken from his personal journal and using his own words:

"One of my children came in, said that Brother Newton Hall's folks were out of bread. Had none that day. I put . . . our flour in sack to send up to Brother Hall's. Just then Brother Hall came in. Says I, 'Brother Hall, how are you out for flour.'

"'Brother Millett, we have none.'

"'Well, Brother Hall, there is some in that sack. I have divided and was going to send it to you. Your children told mine that you were out.'

"Brother Hall began to cry. Said he had tried others. Could not get any. Went to the cedars and prayed to the Lord and the Lord told him to go to Joseph Millett.

"'Well, Brother Hall, you needn't bring this back if the Lord sent you for it. You don't owe me for it.'"

His journal continued, "You can't tell how good it made me feel to know that the Lord knew that there was such a person as Joseph Millett" (in Eugene England, "Without Purse or Scrip: A 19-year-old Missionary in 1853," *New Era*, July 1975, p. 28).

The Lord knows and remembers us

Brethren, the Lord knows each of us. Do you think for a moment that He who notes the sparrow's fall would not be mindful of our needs and our service? We simply cannot afford to attribute to the Son of God the same frailties which we find in ourselves.

A while back, my good friend G. Marion Hinckley from Utah County, my fellow trail rider, came to the office with two grandsons who were brothers, one having served an honorable mission in Japan and the other in Scotland. Brother Hinckley said, "Let me share with you a wonderful experience which came to these grandsons of mine." His buttons were almost bursting with pride.

In faraway Japan a commercial street photographer stopped one of the brothers, having taken a picture of him holding a small child. He offered the print for sale to the missionary and his companion. They explained that they were on a tight budget, that they were missionaries, and they directed the photographer's attention to their nameplates. They didn't purchase the picture.

Some months later, the brother serving in Scotland was asking two missionaries why they had arrived late for a zone meeting, when they told this story: A most persistent street photographer had attempted to sell them a picture of a missionary in Japan holding a small child. They had no interest in the picture, but to avoid arriving even later at their zone meeting, they purchased it.

"A likely story," responded Elder Lamb, whereupon they handed him the picture. He could not believe his eyes. It was a photograph of his own brother in faraway Japan.

That day in my office they presented to my view the two pictures, and with

their grandfather beaming his approval they declared, "The Lord surely is mindful of his servants the missionaries."

As they departed my office, I thought, Yes, the Lord is mindful of his missionaries—and their fathers, their mothers, their grandparents, and all who sacrifice for their support that precious souls may be taught and provided His gospel.

Now, many are not on the front line of missionary service in the Church calling them fill. Does God remember them also? Is He mindful of their needs and the yearnings of their hearts? What about those who have been in the limelight but have grown old with faithful service, have been released and have slipped into the anonymity of the vast congregation of Church members? To all such individuals I testify that He does remember and He does bless.

Clifton Rooker's service

Many years ago I was assigned to divide the Modesto California Stake. The Saturday meetings had been held, the new stake presidencies selected, and preparations concluded for the announcements to be made the following morning in the Sunday session of conference.

As the Sunday session was about to begin, there went through my mind the thought that I had been in Modesto before. But when? I let my mind search back through the years for a confirmation of the thought I was thinking. Suddenly I remembered. Modesto, years before, had been a part of the San Joaquin Stake. The stake president was Clifton Rooker. I had stayed in his home during that conference. But that was many years earlier. Could my thoughts be playing tricks on my mind? I said to the stake presidency as they sat on the stand, "Is this the same stake over which Clifton Rooker once presided?"

The brethren answered, "Yes, it is. He was our former president."

"It's been many years since I was last here," I said. "Is Brother Rooker with us today?"

They responded, "Oh, yes. We saw him early this morning as he came to conference."

I asked, "Where is he seated on this day when the stake will be divided?"

"We don't know exactly," they replied. The response was a good one, for the building was filled to capacity.

I stepped to the pulpit and asked, "Is Clifton Rooker in the audience?" There he was—way back in the recreation hall, hardly in view of the pulpit. I felt the inspiration to say to him publicly, "Brother Rooker, we have a place for you on the stand. Would you please come forward?"

With every eye watching him, Clifton Rooker made that long walk from the rear of the building right up to the front and sat by my side. It became my opportunity to call upon him, one of the pioneers of that stake, to bear his testimony and to tell the people whom he loved that he was the actual beneficiary of the service he had rendered his Heavenly Father and which he had provided the stake members.

After the session was concluded, I said, "Brother Rooker, how would you like to step with me into the high council room and help me set apart the two new presidencies of these stakes?"

He replied, "That would be a high-light for me."

We proceeded to the high council room. There, with his hands joining my hands and the hands of the outgoing stake presidency, we set apart to their callings the two new stake presidencies. Brother Rooker and I embraced as he said goodbye and went to his home.

Early the next morning, after I had returned to my home, I had a telephone call from the son of Clifton Rooker. "Brother Monson," he said, "I'd like to tell you about my dad. He passed away this morning; but before he did so, he said that yesterday was the happiest day of his entire life."

As I heard that message from Brother Rooker's son, I paused to thank God for the inspiration which came to me to invite this good man, while he was yet alive, to come forward and receive the

plaudits of the stake members whom he had served.

"Ye have done it unto me"

To all those who serve the Lord by serving their fellowmen, and to those who are the recipients of this selfless service, the Redeemer seems to be speaking to you when He declared:

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

"And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

"And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

"For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

"Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

"Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

"When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

"Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:31-40).

That each of us may qualify for this blessing from our Lord is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has just spoken to us.

President Benson has felt that he would not speak tonight, but we convey

his love and blessing to brethren of the priesthood wherever they might be assembled this evening.

Before giving the closing remarks, I remind you that the CBS Tabernacle Choir broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 tomorrow morning. Those desiring to attend this broadcast and the Sunday morning session, which follows, must be in their seats before 9:15 A.M.

As you leave this meeting tonight, we ask you to obey traffic rules, to use

caution, and to be courteous in driving.

We express our gratitude to the brethren of the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth Chorus for the wonderful music they have given and will give us. They will conclude after I have spoken by singing "The Pilgrim's Chorus." The benediction will then be offered by Elder Spencer J. Condie of the Seventy.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

The released and emeritus brethren of the Seventy

Brethren, this has been a wonderful meeting, in which we have been stirred and uplifted and motivated, and I pray for a continuation of the Spirit of the Lord.

This great semiannual gathering of tens and tens of thousands of boys and men is a religious conference unique and wonderful. I desire to treat two matters this evening.

The first is an expression of appreciation to my brethren of the Seventy who were honorably released from active service this afternoon. Others eventually will be called to take their places. No one here needs to be told that the Church is growing. It is spreading over the world in a remarkable way. Involved in this are many problems of administration. The pace is heavy, and the demands are many. Coincident with this growth, there is an increasing number of men of faith and ability who can serve full-time for a season. As announced some years ago, a program of rotation will be followed among the Brethren of the Seventy. Likewise, age and conditions of health will become factors in the length of service the Brethren are asked to give.

To those who are released or who receive emeritus status, may I express appreciation in behalf of the entire Church. Without exception, you have done a magnificent work. When you were called, you consecrated yourselves to this work. You have gone wherever you have been asked to go and never complained. You

have put in long and wearisome days. You have dealt with very serious problems. You have been absolutely loyal to the Church and its membership. You have served at times at the peril of your own health. You have gone when human wisdom would have dictated that you stay home. You have sacrificed private means in giving your full time to the work.

You have exercised apostolic power in carrying the gospel to the nations of the earth. You have exercised the divine sealing power in the temples of the Lord. You have spoken from scores and scores of pulpits with power and conviction, with great persuasiveness to your listeners, and with deep sincerity welling up from the strong and sure testimonies which you carry in your hearts. Your wives have been a part of all of this. They, too, have made sacrifices. In many instances, they have remained at home while their husbands have been off traveling in the ministry. They have known much of loneliness and even anxiety. To them we express our deep and sincere gratitude. We sincerely thank each of you.

While these brethren are being released from Churchwide service, they still have much to offer. They are men of demonstrated judgment and wisdom. They know the gospel. They know how to speak about it. They know how to teach it. They know how to live it. They are not ready to lie down and die. They have so much of value in them that they can still make tremendous contributions. While some have physical limitations

which would make it inadvisable to call them to certain duties, others are not so limited except by factors of age, which eventually slow us all. You presidents of stakes and bishops of wards should speak with them and find out their desires and be guided thereby.

They have served as General Authorities of the Church, with worldwide jurisdiction. There is due them much of gratitude, much of respect, and much of understanding. Be sensitive to their conditions and circumstances.

They leave the ranks of the active General Authorities with our commendation for work well done, with our love because of the wonderful association we have had with them and their companions, with our respect for the goodness and strength of their lives, with our good wishes for health and strength and a measure of relaxation from the very hectic schedule under which they have been living, and with our prayers that the Lord will bless them and their companions and make sweet their days through the years that lie ahead. It is not easy to retire from any duty to which one has wholly dedicated himself over a long period. The very nature of their work, out among the people who have come to know them and love them, makes even more difficult a sudden cessation from strenuous activity.

God bless you, our dear brethren. Your testimony of the truth of this work is strong and vibrant. We have heard your expressions. Your love for the Lord is real and personal. We know that. Your desire to serve is sincere and commendable. We know because we have worked beside you. Please know that you will continue to be in our prayers and that we shall never forget you, having served with you on the front lines of this great and vital work.

The scourge of illicit drugs

Now, I should like to say a few words on another subject. It is a matter much in the public press these days. It is the widespread use of illegal drugs

with all of the ramifications associated therewith.

I received a letter the other day from a government official who for years has been involved in the fight against illegal drugs. He says: "I know from firsthand knowledge what a scourge illicit narcotics are to this country and others. The drain on the human and monetary resources of the world being caused by this dilemma is inestimable and threatens the very foundations of freedom. I have watched as families dissolved, morals collapsed, and lives were lost, both directly and indirectly due to the effect of drugs."

I am confident this man knows whereof he speaks. He pleads for help, for public support, for Church support against this terrible scourge that is destroying so many. The *Wall Street Journal* a few days ago carried the results of a national poll which indicated that "three out of four Americans have been touched personally by drugs. Half have personally used drugs or have a family member who has. A remarkable 43% say that drugs are the nation's single most important issue."

The article goes on to say: "A surprisingly high 70% of the voters surveyed believe at least half of the crimes committed in their neighborhoods are drug related. Also, 70% of those with children between the ages of 13 and 17 say that drugs are sold in their children's schools."

As most of you are aware, the president of the United States has described the drug problem as the gravest domestic threat facing our nation. He has launched a battle against illicit drugs, with some eight billion dollars to be spent on strengthening police forces, building more prisons, and implementing other measures. Notwithstanding this, "those responding to the poll were deeply skeptical that the battle can be won: Only a third believe a federal program would do a 'great deal' or 'quite a bit' to correct the drug problem."

A woman respondent said, "No amount of money is going to stop it. It has to be a change within the hearts and minds of people. Young people have to think: 'I have just one body, and I'm

going to need it all my life' " (Michael McQueen and David Shribman, "Battle against Drugs Is Chief Issue Facing Nation, Americans Say," *Wall Street Journal*, 22 Sept. 1989, sec. A, pp. 1, 12).

I am inclined to agree with this woman. Stiffer enforcement measures may be necessary. But I believe that, only when far greater numbers of people conclude within their hearts and minds that the fruits of drug-taking are only sorrow and trouble, remorse, and even death, then will things change to any significant degree.

I wish I could say that all of our people, and particularly our young men, are free from this scourge. They are not, although I am pleased to note that drug use has declined among young people in some areas, including Utah.

Many of you young men to whom I am speaking are high school students. We may not be able to change the nation or the world. But we can change the problem in our own lives as individuals and, in that process, move others in the same direction.

Some have even used as an alibi the fact that drugs are not mentioned in the Word of Wisdom. What a miserable excuse. There is likewise no mention of the hazards of diving into an empty swimming pool or of jumping from an overpass onto the freeway. But who doubts the deadly consequences of such? Common sense would dictate against such behavior.

Use of illegal drugs is an affront to God

Regardless of the Word of Wisdom, there is a divinely given reason for avoiding these illegal substances.

I am convinced that their use is an affront to God. He is our Creator. We are made in His image. These remarkable and wonderful bodies are His handiwork. Does anyone think that he can deliberately injure and impair his body without affronting its Creator? We are told again and again that the body is the tabernacle of the spirit. We are told that it is a temple, holy to the Lord. In a time of terrible conflict between the Nephites

and the Lamanites, we are told that the Nephites, who had been strong, became "weak, like unto their brethren, the Lamanites, and that the Spirit of the Lord did no more preserve them; yea, it had withdrawn from them because the Spirit of the Lord doth not dwell in unholy temples" (Helaman 4:24).

Alma taught the people of Zarahemla, The Lord "doth not dwell in unholy temples; neither can filthiness or anything which is unclean be received into the kingdom of God" (Alma 7:21).

Can anyone doubt that the taking of these mind- and body-destroying drugs is an act of unholiness? Does anyone think that the Spirit of God can dwell in the temple of the body when that body is defiled by these destructive elements? If there be a young man anywhere who is listening tonight, who is tampering with these things, let him resolve forthwith, and with the strongest determination of which he is capable, that he will never touch them again.

You hold the priesthood of almighty God, and the revelation is clear that this priesthood cannot be exercised in any degree of unrighteousness. In holding the Aaronic Priesthood, you partake of the keys of "the gospel of repentance." Begin immediately to implement that repentance in your own lives. It may not be easy to stand up to your friends. It may be most difficult to resist the demands of your body for more of this illicit material. Pray for strength. Seek help. God will bless you if you make the effort. And I promise you that you will be grateful for the remainder of your lives for the decision you have made.

I know it is difficult to resist following when your peers are pulling you along with others down into the swamp of narcotics. It takes a man with something of a bit of steel in his spine to say no and then keep his resolution.

Blood on the hands of drug users

We recently deemed it prudent, for reasons of personal safety, to move our American missionaries out of one of the nations of South America. It was not an

easy decision. We have many wonderful and faithful Latter-day Saints there. The people in that area are receptive to the gospel. For the most part, they are good people, law-abiding, and desirous of doing what is right. But the very life of that nation is threatened by powerful men of the drug cartel. There would be no such problem if the people of the United States and other nations refused to become a market for these narcotics. It is a supply-and-demand situation. There is great demand with a ready supply to meet that demand. Everyone who partakes of these illicit drugs has on his hands some of the blood of those who have been killed or wounded in the fight to stop the cultivation and exportation of these destructive products.

Drugs destroy self-worth

You cannot afford to tamper with them in the least. Certainly you must be grateful for your bodies and your minds, the very substance of your mortal lives. Certainly you must know that health is the most precious of assets. Certainly you recognize that, for the years that lie ahead, you will need health of body and clarity of mind if you are to live productively and with the respect of your associates. You would not knowingly break an arm or a leg just for the fun of it. Broken bones will mend and will function again in a normal way. But a mind warped by drugs or a body weakened or distorted by these evil things will not be easily repaired. The drug-induced destruction of self-worth and self-confidence is almost impossible to restore.

Drugs jeopardize posterity

To you who may be partaking, I repeat, stop immediately. To you who at any time in the future may be tempted, I urge you to stand your ground. Reflect on the fact that you are a son of God our Eternal Father, blessed with His holy priesthood and endowed with those faculties of body and mind which will help you to take a place that is significant in the world in which you will live. Do not

throw away your future. Do not jeopardize the well-being of your posterity.

I watched on television the other evening a documentary on what are called cocaine babies. I have seen few things more pitiable. These children, born of addicted mothers, come into the world under a terrible handicap. Their future prospects are hopeless. Many of them doubtless throughout their lives will be cared for at public expense. You will bear this burden as taxpayers. That, of course, is serious. But more serious is the manner in which the gift of life has been so wickedly abused by parents who had not the will to resist the drugs that have all but destroyed their children.

A clear defense against the plague

In earlier centuries there were plagues that swept across England and the nations of Europe. They struck like lightning, carrying tens of thousands to their death.

This modern drug scourge has become as a plague on the world. But in most cases, the death it brings is not swift, but rather, it follows a long period spent in misery and pain and regret. Unlike the plagues of old, from which there was no known defense, the defense is clear and relatively easy in the case of illicit drugs. It lies in simply refraining from touching them.

Stand free from personal holocaust

As I look at you young men in the Tabernacle tonight, I recognize that, in as brief a period as ten years from now, the youngest of you will be twenty-two. Hopefully you will have completed honorable missions. You priests who are here tonight will for the most part have completed your educational programs and will be employed in the vocations of your choice. Ten years pass so quickly. They are almost as sunrise and sunset. Do not blight your future. Do not impair your capacity. Do not offend God, in whose image you were created.

Although I recognize that drugs are not mentioned specifically in the Word of

Wisdom, I am confident that the promise attached to that revelation will apply also to those who refrain from these evil and vicious destroyers. I repeat, therefore, these marvelous words of the Lord:

"And all saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones;

"And shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures;

"And shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint.

"And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall

pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them" (D&C 89:18-21).

Let no member of this church, be he man or boy, girl or woman, fall prey to this frightful scourge. Some things are right; some are wrong. You know this as well as do I. God grant you the strength to stand free from this enslavement and from the personal holocaust of destruction which inevitably follows.

God bless you to this end I humbly pray, as one who loves you, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "The Pilgrim's Chorus."

Elder Spencer J. Condie offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY MORNING SESSION

The fourth session of the 159th Semiannual General Conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, October 1, 1989. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music, with Jerold Ottley conducting and Robert Cundick at the organ.

Before the session, the choir sang "Jehovah, Lord of Heaven and Earth" without announcement.

President Monson opened the meeting with the following remarks:

President Thomas S. Monson

We welcome you this Sabbath morning from the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, Utah, to the fourth general session of the 159th Semiannual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Our beloved prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this and all sessions of the conference, has

asked that I, Brother Monson, conduct this meeting.

We acknowledge the large audience assembled in the Tabernacle and in the overflow gathering in the nearby Assembly Hall, where Elders Marvin J. Ashton, Loren C. Dunn, and Merlin R. Lybbert are seated on the stand. We extend our greetings to those of you participating by radio, television, cable, or satellite transmission. We are grateful to the owners and operators of the stations that are broadcasting this conference.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders, and officers and members of the Church from many lands who have assembled to worship and to counsel together.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Brother Jerold D. Ottley, with Brother Robert Cundick at the organ, opened these services by singing "Jehovah, Lord of Heaven and Earth." The choir will now sing "Lord, I Would Follow Thee," following which Elder Derek A. Cuthbert of the Seventy will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "Lord, I Would Follow Thee."

Elder Derek A. Cuthbert offered the invocation.

President Monson

President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, will be our first speaker this morning.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

"An ensign to the nations"

My brothers and sisters, I very much appreciate Brother Cuthbert's prayer. It is always an awesome responsibility to speak in this historic Tabernacle. I seek the direction of the Holy Spirit.

For a moment, may I take you back 142 years when there was, of course, no tabernacle here, nor temple, nor Temple Square. On July 24, 1847, the pioneer company of our people came into this valley. An advance group had arrived a day or two earlier. Brigham Young arrived on Saturday. The next day, Sabbath services were held both in the morning and in the afternoon. There was no hall of any kind in which to meet. I suppose that in the blistering heat of that July Sunday they sat on the tongues of their wagons and leaned against the wheels while the Brethren spoke. The season was late, and they were faced with a gargantuan and immediate task if they were to grow seed for the next season. But President Young pleaded with them not to violate the Sabbath then or in the future.

The next morning they divided into groups to explore their surroundings. Brigham Young, Wilford Woodruff, and a handful of their associates hiked from their campground a little to the south of us, on past the ground where we are, and up the hill to the north of us. They climbed a dome-shaped peak, President Young having difficulty because of his recent illness.

When the Brethren stood on the summit, they looked over this valley to the south of them. It was largely barren, except for the willows and rushes that grew along the streams that carried water

from the mountains to the lake. There was no building of any kind, but Brigham Young had said the previous Saturday, "This is the place."

The summit where they stood was named Ensign Peak out of reference to these great prophetic words of Isaiah:

"And he [speaking of God] will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth: and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly" (Isaiah 5:26).

"And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth" (Isaiah 11:12).

There is some evidence to indicate that Wilford Woodruff took from his pocket a bandanna handkerchief and waved it as an ensign or a standard to the nations, that from this place should go the word of the Lord, and to this place should come the people of the earth.

I think they may also on that occasion have spoken of the building of the temple, which today stands a few feet east of here, in fulfillment of the words of Isaiah:

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

"And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:2-3).

A vision drawn from the scriptures

How foolish, someone might have said had he heard these men that July morning of 1847. They did not look like statesmen with great dreams. They did not look like rulers poring over maps and planning an empire. They were exiles, driven from their fair city on the Mississippi into this desert region of the West. But they were possessed of a vision drawn from the scriptures and words of revelation.

I marvel at the foresight of that little group. It was both audacious and bold. It was almost unbelievable. Here they were, almost a thousand miles from the nearest settlement to the east and almost eight hundred miles from the Pacific Coast. They were in an untried climate. The soil was different from that of the black loam of Illinois and Iowa, where they had most recently lived. They had never raised a crop here. They had never experienced a winter. They had not built a structure of any kind. These prophets, dressed in old, travel-worn clothes, standing in boots they had worn for more than a thousand miles from Nauvoo to this valley, spoke of a millennial vision. They spoke out of a prophetic view of the marvelous destiny of this cause. They came down from the peak that day and went to work to bring reality to their dream.

Seeing the grand picture

Sometimes in our day, as we walk our narrow paths and fill our little niches of responsibility, we lose sight of the grand picture. When I was a small boy, draft horses were common. An important part of the harness was the bridle. On the bridle were blinders, one on each side. They were so placed that the horse could see only straight ahead and not to either side. They were designed to keep him from becoming frightened or distracted and to keep his attention on the road at his feet.

Some of us do our work as if we had blinders on our eyes. We only see our own little narrow track. We catch nothing of the broader vision. Ours may be a

small responsibility in the Church. It is good to fulfill that responsibility with diligence. And it is also good to know how that responsibility contributes to the great overall program of the growing kingdom of God.

The cumulative power of small acts

President Harold B. Lee once said from this pulpit, quoting an unknown writer, "Survey large fields and cultivate small ones."

My interpretation of that statement is that we ought to recognize something of the breadth and depth and height—grand and wonderful, large and all-encompassing—of the program of the Lord, and then work with diligence to meet our responsibility for our assigned portion of that program.

Each of us has a small field to cultivate. While so doing, we must never lose sight of the greater picture, the large composite of the divine destiny of this work. It was given us by God our Eternal Father, and each of us has a part to play in the weaving of its magnificent tapestry. Our individual contribution may be small, but it is not unimportant. When we were children we learned a nursery rhyme:

Little drops of water,
Little grains of sand
Make the mighty ocean,
And the pleasant land.

So it is with us in our service in the kingdom of God. Many small efforts and little acts become the cumulative pattern of a great worldwide organization.

On March 26, 1907, the First Presidency issued a proclamation to the world in response to hateful criticism charging the Church and its leaders with selfish interests and narrow bigotry. The First Presidency responded: "Our motives are not selfish; our purposes not petty and earth-bound; we contemplate the human race—past, present, and yet to come—as immortal beings, for whose salvation it is our mission to labor; and to this work, broad as eternity and deep as the love of God, we devote ourselves, now, and

forever" (*Improvement Era*, May 1907, p. 495).

We serve as teachers in quorums and auxiliary organizations; we serve as missionaries at home and abroad; we serve as researchers in family history and as temple workers—hopefully each with diligence in our little corner. And from all of this there emerges a remarkable and wonderful pattern, a phenomenon grand in its comprehensiveness, as broad as the earth and encompassing all of the generations of men.

If each of us does not do well that which is his or hers to do, then there is a flaw in the entire pattern. The whole tapestry is injured. But if each of us does well his or her part, then there is strength and beauty.

Progress in building the kingdom

I need not remind you that this cause in which we are engaged is not an ordinary cause. It is the cause of Christ. It is the kingdom of God our Eternal Father. It is the building of Zion on the earth, the fulfillment of prophecy given of old and of a vision revealed in this dispensation.

Under its present organization it has been moving forward for only a little more than a century and a half. It will continue, ever growing and spreading over the earth, as part of a great millennial pattern until the time comes when He whose right it is to reign will rule as King of kings and Lord of lords.

When President Young and his brethren stood atop the peak to the north of us and spoke of an ensign to the nations, they soon put in place a program to implement it, and this notwithstanding the circumstances in which they found themselves. In August of 1852, only five years later, a special conference was held in the old tabernacle on this square. President Heber C. Kimball opened by saying:

"We have come together today, according to previous appointment, to hold a special conference to transact business, a month earlier than usual, inasmuch as there are elders to be selected to go to the

missions of the earth, and they want an earlier start than formerly. . . .

"The missions we will call for during this conference are, generally, not to be very long ones; probably from three to seven years will be as long as any man will be absent from his family."

The clerk then read ninety-eight names of individuals who had been proposed for foreign missions. (*Joseph I. Earl Family History*, p. 1.)

To me it is a thing of wonder that at a time when our people were struggling to gain a foothold in these mountains, they put the spread of the gospel ahead of comfort, security, the well-being of their families, and all other considerations. Across the broad prairie between the mountains of the West and the Missouri and Mississippi rivers there were two bodies of Latter-day Saints moving in opposite directions. Missionaries traveling to the eastern states and Europe passed converts gathering from those lands to the Zion of the West. There was likewise a movement to the West Coast and across the Pacific, with elders going to Hawaii, even to Hong Kong, China, Siam, Ceylon, and India. This was all part of this grand vision of an ensign to the nations. It has gone on ever since, and it goes on today at an accelerated pace. In a hundred nations missionaries of the Church are teaching the doctrines of salvation.

They are building the kingdom across the world. They are touching for everlasting good the lives of all with whom they work, and generations who come after them will be affected by what they do today. They are fulfilling the declarations of ancient prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord concerning the "marvellous work and a wonder" that should come to pass in the dispensation of the fulness of times (Isaiah 29:14).

The ensign of Temple Square

I think of this beautiful Temple Square, where we are meeting. I think of the travail that lies behind its creation.

Last year some 3½ million visitors came here. They came from all states of

the United States and all provinces of Canada. They came from other nations around the globe.

Their freely written comments remind us of the words of Isaiah, written of old, that in the latter days people from the nations will come to learn of the ways of God and to walk in His paths. Listen to a sampling of these comments:

From a Protestant from New Jersey: "I have often heard the word *Mormon* and associated it with a fanatic religious group. I couldn't have been more wrong!"

From a Congregationalist from Massachusetts: "I have always felt that religion should be a joy, and you certainly show it!"

From a Christian from Maine: "This is beautiful; it is the first time in my life I have wondered if my religion is the right one."

From a Catholic from Pennsylvania: "I envy your way of life."

A Presbyterian from Canada: "God is in this place; we see him everywhere."

A Christian from Germany: "I enjoyed myself very much here. I cannot believe such a place exists that offers so much and asks for no money."

And so they go, on and on by the thousands. Many come with doubts and bias. They leave with appreciation and curiosity. The great work that is being done here is all a part of the fabric of this tremendous cause we describe as the kingdom of God in the earth.

The breadth of temple work

And then I think of the work that goes on in this temple and in the other temples of the Church.

We are sometimes looked upon as provincial. Is there any group in all the world with a vision so broad and a work so comprehensive? I know of no other people so concerned with the eternal well-being of the sons and daughters of God of all generations. Surely the work that goes on in these sacred houses is the most unselfish of all work. Those who labor here do so, for the most part, in behalf of those beyond the veil of death. They do it

because of a knowledge of the importance of eternal ordinances and covenants. They do it so that even the dead may exercise agency concerning the acceptance or rejection of sacred ordinances.

It is all part of the great pattern of the God of Heaven, who is our Eternal Father, and of His Son, who is our Savior and our Redeemer, the author of our salvation, through whose sacrifice came universal resurrection from the dead and opportunity for exaltation for those who, whether in life or in death, will walk in obedience to His commandments.

A compelling responsibility

My brethren and sisters, the priesthood is upon the earth, the power of God given to men to act in His name and for His purposes. It carries with it "the keys of the kingdom, for an ensign, and for the gathering³ of the people of the Lord in the last days (D&C 113:6).

My co-workers in this great cause and kingdom, you and I are weaving the grand design of that standard to the nations. It waves to all the world. It says to men and women everywhere, "Come, walk with us and learn of the ways of the Lord. Here is the priesthood given to men in these last days. Here are the great keys for the redemption of the dead. Here is the authority to carry the gospel to the nations of the earth."

We do not say it selfishly. We do not say it with egotism. We do not say it boastfully. We say it as those charged with a great and compelling responsibility. We say it with love in our hearts for the God of heaven and the risen Lord, and with love for the children of men everywhere.

Contribute to the grand vision

To those of the Church, all within the sound of my voice, I give the challenge that while you are performing the part to which you have been called, never lose sight of the whole majestic and wonderful picture of the purpose of this, the dispensation of the fulness of times. Weave beautifully your small thread in

the grand tapestry, the pattern for which was laid out for us by the God of heaven. Hold high the standard under which we walk. Be diligent, be true, be virtuous, be faithful, that there may be no flaw in that banner.

The vision of this kingdom is not a superficial dream in the night that fades with the sunrise. It is veritably the plan and work of God our Eternal Father. It has to do with all of His children.

While grubbing the sagebrush of these western valleys to lay the foundations for a commonwealth, while doing all of the many mundane things they were required to do to stay alive and grow, our forebears ever kept before them the grandeur of the great cause in which they were engaged. It is a work which we must do with the same vision they held. It is a work which will go on after we have left this scene. God help us to do our very

best as servants, called under His divine will, to carry forward and build the kingdom with imperfect hands, united together to execute a perfect pattern. I so pray, as I bear witness of these things, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "I Sing the Greatness of Our God" without announcement.

President Monson

President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has addressed us, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "I Sing the Greatness of Our God."

Elder David B. Haight, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now speak to us.

Elder David B. Haight

Grateful that life was spared

I pray for your faith and prayers that my utterances will be received and understood "by the Spirit of truth" and that my expressions will be given "by the Spirit of truth" so that we might all be "edified and rejoice together" (D&C 50:21-22).

As I stand here today—a well man—words of gratitude and acknowledgment of divine intervention are so very inadequate in expressing the feelings in my soul.

Six months ago at the April general conference, I was excused from speaking as I was convalescing from a serious operation. My life has been spared, and I now have the pleasant opportunity of acknowledging the blessings, comfort, and ready aid of my Brethren in the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve, and other wonderful associates and friends to whom I owe so much and who surrounded my dear wife, Ruby, and my family with their time, attention, and prayers. For the inspired doctors and thoughtful nurses I express my deepest gratitude, and for the thoughtful letters

and messages of faith and hope received from many places in the world, many expressing, "You have been in our prayers" or "We have been asking our Heavenly Father to spare your life." Your prayers and mine, thankfully, have been answered.

One unusual card caused me to ponder upon the majesty of it all. It is an original painting by Arta Romney Ballif of the heavens at night with its myriad golden stars. Her caption, taken from Psalms, reads:

"Praise ye the Lord: . . .

"He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.

"He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names.

" . . . His understanding is infinite" (Psalm 147:1, 3-5).

The goodness and majesty of God

As I lay in the hospital bed, I meditated on all that had happened to me and studied the contemplative painting by President Marion G. Romney's sister and

the lines from Psalms: "He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names." I was then — and continue to be — awed by the goodness and majesty of the Creator, who knows not only the names of the stars but knows your name and my name — each of us as His sons and daughters.

The psalmist David wrote:

"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? . . .

"For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour" (Psalm 8:3-5).

To be remembered is a wonderful thing.

The crisis, the peace, and the testimony

The evening of my health crisis, I knew something very serious had happened to me. Events happened so swiftly — the pain striking with such intensity, my dear Ruby phoning the doctor and our family, and I on my knees leaning over the bathtub for support and some comfort and hoped relief from the pain. I was pleading to my Heavenly Father to spare my life a while longer to give me a little more time to do His work, if it was His will.

While still praying, I began to lose consciousness. The siren of the paramedic truck was the last that I remembered before unconsciousness overtook me, which would last for the next several days.

The terrible pain and commotion of people ceased. I was now in a calm, peaceful setting; all was serene and quiet. I was conscious of two persons in the distance on a hillside, one standing on a higher level than the other. Detailed features were not discernible. The person on the higher level was pointing to something I could not see.

I heard no voices but was conscious of being in a holy presence and atmosphere. During the hours and days that

followed, there was impressed again and again upon my mind the eternal mission and exalted position of the Son of Man. I witness to you that He is Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, Savior to all, Redeemer of all mankind, Bestower of infinite love, mercy, and forgiveness, the Light and Life of the world. I knew this truth before — I had never doubted nor wondered. But now I knew, because of the impressions of the Spirit upon my heart and soul, these divine truths in a most unusual way.

Visions of Jesus' earthly ministry

I was shown a panoramic view of His earthly ministry: His baptism, His teaching, His healing the sick and lame, the mock trial, His crucifixion, His resurrection and ascension. There followed scenes of His earthly ministry to my mind in impressive detail, confirming scriptural eyewitness accounts. I was being taught, and the eyes of my understanding were opened by the Holy Spirit of God so as to behold many things.

The first scene was of the Savior and His Apostles in the upper chamber on the eve of His betrayal. Following the Passover supper, He instructed and prepared the sacrament of the Lord's Supper for His dearest friends as a remembrance of His coming sacrifice. It was so impressively portrayed to me — the overwhelming love of the Savior for each. I witnessed His thoughtful concern for significant details — the washing of the dusty feet of each Apostle, His breaking and blessing of the loaf of dark bread and blessing of the wine, then His dreadful disclosure that one would betray Him.

He explained Judas's departure and told the others of the events soon to take place.

Then followed the Savior's solemn discourse when He said to the Eleven: "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

Our Savior prayed to His Father and acknowledged the Father as the source

of His authority and power—even to the extending of eternal life to all who are worthy.

He prayed, “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”

Jesus then reverently added:

“I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

“And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (John 17:3–5).

He pled not only for the disciples called out from the world who had been true to their testimony of Him, “but for them also which shall believe on me through their word” (John 17:20).

When they had sung a hymn, Jesus and the Eleven went out to the Mount of Olives. There, in the garden, in some manner beyond our comprehension, the Savior took upon Himself the burden of the sins of mankind from Adam to the end of the world. His agony in the garden, Luke tells us, was so intense that “his sweat was as . . . great drops of blood falling . . . to the ground” (Luke 22:44). He suffered an agony and a burden the like of which no human person would be able to bear. In that hour of anguish our Savior overcame all the power of Satan.

The glorified Lord revealed to Joseph Smith this admonition to all mankind:

“Therefore I command you to repent. . . .

“For . . . I, God, . . . suffered . . . for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent; . . .

“Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore. . . .

“Wherefore, I command you again to repent, lest I humble you with my almighty power; and that you confess your sins, lest you suffer these punishments” (D&C 19:15–16, 18, 20).

Testimony of the Atonement

During those days of unconsciousness I was given, by the gift and power of the Holy Ghost, a more perfect knowledge of His mission. I was also given a more complete understanding of what it means to exercise, in His name, the authority to unlock the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven for the salvation of all who are faithful. My soul was taught over and over again the events of the betrayal, the mock trial, the scourging of the flesh of even one of the Godhead. I witnessed His struggling up the hill in His weakened condition carrying the cross and His being stretched upon it as it lay on the ground, that the crude spikes could be driven with a mallet into His hands and wrists and feet to secure His body as it hung on the cross for public display.

Crucifixion—the horrible and painful death which He suffered—was chosen from the beginning. By that excruciating death, He descended below all things, as is recorded, that through His resurrection He would ascend above all things (see D&C 88:6).

Jesus Christ died in the literal sense in which we will all die. His body lay in the tomb. The immortal spirit of Jesus, chosen as the Savior of mankind, went to those myriads of spirits who had departed mortal life with varying degrees of righteousness to God’s laws. He taught them the “glorious tidings of redemption from the bondage of death, and of possible salvation, . . . [which was] part of [our] Savior’s foreappointed and unique service to the human family” (James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ* [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1916], p. 671).

I cannot begin to convey to you the deep impact that these scenes have confirmed upon my soul. I sense their eternal meaning and realize that “nothing in the entire plan of salvation compares in any way in importance with that most transcendent of all events, the atoning sacrifice of our Lord. It is the most important single thing that has ever occurred in the entire history of created things; it is the

rock foundation upon which the gospel and all other things rest," as has been declared (Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966], p. 60).

Father Lehi taught his son Jacob and us today:

"Wherefore, redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah; for he is full of grace and truth.

"Behold, he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit; and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered.

"Wherefore, how great the importance to make these things known unto the inhabitants of the earth, that they may know that there is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah, who layeth down his life according to the flesh, and taketh it again by the power of the Spirit, that he may bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, being the first that should rise.

"Wherefore, he is the firstfruits unto God, inasmuch as he shall make intercession for all the children of men; and they that believe in him shall be saved" (2 Nephi 2:6-9).

Importance of the sacrament

Our most valuable worship experience in the sacrament meeting is the sacred ordinance of the sacrament, for it provides the opportunity to focus our minds and hearts upon the Savior and His sacrifice.

The Apostle Paul warned the early Saints against eating this bread and drinking this cup of the Lord unworthily (see 1 Corinthians 11:27-30).

Our Savior Himself instructed the Nephites, "Whoso eateth and drinketh my flesh and blood unworthily [brings] damnation to his soul" (3 Nephi 18:29).

Worthy partakers of the sacrament are in harmony with the Lord and put themselves under covenant with Him to always remember His sacrifice for the sins of the world, to take upon them the name of Christ and to always remember

Him, and to keep His commandments. The Savior covenants that we who do so shall have His spirit to be with us and that, if faithful to the end, we may inherit eternal life.

Our Lord revealed to Joseph Smith that "there is no gift greater than the gift of salvation," which plan includes the ordinance of the sacrament as a continuous reminder of the Savior's atoning sacrifice. He gave instructions that "it is expedient that the church meet together often to partake of bread and wine in the remembrance of the Lord Jesus" (D&C 6:13; 20:75).

Immortality comes to us all as a free gift by the grace of God alone, without works of righteousness. Eternal life, however, is the reward for obedience to the laws and ordinances of His gospel.

I testify to all of you that our Heavenly Father does answer our righteous pleadings. The added knowledge which has come to me has made a great impact upon my life. The gift of the Holy Ghost is a priceless possession and opens the door to our ongoing knowledge of God and eternal joy. Of this I bear witness, in the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring" without announcement.

President Monson

We have just heard from Elder David B. Haight, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles and a living miracle himself and the beneficiary of our Heavenly Father's blessings, followed by the choir singing "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring."

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Oh Say, What Is Truth?" following which we shall hear from Elder Dean L. Larsen, a member of the Presidency of the Quorums of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation sang "Oh Say, What Is Truth?"

Elder Dean L. Larsen

Since the announcement yesterday of the change of status of some of the members of the Seventies quorums, I have been trying to think of words that might appropriately pay tribute to these good men. I've concluded that words are inadequate and that in reality their real tribute will be found in the lives of people throughout the earth who have been touched by their influence, which influence will continue for generations to come. We love these men with a love that will not be diminished, even though our contact with some of them will not be as frequent as in the past. We acknowledge that they have pioneered many of the aspects of the Church in many parts of the world. And now they are pioneering a new course that some of the rest of us will soon follow. They go with our love, our prayers, our deep respect and admiration, and our eternal gratitude.

Our physical clocks

On the wall of the kitchen in our home hangs a clock. It's a windup clock. That is, it is necessary every seven or eight days to wind up the mechanism with a key. If this is not done at regular intervals, the clock eventually begins to lose time; its chimes become sluggish and off-tone. Finally it stops until it is re-wound again.

Sometimes when I am rewinding this clock, I think how good it would be if I could restore my physical powers to their youthful vigor in a manner as simple as this. I suppose increasing age sometimes brings these thoughts to all who move into the later years of life.

In some ways, and to some degree, I can effect a partial rejuvenation through exercise, rest, and proper nourishment. I realize, however, that my physical clock is gradually winding down. The mechanism becomes increasingly sluggish. The chimes are less vibrant and sometimes a little out-of-pitch. One day the clock will

stop altogether, in spite of all my desire and effort to keep it going.

So it is with the physical clock in each one of us. It is part of the Lord's plan. Our time here is but one phase of an eternal existence. As our physical clock winds down, we have the assurance of new beginnings and even greater possibilities as other phases open to us.

Our spiritual clocks

As I think of these sobering realities, there comes to mind another figurative clock that operates within me. It is my spiritual clock. It has some similarities to the physical one. It, too, needs regular winding to stay in time and keep its true tone. Unlike the physical clock, however, the spiritual one is not necessarily destined for dissolution. In fact, with proper attention and regular care it grows more vigorous—more perfect in its operation, more clear and resonant in its tones. But this is not an automatic process. Just as with the clock that hangs on our kitchen wall, unless there is a regular winding up of the mechanism, a spiritual sluggishness develops, the spiritual tone becomes off-key, and unless something is done to correct the winding-down process, the clock can stop.

In the world's environment today, spiritual clocks that do not receive regular attention can wind down very quickly.

Just forty years ago, in the October conference of 1949, Elder Albert E. Bowen, a member of the Council of Twelve, spoke these words:

"Men are mortal and beset by human frailties. They are enticed by the pressures of immediate . . . desire to depart from the high standards of the perfect law. When they are under the influence of an exalted occasion, they make high resolves. They firmly determine to avoid past mistakes and to do better. But gone out from under the spell of that influence and absorbed in the complicated pursuits of life, they find difficulty in holding fast

to their noble purposes. . . . So it is essential that they come again, and frequently, under the influence which kindles anew the warmth of spirit in which good resolutions are begotten, that they may go out fortified to withstand the pressures of temptation which lure them into false ways. Happily, if they refresh themselves frequently enough under ennobling influences, the spirit of repentance will be at work with them, and they will make conquest of some temptations—rise above them—and advance thus far toward their final goal” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1949, p. 139).

All of us require the “ennobling influences” about which Elder Bowen spoke to “wind up” our spiritual clocks. Just as exercise, proper nourishment, and rest are essential to our physical well-being, so are such things as regular prayer, scripture study, Sabbath worship, partaking of the sacrament, and service to others necessary for our spiritual vigor. Without these continuing influences in our lives, our spiritual clocks wind down.

Prayer

Nephi said: “If ye would hearken unto the Spirit which teacheth a man to pray ye would know that ye must pray; for the evil spirit teacheth not a man to pray, but teacheth him that he must not pray. But behold, I say unto you that ye must pray always, and not faint” (2 Nephi 32:8–9).

Amulek understood the importance of prayer as a spiritually rejuvenating influence. “Humble yourselves,” he said to the Zoramites, “and continue in prayer. . . . Ye must pour out your souls in your closets, and your secret places, and in your wilderness” (Alma 34:19, 26).

Amulek counseled the people to pray over their flocks, their households, and their fields (see Alma 34:20–21). “Yea,” he said, “and when you do not cry unto the Lord, let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually for your welfare, and also for the welfare of those who are around you” (Alma 34:27).

Earnest, sincere prayer is an essential ingredient in maintaining spiritual tone.

Scripture study

No leader of the Church in this dispensation has given greater emphasis to the study of the scriptures than has President Ezra Taft Benson. His inspired counsel to the members of the Church, and to all people, has led many to draw close to the scriptures, particularly the Book of Mormon. The testimonies that can be borne to the value of scripture study are numerous. There is a special power in the scriptures. Scripture study, combined with daily, purposeful prayer, can provide much of the resolution that is necessary today to offset the influences so prevalent in the world that lead us into forbidden ways.

Alma likened the word of God to a seed. “We will compare the word unto a seed,” he said. “Now, if ye give place, that a seed may be planted in your heart, behold, if it be a true seed, or a good seed, if ye do not cast it out by your unbelief, that ye will resist the Spirit of the Lord, behold, it will begin to swell within your breasts; and when you feel these swelling motions, ye will begin to say within yourselves—It must needs be that this is a good seed, or that the word is good, for it beginneth to enlarge my soul; yea, it beginneth to enlighten my understanding, yea, it beginneth to be delicious to me” (Alma 32:28).

I can testify that Alma’s analogy is a valid one. One who regularly turns to the word of God for spiritual strength and enlightenment will find it good—delicious to the spiritual taste.

Alma promises that the seed that is planted by studying and applying the word of God will grow to the stature of a tree. But he warns those that begin to slacken in this effort:

“If ye neglect the tree, and take no thought for its nourishment, behold it will not get any root. . . .

“Now, this is not because the seed was not good, neither is it because the fruit thereof would not be desirable; but it is because your ground is barren, and ye will not nourish the tree. . . .

“But if ye will nourish the word, yea, nourish the tree as it beginneth to

grow, . . . it shall take root; and behold it shall be a tree springing up unto everlasting life" (Alma 32:38-39, 41).

Sabbath worship and partaking of the sacrament

One of the most effective ways to wind up our spiritual clocks is to worship on the Sabbath day and partake of the sacrament.

"That thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day" (D&C 59:9). These are the Lord's instructions to us. He knows that our spiritual clocks wind down quickly without this regular experience.

There is something essential about joining together with other believers to worship, to sing, to pray, to learn of God's will for us, and to acknowledge his goodness to us. He has commanded that this should be so.

It may be well to emphasize also that our church buildings are not the only places where we can worship. Our homes should also be places of devotion. It would be well if each day we could "go home to church." There should be no other place where the Spirit of the Lord is more welcome and more easily accessible than in our own homes.

Service

A final comment about service to others and its influence in winding up our spiritual clocks: anyone who has unselfishly given of himself in service to another can testify of the lift that comes

to the giver. We need this reinforcement to our spiritual well-being. When we cast our bread upon the water in this sense, it inevitably comes back to us in even greater abundance.

President Spencer W. Kimball once said: "I have learned that it is by serving that we learn how to serve. When we are engaged in the service of our fellowmen, not only do our deeds assist them, but we put our own problems in a fresher perspective. When we concern ourselves more with others, there is less time to be concerned with ourselves. In the midst of the miracle of serving, there is the promise of Jesus, that by losing ourselves, we find ourselves." President Kimball added, "There is great security in spirituality, and we cannot have spirituality without service!" ("Small Acts of Service," *Ensign*, Dec. 1974, pp. 2, 5).

In this, as is true with all of the other virtues, the Master is the perfect example. He is our Lord, our Savior, and our Redeemer and the perfect example in all things.

I testify to you that these things are true. May those "ennobling influences" about which Elder Bowen spoke come regularly enough into our own lives that our spiritual clocks will continue to run strong and true is my earnest prayer. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Dean L. Larsen, a member of the Presidency of the Quorums of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks

Faithful pioneers of the last wagon

The days of the pioneers are not past. There are modern pioneers whose achievements are an inspiration to all of us.

In a message about the pioneers who crossed the plains over a century ago,

President J. Reuben Clark spoke words that apply to pioneers in every age. In his description of "Them of the Last Wagon," President Clark paid tribute to the rank and file, "those great souls, . . . in name unknown, unremembered, unhonored in

the pages of history, but lovingly revered round the hearthstones of their children and their children's children" (*J. Reuben Clark: Selected Papers on Religion, Education, and Youth*, ed. David H. Yarn, Jr. [Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1984], pp. 67-68; see also *Improvement Era*, Nov. 1947, pp. 704-5, 747-48).

In every great cause there are leaders and followers. In the wagon trains, the leaders were "out in front where the air was clear and clean and where they had unbroken vision of the blue vault of heaven" (*Clark*, p. 69). But, as President Clark observed, "Back in the last wagon, not always could they see the brethren way out in front and the blue heaven was often shut out from their sight by heavy, dense clouds of the dust of the earth. Yet day after day, they of the last wagon pressed forward, worn and tired, foot-sore, sometimes almost disheartened, borne up by their faith that God loved them, that the Restored Gospel was true, and that the Lord led and directed the brethren out in front" (*Clark*, p. 69).

The purposes of God were accomplished by the unswerving loyalty and backbreaking work of the faithful tens of thousands who pushed on, as President Clark said, "with little praise, with not too much encouragement, and never with adulation" (*Clark*, pp. 69-70).

"And thousands upon thousands of these . . . measured to their humble calling and to their destiny as fully as Brother Brigham and the others measured to theirs, and God will so reward them. They were pioneers in word and thought and act and faith, even as were they of more exalted station. . . . God keep their memories ever fresh among us . . . to help us meet our duties even as they met theirs" (*Clark*, pp. 73-74).

Modern pioneers

President Clark's words of tribute also apply to the membership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in our day. In every nation, in every worthy occupation and activity, members of this church face hardships, overcome obstacles, and follow the ser-

vants of the Lord Jesus Christ as valiantly as the pioneers of any age. They pay their tithes and offerings. They serve as missionaries or as Church Service volunteers, or they support others who do so. Like the noble young mothers who postpone the pursuit of their personal goals in order to provide the needs of their children, they sacrifice immediate pleasures to keep commitments that are eternal. They accept callings and, in the service of others, they willingly give their time and sometimes their lives.

They do as the Savior taught: They deny themselves; they take up their crosses daily; they follow Him (see Luke 9:23). These are those the Savior likened to the seed that fell on good ground: "in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, [they] keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience" (Luke 8:15).

The fruits of the gospel issue from every honest and good heart, without regard to past origins or current positions in the Church. As President Clark declared, "There is no aristocracy of birth in this Church; it belongs equally to the highest and the lowliest" (*Clark*, p. 73).

I will give some illustrations of modern pioneers. My examples are not necessarily the most notable, but I believe they are typical of the rank-and-file Latter-day Saints who are the heart and the hands of this great latter-day work.

Elderly missionary couples

Our older couple missionaries, now numbering over 2,600 throughout the world, provide an unequalled example of Christian service. Who could calculate the contribution these couples are making in furthering the mission of the Church? They preach the gospel, strengthen leaders and members in struggling branches, serve in temples and visitors' centers, and in countless other ways accomplish the essential work of the kingdom, both the important and the routine.

In a missionary meeting in a remote corner of the world, Sister Oaks and I listened as a devoted brother said, "I never thought I could teach the gospel. I only thought I could fish. But now that

I am here, I get so wrapped up in telling people about the gospel!"

A few minutes later, another devoted missionary, his wife, said, "I feel so sorry for those who have nothing to worry about and occupy them except how many steps to the swimming pool or the golf course!"

Time after time, the pioneers President Clark praised left their homes, loaded their wagons, and moved to new hardships at the direction of their prophet. In our day, many couples go on mission after mission. One dear veteran described her family's reaction: "Our children say, 'We hope you'll come by and at least have dinner with us before you go on another mission.'"

Every day other thousands set aside personal preferences and give devoted service as teachers and leaders, as temple workers, in name extraction, and in so many other ways.

"Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation"

The Apostle Paul described the followers of Christ as "rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation" (Romans 12:12). We are tested for those qualities in different ways at different times.

A few weeks ago, some members of my family visited the Winter Quarters cemetery at Florence, Nebraska. There they saw Avar T. Fairbanks's marvelous statue of the pioneer parents looking down at the body of their baby, soon to be left in its grave at the side of the trail. Those pioneers received some of their toughest tests at graveside. Some modern pioneers receive their tests at bedside. One sister wrote:

"My mother cared for her mother until [Grandma] was ninety-eight. My dad now has Alzheimer's disease, and my mother patiently cares for him. . . . The amazing part of this is the attitude of my mother. She always thought she would travel after she retired. She has always kept a beautiful home, loving to entertain others. She maintains her home as best

she can, but has had to put aside many things that bring her joy. The amazing part is the joy my mother radiates. Her attitude is so beautiful. She finds real joy in the simple things of life. She is the pillar of strength to the whole family as she uplifts us all with her positive attitude."

God notices all service

There are hidden heroines and heroes among the Latter-day Saints—"those of the last wagon" whose fidelity to duty and devotion to righteousness go unnoticed by anyone except the One whose notice really matters.

Others, including those who have been called to prominent positions, are more noticeable, but surely no more noble. I am one of these. At a public occasion a mother introduced me to her teenage son. "Do you know who this is?" she asked him.

"Sure," the boy replied. "He's one of those guys who hangs on the wall at seminary."

Prominent position—"hanging on the wall at seminary"—does not put anyone on a fast-track to exaltation. The criterion for that ultimate goal is the same for every person—leader or follower, prominent or obscure: Have we received the ordinances of salvation and kept our covenants? A member of the Church in Great Britain said it best. He had served as stake president. As that period of prominence came to an end, he told Elder Boyd K. Packer why it did not bother him to be released: "I served because I am under *covenant*. And I can keep my covenants quite as well as a home teacher as I can serving as stake president" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1987, p. 26; or *Ensign*, May 1987, p. 24).

Numberless officers, teachers, advisers, and clerks keep their covenants in that same way. Their service is almost invisible, except to Him who sees all things and promises all who do good that they shall "in nowise lose their reward" (D&C 58:28; see also Matthew 10:42).

Walk the trail blazed by leaders

The pioneers who crossed the plains took their directions from the trails blazed by their leaders. For safety, those pioneers traveled in groups. Then, as now, a pioneer who got separated from the company and off the marked trail walked a lonely and dangerous path until he could rejoin the group. So it is today. A letter said it this way:

"One and a half years ago I was excommunicated. I was guilty of great hypocrisy and deception before God in matters of infidelity. This Saturday I am going to be baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. As the day approaches, my gratitude deepens for the Lord's mercy extended to me, allowing me to repent and experience the mighty change in my heart. It grieves me to know of the great contribution I made to the Lord's suffering in Gethsemane, but I glory in the proposition that I, as a result of that suffering, might turn my life and make His purposes my purposes."

This writer expressed gratitude for "the Lord's repentance process," which would now "allow me to become the father, son, and priesthood-bearer that I always appeared to be. The feeling of finally being an honest, truly honest, man is indescribable."

One of the best qualities in any of the sons and daughters of God, whatever their circumstance, is a determination to become better. Since we all have a need to improve, we should always be willing to recognize goodness and encourage improvement in everyone.

The importance of forgiveness

One of the most Godlike expressions of the human soul is the act of forgiveness. Everyone is wronged at some point by someone, and many suffer serious wrongs. Christians everywhere stand in awe of those pioneers who have climbed that steep slope to the spiritual summit attained by those who have heeded the Savior's command to forgive all men (see Matthew 6:14-15; D&C 64:9-10). For-

giveness is mortality's mirror image of the mercy of God.

A sister wrote me about her feelings toward a relative who had abused her as a child, leaving her with a painful physical condition. In her words, "I have to live with the pain and try to function around it." She wrote, "At times I [felt] angry and wonder[ed] why I had to suffer the abuse in the first place and why must I continue to pay a price now."

One day, as she listened to a talk in church, her heart was touched. The Spirit bore witness that she should forgive the man who had wronged her and that she could do so with the help of our Lord Jesus Christ. Her letter explained: "The price for that sin has already been paid by Him in Gethsemane. I have no right to hold on to it and demand justice, so I gladly hand it back to Him and rejoice in His love and mercy."

Her letter described the result of her decision: "My heart is so full of joy, peace, and gratitude and love! Isn't His work glorious? How I do love Him! Words cannot express my feelings."

Like this sister who forgave, many modern saints do their pioneering on the frontiers of their own attitudes and emotions. The proverb says, "He that ruleth his spirit [is better] than he that taketh a city" (Proverbs 16:32). Modern saints know that one who subdues his own spirit is just as much a pioneer as one who conquers a continent.

Burdens carried by modern pioneers

The path of modern pioneers is not easy. Burdens carried in the heart can be just as heavy as those pulled in a handcart. And just as some early pioneers struggled for the benefit of others, so some modern pioneers carry burdens imposed by the transgressions or thoughtlessness of others.

Another letter came from a woman who had been divorced. Although she said that the ten years that followed her divorce were a time of trial, heartache, struggle, and loneliness, she described that experience as "a blessing" — "a refining

process." She expressed gratitude "for what I now have. It has brought me so close to my Heavenly Father and particularly to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a feeling that I'm not sure can be expressed in words. I literally came before the Lord with a broken heart and a contrite spirit. No physical pain I have ever experienced has been as painful as the emotional pain I have felt. But each time I feel it, it draws me so close to the Lord because I think of all He suffered, and it makes me so grateful. I love Him with all my heart and soul for His sacrifice and for all He represents."

Many of our members are struggling valiantly to try to do it all. They support themselves and provide for their families. They strive to carry out the responsibilities of their church callings. They spend many hours transporting their children to numberless church and school activities. They try to be generous with money and time for worthy causes in the community. They strive to improve themselves. They hope, after all of this, to have some little time left for togetherness and recreation.

One sister wrote, "We are having great difficulty [just] trying to cope." Many could say the same. Yet they do cope. They carry on without complaint, even when they have just cause for complaint. And even when they fall short, the Lord blesses them for their righteous desires (see Mosiah 4:24-25), for, as King Benjamin taught, "it is not requisite that a man should run faster than he has strength" (Mosiah 4:27).

Grateful for faithful members

How grateful we are for the service and example of these faithful members! Like all my Brethren among the General Authorities, I look to the rank-and-file members of this church for my models of faithfulness and nobility. When I visit a conference and mingle with the Saints, I always receive more than I give. I agree with the sentiment voiced by President Gordon B. Hinckley. After describing the faithful Saints he had met at a conference, he added, "We have the responsibility of leading them, when, in fact, we can learn so much from them."

Our faith and resolve are strengthened by the spiritual achievements and service of ordinary Latter-day Saints. There are thousands of such inspirational examples, but they are rarely published except on the pages of the *Church News* and the Church magazines—the *Ensign*, *New Era*, and *Friend*. I encourage everyone to have these unique publications in their home.

Home teachers and visiting teachers

Some of the unsung heroes and heroines of our day are the faithful home teachers and visiting teachers who feed the Master's sheep. When the Apostle Paul likened the Church to a body, he referred to such less-visible members as the hands and the feet, saying that upon these we should "bestow more abundant honour" (1 Corinthians 12:23).

An LDS girl whose two parents took no part in Church activities later wrote this recollection to an elder who had been her home teacher:

"You were the bright hope in my often difficult life. There is no greater call than a home teacher. You loved and showed respect for my parents. You honored them and at the same time supported me. You were *there!* . . . As I look back now, I realize you and the truth you offered were my life-support.

"Behind the doors were years of pain, tears, and fear. You were able to come into our home and chase them away, if only for a short time. No one else could do that."

All things shall work for your good

In our day, as in the days of earlier pioneers, those in the lead wagons set the direction and signal onward, but it is the faithful men and women in the wagons which follow that provide the momentum and motive power for this great work.

As modern pioneers press forward, they suffer hardships and make sacrifices. But they are sustained by an assurance given by the Lord Himself. These words, first spoken to the struggling Saints in Ohio, apply also to the faithful of our day:

“Verily I say unto you my friends, fear not, let your hearts be comforted; yea, rejoice evermore, and in everything give thanks;

“Waiting patiently on the Lord, for your prayers have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, and are recorded with this seal and testament—the Lord hath sworn and decreed that they shall be granted.

“Therefore, he giveth this promise unto you, with an immutable covenant that they shall be fulfilled; and all things wherewith you have been afflicted shall work together for your good, and to my name’s glory, saith the Lord” (D&C 98:1–3).

This is His work. We are His children. He loves us—one and all. Of this I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang “The Lord’s Prayer” without announcement.

President Monson

What a beautiful number, brothers and sisters, “The Lord’s Prayer” as rendered by the Tabernacle Choir. President Benson has suggested that I serve as the next speaker.

President Thomas S. Monson

This is an awesome responsibility for me as I approach this task. Before doing so, however, I too would like to echo the sentiment expressed by others in expressing appreciation and love to our General Authorities of the Church who yesterday were given a change of status or an honorable release from their strenuous duties. May I add my personal appreciation for their outstanding service over the years and extend to them and their devoted companions my love and my blessings. They have traveled far and wide in the Lord’s service and merit His approbation “Well done.”

Windows

On one such journey while I was waiting my turn at an airline office in London, England, I reached forward from my chair and selected an advertising brochure from the small table which contained reading material. The publication bore the title *Windows to the World*. Each page contained a framed picture of a well-known and beautiful site, accompanied by a well-written description which made one desire to visit all of the locations shown. The Matterhorn in Switzerland,

the Alps of New Zealand, even the Taj Mahal of India—all seemed to suggest to the reader the desirability of an immediate visit.

Windows are wonderful. They serve as a frame on which we might focus our attention. They provide a glimpse of God’s creations. The azure blue sky, the billowy, white clouds, the verdant green forest all are as framed pictures in the memory of the mind. Windows also reveal the approach of a friend, a gathering storm, a magnificent sunset—even the passing parade of life.

Windows welcome light to our lives and bring joy to our souls. The absence of windows, such as in dark prison cells, shuts out the world. When we are deprived of light, the depression of darkness encompasses us.

President Hugh B. Brown’s window

Windows teach lessons never to be forgotten. Ever shall I remember a visit to the home of President Hugh B. Brown. It was graduation day at Brigham Young University. He was to conduct the exercises, and I was to deliver the commencement address. I drove to President Brown’s home and escorted him to my

car. Before we could drive away, however, he said to me, "Wait just a few minutes. My wife, Zina, will come to the front window."

I glanced at the window, noted that the curtain had parted, and saw Zina Brown sitting in her wheelchair, affectionately waving a small, white handkerchief toward the gaze of her smiling husband. President Brown reached into his jacket pocket, retrieved a white handkerchief, and began to wave it gently, much to the delight of his wife. We then inched away from the curb and commenced the journey to Provo.

"What is the significance of the white-handkerchief waving?" I asked.

He replied, "Zina and I have followed that custom since we were first married. It is somewhat a symbol between us that all will be well throughout the day until we are again together at eventide."

That day I witnessed a window to the heart.

Windows sealed by pain and neglect

Some windows are sealed shut by sorrow, by pain, by neglect. The forgotten birthday, the unremembered visit, the overlooked promise—all can sow seeds of sorrow and bring to the human heart that unwelcome visitor, despair.

A national columnist one day titled her story, "What a Forgotten Birthday Can Mean," and then quoted from a letter she had received:

"I have never written to you before, but I believe the following might interest you and your readers. I found it in an old magazine. No author's name was mentioned—just 'A Heavy-Hearted Observer.'

"Yesterday was a man's birthday. He was ninety-one. He awakened earlier than usual, bathed, shaved, and put on his best clothes. Surely they would come today, he thought.

"He didn't take his daily walk to the gas station to visit with the old-timers of the community because he wanted to be right there when they came.

"He sat on the front porch with a clear view of the road so he could see

them coming. Surely they would come today.

"He decided to skip his noon nap because he wanted to be up when they came. He had six children. Two of his daughters and their married children lived within four miles. They hadn't been to see him for such a long time. But today was his birthday. Surely they would come today.

"At supper time he refused to cut the cake and asked that the ice cream be left in the freezer. He wanted to wait and have dessert with *them* when they came.

"About 9 o'clock he went to his room and got ready for bed. His last words before turning out the lights were, 'Promise to wake me up when they come.'

"It was his birthday, and he was ninety-one."

The window of faith

When I read that touching account, tears came easily. I reflected on an experience in my life, one that had a happier ending.

Each time I would visit an older widow whom I had known for many years and whose bishop I had been, my heart grieved at her utter loneliness. A favorite son of hers lived many miles away, and for years he had not visited Mother. Mattie spent long hours in a lonely vigil at her front window. Behind a frayed and frequently opened curtain, the disappointed mother would say to herself, "Dick will come; Dick will come."

But Dick didn't come. The years passed by one after another. Then, like a ray of sunshine, Church activity came into the life of Dick. He journeyed to Salt Lake to visit with me. He telephoned upon his arrival and, with excitement, reported the change in his life. He asked if I had time to see him if he were to come directly to my office. My response was one of gladness. However, I said, "Dick, visit your mother first, and then come to see me." He gladly complied with my request.

Before he could get to my office, there came a phone call from Mattie, his

mother. From a joyful heart came words punctuated by tears: "Tom, I knew Dick would come. I told you he would. I saw him through the window."

Years later at Mattie's funeral, Dick and I spoke tenderly of that experience. We had witnessed a glimpse of God's healing power through the window of a mother's faith in her son.

The window of example

The holy scriptures are replete with sacred accounts of our Master's love for the downtrodden and the poor of this world. Though many are forgotten by men, they are remembered by God and are oftentimes seen through the window of personal example.

Who among us can forget the timeless lesson taught by the Lord when, "in the audience of all the people he said unto his disciples,

"Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts;

"Which devour widows' houses, and for a shew make long prayers" (Luke 20:45-47).

"And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury.

"And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites.

"And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all:

"For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had" (Luke 21:1-4). What a beautiful lesson, as taught through the window of example.

The window of priesthood power

At a city called Nain, the Lord opened to his disciples and to many people who followed him a window through which they might view true compassion:

"Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother,

and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.

"And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

"And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.

"And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother" (Luke 7:12-15).

The disciples of the Lord witnessed through the windows Jesus opened the power of God and were made partakers of this same power when, in righteousness, they ministered to the children of the Almighty.

A beautiful account, recorded in the book of Acts, tells of a disciple named Tabitha who lived at Joppa. She was described as being a woman "full of good works and almsdeeds."

"It came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber.

"And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them.

"Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which [Tabitha] made, while she was with them" (Could we not say this was a window through which Peter glimpsed the industry of Tabitha's life?) "Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

"And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.

"And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord" (Acts 9:36-42).

Would it not be ever so sad if such a window to priesthood power, to faith, to healing, were to be restricted to Joppa alone? Are these sacred and moving

counts recorded only for our uplift and enlightenment? Can we not apply such mighty lessons to our daily lives?

The window of loving service

When we catch the vision regarding the worth of human souls, when we realize the truth of the adage, "God's sweetest blessings always flow through hands that serve Him here below," then we have quickened within our souls the desire to do good, the willingness to serve, and the yearning to lift to a higher plane the children of God.

Such was the experience of William Norris, formerly the chairman of a large computer manufacturing firm and a friend of many years. Mr. Norris determined to build a plant in an area of extreme poverty. The neighborhood was predominantly composed of a minority race of unmarried women with children—women who were uneducated, uncared-for, but needing help. These women became the work force in the production of high-tech computers.

I had the privilege to be hosted by Mr. Norris and to be given a tour of his new facility. I was impressed with the employment provided—but more impressed with the company nursery, which occupied a wing of the building. Here, while their mothers worked, children received schooling, including proficiency with computers. Since most of the children did not have fathers and grandfathers who cared, retired grandfathers in the community were invited to have lunch with them. The children were benefited, and the grandfathers had a special blessing brought into their lives.

As a result of Mr. Norris's dream, the chain of poverty was broken. Children learned to earn. It was as though William Norris had personally blessed the life of each worker. Through the window provided by Mr. Norris—even love in action—I saw demonstrated the philosophical and practical truth: The bottom line of living is giving.

Following the Savior's example

As we go about our daily lives, we discover countless opportunities to follow the example of the Savior. When our hearts are in tune with His teachings, we discover the unmistakable nearness of His divine help. It is almost as though we are on the Lord's errand; and we then discover that, when we are on the Lord's errand, we are entitled to the Lord's help.

Through the years, the offices I have occupied have been decorated with lovely paintings of peaceful and pastoral scenes. However, there is one picture that always hangs on the wall which I face when seated behind my desk. It is a constant reminder of Him whom I serve, for it is a picture of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. When confronted with a vexing problem or difficult decision, I always gaze at that picture of the Master and silently ask myself the question, "What would He have me do?" No longer does doubt linger, nor does indecision prevail. The way to go is clear, and the pathway before me beckons.

A window to the soul

Some months back I sat in my office chair reading the daily mail. I opened a letter from Martha Sharp of Wellsville, Utah, and read her entreaty seeking a blessing for her grown son, Steven, who was a patient at University Hospital in Salt Lake City. She described Steven's spiritual and physical needs and the likelihood that he would suffer the amputation of his foot. Her tears were felt in each word, and her feelings of love marked every sentence. Hers was a request which the Spirit simply did not allow me to delegate.

When I entered Steven's hospital room that night, I saw a man who just seemed built to ride a horse. Sensing this, I began to chat with him about a Western adventure film I had seen recently. I described the beautiful horses ridden by the principal characters. A warm smile came over Steven's face. Not until that moment did I note on his nightstand a book he

had been reading. It was the book from which the film we had been discussing was made. Our conversation was warm and free from that point forward.

In describing his condition, Steven commented, "I hope they leave enough of my foot so that I can get it into a stirrup." I assured him we would remember his name when the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve met in the holy temple and that my wife and I would personally remember him in our prayers. I told him that he had a wonderful mother, who loved him and remembered him in his need, and a Heavenly Father who also loved and remembered him. Steven began to weep. A special spirit filled the room. A blessing was given, a heart cleansed, a memory of home and family rekindled, and a mother comforted.

As I departed the hospital, situated high on the east bench of Salt Lake City, I gazed at the panoramic view of the valley before me. The miles collapsed; the stars drew near. I could almost see through the window of mortality the expanse of eternity. One star shone especially bright. It seemed to light the way and mark the path to Wellsville. I remembered the poem from Primary days:

Star light, star bright,
The first star I see tonight,
I wish I may, I wish I might,
Have the wish I wish tonight.

What was my wish? That Martha Sharp might receive the welcome message, "Your son loves you."

From sacred soil far away, and from a timeless truth taught long ago, came the message, "With God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26).

Once more a gentle but unseen hand had opened a window to the soul, that precious lives might receive blessings heaven-sent.

He beckons to each of us and extends the warm invitation not only to gaze at the beauty seen through the windows He opens, but also to pass through them to the priceless opportunities He provides to bless the lives of others.

That each may experience this privilege is my humble prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "Children of Our Heavenly Father," and the benediction will be offered by Elder F. Melvin Hammond of the Seventy. The conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The choir sang "Children of Our Heavenly Father."

Elder F. Melvin Hammond offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY AFTERNOON SESSION

The fifth session of the 159th Semiannual General Conference commenced at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, October 1, 1989. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music, with Donald Ripplinger conducting and John Longhurst at the organ.

President Hinckley made the following remarks as the meeting began:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

President Ezra Taft Benson, who has presided at all sessions of this conference, has asked that I conduct this fifth and concluding session of the 159th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We extend a sincere welcome to all assembled in the Tabernacle and to those seated in the Assembly Hall, where Elders James E. Faust, J. Thomas Fyans, and Horacio A. Tenorio are seated on the stand. We also send our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere who are participating in these proceedings by radio, television, cable, or satellite transmission.

The Tabernacle Choir, directed by Donald Ripplinger and accompanied by John Longhurst, will begin this service by singing "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." The invocation will then be offered by Elder Rex C. Reeve, an emeritus member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God."

Elder Rex C. Reeve offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

The choir will now sing "Each Life That Touches Ours for Good." Following the singing, Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will address us.

The choir sang "Each Life That Touches Ours for Good."

Elder L. Tom Perry

Thomas Kane's visit to Nauvoo

Colonel Thomas L. Kane, a non-member of the Church, spoke to the Historical Society of Philadelphia, as recorded in the memoirs of John R. Young. He told them that during his travels a few years before, he had passed through a very unusual city named Nauvoo, a community established on the banks of the Mississippi. He explained that after traveling up the river for some time, he left the steamer and began to travel on land because of the rapids in the river.

While on the road, he had seen only unimproved country where idlers and outlaws had settled. Then he saw Nauvoo. Quoting him:

"I was descending the last hillside upon my journey, when a landscape in delightful contrast broke upon my view. Half encircled by a bend of the river, a beautiful city lay glittering in the fresh morning sun. Its bright new dwellings [were] set in cool green gardens ranging up around a stately dome-shaped hill, which was crowned by a noble marble edifice, whose high tapering spire was radiant with white and gold. The city appeared to cover several miles, and beyond

it, in the backgrounds, there rolled off a fair country chequered by the careful lines of fruitful husbandry. The unmistakable marks of industry, enterprise and educated wealth everywhere, made the scene one of singular and most striking beauty. . . . No one met me there. I looked and saw no one. I could hear no one move, though the quiet everywhere was such that I heard the flies buzz and the water ripples break against the shallow beach. I walked through the solitary streets. The town lay as in a dream, under some deadening spell of loneliness, from which I almost feared to wake it, for plainly it had not slept long. There was no grass growing up in the paved ways, rains had not entirely washed away the prints of dusty footsteps, yet I went about unchecked. I went into empty workshops, rope walks and smithies. The spinner's wheel was idle, the carpenter had gone from his work bench and shavings, his unfinished sash and casings, fresh bark was in the tanner's vat, and fresh chopped light wood stood piled against the baker's oven. The blacksmith's shop was cold; but his coal heap and ladling pool and crooked water horn were all there, as if he had just gone for a holiday. . . .

" . . . Fields upon fields of heavy headed yellow grain lay rotting. . . . No one was at hand to take in their rich harvest" (in *Memoirs of John R. Young, Utah Pioneer 1847* [Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1920], pp. 31–33).

Colonel Kane could not understand why such a beautiful city had been abandoned. He was unaware that the Saints had been *driven* from their city by the mobs. His curiosity caused him to search for the people who had left the city. When he found them, he observed that even though they were suffering and dying from hunger and exposure, they were peaceful and wholesome. Why had such a harmless people been so persecuted?

Persecution of missionaries

In many ways the situation has not changed a great deal today. The Church still faces some situations which, in many ways, are similar to the Nauvoo period. There is not, of course, the same degree of antagonism manifest against us as in our early history. But we still must wonder, as Colonel Kane did, why it is sometimes directed, as it so recently has been, against our great missionary force. I can only guess that it is because of the widespread misunderstanding of the essential purposes for which our missionaries are called to serve.

The missionary purpose has not changed with time. We recall the account of Ammon in the Book of Mormon. His missionary call was to the land of the Lamanites—a dangerous assignment. The fate of a Nephite entering the land of the Lamanites was left entirely in the hands of their king, who could slay him, cast him into prison, or force him to leave.

"And thus Ammon was carried before the king who was over the land of Ishmael; and his name was Lamoni; and he was a descendant of Ishmael.

"And the king inquired of Ammon if it were his desire to dwell in the land among the Lamanites, or among his people.

"And Ammon said unto him: Yea, I desire to dwell among this people for a

time; yea, and perhaps until the day I die.

"And it came to pass that king Lamoni was much pleased with Ammon, and caused that his bands should be loosed; and he would that Ammon should take one of his daughters to wife.

"But Ammon said unto him: Nay, but I will be thy servant. Therefore Ammon became a servant to king Lamoni. And it came to pass that he was set among other servants to watch the flocks of Lamoni, according to the custom of the Lamanites" (Alma 17:21–25).

As with Ammon, the only desire of our army of modern missionaries is to serve their fellowmen.

Missionaries have pure intent

It has been over 160 years since Samuel Smith left his home with a knapsack on his back filled with a few copies of the newly printed Book of Mormon. He left to declare his witness of the truths contained in this book and to extend an invitation to anyone interested to read its contents and discover for themselves whether it be true. Since Samuel Smith's time, thousands of our missionaries have given their time and their means and left their homes for a season to declare a message they believe to be true.

Today we have a multinational force coming from many nations and spreading themselves among a great number of other nations of the world. Missionaries go forward with the purest of intent, with no hidden agenda, and at great personal sacrifice. They are not out to destroy anyone's faith or to exert unrighteous pressure. They are teachers who invite those interested in their message to listen and determine for themselves if the message is true. They go forward not representing any government or political philosophy. Furthermore, they will not be active nor participate in, encourage, or even express an opinion on the politics of the country in which they are called to labor.

Missionaries return home with a love for the people they have served and taught. They are true ambassadors spreading goodwill for the peoples in whose

countries they have lived and worked. They are not concerned with income levels and have no racial bias. They are not out to build any worldly kingdoms. They are, in the words of Mormon, "the peaceable followers of Christ" (Moroni 7:3). The only kingdom which interests them is the kingdom of our Lord and Savior which He will establish at His return. Their only hope is to prepare us for that great day. Until then, our missionaries, as well as all members of the Church, will be "subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates" and will be found "obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law" (Articles of Faith 1:12).

Choose how best you can serve

Now I would like to change subjects and conclude my remarks with some counsel to the membership of the Church. We have been taught about the mission of our Lord and Savior and that by following Him we receive the greatest joy and happiness to be found here on earth. We have experienced the joy of service in our Heavenly Father's kingdom and know the soul-satisfying fulfillment it brings to our lives. I often think of the challenge which Alma faced when he could see the urgent need of the people to be taught the importance of having an understanding of the gospel of our Lord and Savior. At that time he served in two positions, that of chief judge and high priest over all the Church. He had to make a choice between the two in order to maximize his effectiveness in serving the people. The book of Alma records:

"And he selected a wise man who was among the elders of the church, and gave him power according to the voice of the people, that he might have power to enact laws according to the laws which had been given, and to put them in force according to the wickedness and the crimes of the people. . . .

"Now Alma did not grant unto him the office of being high priest over the church, but he retained the office of high priest unto himself; but he delivered the judgment-seat unto Nephihah.

"And this he did that he himself might go forth among his people, or among the people of Nephi, that he might preach the word of God unto them, to stir them up in remembrance of their duty, and that he might pull down, by the word of God, all the pride and craftiness and all the contentions which were among his people, seeing no way that he might reclaim them save it were in bearing down in pure testimony against them" (Alma 4:16, 18-19).

He selected for himself the position which would allow him to do the most good for his people.

Show which kingdom you seek

Sometimes, however, in our enthusiasm for the gospel, we cast our pearls indiscriminately, and we might even be tempted to enhance the luster of our pearl of great price by placing it in a much too attractive setting. This may only detract from the true value of our pearl. Our pearl will stand on its own, with all its beauty and simplicity. We do not need to enhance it with bright and flashy things that will only bring antagonism and conflict to the Church. We need to speak less about our accomplishments and, by our actions, show which kingdom we seek.

Could I offer this little suggestion to you? In the elevators in the Church Office Building we place scriptures and sayings of the prophets to make the time that people spend in the elevators productive as they ride up and down. This is an idea we could carry into our homes. We have an appliance we use all too frequently in our homes—the refrigerator. We need to place a sign on our refrigerators to elevate our thoughts. And by so doing, we could remind ourselves of the scriptures as we go about our daily duties—of who we are and what we represent. Could I suggest just a few scriptures to you for starters? The first is in the book of Matthew 5:43-44:

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

Maybe a second would be from Luke 6:35:

"But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil."

And in James 1:27 we read:

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

Finally, display one of the great scriptures from the Book of Mormon, Moroni 7:47:

"But charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him."

I love the gospel of our Lord and Savior. It has brought into my life the

greatest peace of mind, joy, and happiness I could ever hope to find on this earth. I pray that each of us might be willing and able to share this pearl of great price—a pearl of lasting and singular beauty—with all of our Heavenly Father's children, that we may go forward armed with the gospel of our Lord and Savior. This is His work in which we're engaged. God lives. Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world. This is my solemn witness to you, in His holy name, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just addressed us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, also a member of the Council of the Twelve. Following Elder Wirthlin, we shall hear from Elder Victor L. Brown, an emeritus member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

My beloved brethren and sisters, I pray for that same Spirit that we have enjoyed so much during this conference. I should like today to address my remarks to the youth, to those of you who still have before you the greater part of this journey we call life. I hope you have decided to follow the course marked by our Savior and his teachings. Following that course requires great effort and the help of the Lord at each step along the way. I promise you that his help always is there.

The marathon

In recent years, running has become a popular form of exercise throughout the world. Many run primarily for the exercise, but others run to condition themselves for well-publicized races of various

distances. Perhaps the premier endurance race is the marathon, a modern-day race that has its roots in ancient Greece. Today, the meaning of the word has been broadened to include any contest or activity of great length that requires extraordinary effort and endurance.

A young friend of mine, whom I will call Alan, recently ran his first marathon—a distance of 26.2 miles. He had set his goal several months in advance, learned what preparation was required, and disciplined himself to follow a rigorous training schedule. He sought the advice of experienced runners and read articles on running a marathon. He practiced running the marathon route and planned a strategy for traversing the hilly course.

Finally, the day of the marathon arrived; it would be the culmination of months of training, discipline, and sacrifice. He got off to a good start in a large crowd of runners. He felt strong and confident, following his predetermined strategy. About eight miles into the race, on a downhill part of the course, he caught up with an experienced runner, Brent by name, who had given him sound advice during his training. Alan decided to match his stride to Brent's disciplined and experienced pace.

As they passed the eighteen-mile mark, Alan struggled to stay with Brent so someone he knew would be by his side if he began "hitting the wall." Hitting the wall means feeling a sudden urge to quit, encountering an almost tangible barrier that requires a tremendous effort to overcome. It often comes at about the twenty-mile mark.

For the next two miles, Alan kept pace with Brent. Then it hit him. He felt a sudden loss of energy, an almost overwhelming desire to stop or walk. "Stay with me," Brent said. "We all feel it at some point. You can get through it. I'll help pull you through."

Somehow, Alan continued. He and Brent began to pass spectators. He knew his wife, children, and other family members would be watching about one mile ahead. Drawing on the strength provided by thoughts of his family, he was able to hang on until the desire to quit left him.

As they finally neared the finish, Alan found the last mile to be the hardest of all. Alan and Brent crossed the finish line just five seconds apart. Alan was more exhausted than he ever had been but was elated because he had beaten his goal by more than fifteen minutes and had finished among the top twenty-five runners.

Life is like running a marathon

In some respects, progressing through life is like running a marathon. You young people are nearer the beginning of your earthly sojourn. You chose to come to this earth and to be tested and proved. The end may seem too far away to concern you now. But life, like a mara-

thon, requires a good start and a strong, consistent effort all of the way to the finish.

Set goals

Marathon runners set explicit goals. You should look ahead now and decide what you want to do with your lives. Fix clearly in your mind what you want to be one year from now, five years, ten years, and beyond. Receive your patriarchal blessing and strive to live worthy of its promises. A patriarchal blessing is one of the most important guides in life that members of the Church enjoy. Write your goals and review them regularly. Keep them before you constantly, record your progress, and revise them as circumstances dictate. Your ultimate goal should be eternal life—the kind of life God lives, the greatest of all the gifts of God.

Prepare

After you visualize yourself as you would like to be in twenty years from now, identify the preparation you will need. Determine to pay the price in effort, money, study, and prayer. Be sure you understand the course or path you will be taking. The ideal course of life is not always easy. Comparatively few will find it and complete it. It is not a well-marked freeway, but a narrow path with only one entrance. The way to eternal life is straight and narrow. When I think of staying on the right path, I am reminded of Lehi's dream about the tree of life. In it, the love of God was likened to a tree that bore delicious fruit, fruit that was desirable above all others. As Nephi recorded his father's words: "And I also beheld a strait and narrow path, which came along by the rod of iron, even to the tree. . . . And I saw numberless concourses of people, many of whom were pressing forward, that they might obtain the path which led unto the tree" (1 Nephi 8:20–21). Many of these people later "fell away into forbidden paths and were lost" (8:28). But those who ignored the scoffing and ridicule of the world and held tightly to the rod of iron enjoyed the

fruit of the tree. The rod of iron represents the word of God, that leads us to the love of God (see 1 Nephi 11:25). You must hold firmly to the rod of iron through the mists and darknesses, the hardships and trials of life. If you relax your grip and slip from the path, the iron rod might become lost in the darkness for a time until you repent and regain your grasp of it.

Remember that success results when preparation meets opportunity in your lives. You will not always know precisely what opportunities will come or when they will come. But you can be sure they will be valuable only to the extent that you are prepared to respond to them. You can see the equation of preparation plus opportunity equaling success in the lives of leaders in the Church, government, business, professions, and, hopefully, in your own lives.

Preparation is vitally important in the Church so you can do your part when called upon and so the Lord can use you when he needs you.

Seek help and give help

In life, as in a marathon, you should seek the help you need. Do not depend on your own strength alone. You have never done all you can to finish a task until you have sought help from the Lord, loved ones, Church leaders, and friends.

I'm sure we've all been impressed by a miracle that has occurred recently in this valley. Joshua Dennis, age ten, is alive today because of his own fervent prayer, faith, and overwhelming optimism, and, in addition, because of the fact that he listened to his mother and obeyed her counsel. In addition, we remember the feeling, and I call it inspiration, given to John Skinner, who led the search party to Joshua. I hope our youth will remember this great lesson of prayer as they pass through life's journey.

Relying on only your own abilities can lead to the sin of pride. In the opening section of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord described the wicked condition of many in the world, and I quote: "They

seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god" (D&C 1:16). If we boast in our own strength and "walk in our own way," we can slip easily from the straight and narrow path to the broad roadways of the world. Do not be misled by the occasional easiness of the way, like the downhill part of a marathon. Keep close to the Lord and trust in him during the easier times, just as you do in your uphill struggles.

Marathon runners pass aid stations located along the course; they provide water, encouragement, and assistance. Without this help, many runners could not carry on. You young people also have "aid stations" to help you keep moving along your course. They should include your parents, other family members, ward leaders, and teachers who have "run more races" and are farther along the path of life. Benefit from the experience they have accumulated. Trust them; seek their advice, counsel, and support; and then listen to them. They will help you stay on your course.

You young men should be grateful for the great privilege and blessing you have of bearing the Aaronic Priesthood. Be faithful in your priesthood duties; they will help you prepare for greater service. I urge you teachers and priests to be faithful home teachers, which is a lifetime calling for all of us. You young women should participate in the Young Women program. Learn the values of this program and apply them personally in your lives. Aaronic Priesthood and Young Women leaders support your parents in helping guide you through this critical part of your lives when the decisions you make have such far-reaching effects.

Always be willing, even anxious, to help others. Nothing else you do will give you the same genuine satisfaction and joy within because, and I quote, "when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God" (Moses 2:17). Ignoring the needs of others is a serious sin. Think of the words of Alma to the people of the Church in Zarahemla. He asked:

"Will ye . . . persist in the wearing of costly apparel and setting your hearts upon the vain things of the world, upon your riches?"

"Yea, will ye persist in supposing that ye are better one than another; . . .

"Yea, and will you persist in turning your backs upon the poor, and the needy, and in withholding your substance from them?" (Alma 5:53-55).

King Benjamin taught that we must care for those in need—the poor, hungry, naked, and sick—both spiritually and temporally if we are to receive a remission of our sins from day to day or, in other words, if we are to walk guiltless before God (see Mosiah 18:29).

Hitting the wall

I suppose some of you, at one time or another, feel that you are "hitting the wall," feeling an almost compelling urge to quit, give up, or give in to temptation. You will meet challenges, adversities, and temptations that seem to be more than you can bear. In times of sickness, death, financial need, and other hardships, you may wonder whether you have the strength, courage, or ability to continue.

You young people face the same temptations that have been common throughout history, plus many others that were unknown to earlier generations. However, be sure you understand that God will not allow you to be tempted beyond your ability to resist (see 1 Corinthians 10:13). He does not give you challenges that you cannot surmount. He will not ask more than you can do but may ask right up to your limits so you can prove yourselves. The Lord will never forsake or abandon anyone. You may abandon him, but he will not abandon you. You never need to feel that you are alone.

The reason to stay on course in a marathon is obvious. The reason to stay on a course that leads to a righteous life may be less obvious but is much more important. In simple terms, a righteous life is the way—the only way—to happiness, joy, and peace. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught:

"Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it; and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God. . . .

" . . . In obedience there is joy and peace, . . . and as God has designed our happiness . . . , he never has—He never will . . . give a commandment to His people that is not calculated in its nature to promote that happiness which He has designed" (*History of the Church*, 5:134-35).

We read in the Book of Mormon, "Men are, that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25).

Our Heavenly Father knows the way for you to enjoy happiness and peace; the principles of the gospel mark the way. They are a gift to you, his children.

On the other hand, Satan will try, at every step of the way, to lead you off course. His objective is to make you unhappy and miserable like he is (see 2 Nephi 2:27). Vast sums of money are spent each year to package and disguise sin and evil to make them appear enticing, attractive, even harmless. However, regardless of appearances, "wickedness never was happiness" (Alma 41:10) and never will be. Never find yourselves in the position of the Nephites just a few years before the birth of the Savior. They "sought . . . for that which [they] could not obtain; . . . for happiness in doing iniquity, which thing is contrary to the nature of that righteousness which is in our great and Eternal Head" (Helaman 13:38). You cannot find happiness in sin and iniquity.

The Lord has given you the gift of agency (see Moses 7:32) and instructed you sufficiently to know good from evil (see 2 Nephi 2:5). You are free to choose (see 2 Nephi 2:27) and are permitted to act (see 2 Nephi 10:23; Helaman 14:30), but you are not free to choose the consequences. With absolute certainty, choices of good and right lead to happiness and peace, while choices of sin and evil eventually lead to unhappiness, sorrow, and misery.

Endure to the end

An obvious parallel between life and a marathon is the necessity to run diligently and endure to the end. Among his final words to his people, Nephi told them: "And now, . . . after ye have gotten into this strait and narrow path, I would ask if all is done? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; . . . Ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ . . . and endure to the end" (2 Nephi 31:19–20). I think of this promise of the Lord: "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31). You have that promise.

My dear young friends, I pray that the Lord will guide and strengthen each of you in running your personal marathon. Then you can say, as Paul wrote to Timothy, "I have fought a good fight, I have

finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7). I know that you *can* live righteous lives and, with the help of the Lord, *do* all that you should do. I bear testimony that our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ love each of you and want you to be happy. Joseph Smith is the prophet of the restoration of the gospel in these latter days, and President Ezra Taft Benson is the prophet today. This is the Church of our Lord and Savior; I am one of His witnesses. I bear this humble testimony in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin has just addressed us.

We shall now hear from Elder Victor L. Brown, who will speak as one who has received emeritus status in this conference.

Elder Victor L. Brown

Serving with prophets of God

Twenty-eight years ago today, to my total surprise, my professional life took a completely different direction. I had spent twenty-one years in the commercial aviation industry, and I enjoyed it. We had just moved into a new home in Chicago when a call came from Church headquarters inviting me to come to Salt Lake City for an interview with President David O. McKay. All my prior plans were discarded as I was called to be a Counselor to the new Presiding Bishop, John H. Vandenberg. I had never thought nor aspired to become a General Authority, but there was only one answer possible when President McKay, a prophet of God, called me to this work.

These twenty-eight years following that experience in October of 1961 have provided opportunities for service I never could have dreamed of. I have been blessed with dedicated associates in many countries and at headquarters who have worked faithfully to help build the kingdom of God, often at great personal sacrifice.

I was privileged to serve very closely under four Presidents of the Church — Presidents David O. McKay, Joseph Fielding Smith, Harold B. Lee, and Spencer W. Kimball. As a member of the Presiding Bishopric for twenty-four years, I sat in weekly meetings with the First Presidency and was privileged to be taught by these prophets of God. Prior to President Ezra Taft Benson's call to be the President of the Church, I was released from the Presiding Bishopric. Although I have not had regular opportunities to meet with him, I have appreciated his leadership and have greatly benefited from his challenge to each member of the Church to study and ponder the truths of the Book of Mormon. Each of these five Presidents under whom I have served as a General Authority has had his own personality and style; yet I testify each is a prophet of God. Through my association with them, I have come to understand why we sustain them as prophets, seers, and revelators.

Look at how people treat others

In my experience with these Brethren and with other men and women in many parts of the world, I have found that the measure of a man is not necessarily his title or his position but rather how he treats others—his peers, his supervisor, the cab driver, or the airline clerk after he has missed an important connecting flight. This is particularly true in how a man treats those closest to him—his wife and children.

I once overheard a conversation between two friends of mine who are somewhat older than I and very successful in their professional pursuits. One said to the other, quietly, not realizing I could hear his comment, "You may think you love your wife, but I love Elizabeth twice as much as you do Rachel." Each had been married over fifty years. Their greatest success, in my opinion, is the love and respect they have for their companions.

I pay tribute to my wife, Lois, who had the major responsibility in rearing our children, as my assignments have caused me to travel very extensively throughout the world. Because of her wonderful influence, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (3 John 1:4).

People who have walked in truth

I have been blessed to meet many young Church members who "walk in truth" and who have taught me so much through their quiet obedience to the Lord's commandments. Let me share with you a few examples:

- A fifteen-year-old Korean boy, a teacher in the Aaronic Priesthood, used his allowance each week to buy newspapers. Then he and his friends sold them on street corners in Seoul, giving the money to a classmate who couldn't remain in school without this financial help. He wanted to know how it felt to be a Good Samaritan rather than having just an intellectual understanding of the lesson he had studied in the scriptures.

- Another teacher, a fourteen-year-old Tongan boy, had the same faith the Prophet Joseph Smith did at fourteen. He

thought, If, at my age, Joseph Smith could pray to God and get an answer to his prayers, why can't I? He prayed that he might somehow obtain an education to prepare him to help his people. The answer came when he received a full scholarship to the Church college of Hawaii without having applied for it. Since then he has used his education to bless his people.

- An eight-year-old girl, reared in a good home with parents who did not believe in God, on her own initiative learned the Lord's Prayer and recited that prayer privately every day. Eventually she added her own words and finally began offering her personal prayers to her Heavenly Father. She knew He lived, even though her parents did not. A few days ago I had the honor of officiating at her marriage and sealing in the temple. Her mother was with her—the result of her daughter's example.

- A deacons quorum president startled his adult leaders by asking a boy who hadn't been coming to church to offer the prayer in quorum meeting. When asked afterward if it really was wise to ask a boy to pray who had only been in church the second time, he responded, "But I just spent three days this week teaching him how to pray."

- A young woman whose understanding of eternal life was far beyond her years said that the only gift she wanted for her twelfth birthday was to be able to go to the temple and be baptized for the dead.

These wonderful young Latter-day Saints, whom I love very dearly as I do all young people, are some of my heroes of the past twenty-eight years. They cause me to have great faith in the future even though there is much to concern us today.

Blessings of temple service

The capstone of all the experiences I have had in Church service was the blessing of serving in the Salt Lake Temple. There, Sister Brown and I, with the wonderful, devoted temple workers, had the privilege of associating daily with faithful members who came to the house

of the Lord to perform sacred service. I had always intellectually understood and accepted the purposes and the ordinances of the temple, but now I know to the depths of my being the joyous, peaceful spirit of that service.

When we go to the temple because we want to go and not because it is an obligation; when we go with an attitude of worship and a reverence for God and for His son Jesus Christ, and with gratitude for the Savior's sacrifice; when we spend sufficient time to leave the cares of the world outside, wonderful things happen which cannot be described. The Spirit of the Lord distills upon one's soul in these holy houses, truly the most sacred places on earth. A new perception comes into focus of who we are, of what this life is really about, of the opportunities of eternal life, and of our relationship with the Savior.

A young medical student in Italy, a friend of mine who is now a cardiovascular surgeon, expressed his feelings about the temple this way:

"Doing temple work, especially for your loved ones, is an edifying and spiritual thing. You feel the gospel in action; you feel the love of God and the sense of the wonderful plan He made just for us, His children.

"Two days ago, I was at the hospital working when an eighteen-year-old boy came to me, asking for news of his father, who was undergoing coronary bypass surgery. At 5:00 P.M. came the news: his father's heart ceased to beat. I'll remember for the rest of my life how miserable and void of hope is a life without the comfort of the certainty of resurrection, of being eternally sealed as a family, of having the opportunity again to be with Heavenly Father."

The Lord invites all to come unto Christ through the ordinances and covenants of the temple, that we might receive the greatest of all God's gifts to His children, the blessing of eternal life and exaltation.

Testimony

At the conclusion of these twenty-eight years, I testify of our Heavenly Father's love for us. The unconditional love the Father and the Son have for us is so real. The Savior continually invites us to "come unto him and partake of his goodness" (2 Nephi 26:33).

The whole message of the gospel is found in one short scripture which speaks to all of us: "And now, my beloved brethren, I would that ye should come unto Christ, who is the Holy One of Israel, and partake of his salvation, and the power of his redemption. Yea, come unto him, and offer your whole souls as an offering unto him, and continue in fasting and praying, and endure to the end; and as the Lord liveth ye will be saved" (Omni 1:26).

I bear witness that He lives, that He loves each one of His children — and that means every human being — every man, every woman, every girl, every boy, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Elder Victor L. Brown, whom all of us knew for so many years as Bishop Victor L. Brown, who served with great distinction first as a Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, then for a long period of time as Presiding Bishop of the Church and more recently as president of the Salt Lake Temple. Bishop Brown lost his beloved companion, Lois Kjar Brown, only a few days ago. I'm confident that the hearts of members of the Church throughout the world reach out to him in love and understanding and comfort.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "High on the Mountain Top." Following this, Sister Jayne B. Malan, First Counselor in the Young Women General Presidency, will speak to us.

The choir and congregation sang "High on the Mountain Top."

Jayne B. Malan

The summer of the lambs

The day school was out at the beginning of each summer, our family went to our ranch in Wyoming. It was there, with my parents and brothers and sisters and a few cousins mixed in, that I learned about family loyalty; love and concern; birth and death; that one must finish a job once it is started; and, to quote my father, "There are only two things important—the family and the Church."

One year my father was waiting for us as we arrived. He said he had a big job for my brother Clay and me to do that summer. I was about twelve at the time, and my brother was two years older. Pointing to the field by the side of the house, my father said, "Do you see all of these lambs in that field? I'll share the money we get for the ones you raise when we sell them in the fall." Well, we were excited. Not only did we have a significant job to do, but we were going to be rich! There were a lot of lambs in that field—about 350 of them. And all we had to do was feed them.

However, there was one thing that my father hadn't mentioned. None of the lambs had mothers. Just after shearing, there had been a violent storm that chilled the newly shorn sheep. Dad lost a thousand ewes that year. The mothers of our lambs were among them.

To feed one or two baby animals is one thing, but to feed 350 is something else! It was hard. There was plenty of grass, but the lambs couldn't eat the grass. They didn't have teeth. They needed milk. So we made some long, V-shaped feeding troughs out of some boards. Then we got a great big tin wash-tub, ground up some grain, and added milk to make a thin mash. While my brother poured the mash into the troughs, I rounded up the lambs, herded them to the troughs, and said, "Eat!" Well, they just stood there looking at me. Although they were hungry and there was food in front of them, they still wouldn't eat. No one had taught them to drink milk out of a trough. So I tried *pushing* them toward

the troughs. Do you know what happens when you try to push sheep? They run the other way. And when you lose one, you could lose them all because others will follow. That's the way with sheep.

We tried lining up the lambs along the troughs and pushing their noses down in the milk, hoping they'd get a taste and want some more. We tried wiggling our fingers in the milk to get them to suck on our fingers. Some of them would drink, but most of them ran away.

Many of the lambs were slowly starving to death. The only way we could be sure they were being fed was to pick them up in our arms, two at a time, and feed them like babies.

And then there were the coyotes. At night the coyotes would sit up on the hill, and they'd howl. The next morning we would see the results of their night's work, and we would have two or three more lambs to bury. The coyotes would sneak up on the lambs, scatter the herd, and then pick out the ones they wanted and go after them. The first were those that were weak or separated from the flock. Often in the night when the coyotes came and the lambs were restless, my dad would take out his rifle and shoot in the air to scare them away. We felt secure when my dad was home because we knew our lambs were safe when he was there to watch over them.

Clay and I soon forgot about being rich. All we wanted to do was save our lambs. The hardest part was seeing them die. Every morning we would find five, seven, ten lambs that had died during the night. Some the coyotes got, and others starved to death surrounded by food they couldn't or wouldn't eat.

Part of our job was to gather up the dead lambs and help dispose of them. I got used to that, and it really wasn't so bad until I named one of the lambs. It was an awkward little thing with a black spot on its nose. It was always under my feet, and it knew my voice. I loved my lamb. It was one I held in my arms and fed with a bottle like a baby.

One morning my lamb didn't come when I called. I found it later that day under the willows by the creek. It was dead. With tears streaming down my face, I picked up my lamb and went to find my father. Looking up at him, I said, "Dad, isn't there someone who can help us feed our lambs?"

After a long moment he said, "Jayne, once a long, long time ago, someone else said almost those same words. He said, 'Feed my lambs. . . . Feed my sheep. . . . Feed my sheep'" (John 21:15-17). Dad put his arms around me and let me cry for a time, then went with me to bury my lamb.

The Savior's lambs

It wasn't until many years later that I fully realized the meaning of my father's words. I was pondering the scripture in Moses that says, "For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of [all mankind]" (Moses 1:39). As I thought about the mission of the Savior, I remembered the summer of the lambs, and for a few brief moments I thought I could sense how the Savior must feel with so many lambs to feed, so many souls to save. And I knew in my heart that he needed my help.

You wonderful young people, from what we've observed, you're not unlike our lambs. You, too, are hungry—hungry for things of the Spirit that will make you grow strong and keep you safe from the coyotes that are out to destroy you. You are capable and willing to do your part in building the kingdom when you are taught how. And we want to help you.

We know that you need someone to love you, someone to listen and understand. You need to be needed. You need opportunities to come together in a safe environment, a safe fold so to speak, where you can share with one another and develop wholesome friendships based on brother-sister relationships rather than romantic involvement. You need opportunities to experience the joy of sacrifice and service, of caring for and loving one

another as our Savior loves us. Within the gospel we have what you need, but you will need to reach out and accept it.

Youth, prepare now

It would have been far easier to save our lambs if the mothers had been there to feed them. Young women, you are the mothers of tomorrow. Young men, you are the fathers. Together, you are the parents, the teachers, and the advisers who will help nurture and feed young lambs and lead them home. Prepare yourselves now for that sacred responsibility. Study the scriptures. Develop your God-given talents. Learn all you can about the world around you that is clean and good. Prepare yourselves to enter the temple of the Lord and be worthy to receive the ordinances and blessings by living, teaching, and sharing the gospel.

Your Heavenly Father knows you and cares about what you are doing. He wants you to fulfill your divine mission, then come home and bring your family and friends with you. He wants you to be happy. Be on your knees daily and talk to your Heavenly Father. Share the happy times. Talk about what's hard for you. Like my father, your Heavenly Father will understand. He'll be there to walk with you and to comfort and protect you, for he has promised to those who seek him, "I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up" (D&C 84:88).

With a shepherd's loving care

Our prophet, President Benson, has said, "The symbolism of the Good Shepherd is not without significant parallel in the Church today. The sheep need to be led by watchful shepherds. . . . With a shepherd's loving care, our young people, our young lambs, will not be as inclined to wander. And if they do, the crook of the shepherd's staff, a loving arm, and an understanding heart will help to retrieve them" (Regional Representatives' seminar, 3 Apr. 1987).

Parents, priesthood leaders, teachers, advisers, be "watchful shepherds"; and you, our noble youth, band together in the strength of the Lord and lead out in righteousness. Reach out with loving arms and understanding hearts to those who are weak or wandering. Help bring them back to the fold, where they can learn of the Good Shepherd and grow close to him. And please choose carefully the paths you walk, for others will follow. That's the way with sheep.

Of our little flock, we saved only one-third. And what of the Savior's flock? He has said, "Feed my lambs. . . . Feed my sheep."

This I know: He needs our help. With more people to help, more lambs

will be saved. A simple fact, but true. Of this I can bear testimony in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Sister Jayne Malan, for that very touching and impressive talk and testimony.

We should now like to hear brief testimonies from Elders F. Arthur Kay and John Sonnenberg, who have served as members of the Seventy called five years ago and who have served the Lord so very well and faithfully.

Elder F. Arthur Kay

Seeing God's power at work

My beloved brothers and sisters, this is indeed a challenge and an opportunity, a privilege that I had not anticipated and yet one of those great opportunities to do that which I have been called to do for the past five years — and that is to bear witness of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

These five years have been filled with experiences that have further taught me what I had learned in the previous forty years while serving in various capacities of leadership in the Church — and that is that God does hear and answer prayer, that there is power in the priesthood, and that by that power and authority to act in his name great things happen in the lives of people.

I have in mind today a blessing given to someone precious and close to me who was told by her physicians that the child she was to bear would unquestionably have Down's syndrome; an abortion was recommended. She refused, and in the next few weeks calls from the hospital and others came encouraging that the little fetus be aborted. Finally, in desperation, she called her doctor and said, "Get those people off my back. This little child will have a right to life regardless of its

condition." She had been given a priesthood blessing by her father and had been promised that the little child would be normal and healthy. When the little child involved was born, so it was. Today she is an unusually beautiful, bright, charming child.

I have thought how many times in her life she would have had cause to reflect had she followed that counsel which was contrary to that given her by her father.

I recall that not too long ago I became acquainted with a precious young woman named Sharon living in Brisbane, Australia. She had cystic fibrosis and had in the last few years spent nearly as much time in the hospital as she had in her home. She was downcast and desperate, feeling that God had forgotten her and that there was no chance for her. But a priesthood blessing told her to trust in the Lord with all of her heart and lean not to her own understanding and promised that He would guide and direct her. And then came the words that somewhat frightened him who was pronouncing the blessing: "Sharon, there will come in your lifetime medical advances which will correct the problem and alleviate the challenges that you are facing."

Within thirty days, in Melbourne, Australia, there came a medical announcement of a new drug, experimental in nature, that showed promise in combating cystic fibrosis. Sharon applied for treatment, and it has been successful. Today she spends very little time in the hospital; the rest of her time is spent preparing for a career.

Keep the faith

My brothers and sisters, these are only two instances of times I have seen God's power at work. I want you to know that my testimony came when I was a little boy at the feet of my parents. I loved my parents. They taught me in the way of truth and righteousness. I was taught the story of the Restoration, which I believed with all of my heart because I believed my parents.

In the forty-sixth section of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord says: "To some it is given by the Holy Ghost to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. . . . To others it is given to believe on their words" (46:13-14). I was one of those who believed on my parents' words. To me, the teachings of the First Vision,

the visits of Moroni and others were as real as if they had been personal experiences of my own. I have never had a day in my life that I can remember when I haven't known these things are true.

I pay tribute this day to my wife of some fifty years, who has been at my side, encouraging, sustaining, supporting, and enduring when the going was tough. I want her and my children to know that I love her and them with all of my heart.

In the past two or three weeks, I have greeted most of my grandchildren, and I have shaken their hands and looked into their eyes and have said, "Keep the faith, my child. It's true." Almost invariably there has come the response, "I will, Grandpa, I will."

Their words, "Yes, Grandpa, I will," have caused me to reflect. My greatest desire is to continue faithful as an example to my family. I trust that one day the response will be, "Yes, Grandpa, I have."

I bear you my witness that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. Ezra Taft Benson is a prophet of God. I leave that testimony with you in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder John Sonnenberg

The true meaning of love

My beloved brothers and sisters, I am grateful for this opportunity to bear witness of the divinity of this great work and testify to all the world that we are led by a prophet of God. I don't think I've heard any more convincing words of love than those I've heard when I've been in the temple with President Benson and his dedicated Counselors and he says, "I love you, my Brethren. I love every one of you." From the depths of his heart, he has proclaimed to us the true significance of love for our fellowmen.

A few years ago while we were in Sydney, Australia, my wife and I received a letter from one of our grand-

children. He wrote: "Dear Grandma and Grandpa, I just turned twelve years of age, and the bishop called me into the office, and he said, 'I have some questions to ask of you, Bruce. Bruce, you're twelve years of age now, and so I need to know if you love the Lord.' I told him I do. 'Do you say bad words, Bruce?' 'No, bishop, I never say bad words.' 'Do you love your mother and dad?' 'Yes, bishop, I do.' 'Do you pay your tithing, Bruce?' 'Yes I do, bishop.'"

"You know, Grandpa and Grandma, the bishop said that I could receive the Aaronic Priesthood because I was twelve years of age, and he asked me if I knew what the Aaronic Priesthood was. I told

him that I knew a little bit and that I could be ordained a deacon. You know, the next week the bishop asked who I would like to be ordained by. I said I would like to be ordained by my dad. So my dad put his hands upon my head, and the bishop stood around and so did my uncles, and my dad conferred the Aaronic Priesthood upon me and ordained me a deacon.

"Now, Grandma and Grandpa, you're a long way away, but I know that you're a General Authority and some day you'll come home. You know, I can't wait until you come home because I know you'll sit on the stand, and then Grandpa, I can pass the sacrament to you."

I think that is the true meaning of love, of families.

A light unto the world

I express my love to my devoted sweetheart and eternal companion. I'm grateful for the matriarch that she is in our family. I am grateful for each of our children; I am grateful for their families. I'm grateful to the Lord Jesus Christ for his atoning sacrifice. I've come to know him more assuredly as I have sat in council with your great leaders. I testify to you that they are men of God.

I like a scripture that I reflect upon frequently, and I think of it when I think of them, "For they were set to be a light unto the world, and to be the saviors of men" (D&C 103:9). I bear witness that those who come into the kingdom will eventually say unto them who have helped them come into the kingdom, "You were a light unto me, and I acknowledge you as literally being a savior to me."

Another of my favorite scriptures that I would like to share with you is, "Search diligently, pray always, and be believing, and all things shall work together for your good, if ye walk uprightly and remember the covenant wherewith ye have covenanted one with another" (D&C 90:24).

Look to the Savior

Inscribed on the granite walls of the temple here in Salt Lake City is the constellation of Ursa Major, or the Great Bear, commonly known to you as the Big Dipper. If you were to project a line through the bottom two stars opposite the handle, it would point to and bisect the North Star. The mariners and those who have been lost at sea or on land have looked to the North Star to find their bearings.

I bear witness that there is, figuratively speaking, a "North Star" leading us today—a beloved prophet of God. Look to him. He will point you to the way of truth and righteousness. Look to the Savior, for he will give you life eternal.

Again I express my love to you, President Benson, to your dedicated and devoted Counselors, to the General Authorities, and to the body of the Church for your love and sustaining influence. We have come to love you in the Pacific islands; we have come to love you in Europe, where we served; we have come to love the Saints all over the world. My lovely companion and I shall ever remember this association with grateful hearts as we continue to bear witness of the atoning sacrifice of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

I bear witness that the Church has been restored, that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God, as is a living prophet today, President Ezra Taft Benson, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Elder Kay and Elder Sonnenberg, for those beautiful and moving testimonies. Testimonies of similar substance and beauty could be borne by each of those who has been released during this conference. We pray that the blessings of the Lord will go with them and be with them now and throughout their lives.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Council of the Twelve, will now address us.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

With all of you, I express my admiration to these wonderful men who are being released and whose status is being adjusted. They were exemplary at the time of their calls; they are even more so today. They are portable sermons for us all. My sermon was essentially prepared in June. It is for myself as well as for the members of the Church.

Murmuring against the Lord

Murmuring is defined as a half-suppressed resentment or muttered complaint. We all remember, in *Fiddler on the Roof*, Tevye's verbal asides to God.

However, just as "a yawn [can be] a silent shout," so murmuring can be much more than muted muttering (G. K. Chesterton, in Robert Andrews, ed., *The Concise Columbia Dictionary of Quotations* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1987], p. 30). The real "Addressee" of some of our murmuring is clearly the Lord, as when the people complained against Moses (see Exodus 16:8; 1 Nephi 16:20). At least Tevye honestly acknowledged whom he addressed.

Scriptural accounts of murmuring

Murmuring seems to come so naturally to the natural man. It crosses the scriptural spectrum of recorded complaints. We need bread. We need water (see Numbers 21:5). The needed military reinforcements did not arrive (see Alma 60). "Why did we ever leave Egypt?" (see Numbers 11:20). "Why did we ever leave Jerusalem?" (see 1 Nephi 2:11). Some, perhaps understandably, murmured over persecution by unbelievers, and others even murmured over what the name of Christ's church should be (see Mosiah 27:1; 3 Nephi 27:3-4). Most ironically, the coming forth of more scripture from God was to cause murmuring (see 2 Nephi 29:8).

An early scriptural instance of murmuring involved Cain's offering to the

Lord, illustrating how our intentions are at least as important as our deeds (see Moses 5:20-21). Cain was "wroth" that Abel's offering was acceptable but not his. Sometimes, brothers and sisters, we, too, worry if someone else seems to be more favored than we. Worse still, we want to be accepted of the Lord—but on our terms, not His!

A basic cause of murmuring is that too many of us seem to expect that life will flow ever smoothly, featuring an unbroken chain of green lights with empty parking places just in front of our destinations!

In its extremity, murmuring reflects not only the feelings of the discontented, but also the feelings of the very conflicted:

"Their sorrowing was . . . the sorrowing of the damned, because [they could not] take happiness in sin.

"And [yet] they did not come unto Jesus with broken hearts and contrite spirits, but they did curse God, and wish to die. Nevertheless they would struggle with the sword for their lives" (Mormon 2:13-14).

In His parable of the vineyard workers, Jesus noted of disciples how those who worked from the first hour, having "borne the burden and heat of the day" (Matthew 20:12), murmured because they received the same wages as those who worked only the last hour (see 20:11). We beggars are so concerned with our entitlements.

Laman and Lemuel murmured against father Lehi for leading them into the wilderness because of the "foolish imaginations of his heart" (1 Nephi 2:11; see also 3:31; 4:4). This same depressing duo declared that father Lehi had judged the Jerusalemites too harshly, yet Jerusalem was soon to fall.

Lehi rebuked murmuring Laman and Lemuel for complaining over Nephi's saying "hard things" to them (1 Nephi 16:3). Lehi noted, "That which ye call anger was the truth" (2 Nephi 1:26). How often you and I, brothers and sisters,

can make that same mistake! Cutting truth does hurt, but its lancing can drain off pride.

There was murmuring, too, because Nephi broke his steel bow and couldn't build a ship (see 1 Nephi 17:17) and because he was seen as trying to "rule over us" (2 Nephi 5:3). Those same murmurers, however, soon surfeited themselves on the meat brought back by Nephi's new bow, and they sailed in the ship that Nephi built. How handy inspired but imperfect leaders in the Church are as focal points for our frustrations, especially if circumstances require them to suffer in silence! Having confidence in leaders who keep confidences is part of sustaining them.

Oliver Cowdery fell short of the coveted privilege of translating. He was told, "Do not murmur, my son, for it is wisdom in me that I have dealt with you after this manner" (D&C 9:6). Emma Smith was likewise told to "murmur not" that certain things were withheld from her (D&C 25:4).

The nature of murmurers

In pondering these and various other examples of murmuring, several other things become obvious.

First, the murmurer often lacks the courage to express openly his concerns. If the complaint concerns a peer, the murmurer seldom follows Jesus' counsel, "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother" (Matthew 18:15).

Second, murmurers make good conversational cloak holders. Though picking up no stones themselves, they provoke others to do so.

Third, while a murmurer insists on venting his own feelings, he regards any response thereto as hostile (see 2 Nephi 1:26). Furthermore, murmurers seldom take into account the bearing capacity of their audiences.

Fourth, murmurers have short memories. Israel arrived in Sinai, then jour-

neyed on to the Holy Land though they were sometimes hungry and thirsty. But the Lord rescued them, whether by the miraculous appearance by quail or by water struck from a rock (see Numbers 11:31; Exodus 17:6). Strange, isn't it, brothers and sisters, how those with the shortest memories have the longest lists of demands! However, with no remembrance of past blessings, there is no perspective about what is really going on.

This powerful verse in the Old Testament reminds us of what is really going on:

"And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no" (Deuteronomy 8:2).

Perspective makes such an enormous and constant difference in our lives. It shouldn't surprise us, therefore, that Satan, we are told, does not know the mind of God (see Moses 4:6).

Perhaps when we murmur we are unconsciously complaining over not being able to cut a special deal with the Lord. We want full blessings but without full obedience to the laws on which those blessings are predicated. For instance, some murmurers seem to hope to reshape the Church to their liking by virtue of their murmuring. But why would one want to belong to a church that he could remake in his own image, when it is the Lord's image that we should come to have in our countenances? (see Alma 5:19).

The doctrines are His, brothers and sisters, not ours. The power is His to delegate, not ours to manipulate!

One especially fundamental fact about murmuring is contained in this verse: "And thus Laman and Lemuel . . . did murmur because they knew not the dealings of that God who had created them" (1 Nephi 2:12).

Like Laman and Lemuel, we too sometimes fail to understand the dealings of our God in our lives and in our times (see 1 Nephi 2:12; 17:22).

Thomas B. Marsh's murmuring

Presidents Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball tried to discourage Thomas B. Marsh's murmuring, but to no avail. A repentant Brother Marsh later said of that time:

"I must have lost the Spirit of the Lord out of my heart. . . .

"I became jealous of the Prophet . . . and overlooked everything that was right, and spent all my time in looking for the evil; . . . I thought I saw a beam in Brother Joseph's eye, but it was nothing but a mote, and my own eye was filled with the beam; . . . I got mad and I wanted everybody else to be mad. I talked with Brother Brigham Young and Brother Heber C. Kimball, and I wanted them to be mad like myself; and I saw they were not mad, and I got madder still because they were not. Brother Brigham Young, with a cautious look, said, 'Are you the leader of the Church, Brother Thomas?' I answered 'No.' 'Well then,' said he, 'why do you not let that alone?'" (in Joseph E. Cardon and Samuel O. Bennion, comps., *Testimonies of the Divinity of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by Its Leaders* [Independence, Mo.: Zion's Printing and Publishing Co., 1930], pp. 103, 105).

The faithful do not murmur

Laborers in the Lord's vineyard who murmur over life's inequities, declared Jesus, murmur "against the goodman of the house" (Matthew 20:11). The goodness of the Lord is attested to in so many ways—mansions await!—yet we ungrateful guests still complain about the present accommodations.

Those of deep faith do not murmur. They are generously disposed, and they are reluctant to murmur, even while in deep difficulties, as with one faithful group, who said:

"Behold, [perhaps] ye are unsuccessful . . . ; if so, we do not desire to murmur. . . .

" . . . It mattereth not—we trust God will deliver us, notwithstanding the weakness of our armies" (Alma 58:35, 37).

Exemplary Job, who went through so very much, was openly anxious that he not charge God foolishly (see Job 1:22).

The pleading of one filled with faith who is also concerned with the welfare of others, as with Joseph Smith in Liberty Jail, is not murmuring. This is not the murmuring of a superficial follower who is quick to complain and who is slow to endure. Reassurance and further instruction followed with Joseph being told, "My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment" (D&C 121:7).

Damage to ourselves is sufficient reason to resist murmuring, but another obvious danger is its contagiousness. Even faithful father Lehi, for one brief moment, got caught up in the contagion of murmuring (see 1 Nephi 16:20). Similarly, when Moses lapsed, very briefly, it was under exasperating pressure from rebels (see Numbers 20:7–12). No one knows how to work a crowd better than the adversary.

Be of good cheer

Instead of murmuring, therefore, being of good cheer is what is needed, and being of good cheer is equally contagious. We have clear obligations to so strengthen each other by doing things "with cheerful hearts and countenances" (D&C 59:15; see also 81:5).

Basic things over which the scriptures say we are to be of good cheer include the transcending blessing that our sins can be forgiven and that Jesus has overcome the world! These are marvelous blessings. Additionally, we are assured that the Lord is in our midst. He will lead us along. He will stand by us (see Matthew 9:2; John 16:33; D&C 61:36; 68:6; 78:18). By knowing that these everlasting things are firmly in place, can we not, then, better endure irritations, such as a dislocated travel schedule? Besides, brothers and sisters, how can it rain on the just and the unjust alike without occasionally raining on our personal parade? (see Matthew 5:45).

Ways to express legitimate concerns

Of course there are ways provided — formal and informal — for expressing legitimate concerns and complaints, and for doing so productively. These avenues often go unused, especially if one's real desire is to parade his discontent. Letting off steam always produces more heat than light (see Matthew 18:15). True, we may merely gripe or grumble in a passing way. We may even do it cleverly. Still, even mild murmuring can be more pointed than we may care to admit.

Murmuring is a form of mocking

Some actually question God's capacity, this in the face of His assurance to us, "I am able to do my own work" (2 Nephi 27:20, 21). Therefore, murmuring can be another form of mocking God's plan of salvation (see 3 Nephi 29:6). Yes, such individuals say, God has an overall general plan, but we don't care for His specific timing (see 2 Nephi 27:21; Enos 1:16; Ether 3:24, 27). Yet the scriptures specifically advise us that "all things must come to pass in their time" (D&C 64:32; see also 24:16).

Yes, such individuals may acknowledge God, but they criticize His ways (see Jacob 4:8; D&C 1:16; 56:14). We want things to be done in our ways, even though our ways are much lower ways (see Isaiah 55:8–9).

The importance of patience

Furthermore, since God has told us He intends to try our faith and our patience, are not situations of stress the very settings from which such murmuring would emerge? (see Mosiah 23:21). Of course — unless we are careful.

God accomplishes things, brothers and sisters, "in process of time." This calls for our patience. Moreover, doing things in process of time is often His way of either preserving our agency or of providing us with needed opportunity. In

fact, certain experiences, over which we might understandably murmur, can actually be for our good (see D&C 105:10; 122:7; Genesis 30:27). Thus you and I may think God is merely marking time, when He is actually marking openings for us, openings which are sorely needed. Even then, we are so slow to use those openings in order to escape from the familiar cell of selfishness.

Murmuring deafens and blinds us

Murmuring can also be noisy enough that it drowns out the various spiritual signals to us, signals which tell us in some cases to quit soaking ourselves indulgently in the hot tubs of self-pity! Murmuring over the weight of our crosses not only takes energy otherwise needed to carry them but might cause another to put down his cross altogether. Besides, brothers and sisters, if we were not carrying so much else, our crosses would be much lighter. The heaviest load we feel is often from the weight of our unkept promises and our unresolved sins, which press down relentlessly upon us. In any genuine surrendering to God, one says, "I will give away all my sins to know thee" (Alma 22:18). To Whom shall we give our sins? Only Jesus is both willing and able to take them!

Finally, nonmurmurers are permitted to see so much more. Ancient Israel was once compassed about with "a great host" of hostile horses and chariots. Elisha counseled his anxious young servant, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them" (2 Kings 6:16). The prophet then prayed that the Lord would "open" the young man's eyes, "and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha!" (2 Kings 6:17).

Elisha's counsel can help Church members today to silence our murmuring. Regardless of how things seem, or come to seem, in troubled times, "They that be with us are more than they that be with

them." My brothers and sisters, if our lips are closed to murmuring, then our eyes can be opened. I so pray for us all in the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Appreciation for President Benson

We come now to the conclusion of this great conference. President Benson asked President Monson in the opening session to read a message from him, which was beautiful and inclusive and of great value to us. He has felt that he would not speak in this session.

We commemorated President Benson's ninetieth birthday last August fourth with a great celebration in this Tabernacle, which was carried to the Church across the nation and even to some foreign areas. His life has been rich and wonderful and marvelous. His service has been tremendous and unceasing. His love for the people has been deep and magnificent.

I know that he would have me express in his behalf his deep love for each of you, for you members of the Church throughout the world wherever you may be; likewise, he would extend that love to those who are not members of the Church, for he stands as a prophet of the Lord Jesus Christ, extending in his life and in his authority as that prophet all of the love which the Lord would have his children receive.

"We ever pray for thee, our prophet dear." God bless you for your great leadership, for your dedicated service, for your example to us, for your love of God expressed through your service to His children.

As we conclude this conference, we express our sincere appreciation to the Mormon Youth Chorus, the Polynesian choir, the Tabernacle Choir, and their conductors and organists for their beautiful and inspiring music.

The Tabernacle Choir: a national treasure

May I say concerning this great Tabernacle Choir, which has sung for us today, that it has become an institution in the Church and has become, as expressed by a great national leader, a national treasure. They are dedicated and wonderful people, skillfully led and directed by good and able leaders, who sing the glories of God each week to a vast audience from sea to shining sea across this land and have been doing so for sixty years. Last July that anniversary was celebrated here, again in this Tabernacle. Think of it — six decades without an interruption of singing as the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, representatives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. There is nothing like it in the history of broadcasting in this nation or in any other nation. They have now given 3,127 continuous programs, that number being the number of the program that was given this morning. We salute them. We honor them. We praise them. We thank them for their dedicated service and their unmatched contributions.

The roots of this choir lie in the soil of this block. It was 140 or more years ago — first in the old Bowery and then in the old Tabernacle, which stood just to the south of us — that a group of singers first raised their voices in this valley in praise to God. The choir they began has gone on ever since and in the process grown better with age. Thank you so very, very much.

We thank our city officials for the cooperation given this conference, the Relief Society, the doctors and Church

health unit nurses who have been on hand to render service, and the ushers and interpreters. We express appreciation to local and national press representatives for the coverage of the conference. We are grateful to the owners and the operators of the many radio and television stations and cable and satellite systems who have given time and made facilities available to carry sessions of this conference in many countries.

The choir will sing "A Gaelic Blessing," and the benediction will then be offered by Elder Malcolm S. Jeppsen of the Seventy. The conference will then stand adjourned for six months.

A word of benediction

As we conclude, may I leave with you, in the form of a word of benediction, some of the words of the Lord as set forth in His revelation:

"Therefore, cease from all your light speeches, from all laughter, from all your lustful desires, from all your pride and light-mindedness, and from all your wicked doings. . . .

"See that ye love one another; cease to be covetous; learn to impart one to another as the gospel requires.

"Cease to be idle; cease to be unclean; cease to find fault one with another. . . .

"And above all things, clothe yourselves with the bond of charity, as with a mantle, which is the bond of perfectness and peace.

"Pray always, that ye may not faint, until I come. Behold, and lo, I will come quickly, and receive you unto myself [saith the Lord]. Amen" (D&C 88:121, 123-26).

Our prayers go with you. May there come into your minds remembrances of the wonderful things we have heard as we have sat together as the Saints of God and partaken of His everlasting truths, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "A Gaelic Blessing."

The benediction was offered by Elder Malcolm S. Jeppsen.

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE MUSIC

The Mormon Youth Chorus, conducted by Robert C. Bowden, furnished the choral numbers for the Saturday morning session of the conference.

Music for the Saturday afternoon session was provided by a Polynesian Choir from the Salt Lake Valley, conducted by Kuinise V. Matagi.

At the general priesthood session, music was furnished by a combined men's choir from the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth Chorus. Robert C. Bowden and Donald Ripplinger conducted the choir.

The Tabernacle Choir, conducted by Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger,

provided music for the Sunday morning and Sunday afternoon sessions.

Throughout the conference sessions, prelude, postlude, and interlude music and accompaniments on the Tabernacle organ were played by Robert Cundick, John Longhurst, and Clay Christiansen, Tabernacle organists.

F. Michael Watson

Clerk of the conference

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